

**THE NEW
TESTAMENT FOR
ENGLISH READERS**

**A CRITICAL AND
EXPLANATORY COMMENTARY**

BY

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DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Title] GOSPEL, from *god* and *spel*, “good message” or “news;” a translation of the Greek “euangelion,” which means the same. This name came to be applied to the writings themselves which contain this news, very early. Justin Martyr, in the second century speaks of “the memoirs drawn up by the Apostles, which are called gospels (euangelia).”

according to Matthew] as delivered by Matthew, implies *authorship or editorship*. It is not merely equivalent to *of Matthew*, which would have been said, had it been meant. Nor does it signify that the original teaching was Matthew’s and the present gospel drawn up after that teaching. Eusebius tells us, that Matthew “delivered to writing the gospel according to him.”

Matthew: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1–17.] GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. book of the generation] Not always used of a pedigree only: see reff. Here however it appears that it refers exclusively to the genealogy, by “*Jesus Christ*” being used in the enunciation, and the close being “*Jesus which is called Christ*.” Then ver. 17 forms a conclusion to it, and ver. 18 passes on to other matter.

Jesus] See on ver. 21.

Christ] The word is equivalent to the Hebrew *Messiah, anointed*. It is used of kings, priests, prophets, and of the promised Deliverer. It is here used (see ver. 16) in that sense in which it became affixed to Jesus as the name of our Lord. It does not once thus occur in the progress of the Evangelic *history*; only in the prefatory parts of the Gospels, here and vv. 16, 17, 18: Mark i. 1: John i. 17, and once in the mouth of our Lord Himself, John xvii. 3; but continually in the Acts and Epistles. This may serve to shew that the evangelic memoirs themselves were of earlier date than their incorporation into our present Gospels.

son... son] both times refers to our Lord. *Son of David* was an especial title of the Messiah: see reff. That He should be *son of Abraham*, was too solemn a subject of prophecy to be omitted here, even though implied in the other. These words serve to shew the character of the Gospel, as written for *Jews*. Luke, ch. iii. 23 ff., carries his genealogy farther back.

2. and his brethren] These additions probably indicate that Matt. did not take his genealogy from any family or public documents, but constructed it himself.

3.] These children of Judah were not born in marriage: see Gen. xxxviii. 16–30. Both the sons are named, probably as recalling the incident connected with their birth. The reason for the women (Thamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba) being mentioned, has been variously assigned: it might be, to meet the objection of the Jews to *our Lord’s* birth: or *for the sake of minute accuracy*. It most probably is, that the Evangelist omitted what was ordinary, but stated what was doubtful or singular. It has been suggested, that as these women are of Gentile origin or dubious character, they may be mentioned as introducing the calling of Gentiles and sinners by our Lord: also, that they may serve as types of the mother of our Lord, and are consequently named in the course of the genealogy, as she is at the end of it.

5. Rachab] It has been imagined, on chronological grounds, that this Rachab must be a different person from Rahab of Jericho. But those very grounds completely tally with their identity. For Naashon father of Salmon), prince of Judah (1 Chron. ii. 10), offered his offering at the setting up of the tabernacle (Num. vii. 12) 39 years before the taking of Jericho. So that Salmon would be of mature age at or soon after that event; at which time Rahab was probably young, as her father and mother were living (Josh. vi. 23). Nor is it any objection that Achan, the fourth in descent from Judah by Zara, is contemporary with Salmon, the sixth of the other branch: since the generations in the line of Zara average 69 years, and those in the line of Phares 49, both within the limits of probability. The difficulty of the interval of 366 years between Rahab and David does not to this passage only, but equally to Ruth iv. 21, 22; and is by no means insuperable, especially when the extreme old age of Jesse, implied in 1 Sam. xvii. 12, is considered.—I may add that, considering Rahab’s father and mother were alive, the house would hardly be called *the house Of Rahab* except on account of the character commonly assigned to her.

8. Joram... Ozias] Three kings, viz. Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah (1 Chron. iii. 11, 12), are here omitted. Some think that they were erased on account of their connexion, by means of Athaliah, with the accursed house of Ahab. Simeon is omitted by Moses in blessing the tribes (Deut. xxxiv.): the descendants of Zebulun and Dan are over in 1 Chron., and none of the latter tribe are sealed in Rev. vii. But more probably such erasure, even if justifiable by that reason, was not made on account of it,

but for convenience, in order to square the numbers of the different portions of the genealogies, as here. Compare, as illustrating such omissions, 1 Chron. viii. 1 with Gen. xlvi. 21.

11. Josias... Jechonias] Eliakim, son of Josiah and father of Jechonias, is omitted; which was objected to the Christians by Porphyry. The reading which inserts Joacim (i. e. Eliakim) rests on hardly any foundation, and would make fifteen generations in the second “fourteen.” The solution of the difficulty by supposing the name to apply to both Eliakim and his son, and to mean the former in ver. 11 and the latter in ver. 12, is unsupported by example, and contrary to the usage of the genealogy. When we notice that the *brethren* of Jechonias are his *uncles*, and find this way of speaking sanctioned by 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10, where Zedekiah, one of these, is called his brother, we are led to seek our solution in some manner of speaking of these kings, by which Eliakim and his son were not accounted two distinct generations. If we compare 1 Chron. iii. 16 with 2 Kings xxiv. 17, we can hardly fail to see that there is some confusion in the records of Josiah’s family. In the latter passage, where we have “his father’s brother,” the LXX render “his son.”

12. Jechonias.... Salathiel] So also the genealogy in 1 Chron. iii. 17. When, therefore, it is denounced (Jer. xxii. 30) that Jechoniah should be ‘childless,’ this word must be understood as explained by the rest of the verse, ‘for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah.’

Salathiel... Zorobabel] There is no difficulty here which does not also exist in the O.T. Zerubbabel is there usually called the son of Shealtiel (Salathiel). Ezra iii. 2, &c. Neh. xii. 1, &c. Hag. i. 1, &c. In 1 Chron. iii. 19, Zerubbabel is said to have been the son of Pedaiah, brother of Salathiel. Either this may have been a different Zerubbabel, or Salathiel may, according to the law, have raised up seed to his brother.

18. Zorobabel.... Abiud] Abiud is not mentioned as a son of the Zerubbabel in 1 Chron. iii.—Lord A. Hervey, On the Genealogies of our Lord, p. 122 ff., has made it probable that Abiud is identical with the Hodaiah of 1 Chron. iii. 24, and the Juda of Luke iii. 26—On the comparison of this genealogy with that given in Luke, see notes, Luke iii. 23–38.

17. fourteen generations] If we carefully observe Matthew’s arrangement, we shall have no difficulty in completing the three “fourteens.” For the first is from Abraham to David, of course inclusive. The second from David (again inclusive) to the *migration*; which gives no name, as before, to be included in both the second and third periods, but which is mentioned simultaneously with the begetting of Jechonias, leaving him for the third period. This last, then, takes in from Jechonias to JESUS CHRIST inclusive. So that the three stand thus, according to the words of this verse: (1) from Abraham to David. (2) From David to the migration to Babylon, i.e. about the time when Josiah begat Jechonias. (3) From the migration (i. e. from Jechonias) to Christ.

18–25.] CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS BIRTH.

18. espoused] i.e. betrothed. The interval between betrothal and the consummation of marriage was sometimes considerable, during which the betrothed remained in her father’s house, till the bridegroom came and fetched her. See Deut. xx. 7

came together] Here to be understood of living together in one house as man and wife. Chrysostom well suggests, that the conception was not allowed to take place before the betrothal, both that the matter might take place more in privacy, and that the Blessed Virgin might escape slanderous suspicion.

was found] not merely for *was*, as some have said, but in its proper meaning:—**she was discovered to be**, no matter by whom. The words “of (by) the Holy Ghost,” are the addition of the Evangelist declaring the matter of fact, and do not belong to the discovery.

19. husband] so called, though they were as yet but betrothed: so in Gen. xxix. 21. Deut. xxii. 24.

just] “**and not willing**” is, not the explanation of **just**, but an additional particular. He was a strict observer of the law,—and (yet) not willing to expose her. The sense of ‘*kind*,’ ‘*merciful*,’ proposed by some instead of **just**, is inadmissible.

privily] Not ‘*without any writing of divorce*,’ which would have been unlawful; but according to the form prescribed in Deut. xxiv. 1. The husband might either do this, or adopt the stronger course of bringing his wife to justice openly. The punishment in this case would have been death by stoning. Deut. xxii. 23.

20. behold] answers to the Hebrew “*hinneh*,” and is frequently used by Matt. and Luke to introduce a new event or change of scene: not so often by Mark, and never with this view in John.

an angel] The announcement was made to Mary openly, but to Joseph in a dream; for in Mary’s case faith and concurrence of will were necessary—the communication was of a higher kind,—and referred to a thing future; but here it is simply an

advertisement for caution's sake of an event which had already happened, and is altogether a communication of an inferior order: see Gen. xx. 3. But see on the other hand the remarks at the close of the notes on ver. 21.

son of David] These words would recall Joseph's mind to the promised seed, the expectation of the families of the lineage of David, and at once stamp the message as the announcement of the birth of the Messiah. May it not likewise be said, that this appellation would come with more force, if Mary also were *a daughter* of David? The addition, "thy wife," serves to remind Joseph of that relation which she already held by betrothal, and which he was now exhorted to recognize. See above on ver. 19.

21. Jesus] The same name as Joshua, the former deliverer of Israel. Philo says, "Jesus is, being interpreted, 'The salvation of the Lord.'"

He] emphatically: **He alone:** best rendered, perhaps, '*it is He that.*'

his people] In primary sense, *the Jews*, of whom alone Joseph could have understood the words: but in the larger sense, all who believe on Him: an explanation which the tenor of prophecy (cf. Gen. xxii. 18: Deut. xxxii. 21), and the subsequent admission of the Gentiles, warrant. Cf. a similar use of 'Israel' by St. Peter, Acts v. 31.

from their sins] It is remarkable that in this early part of the evangelic history, in the midst of pedigrees, and the disturbances of thrones by the supposed temporal King of the Jews, we have so clear an indication of the *spiritual nature of the office of Christ*. One circumstance of this kind outweighs a thousand cavils against the historical reality of the narration. If I mistake not, this announcement reaches further into the deliverance to be wrought, by Jesus, than any thing mentioned by the Evangelist subsequently. It thus bears the internal impress of a message from God, treasured up and related in its original formal terms.—"Sins" is not put for the *punishment of sin*, but is the sin itself—**the practice of sin**, in its most pregnant sense. 'How suggestive it is,' remarks Bishop Ellicott, 'that while to the loftier spirit of Mary the name of Jesus is revealed with all the prophetic associations of more than David's glories—to Joseph, perchance the aged Joseph, who might have long seen and realized his own spiritual needs, and the needs of those around him, it is specially said, thou shalt call his name Jesus: for *He shall save his people from their sins.*' Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord, p. 56.

22. that it might be fulfilled] It is impossible to interpret that in any other sense than **in order that**. The words "all this was done," and the uniform usage of the N.T., forbid any other. Nor, if rightly viewed, does the passage require any other. Whatever may have been the partial fulfilment of the prophecy in the time of Ahaz, its reference to a different time, and a higher deliverance, is undeniable: and then, whatever causes contributed to bring about all this, might be all summed up in the fulfilment of the divine purpose, of which that prophecy was the declaration. The accomplishment of a promise formally made is often alleged as the cause of an action extending wider than the promise, and purposed long before its utterance. And of course these remarks apply to every passage where the phrase is used. Such a construction can have but one meaning. If such meaning involve us in difficulty regarding the prophecy itself, far better leave such difficulty, in so doubtful a matter as the interpretation of prophecy, unsolved, than create one in so simple a matter as the rendering of a phrase whose meaning no indifferent person could doubt. The immediate and literal fulfilment of the prophecy seems to be related in Isa. viii. 1–4. Yet there the child was *not* called Emmanuel: but in ver. 8 that name is used as applying to one of far greater dignity. Again, Isa. ix. 6 seems to be a reference to this prophecy, as also Micah v. 3.

23. the virgin] the words are from the Septuagint. Such is the rendering of the LXX. The Hebrew word is the more general term, "*the young woman,*" and is so translated by Aquila.

they shall call] This indefinite plural is surely not without meaning here. **Men shall call**—i. e. it shall be a name by which He shall be called—one of his appellations. The change of person seems to shew, both that the prophecy had a literal fulfilment at the time, and that it is here quoted in a form suited to its greater and final fulfilment. The

Hebrew has, '*thou shalt call*' (fem.).

Emmanuel] i.e. **God (is) with us.** In Isaiah, prophetic primarily of deliverance from the then impending war; but also of final and glorious deliverance by the manifestation of God in the flesh.

25.] With regard to the much-controverted sense of this verse we may observe, (1) That the *prima facie* impression on the reader certainly is, that **knew her not** was confined to the period of time here mentioned. (2) That there is nothing in Scripture tending to remove this impression, either (a) by narration,—and the very use of the term, "*brethren of the Lord*" (on which see note at ch. xiii. 55), without qualification, shews that the idea was not repulsive: or (b) by implication,—for every where in the N.T. marriage is spoken of in high and honourable terms; and the words of the angel to Joseph rather imply, than discountenance, such a supposition. (3) On the other hand, the words of this verse do not *require* it: the idiom being justified on the contrary hypothesis. See my Greek Test. On the whole it seems to me, that *no one would ever have thought of*

interpreting the verse any otherwise than in its primâ facie meaning, except to force it into accordance with a preconceived notion of the perpetual virginity of Mary. It is characteristic, and historically instructive, that the great impugner of the view given above should be Jerome, the impugner of marriage itself: and that his opponents in its interpretation should have been branded as heretics by after ages. See a brief notice of the controversy in Milman, Hist. of Latin Christianity, i. 72 ff.

he called] i.e. Joseph; see ver. 21.

Matthew: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1-12.] VISIT AND ADORATION OF MAGI FROM THE EAST.

1. Bethlehem of Judæa] There was another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, near the sea of Galilee, Josh. xix. 15. The name Bethlehem-Judah is used, Judges xvii. 7, 8, 9; 1 Sam. xvii. 12. Another name for our Bethlehem was Ephrath; Gen. xxxv. 19; xlvi. 7; or Ephrata, Micah v. 2. It was six Roman miles to the south of Jerusalem, and was known as ‘the city of David,’ the origin of his family, Ruth i. 1, 19.

in the days of Herod] HEROD THE GREAT, son of Antipater, an Idumæan, by an Arabian mother, made king of Judæa on occasion of his having fled to Rome, being driven from his tetrarchy by the pretender Antigonus. This title was confirmed to him after the battle of Actium by Octavianus. He sought to strengthen his throne by a series of cruelties and slaughters, putting to death even his wife Mariamne, and his sons Alexander and Aristobulus. His cruelties, and his affection of Gentile customs, gained for him a hatred among the Jews, which neither his magnificent rebuilding of the temple, nor his liberality in other public works, nor his provident care of the people during a severe famine, could mitigate. He died miserably, five days after he had put to death his son Antipater, in the seventieth year of his age, the thirty-eighth of his reign, and the 750th year of Rome. The events here related took place a short time before his death, but necessarily more than forty days; for he spent the last forty days of his life at Jericho and the baths of Callirrhoe, and therefore would not be found by the magi at Jerusalem. The history of Herod’s reign is contained in Josephus, Antt. books xiv.—xvii.

It would be useless to detail all the conjectures to which this history has given rise. From what has been written on the subject it would appear, (1) That the East may mean either *Arabia, Persia, Chaldæa, or Parthia, with the provinces adjacent.* See Judges vi. 3: Isa. xli. 2; xlvi. 11: Num. xxiii. 7. Philo speaks of “the Eastern nations and their leaders the Parthians.” In all these countries there were **magi**, at least persons who in the wider sense of the word were now known by the name. The words in ver. 2 seem to point to some land not very near Judæa, as also the result of Herod’s enquiry as to the date, shewn in “two years old.” (2) If we place together (a) the prophecy in Num. xxiv. 17, which could hardly be unknown to the Eastern astrologers,—and (b) the assertion of Suetonius “that there prevailed an ancient and consistent opinion in all the East, that it was fated that at that time those should go forth from Judæa who should rule the empire:”—and of Tacitus, to the same effect and nearly in the same words,—and (c) the prophecy, also likely to be known in the East, of the seventy weeks in Daniel ix. 24;—we can, I think, be at no loss to understand how any remarkable celestial appearance at this time should have been interpreted as it was. (3) There is no ground for supposing the magi to have been *three* in number (as first, apparently, by Leo the Great, A.D. 450); or to have been *kings*. The *first* tradition appears to have arisen from the number of their gifts: the *second*, from the prophecy in Isa. Ix. 3. Tertullian seems to deduce it from the similar prophecy in Ps. lxxii. 10, for, he says, the Magi were most commonly kings in the East.

2. his star] There is a question, whether this expression of the magi, *we have seen his star, points to any miraculous appearance, or to something observed in the course of their watching the heavens. We know the magi to have been devoted to astrology: and on comparing the language of our text with this undoubted fact, I confess that it appears to me the most ingenuous way, fairly to take account of that fact in our exegesis, and not to shelter ourselves from an apparent difficulty by the hypothesis of a miracle.* Wherever supernatural agency is asserted, or may be reasonably inferred, I shall ever be found foremost to insist on its recognition, and impugn every device of rationalism or semi-rationalism; but it does not therefore follow that I should consent to attempts, however well meant, *to introduce miraculous interference where it does not appear to be borne out by the narrative.* The principle on which this commentary is conducted, is that of *honestly endeavouring to ascertain the sense of the sacred text, without regard to any preconceived systems, and fearless of any possible consequences.* And if the scientific or historical researches of others seem to contribute to this, my readers will find them, as far as they have fallen within my observation, made use of for that purpose. It seems to me that the preliminary question for us is, Have we here in the sacred text a miracle, or have we some natural appearance which God in His Providence used as a means of indicating to the magi the birth of His Son? Different minds may feel differently as to the answer to this question. And, seeing that much has been said and written on this note in no friendly spirit, I submit that it is not for any man to charge another, who is as firm a believer in the facts related in the sacred text as he himself can be, with weakening that belief, because he feels an honest conviction that it is here relating, not a miracle, but a natural appearance. It is, of course, the far *safer* way, as far as reputation is concerned, to introduce miraculous agency wherever possible: but the present Editor aims at truth, not popularity.

Now we learn from astronomical calculations, that a remarkable conjunction of the planets of our system took place a short time before the birth of our Lord. In the year of Rome 747, on the 29th of May, there was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the 20th degree of the constellation Pisces, close to the first point of Aries, which was the part of the heavens noted in astrological science as that in which the signs denoted the greatest and most noble events. On the 29th of September, in the same year, another conjunction of the same planets took place, in the 16th of Pisces: and on the 5th of December, a third, in the 15th degree of the same sign. Supposing the magi to have seen the *first* of these conjunctions, they saw it actually **in the East**; for on the 29th of May *it would rise* 3½ hours before sunrise. If they then took their journey, and arrived at Jerusalem in a little more than *five* months (the journey from Babylon took Ezra *four* months, see Ezra vii. 9), if they performed the route from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in the evening, as is implied, the *December conjunction*, in 15° of Pisces, would be before them *in the direction of Bethlehem*, 1½ hour east of the meridian at sunset. These circumstances would seem to form a remarkable coincidence with the history in our text. are in no way inconsistent with the word **star**, which cannot surely (see below) be pressed to its mere literal sense of one single star, but understood in its wider astrological meaning: nor is this explanation of *the star directing them to Bethlehem* at all repugnant to the plain words of vv. 9, 10, importing its motion from S.E. towards S.W., the direction of Bethlehem. We may further observe, that *no part of the text respecting the star, asserts, or even implies, a miracle*; and that the very slight apparent inconsistencies with the above explanation are no more than the *report of the magi* themselves, and the *general belief of the age* would render unavoidable. If this *subservience of the superstitions of astrology to the Divine purposes* be objected to, we may answer with Wetstein, “We must infer therefore that these men came to their conclusion from the rules of their art: which though beyond all doubt futile, vain, and delusive, might yet be sometimes permitted to hit on a right result. Hence appears the wonderful wisdom of God, who used the wickedness of men to bring Joseph into Egypt,—who sent the King of Babylon against the Jews by auguries and divinations (Ezek. xxi. 21, 22), and in this instance directed the magi to Christ by astrology.”

It may be remarked that Abarbanel the Jew, who knew nothing of *this* conjunction, relates it as a tradition, that no conjunction could be of mightier import than that of Jupiter and Saturn, which planets were in conjunction A.M. 2365, before the birth of Moses, in the sign of Pisces; and thence remarks that that sign was the most significant one for *the Jews*. From this consideration he concludes that the conjunction of these planets in that sign, in his own time (A. D. 1463), betokened the near approach of the birth of the Messiah. And as the Jews did not invent astrology, but learnt it from the Chaldaeans, this idea, that a conjunction in Pisces betokened some great event in Judæa, must have prevailed among Chaldaean astrologers.

It is fair to notice the influence on the position maintained in this note of the fact which seems to have been substantiated, that the planets did not, during the year B.C. 7, approach each other so as to be mistaken by any eye for one star: indeed not “within double the apparent diameter of the moon.” I submit, that even if this were so, the inference in the note remains as it was. The *conjunction of the two planets*, complete or incomplete, would be that which would bear astrological significance, not their looking like one star. The two bright planets seen in the east,—the two bright planets standing over Bethlehem,—these would on each occasion have arrested the attention of the magi; and this appearance would have been denominated by them **his star**.

in the east] i.e. either in the *Eastern country from which they came*, or in the *Eastern quarter of the heavens*.

to worship him] i.e. *to do homage to him*, in the Eastern fashion of prostration.

3. was troubled] Josephus represents these troubles as raised by the Pharisees, who prophesied a revolution. Herod, as a foreigner and usurper, feared one was *born* King of the Jews: the people, worn away by seditions and slaughters, feared fresh tumults and wars. There may also be a trace of the popular notion that the times of the Messiah would be ushered in by great tribulations.

4. when he had gathered] i.e. says Lightfoot, he *assembled the Sanhedrim*. For the Sanhedrim consisting of seventy-one members, and comprising Priests, Levites, and Israelites, under the term “*chief priests*” are contained the two first of these, and under “*scribes of the people*” the third.

the chief priests are most likely the High Priest and those of his race,—any who had served the office,—and perhaps also the presidents of the twenty-four courses (1 Chron. xxiv. 6).

the scribes consisted of the teachers and interpreters of the Divine law, the *lawyers* of St. Luke. But the *elders of the people* are usually mentioned with these two classes as making up the Sanhedrim. See ch. xvi. 21; xxvi. 3, 59. Possibly on this occasion the chief priests and scribes only were summoned, the question being one of Scripture learning.

6. And thou] This is a free paraphrase of the prophecy in Micah v. 2. It must be remembered that though the words are the answer of the Sanhedrim to Herod, and not a citation of the prophet by the Evangelist, yet they are by the latter as correct.

princes] or thousands (LXX). The tribes were divided into thousands, and the names of the thousands inscribed in the public records of their respective cities. In Judges vi. 15 Gideon says “Behold my thousand is weak in Manasseh” (see English version, margin), on which Rabbi Kimchi annotates, “Some understand Alphi to mean ‘my father,’ as if it were Alluph, whose signification is ‘prince or lord.’” And thus, it appears, did the Sanhedrim understand the word (which is the same) in Micah v. 2. The word, without points, may mean either “*among the thousands*,” or “*among the princes*.”

out of thee shall come] It has been remarked that the singular expression, which occurs both in Tacitus and Suetonius (see above), “*there should go forth from Judea*,” may have been derived from these words of the LXX.

9.] stood over may mean ‘over that part of Bethlehem where the young child was,’ which they might have ascertained by enquiry. Or it may even mean, ‘over the whole town of Bethlehem.’ If it is to be understood as standing *over the house*, and thus indicating to the magi the position of the object of their search, the whole incident must be regarded as miraculous. But this is not necessarily implied, even if the words of the text be literally understood; and in a matter like astronomy, where popular language is so universally broad, and the Scriptures so generally use popular language, it is surely not the letter, but the spirit of the narrative with which we are concerned.

11. with Mary] No stress must be laid on the omission of Joseph here. In the parallel account as regarded the shepherds, in Luke ii. 16, he is mentioned. I would rather regard the omission here as indicating a simple matter of fact, and contributing to shew the truthfulness of the narrative:—that Joseph happened not to be present at the time. If the meaning of the house is to be pressed (as in a matter of detail I think it should), it will confirm the idea that Joseph and Mary, probably under the idea that the child was to be brought up at Bethlehem, dwelt there some time after the Nativity. Epiphanius, supposes that Mary was at this time on a visit to her Kindred at Bethlehem (possibly at a Passover) as much as two years after our Lord’s birth. But if Mary had kindred at Bethlehem, how could she be so ill-provided with lodging, and have (as is implied in Luke ii. 7) sought accommodation at an inn? And the supposition of two years having elapsed, derived probably from the “two years old” of ver. 16, will involve us in considerable difficulty. There seems to be no reason why the magi may not have come within the forty days before the Purification, which itself may have taken place in the interval between their departure and Herod’s discovery that they had mocked him. No objection can be raised to this view from the “two years old” of ver. 16: see note there. The general idea is, that the Purification was previous to the visit of the magi. Being persuaded of the historic reality of these narratives of Matt. and Luke, we shall find no difficulty in also believing that, were we acquainted with all the events as they happened, their reconciliation would be an easy matter; whereas now the two independent accounts, from not being aware of, seem to exclude one another. This will often be the case in ordinary life; e.g. in the giving of evidence. And nothing can more satisfactorily shew the veracity and independence of the narrators, where their testimony to the main facts, as in the t case, is consentient.

treasures] *chests or bales*, in which the gifts were carried during their journey. The ancient Fathers were fond of tracing in the gifts symbolical meanings: “as to the king, the gold: as to one who was to die, the myrrh: as to a god, the frankincense.” Origen, against Celsus; and similarly Irenæus. We cannot conclude from these gifts that the magi came from Arabia,—as they were common to all the East. Strabo says that the best frankincense comes from the borders of Persia.

13–23.] FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

13.] The command was immediate; and Joseph made no delay. He must be understood, on account of “*by night*” below, as having arisen the same night and departed forthwith. Egypt, as *near, as a Roman province and independent of Herod, and much inhabited by Jews*, was an easy and convenient refuge.

15. Out of Egypt] This citation shews the almost universal application in the N.T. of the prophetic writings to the expected Messiah, as the general antitype of all the events of the typical dispensation. We shall have occasion to remark the same again and again in the course of the Gospels. It seems to have been a received axiom of interpretation (which has, by its adoption in the N.T., received the sanction of the Holy Spirit Himself, and now stands for our guidance), that the subject of all allusions, the represented in all parables and dark sayings, was He who was to come, or the circumstances attendant on His advent and reign.—The words are written in Hosea of the children of Israel, and are rendered from the Hebrew.—A similar expression with regard to Israel is found in Exod. iv. 22, 23.

that it might be fulfilled must not be explained away: it never denotes the event or mere result, but always the *purpose*.

16.] Josephus makes no mention of this slaughter; nor is it likely that he would have done. Probably no great number of children perished in so small a place as Bethlehem and its neighbourhood. The modern objections to this narrative may be answered best by remembering the monstrous character of this tyrant, of whom Josephus asserts, “a dark choler seized on him, maddening him against all.” Herod had marked the way to his throne, and his reign itself, with blood; had murdered his wife and three sons (the last just about this time); and was likely enough, in blind fury, to have made no enquiries, but given the savage order at once.—Besides, there might have been a reason for not making enquiry, but rather taking the course he did,

which was sure, as he thought, to answer the end, without divulging the purpose. The word “privily” in ver. 7 seems to favour this view.

was mocked] The Evangelist is speaking of Herod’s view of the matter.

the borders thereof] The word *coasts* is the common rendering of the Greek *horia* in the A.V. It does not imply any bordering on a sea shore, but is an old use for *parts*, or *neighbourhood*, as *côte* in French. See margin of A.V.

the borders thereof will betoken the insulated houses, and hamlets, which belonged to the territory of Bethlehem.

from two years old] This expression must not be taken as any very certain indication of the time when the star did actually appear. The addition **and under** implies that there was uncertainty in Herod’s mind as to the age pointed out; and if so, why might not the jealous tyrant, although he had accurately ascertained the date of the star’s appearing, have taken a range of time extending before as well as after it, the more surely to attain his point?

17. that which was spoken by Jeremy] Apparently, an accommodation of the prophecy in Jer. xxxi. 15, which was originally written of the Babylonish captivity. We must not draw any fanciful distinction between “**then was fulfilled**” and “that might be fulfilled,” but rather seek our explanation in the acknowledged system of prophetic interpretation among the Jews, still extant in their rabbinical books, and now sanctioned to us by N.T. usage; at the same time remembering, for our caution, how little even now we understand of the full bearing of prophetic and typical words and acts. None of the expressions of this prophecy must be closely and literally pressed. The link of connexion seems to be *Rachel’s sepulchre*, which (Gen. xxxv. 19: see also 1 Sam. x. 2) was ‘*in the way to Bethlehem*;’ and from that circumstance, perhaps, the inhabitants of that place are called *her children*. We must also take into account the close relation between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which had long subsisted. Ramah was six miles to the *north* of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin (Jer. xl. 1: “Er-Ram, marked by the village and green patch on its summit, the most conspicuous object from a distance in the approach to Jerusalem from the South, is certainly ‘Ramah of Benjamin.’”) Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 213; so that neither must this part of the prophecy be strictly taken.

20. for they are dead] The plural here is not merely idiomatic, nor for lenity and forbearance, in speaking of the dead; but perhaps a citation from Exod. iv. 19, where the same words are spoken to Moses, or betokens, not the number, but the category. Herod the Great died of a dreadful disease at Jericho, in the seventieth year of his age, and the thirty-eighth of his reign, A.U. C. 750.

22.] ARCHELAUS was the son of Herod by Malthace, a Samaritan woman: he was brought up at Rome; succeeded his father, but never had the title of king, only that of Ethnarch, with the government of Idumæa, Judæa, and Samaria, the rest of his father’s dominions being divided between his brothers Philip and Antipas. But, (1) very likely the word *reign* is here used in the wider meaning:—(2) Archelaus did, in the beginning of his reign, give out and regard himself as king: (3) in ch. xiv. 9, Herod the Tetrarch is called *the King*.—In the ninth year of his government Archelaus was dethroned, for having governed cruelly the Jews and Samaritans, who sent an embassy to Rome against him, and he was banished to Vienne, in Gaul. This account gives rise to some difficulty as compared with St. Luke’s history. It would certainly, on a first view, appear that this Evangelist was not aware that Nazareth had been before this the abode of Joseph and Mary. And it is no real objection to this, that he elsewhere calls Nazareth “*His country*,” ch. xiii. 54, 57. It is perhaps just possible that St. Matthew, writing for Jews, although well aware of the previous circumstances, may not have given them a place in his history, but made the birth at Bethlehem the prominent point, seeing that his account begins at the birth (ch. i. 18), and does not localize what took place before it, which is merely inserted as subservient to that great leading event. If this view be correct, all we could expect is, that his narrative would contain *nothing inconsistent* with the facts related in Luke; which we find to be the case.—I should prefer, however, believing, as more consistent with the fair and conscientious interpretation of our text, that St. Matthew himself was not aware of the events related in Luke i. ii., and wrote under the impression that Bethlehem was the original dwelling-place of Joseph and Mary. Certainly, *had we only his Gospel*, this inference from it would universally be made.

turned aside must not be pressed into the service of reconciling the two accounts by being rendered ‘*returned*;’ for the same is used (ver. 14) of the journey to Egypt.

23. that it might be fulfilled] These words refer to the *divine* purpose in the event, not to that of Joseph in bringing it about.

which was spoken by the prophets] These words are nowhere verbatim to be found, nor is this asserted by the Evangelist; but that the sense of *the prophets* is such. In searching for such sense, the following hypotheses have been made—none of them satisfactory:—(1) Euthymius says, “Do not enquire what prophets said this: for you will not find out: because many of the prophetic books have perished, some in the captivities, some by neglect of the Jews, some also by foul play.” So also Chrysostom and others. Bar the expression “*by the prophets*” seems to have a wider bearing than is thus implied. (2) Others say, the general sense of the prophets is, that Christ should be a *despised person*, as *the inhabitants of Nazareth were* (John i.

47). But surely this part of the Messiah's prophetic character is not general or prominent enough, in the absence of any direct verbal connexion with the word in our text, to found such an interpretation on: nor, on the other hand, does it appear that an inhabitant of Nazareth, as such, was despised; only that the obscurity of the town was, both by Nathanael and the Jews, contrasted with our Lord's claims. (3) The *Nazarites* of old were men holy and consecrated to God; e.g. Samson (Judg. xiii. 5), Samuel (1 Sam. i. 11), and to this the words are referred by Tertullian, Jerome, and others. But (a) our Lord did not (like John the Baptist) lead a life in accordance with the Nazarite vow, but drank wine, &c., and set himself in marked contrast with John in this very particular (ch. xi. 18, 19); and (b) the word here is not *Nazarite*, but *Nazarene*, denoting an inhabitant of Nazareth. (4) There may be an allusion to the Hebrew "*Netser*," a branch, by which name our Lord is called in Isa. xi. 1, and from which word it appears that the name Nazareth is probably derived. So "*learned Hebrews*" mentioned by Jerome on Isa. xi. 1, and others. But this word is only used in the place cited; and in by far the more precise prophecies of the Branch, Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12: Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15, and Isa. iv. 2, the word "*Tsemach*" is used.—I leave it, therefore, as an unsolved difficulty.

Matthew: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1–12.] PREACHING AND BAPTISM OF JOHN. Mark i. 1–8: Luke iii. 1–17 (John i. 6–28). Here the *synoptic narrative* (i. e. the narrative common to the three Evangelists) begins, its extent being the same as that specified by Peter in Acts i. 22, '*from the baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from us.*' For a comparison of the narratives in the various sections, see notes on St. Mark. In *this Gospel*, I have generally confined myself to the *subject-matter*.

1. In those days] The last matter mentioned was the dwelling at Nazareth; and though we must not take the connexion strictly as implying that *Joseph* dwelt there all the intermediate thirty years, "*those days*" must be understood to mean that we take up the persons of the narrative where we left them; i.e. dwelling at Nazareth.

came] literally, **comes forward**—‘makes his appearance.’ Euthymius asks the question, *whence?* and answers it, *from the recesses of the wilderness*. But this can hardly be, owing to the “*in the wilderness*” following. The verb is used absolutely. The title “*John the Baptist*” shews that St. Matthew was writing for those who well knew John the Baptist as an historical personage. Josephus, in mentioning him, calls him “*John who is called the Baptist.*” John was strictly speaking a *prophet*; belonging to the legal dispensation; a rebuker of sin, and preacher of repentance. The expression in St. Luke, “*the word of God came to John,*” is the usual formula for the divine commission of the Prophets (Jer. i. 1: Ezek. vi. 1; viii. 1, &c.). And the effect of the Holy Spirit on John was more in accordance with the O.T. than the N.T. inspiration; more of a sudden overpowering influence, as in the Prophets, than a gentle indwelling manifested through the individual character, as in the Apostles and Evangelists.—The baptism of John was of a deeper significance than that usual among the Jews in the case of proselytes, and formed an integral part of his divinely appointed office. It was emphatically the baptism of *repentance* (Luke iii. 3), but not that of *regeneration* (Titus iii. 5).

We find in Acts xviii. 24–26; xix. 1–7, accounts of persons who had received the baptism of John, who believed, and (in Apollos's case) taught accurately the things (i. e. facts concerning the Lord; but required instruction (in doctrine), and rebaptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus. Whether the baptism practised by the disciples before the Resurrection was of the same kind, and required this renewal, is uncertain. The fact of our Lord Himself having received baptism from John, is decisive against the identity of the two rites, as also against the idea derived from Acts xix. 4, that John used the formula “*I baptize thee in the name of Him who is to come.*” His whole mission was calculated, in accordance with the office of the law, which gives the knowledge of sin (Rom. iii. 20), to bring men's minds into that state in which the Redeemer invites them (ch. xi. 28), as weary and heavy laden, to come to Him.

in the wilderness] Where also he had been brought up, Luke i. 80. This tract was not strictly *a desert*, but thinly peopled, and abounding in pastures for flocks. This *wilderness* answers to “*all the country round about Jordan*” in Luke iii. 3. See note on ch. iv. 1.

2. Repent] Used by the Baptist in the O.T. sense of *turning to God as His people*, from the spiritual idolatry and typical adultery in which the faithless among the Jews were involved. This, of course, included personal amendment in individuals. See Luke iii. 10–14. Josephus describes John as “‘commanding the Jews to practise virtue, and justice to their neighbour, and piety towards God, and thus to receive his baptism.’”

the kingdom of heaven] An expression peculiar in the N.T. to St. Matthew. The more usual one is “*the Kingdom of God:*” but “*the Kingdom of heaven*” is common in the Rabbinical writers, who do not however, except in one or two places, mean by it *the reign of the Messiah*, but *the Jewish religion—the theocracy*. Still, from the use of it by St. Matthew here, and in ch. iv. 17, x. 7, we may conclude that it was used by the Jews, and understood, to mean *the advent the Christ*, probably from the prophecy in Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14, 27.

3. For this is he] *Not the words of the Baptist*, meaning “*for I am he,*” as in John i. 23, but *of the Evangelist*; and “*is*” is not for

“was,” but is the prophetic present, representing to us the place which the Baptist fills in the divine purposes, Of **for**, Bengel says well, that it gives the cause why John then came forward, as described in ver. 1, 2, viz. because it had been thus predicted.—The primary and literal application of this prophecy to *the return from captivity* is very doubtful. If it ever had such an application, we may safely say that its predictions were so imperfectly and sparingly fulfilled in that return, or any thing which followed it, that we are necessarily directed onward to its greater fulfilment—the announcement of the kingdom of Christ. Euthymius remarks, that the ways and paths of the Lord are men’s souls, which must be cleared of the thorns of passion and the stones of sin, and thus made straight and level for His approach.

4. And the same John] rather, **now John himself**, recalling the reader from the prophetic testimony, to the person of John. As John was the Elias of prophecy, so we find in his outward attire a striking similarity to Elias, who was “*an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.*” 2 Kings i. 8. The garment of camel’s hair was not the camel’s skin with the hair on, which would be too heavy to wear, but raiment woven of camel’s hair. From Zech. xiii. 4, it seems that such a dress was known as the prophetic garb: ‘neither shall they (the prophets) wear a rough garment to deceive.’

locusts] There is no difficulty here. The locust, permitted to be eaten, Levit. xi. 22, was used as food by the lower orders in Judæa, and mentioned by Strabo and Pliny as eaten by the Æthiopians, and by many other authors, as articles of food. Jerome mentions it as the custom in the East and Libya: and Shaw found locusts eaten by the Moors in Barbary. (Travels, p. 164.)

wild honey] See 1 Sam. xiv. 25. Here again there is no need to suppose any thing else meant but honey made by wild bees. Schulz found such honey in wilderness in our own time. See Psalm lxxxi. 16: Judg. xiv. 8: Deut. xxxii. 13.

5.] all the region round about Jordan means all the neighbourhood of Jordan not included in “Jerusalem and Judæa” before mentioned. Parts of Peræa, Samaria, Galilee, and Gaulonitis come under this denomination.—There need be no surprise at such multitudes going out to John. The nature of his announcement, coupled with the prevalent expectation of the time, was enough to produce this effect. See, as strictly consistent with this account, chap. xi. 7–15.

6. were baptized] When *men* were admitted as proselytes, three rites were performed—*circumcision, baptism, and oblation;* when *women*, two—*baptism and oblation.* The baptism was administered in the day-time, by immersion of the whole person; and while standing in the water the proselyte was instructed in certain portions of the law. The whole families of proselytes, including infants, were baptized. It is most probable that John’s baptism in outward form resembled that of proselytes. See above, on ver. 1. Some deny that the proselyte baptism was in use before the time of John: but the contrary has been generally supposed, and maintained. Indeed the baptism or lustration of a proselyte on admission would follow, as a matter of course, by analogy from the constant legal practice of lustration after all uncleannesses: and it is difficult to imagine a time when it would not be in use. Besides, it is highly improbable that the Jews should have borrowed the rite from the Christians, or the Jewish hierarchy from John.

confessing their sins] From the form and expression, this does not seem to have been merely ‘shewing a contrite spirit,’ ‘confessing themselves sinners,’ but *a particular and individual confession*; not, however, made privately to John, but before the people: see his exhortation to the various classes in Luke iii. 10–15: nor in every case, but in those which required it.

7. Pharisees and Sadducees] These two sects, according to Josephus, Antt. xiii. 5. 9, originated at the same period, under Jonathan the High Priest (B. C. 159–144). The PHARISEES, deriving their name probably from “*Parash,*” ‘he separated,’ took for their distinctive practice the strict observance of the law and all its requirements, written and oral. They had great power over the people, and are numbered by Josephus, as being, about the time of the death of Herod the Great, above 6000. We find in the Gospels the Pharisees the most constant opponents of our Lord, and His discourses frequently directed against them. The character of the sect as a whole was *hypocrisy*; the outside acknowledgment and honouring of God and his law, but inward and practical denial of Him; which rendered them the enemies of the simplicity and genuineness which characterized our Lord’s teaching. Still, among them were undoubtedly pious and worthy men, honourably distinguished from the mass of the sect; John iii. 1: Actsv. 34. The various points of their religious and moral belief will be treated of as they occur in the text of the Gospels.

The SADDUCEES are *said* to have derived their name from one Sadok, about the time of Alexander the Great (B. C. 323): but they were named from the Hebrew *Tsaddik, righteousness*, more probably. They *rejected all tradition*, but did not, as some have supposed, confine their canon of Scripture to the Pentateuch. The denial of a future state does not appear to have been an original tenet of Sadduceism, but to have sprung from its abuse. The particular side of religionism represented by the Sadducees was bare literal moral conformity, without any higher views or hopes. They thus escaped the dangers of tradition, but fell into deadness and worldliness, and a denial of spiritual influence. While our Lord was on earth, this state of mind was very prevalent among the educated classes throughout the Roman empire; and most of the Jews of rank and station were Sadducees.—The two sects, mutually hostile, are found frequently in the Gospels united in opposition to our Lord (see ch. xvi. 1, 6, 11; xxii. 23, 34; also Acts iv. 1); the Pharisees representing hypocritical superstition; the Sadducees, carnal unbelief.

come] It would appear here as if these Pharisees and Sadducees came with others, and because others did, without any worthy motive, and they were probably deterred by his rebuke from undergoing baptism at his hands. We know, from Luke vii. 30, that the Pharisees in general ‘*were not baptized of him*.’

the wrath to come] The reference of John’s ministry to prophecy concerning Elias, Mal iii. 1; iv. 5 (Mark i. 2), would naturally suggest to men’s minds ‘the wrath to come’ there also foretold. It was the general expectation of the Jews that troublous times would accompany the appearance of the Messiah. John is now speaking in the true character of a prophet, foretelling the wrath soon to be poured on the Jewish nation.

8.] therefore expresses an inference from their apparent intention of fleeing from the wrath to come: q.d. ‘if you are really so minded,’ ...

9. think not to say] Not merely equivalent to “say not:” but, **Do not fancy you may say**, &c. The expression **to say within yourselves**, as similar expressions in Scripture (e. g. Ps. x. 6, 11; xiv. 1: Eccl. i. 16; ii. 15, al. fr.), is used to signify the act by which outward circumstances are turned into thoughts of the mind.

of these stones] The pebbles or shingle on the beach of the Jordan. He possibly referred to Isa. li. 1, 2. This also is prophetic, of the admission of the Gentile church. See Rom. iv. 16: Gal iii. 29. Or we may take the interpretation which Chrysostom prefers, also referring to Isa. li. 1, 2: *Think not that your perishing will leave Abraham without children: for God is able to raise him up children even from stones, as He created man out of dust at the beginning*. The present tenses, “is laid,” “is cut down,” imply the law, or habit, which now and henceforward, in the kingdom of heaven prevails: ‘from this time it is so.’

II. whose shoes,&c.) Lightfoot shews that it was the token of a slave having become his master’s property, to *loose* his shoe, to *tie* the same, or to *carry* the necessary articles for him to the bath. The expressions therefore in all the Gospels amount to the same.

with the Holy Ghost, and with fire] This was literally fulfilled at the day of Pentecost: but Origen and others refer the words to the baptism of the *righteous by the Holy Spirit*, and *of the wicked by fire*. I have no doubt that this is a mistake in the present case, though apparently (to the superficial reader) borne out by ver. 12. The double symbolic reference of fire, elsewhere found, e.g. Mark ix. 50, as purifying the good and consuming the evil, though *illustrated* by these verses, is hardly to be pressed into the interpretation of *fire* in this verse, the prophecy *here* being solely of that higher and more perfect baptism to which that of John was a mere introduction. To separate off “*with the Holy Ghost*” as belonging to one set of persons, and “*with fire*” as belonging to another, when both are united in “you,” is in the last degree harsh, besides introducing confusion into the whole. The members of comparison in this verse are *strictly parallel* to one another: the *baptism by water*, the end of which is “*repentance*,” a mere transition state, a note of preparation,—and the *baptism by the Holy Ghost and fire*, the end of which is (ver. 12) *sanctification*, the entire aim and purpose of man’s creation and renewal. Thus the *official superiority* of the Redeemer (which is all that our Evangelist here deals with) is fully brought out. The superiority of *nature* and *pre-existence* is reserved for the fuller and more dogmatic account in John i.

12. whose fan,&c.] In the Rabbinical work Midrash Tehillim, on Ps. ii., the same figure is found: “The winnowing is at hand: they throw the straw into the fire, the chaff to the wind, but preserve the wheat in the floor; so the nations of the world shall be the conflagration of a furnace: but Israel alone shall be preserved.”

his floor] i.e. *the contents of the barn-floor*. Thus in Job xxxix. 12, “he will bring home thy seed, and *gather thy barn*” (literally). Or perhaps owing to the verb (**shall cleanse from one end to the other**), the *floor itself*, which was an open hard-trodden space in the middle of the field. See “The Land and the Book,” p. 538 ff., where there is an illustration. “Very little use is now made of the *fan*, but I have seen it employed to *purge the floor* of the refuse dust, which the owner throws away as useless,” p. 540.

chaff] Not only *the chaff*, but also *the straw*: see reff.: ‘all that is not wheat.’

13–17.] JESUS HIMSELF BAPTIZED BY HIM. Mark i. 9–11: Luke iii. 21, 22. It does not appear exactly *when the baptism of our Lord took place*. If the comparative age of the Baptist is taken into account, we should suppose it to have been about six months after this latter began his ministry. But this is no sure guide. The *place* was *Bethany* (the older reading), *beyond Jordan*; John. i. 28.

13. to be baptized] Why should our Lord, who was *without sin*, have come to *a baptism of repentance*? Because He was *made sin for us*: for which reason also He suffered the curse of the law. It became Him, being *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, to go through those appointed rites and purifications which belonged to that flesh. There is no more strangeness in His having been baptized by John, than in His keeping the Passovers. The one rite, as the other, belonged to sinners—and *among the transgressors He was numbered*. The prophetic words in Ps. xl. 12, spoken in the person of our Lord, indicate, in the midst of

sinlessness, the most profound apprehension of the sins of that nature which He took upon him. I cannot suppose the baptism to have been sought by our Lord merely *to honour John*, or as *knowing that it would be the occasion of a divine recognition* of his Messiahship, and thus pre-ordained by God: but *bonâ fide*, as bearing the infirmities and carrying the sorrows of mankind, and thus beginning here the triple baptism of water, fire, and blood, two parts of which were now accomplished, and of the third of which He himself speaks, Luke xii. 50, and the beloved Apostle, 1 John v. 8.—His baptism, as it was our Lord's *closing* act of obedience under the Law, in His hitherto concealed life of legal submission, His fulfilling all righteousness, so was His *solemn inauguration and anointing for the higher official life of mediatorial satisfaction* which was now opening upon Him. See Rom. i. 3, 4. We must not forget that the *working out of perfect righteousness in our flesh* by the entire and spotless keeping of God's law (Deut. vi. 25), was, in the main, *accomplished during the thirty years previous to our Lord's official ministry*.

14. forbad) Rather, **tried to hinder**: the word implies the active and earnest preventing, with the gesture, or hand, or voice. There is only an *apparent* inconsistency between the speech of John in this sense, and the assertion made by him in John i. 33, 'I knew him not.' Let us regard the matter in this light:—John begins his ministry by a commission from God, who also admonishes him, that He, whose Forerunner he was, would be in time revealed to him by a special sign. Jesus comes to be baptized by him. From the nature of his relationship to our Lord, he could not but know those events which had accompanied his birth, and his subsequent life of holy and unblamable purity and sanctity. My impression from the words of this verse certainly is, that he *regarded Him as the Messiah*. Still, his belief wanted that full and entire assurance which the occurrence of the predicted sign gave him, which the word **knew** implies, and which would justify him in announcing Him to his disciples as the Lamb of God.

15. now] The exact meaning is difficult. It cannot well be that which the A.V. at first sight gives, that something was to be done *now*, inconsistent with the actual and hereafter-to-be-manifested relation of the two persons, Rather—'*though what has been said (ver.] 4) is true, yet the time is not come for that:—as yet, now, are we is another relation* (viz. our Lord as the *fulfiller* of the law, John as a *minister* of it), therefore suffer it.' "This 'now' is spoken from the Lord's foreknowledge, that this relation of subjection to John was only temporary, that hereafter their relative situations would be inverted." Meyer. Stier remarks that now was fulfilled the prophetic announcement of Ps. xl. 7, 8.

us] not for me, but for me and thee. I cannot help thinking that this word glances at the relationship and previous acknowledged destinations of the speakers. It has however a wider sense, as spoken by Him who is now first coming forth officially as the *Son of Man*, extending over *all those whose baptism plants them in his likeness*, Rom. vi.

righteousness] **requirements of the law**. See ch. vi. 1, where the sense is general, as here.

16. baptised] On this account I would make the following remarks. (1) The appearance and voice seem to have been manifested to *our Lord and the Baptist only*. They may have been *alone* at the time: or, if not, we have an instance in Acts ix. 7, of such an appearance being confined to one person, while the others present were unconscious of it. We can hardly however, with some of the Fathers, say, that it was "*a spiritual beholding*,"—or that "*the appearance was a vision, not reality*." (2) The Holy Spirit descended not only in the *manner* of a dove, but *in bodily shape* (||Luke): which I cannot understand in any but the literal sense, as THE BODILY SHAPE OF A DOVE, seen by the Baptist. There can be no objection to this, the straightforward interpretation of the narrative, which does not equally apply to the Holy Spirit being *visible at all*, which John himself asserts Him to have been (John i. 32–34), even more expressly than is asserted here. Why the Creator Spirit may not have assumed an organized body bearing symbolical meaning, as well as any other material form, does not seem clear. This was the ancient, and is the *only honest* interpretation. All the modern explanations of the "*like a dove*," as importing the *manner* of coming down belong to the vain rationalistic attempt to reduce down that which is miraculous. The express assertion of St. Luke, and the fact that all four Evangelists have used the same expression, which they would not have done if it were a mere medium of comparison, are surely a sufficient refutation of this rationalizing (and, I may add, blundering) interpretation. (3) Two circumstances may be noticed respecting the manner of the descent of the Spirit: it was, *as a dove*:—the Spirit as manifested in our Lord was *gentle* and *benign*. This was not a sudden and temporary descent of the Spirit, but a *permanent* though special anointing of the Saviour for his holy office. It '*abode upon Him*,' John i. 32. And from this moment His ministry and mediatorial work (in the active official sense) begins. Immediately, the Spirit carries Him away to the wilderness: the day of His return thence (possibly; but see notes on John i. 29) John points Him out as the Lamb of God: then follows the calling of Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, and the third day after is the first miracle at the marriage in Cana. But we must not imagine any *change* in the nature or person of our Lord to have taken place at his baptism. The anointing and crowning are but *signs* of the official assumption of the power which the king has by a right independent of, and higher than these. (4) The whole narrative is in remarkable parallelism with that of the Transfiguration. There we have our Lord supernaturally glorified in the presence of two great prophetic personages, Moses and Elias, who speak of His decease,—on the journey to which He forthwith sets out (ch. xvii. 22, compared with xix. 1); and accompanied by the same testimony of the voice from heaven, uttering the same words, with an addition accordant with the truth then symbolized. (5) In connexion with apocryphal additions, the following are not without interest: *When Jesus had gone down to the water, a flame was lit up in the Jordan: and when He had come up from the water, lo, the heavens, &c.* See also, my Greek Test. on this passage.

Matthew: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1–11.] TEMPTATION OF JESUS. Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1–13.

1. led up of (by) the spirit] The Spirit carried Him away, (see Acts viii. 39,) “*driveth him*,” Mark i. 12. Had St. Luke’s “*was led in* (thus literally) *the Spirit*” been our *only* account, we might have supposed what took place to have been done *in a vision*: but the expressions in the two other Evangelists entirely preclude this. The *desert* here spoken of may either be the traditional place of the Temptation near Jericho (thence called *Quarantaria*: it is described in “The Land and the Book,” p. 617, as a high and precipitous mountain, with its side facin the plain perpendicular, and apparently as high as the rock of Gibraltar, and with caverns midway below, hewn in the rock), or as scripture parallelism between Moses, Elias, and our Lord, leads one to think, the *Arabian desert of Sinai*. **to be tempted]** The express *purpose* of His being *led up*. Hence it is evident that our Lord this time was not ‘led up’ of his own will and design: but, as a part of the conflict with the Power of Darkness, He was *brought* to the Temptation. As He had been subject to his earthly parents at Nazareth, so now He is subject, in the outset of his official course, to His Heavenly Parent, and is by His will thus carried up to be tempted. In reverently considering the nature and end of this temptation, we may observe, (1) That the whole is *undoubtedly an objective historical narrative*, recording an actual conflict between our Redeemer and the Power of Evil. (2) That it is undetermined by the *letter* of the sacred text, whether the Tempter appeared *in a bodily shape*, or, *as a spirit*, was permitted to exert a certain power, as in ver. 5, and ver. 8, over the person of our Lord, even as the Holy Spirit did in ver. 1. If the latter were the case, the words spoken at the various of the temptation, were suggested by this Evil Power to the soul of our Redeemer. But (3) such an interpretation, while it cannot justly be accused of unreality by any who do not reject belief in the spiritual world, hardly meets the expressions of the text, “*came (approached) to him*,” ver. 9, and “*leaveth him*” ver. 11. Nor do the two members of ver. 11 correspond to one another in this case, for the angels must have been visible and corporeal, as in the parallel case at Gethsemane, Luke xxii. 43.

2. when he had fasted] Not in the wider ecclesiastical sense of the word, but its strict meaning, of *abstaining from all food whatever*; Luke, ver. 2. Similarly Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 28; and Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 8.

he was afterward an hungryd] Then probably *not during the time itself*. The period of the fast, as in the case of Moses, was Spent in a spiritual ecstasy, during which the wants of the natural body were suspended.

3. when the tempter came] From the words of both St. Mark and St. Luke, it appears that our Lord was tempted *also during the forty days*. Whether the words of St. Mark, “*he was with the wild beasts*,” allude to *one kind* of temptation, is uncertain: see note on Mark i. 13.—The words “*came to him*” need not be understood of the *first* approach, but the first *recorded*—‘at a certain time the tempter approaching, &c’

If thou be] “thinking to beguile Him with his flattery,” Chrys. Or, as Euthymius, “thinking that He would be irritated by this address, as being reproached with not being the Son of God.” At all events, there is no *doubt* expressed, as some think.

Son of God] Our Lord does not give way to the temptation, so as to meet him with an open declaration, ‘I am the Son of God:’ thus indeed He might have asserted his lordship over him, but not have been *his Conqueror for us*. The first word which He uses against him, reaches far deeper: ‘*Man* shall not live,’ &c. “This, like the other text, is taken from the history of Israel’s temptation in the wilderness: for Israel represents, in a foreshadowing type, the Son of Man, the servant of God Righteousness, the one that was *to come*, in whom alone that nature which in all men has degenerated into sin, ‘*fulfils all righteousness*’ Adam stood not,—Israel according to the flesh stood not,—when the Lord their God tempted them: but rather, after Satan’s likeness, tempted their God: but now the second Adam is come, the true Israel, by whose obedience the *way of life* is again made known and opened—“that man truly liveth on and in the eternal word of God.” Stier’s “Words of the Lord Jesus.” Observe also how our Lord resists Satan in *His humanity*; 3 at once here numbering Himself with *men*, by adducing “*man*” as including His own case; and not only so, but thus speaking out the mystery of his humiliation, in which He had foregone his divine Power, of his own will.—By ‘*every word* (or ‘*thing*,’ for the noun is not expressed in the original) *that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*,’ we must understand, *every arrangement of the divine will*; God, who ordinarily sustains by *bread*, can, if it please Him, sustain by *any other means*, as in the case alluded to. Compare John iv. 32, 34.

5. taketh him up] power being most probably given to the tempter over the person of our Lord. In St. Luke, this temptation stands *third*. The real order is evidently that in the text; for otherwise our Lord’s final answer, ver. 10, would not be in its place. It may be observed, that St. Luke makes no assertion as to succession, only introducing each temptation with *and*: whereas “*then*” and “*again*” here seem to mark succession. For “the holy city” see reff.

setteth him—by the same power by which he brought Him.

pinnacle] The general opinion, that our Lord was placed on *Herod's royal portico*, is probably right. That portico overhung the ravine of Kedron from a dizzy height, so as to make one giddy with looking down, as described by Josephus, Antt. xv. 11. 5. The argument that it was probably *on the other side, next the court*, is grounded on the perfectly gratuitous assumption, that an *exhibition to the people* was intended. There is no authority for this in the text; the temptation being one not of ambition, but of *presumption*. The inference from Eusebius, who, quoting Hegesippus, (Hist. ii. 23) describes James the Just as set on and thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, among the people, is not decisive: for this term might embrace either side, as ‘the cornice,’ or ‘the parapet’ would.

6. It is written] cited (nearly verbatim from the LXX, as almost all the texts in this narrative) as applying to all servants of God in general, and à fortiori to the Son of God: not as a of the Messiah.

7. again] not ‘on the contrary,’ which the original word never simply means, not even in Gal. v. 3: 1 John ii. 8. The addition of a second Scripture *qualifies* and *interprets* the first; but *does not refute* it.

8.] The enquiry where and what this mountain was, is entirely nugatory, no data being furnished by the text.

sheweth him all the k. of the world] The additional words in Luke, “*in a moment of time*,” are valuable as pointing out to us clearly the supernatural character of the vision. If it be objected, that in that case there was no need for the ascent of the mountain,—I answer, that such natural accessories are made use of frequently in supernatural revelations: see especially Rev. xxi. 10. The attempts to restrict “the world” to *Palestine*, (which was, besides, God’s peculiar portion and vineyard, *as distinguished from* the Gentile world,) or *the Roman empire*, are mere subterfuges: as is also the giving to “sheweth” the sense of “points out the direction of.”

In this last temptation the enemy reveals himself openly, as the Prince of this world, and as the father of lies: for though power is given him over this world and its sons, his assertion here is most untrue.

10.] Our Lord at once repels him openly; not that He did not *know him before*,—but because he had *thus openly* tempted Him; but not even this of His own power or will; He adds, *for it is written*,—again, as Man, appealing to the word of God.—From this time, our Lord is *known* by the devils, and casts them out by a word. Mark i. 24, 34; iii. 11; v. 7.

11. leaveth him] but *only for a season*, see||Luke. The conflict, however often renewed in secret (of which we cannot speak), was certainly *again waged in Gethsemane*: see Luke xxii. 53, compare John xiv. 30. The expression in Luke x. 18, must be otherwise understood: see note there.

ministered] viz. *with food*, as in the case of Elias, 1 Kings xix. 6, 7.

12–22.] JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY. CALLING OF PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, AND JOHN. Mark i. 14–20. Luke iv. 14, 15. Between the last verse and this is a considerable interval of time. After returning from the Temptation (see note on John i. 28, end) our Lord was pointed out by John the Baptist, (ib. vv. 29–34,) and again on the morrow to two of his disciples, Andrew and (probably) John, who followed Him, and were (on the next day? see note, John i. 44) joined by Simon Peter (35–43): then on the morrow Philip and Nathanael we recalled (44–52); three days after was marriage in Cana (ii. 1–11); then our Lord went down to Capernaum and remained not many days (12); then followed the Passover; the cleansing of the temple (13–22); the belief of many on Jesus (23–25); the discourse with Nicodemus (iii. 1–21); the baptizing by Jesus (i. e. his disciples) (22–24); the question about purifying, and testimony of the Baptist (25–36); the journey through Samaria into Galilee, and discourse with the woman of Samaria (iv. 1–42); the return to Cana, and healing of the ruler’s son in Capernaum (43–54); and the journey to Jerusalem related in John v. 1. After that chapter St. John breaks off the first part his narrative; and between his v. 47 and vi. 1, comes in the synoptic narrative, Matt. iv. 12—xiv. 15: Mark i. 14—vi. 30: Luke iv. 14—ix. 10. This omission is in remarkable consistency with St. Matthew’s account of his own calling in ch. ix. 9. Being employed in his business in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, he now first becomes personally acquainted with the words and actions of our Lord. From what circumstance the former miracle in Capernaum had not attracted his attention, we cannot, of course, definitely say; we can, however, easily conceive. Our Lord was not then *in Capernaum*; for the ruler sent to Him, and the cure was wrought by word at a distance. If Matthew’s attention had not been called to Jesus before, he might naturally omit such a narrative, which John gives probably from personal knowledge. The *synoptic narrative generally* omits this whole section of our Lord’s travels and ministry. Its sources of information, until the last visit to Jerusalem, seem to have been *exclusively Galilean*, and *derived from persons who became attached to Him at a later period than any of the events recorded in that first portion of John’s Gospel*. The objections to this view are, the narrative, in the three Gospels, of the baptism and temptation: but the former of these would be abundantly testified by John’s disciples, many of whom became disciples of Jesus; and the latter could only have been derived from the mouth of our Lord Himself.

12. delivered up] This seems to have been the usual and well-known term for the imprisonment of John. The same word in the original is also the usual one for the betrayal and apprehension of our Lord Himself.

departed] **re-tired, withdrew**; see ch. ii. 22, and note. No notice is given whence this withdrawal took place. The narrative is evidently taken up after an interval, and without any intention that it should follow closely on ver. 11. Wieseler sees in this a proof that St. Matthew recognized a ministry in Judæa during the interval. I cannot quite think this, but certainly he does not exclude it.

13. leaving Nazareth] Not on account of the behaviour of the Nazarenes to Him after the preaching in the Synagogue, Luke iv. 28, 29, as sometimes supposed; see notes, ib. ver. 31.

Capernaum] This town, on the borders of the lake of Gennesareth, was central in situation, and in the most populous and frequented part of Galilee. It besides was the residence of four at least of the Apostles, Andrew and Peter, and James and John—and probably of Matthew. “*Kephar Nahum,*” *the village of consolation.* So Josephus. It is from this time called ‘*His own city,*’ ch. ix. 1, see also ch. xvii. 24.

15.] This prophecy is spoken with direct reference to the days of the Messiah. It is here freely rendered from the Hebrew, without any regard to the LXX, which is wholly different. This, coming so immediately after a string of quotations literally from the LXX, seems to mark the beginning of a new portion of the Gospel, agreeably to what was said before.

the way of the sea] the country round the coast of the lake. All the members of this sentence are in apposition with one another: thus *beyond Jordan* is not a description of the land before spoken of, which was not thus situated, but of a different tract. The later meaning of the phrase, as signifying the tract to the west of the Jordan, and which naturally sprung during the captivity, is not to be thought of in Isaiah, who wrote before that event.

Galilee of the Gentiles] *Galilee superior*, near to Tyre and Sidon, which was inhabited by a variety of nations.

17. began to preach..] That is, *began His ministry in Galilee.* The account of Matthew, being that of an eyewitness, begins where his own experience began. It is not correct to suppose, as some of the German Commentators have done, (De Wette, Strauss,) that this preaching of repentance was of a different character from the after-teaching of our Lord: we recognize the same formula, though only partly cited, in ch. x. 7: Luke x. 10, and find our Lord still preaching repentance, Luke xiii. 3, after repeated declarations of His Messiahship.

18. by the sea of Galilee] The lake of Gennesareth or Tiberias (John vi. 1), called in the O.T. “the sea of Chinnereth,” Num. xxxiv. 11, or Chinneroth, Josh. xii. 3. It is of an oval shape, about 13 geographical miles long, and 6 broad: and is traversed by the Jordan from N. to S. “Its most remarkable feature is its deep depression, being no less than 700 feet below the level of the ocean.” See the interesting article by Mr. Porter in Smith’s Biblical Dictionary.

If we give any consideration to the circumstances here related, we cannot fail to see that the account in John is admirably calculated to complete the narrative. We have there furnished to us the reason why these two brethren were so ready to arise and follow One, whom, if we had this account only, we should infer they had never before seen. Add to this, that there is every probability that one of the other pair of brethren, John the son of Zebedee, is there described as having gone with Andrew to the dwelling of our Lord. It also tends to confirm the chronological view here taken, that Philip, the only one mentioned expressly by John as *having been called by Jesus*, is not mentioned here as called: and that Andrew, and the other disciple of John the Baptist, clearly were not called by Jesus in John i. 35–40, or the words “*abode with him that day,*” could not have been used: that these two continued disciples of the Baptist, is not probable; but that they were henceforth, but not invariably, attached to our Lord. I believe that the disciple whom Jesus loved was in His company during the whole of the events in John ii. iii. iv. and v., and on His return from Judea with His disciples, John having for a time returned to his business, as our Lord was now resident in Capernaum, received, as here related, this more solemn and final call. We must remember, that the disciples would naturally have gone up to Jerusalem at the Passover, John ii. 23, without a call from the Lord, and by what they saw there would become more firmly attached to him. The circumstance related in John xxi, that even after they were assured of the Resurrection, the Apostles returned to their occupation as fishermen, gives additional probability to the usual nation of the call in our text.

20. left their nets, and followed him] i.e. *from this time they were constant followers* of the Lord. But when He happened to be in the neighbourhood of their homes, they resumed their fishing; cf. Luke v. 1–11, which occurrence was, in my belief, different from, and later than the one related in our text. See notes there.

23–25.] HE MAKES A CIRCUIT OF GALILEE. (Mark i. 89: Luke iv. 44, ordinarily: but qu.? There is no necessity for believing this circuit of Galilee to be identical with those, even if we read *Galilee* in the passage in Luke. Our Lord made many such circuits.)

23. synagogues] These were the places of religious assembly among the Jews after the return from the captivity. Tradition,

and the Targums, ascribe a very early origin to synagogues: and Deut. xxxi. 11, and Ps. lxxiv. 8, are cited as testimonies of it. But the former passage does not necessarily imply it: and it is doubtful whether that Psalm was not itself written after the captivity. They are generally supposed to have originated in Babylon, and thence to have been brought, at the return, into the mother land. See Neh. viii. 1–8. At the Christian era there were synagogues in every town, and in some larger towns several. See Acts ix. 2, 20. In Jerusalem, according to the Rabbinical writings, there were upwards of 450. (See Acts vi. 9, and note.) The people assembled in them on sabbath and festival days, and in later times also on the second and fifth days of each week, for public prayer and the hearing of portions of Scripture. See Luke iv. 16: Acts xiii. 15. The officers of the synagogues were (1) *the ruler of the synagogue*, Luke viii. 49; xiii. 14: Acts xviii. 8, 17, who had the care of public order, and the arrangement of the service; (2) the Elders, Luke vii. 3: Mark v. 22: Acts xiii. 15, who seem to have formed a sort of council under the presidency of the Ruler; (3) the *legate or angel of the assembly*, who was the reader of prayers, and also secretary and messenger of the synagogues; (4) the *minister* (Luke iv. 20), or chapel clerk, whose office was to prepare the books for reading, to sweep, open, and shut the synagogue. Besides these, there appear to have been alms-gatherers. The synagogue was fitted up with seats, of which the first row were an object of ambition with the scribes (ch. xxiii. 6). A pulpit for the reader, lamps, and a chest, for keeping the sacred books, appear to complete the furniture of the ancient synagogue. Punishments, e.g. scourging, were inflicted in the synagogues. (See ch. x. 17; xxiii. 34: Luke ix. 49: Acts xxii. 19; xxvi. 11.) The catechizing also of children seems to have taken place there, as also disputations on religious questions.—Our Lord was allowed to read and teach in the synagogues, although of mean extraction according to the flesh, because of His miracles, and His supposed character as the professed leader and teacher of a religious sect.

preaching the gospel] For the exact meaning of these words, compare the declaration in the synagogue at Nazareth, Luke iv. 16–30.

24. Syria] Answering to “*all the region round about Galilee*,” Mark i. 28. On the possessed with devils, see note on ch. viii. 29. The lunatick were probably *epileptics*: see an instance in ch. xvii. 14 and parallels.

25. Decapolis] A district principally east of the Jordan, so called from ten cities, some of the names of which are uncertain.

beyond Jordan] Peræa. The country east of the Jordan, between the rivers Jabbok and Arnon. See Jos. B.J. iii. 3. 3.

Matthew: Chapter 5

CHAPP. V. VI. VII.] THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. In this form peculiar to Matthew.

Without attempting a solution of the many difficulties which beset the question of time, place, and arrangement of our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, I shall state the principal views of these subjects, and make some remarks upon them. One of the weightiest questions is, as to the *identity or otherwise of the Sermon with that given in Luke vi. 20–49*. There is (I) the view that they are *identical*. This is generally taken by ordinary readers of Scripture, from their similarity in many points. It is also taken by most of the modern German Commentators, who uniformly reject every attempt at harmonizing by supposing the same or similar words to have been twice uttered. This view is, however, beset by difficulties. For (a) the Sermon in Luke is expressly said to have been delivered *after* the selection of the Apostles: whereas that in the text is as expressly, by continual consecutive notes of time extending to the call of Matthew (before which the Apostles cannot have chosen,) placed *before* that event. And it is wholly unlikely that St. Matthew, assuming him to be the author of our Gospel, would have made a discourse, which he must have heard immediately after his call as an Apostle, take place that call.—Then (b) *this* discourse was spoken on *a mountain*,—*that*, after descending from a mountain, in the *plain*. Possibly this may be got over, by rendering St. Luke’s expression “on a level place.” See note on Luke: and the citation from Stanley below. And again (c), the two discourses are, though containing much common matter, *widely different*. Of 107 verses in Matt., Luke contains only *thirty*: *his four* beatitudes are balanced by as many *woes*: and in his text, parts of the sermon are introduced by sayings, which do not precede them in Matt. (e. g. Luke vi. 39 ff., 45 ff.), but which naturally connect with them. (II) St. Luke *epitomized* this discourse, leaving out whatever was unsuitable for his Gentile readers, e.g. ch. v. 17–38. But this is improbable: for Luke in several verses is *fuller* than Matthew, and the whole discourse, as related by him, is connected and consecutive. (III) The two discourses are *wholly distinct*. This view is maintained by Greswell, vol. ii, Diss. xi., and principally from the arguments above noticed. But it also is not without grave difficulties, especially if we suppose, as most do, that Luke had the Gospel of Matthew before him. That two discourses wholly distinct should contain so much in common, seems unlikely and unnatural. It is hardly credibly that two great public special occasions should be selected by the Lord near the commencement of His ministry, and two discourses delivered to the same audience, not *identical*, which might have been very probable, and impressive from that very circumstance,—nor consecutive, nor explanatory the one of the other, but, only coinciding in fragments, and not even as two different reports at the distance of some years might be expected to do. Add to this, that those parts of the discourses in which Luke and Matthew agree, occur in both in almost the same order, and that the beginning and conclusion of both are the same. (IV) St. Matthew *gives a general compendium of the sayings of our Lord during this part of His ministry*, of which St. Luke’s discourse formed a *portion*, or perhaps was *another shorter compendium*. But the last stated

objection applies with still greater force to this hypothesis, and renders it indeed quite untenable. Besides, it labours under the chronological difficulty in all its bearings. And to one who has observed throughout the close contextual connexion of the parts in this discourse, it will be quite incredible that they should be a mere collection of sayings, set down at hazard. See notes throughout. (V) The apparent discrepancies are sometimes reconciled by remembering, that *there is no fixed time mentioned in any Evangelist for the special ordination of the Apostles*, and that it is very doubtful whether they were at any set moment so ordained all together. Thus Matthew may have been a usual hearer of our Lord, and present with the whole of the Apostles, as related in Luke, though not yet formally summoned as related in Matt. ix. 9 ff. The introduction of the discourse in Luke by the words “*And it came to pass in those days*” (which I maintain to be, on Luke vi. 12, not only *possibly*, but *expressly* indefinite, and to indicate that the event so introduced may have happened at any time during the current great period of our Lord’s ministry, before, during, or after, those last narrated,) allows us great latitude in assigning Luke’s discourse to any precise time. This, however, leaves the difficulties (above stated under I) in supposing the discourses identical, in force, except the chronological one.—With regard to the many sayings of this sermon which occur, dispersed up and down, in Luke, see notes in their respective places, which will explain my view as to their connexion and original times of utterance, in each several instance. See also notes on Luke vi. 20–49.

1. the mountain] Either *some hill* near Capernaum well known by this name, and called by it in the reff. to Mark and Luke, (tradition, not earlier probably than the Crusades, which points out a hill between Capernaum and Tiberias as the Mount of Beatitudes, near the present Saphet, is in such a matter worthless as an authority. But the situation seems to modern travellers [see Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 368] “so strikingly to coincide with the intimations of the narrative, as almost to force the inference that in this instance the eye of those who selected the was for once rightly guided. It is the only height seen in this direction from the shores of the lake of Gennesareth. The plain on which it stands is easily accessible from the lake, and from that plain to the summit is but a few minutes’ walk. The platform at the top is evidently suitable for the collection of a multitude, and corresponds precisely to the ‘level place’ to which He would ‘come down’ as from one of its higher horns to address the people. Its situation is central both to the peasants of the Galilean hills, and the fishermen of the Galilean lake, between which it stands, and would therefore be a natural resort both to Jesus and His disciples when they retired for solitude from the shores of the sea, and also to the crowds who assembled ‘from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.’ None of the other mountains in the neighbourhood could answer equally well to this description, inasmuch as they are merged into the uniform barrier of hills round the lake: whereas this stands separate—‘the mountain,’ which alone could lay claim to a distinct name, with the exception of the one height of Tabor, which is too distant to answer the requirements,”) or *the mountain district*, certainly imported by the word in ch. xiv. 23.—See a full description of the locality in Tholuck, Bergpredigt, ed. 3, pp. 63 ff.

his disciples] in the wider sense: including those of the Apostles already called, and all who had, either for a long or a short time, attached themselves to him as hearers. See John vi. 66.

2. opened his mouth] as in reff., a solemn introduction to some discourse or advice of importance.

them] i.e. his disciples. The discourse (see vv. 13, 14, 20, 48; ch. vi. 9; vii. 6) was spoken directly to the disciples, but (see vii. 28, 29) also generally to the multitudes. It is a divine commentary on the words with which His own and the Baptist’s preaching opened: “*Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” It divides itself into various great sections, which see below.

3–16.] THE DESCRIPTION OF the LORD’ S DISCIPLES, THEIR BLESSEDNESS< AND DIGNITY.

3. the poor in spirit] “He said not, the poor in possessions, but ‘in spirit:’ i.e. the lowly in purpose and in soul.” Euthymius. “What is ‘the poor in spirit?’ the humble and contrite in heart.” Chrys.—The meaning of *voluntary poverty*, as that of the religious orders, given by some of the Fathers, and many; Romish interpreters, is *out of the question*. As little can the *bare literal* sense of the words, which Julian scoffed at, be understood: viz. those who are *ill-furnished in mind*, and uneducated. See Rev. iii. 17. The idea (De Wette) is not improbable, that our Lord may have had a reference to the poor and subjugated Jewish people around him, once members of the theocracy, and now expectants of the Messiah’s temporal kingdom; and, from their condition and hopes, taken occasion to preach to them the deeper spiritual truth.

their’s is the kingdom of heaven] See Luke iv. 17–21: James ii. 5. The kingdom must here be understood in its widest sense: as the combination of all rights of Christian citizenship in this world, and eternal blessedness in the next, ch. vi. 33. But Tholuck well observes, that all the senses of “*the kingdom of God*,” or “*of heaven*,” or “*of Christ*,” are only different sides of the same great idea—the *subjection of all things to God in Christ*.

4.] The spiritual qualification in the former verse must be carried on to this, and the mourning understood to mean not only that on account of sin, but *all such as happens to a man in the spiritual life*. All such mourners are blessed: for the Father of mercies and God of all consolation being their covenant God, His comfort shall overbear all their mourning, and taste the sweeter for it. In Luke ii. 25, the Messiah’s coming is called “*the consolation of Israel*.”—This beatitude is by many editors

placed after ver. 5. But the authority is by no means decisive, and I cannot see how the logical coherence of the sentence is improved by it.—In placing these two beatitudes first, the Lord follows the order in Isa. lxi. 1, which He proclaimed in the synagogue at Nazareth, Luke iv. 18.

5. the meek] A citation from Ps. xxxvii. 11. The usual dividers and allotters of the earth being mighty and proud conquerors, and the Messiah being expected as such a conqueror, this announcement that the meek should inherit the earth, struck at the root of the temporal expectations of power and wealth in the Messiah's kingdom. This meekness is not mere outward lowliness of demeanour, but that true *meekness* of Eph. iv. 2, whose active side is love, and its passive side long-suffering. On the promise, compare Isa. lvii. 13–15; lx. 21; 1 Cor. iii. 22. That kingdom of God which begins in the hearts of the disciples of Christ, and is not “of (sprung from) *this world*,” shall work onwards till it shall become *actually a kingdom over this earth*, and its subjects shall *inherit the earth*: first in its millennial, and finally in its renewed and blessed state for ever.

6.] See Ps. cvii. 9; lxv. 4; xxii. 26: Isa. xli. 17. This *hunger and thirst* is the true sign of that new life on which those born of the Spirit (John iii. 3, 5) have entered; and it is after *righteousness*, i.e. *perfect conformity to the holy will of God*. This was *His meat*, John iv. 34. They shall be *satisfied—in the new heaven and new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness*, 2 Pet. iii. 13. Compare the remarkable parallel Ps. xvii. 15. This hunger and thirst after righteousness, is admirably set forth in the three first petitions of the Lord's prayer,—‘Hallowed be Thy name—Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.’

7. merciful] “We may shew mercy, not by alms only, but by words: and if we have no other way, by tears. For manifold is the form of mercy, and wide is this command: They shall obtain mercy, here, from men; and there, from God,” Euthymius, expanding Chrysostom. This beatitude comprises every degree of sympathy and mutual love and help; from that fulness of it which is shed abroad in those who have been forgiven much, and therefore love much,—down to those first beginnings of the new birth, even among those who know not the Lord, which are brought out in ch. xxv. 37–40, where see notes.

8. pure in heart] See Ps. xxiv. 4, 6. It is no Levitical cleanness, nor mere moral purity, that is here meant; but that *inner purity*, which (Acts xv. 9) is brought about by faith, has its fruit (1 Tim. i. 5) in *love*; which is opposed to all “*double mindedness*” (James i. 8), and all hypocrisy and outward colouring; so that pure in heart are those who have their “*hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*.” There is an allusion to the nearer vision of God attained by progressive sanctification, of which St. Paul speaks, 2 Cor. iii. 18,—begun indeed in this life, but not perfected till the next, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

9. peacemakers] More than ‘*the peaceful*’ (Vulg.) is doubtful whether the word ever has this meaning. Thus Euthymius, mostly after Chrysostom: They who not only are themselves not men of strife, but make peace between others when at strife. They shall be called sons of God, because they have imitated His only Son; whose office it is to bring together the separated and to reconcile those at variance. But even thus we do not seem to reach the full meaning, which probably is, “*they that work peace*,” not confining the reference to the reconciliation of persons at variance: see note on James iii. 18.

shall be called] implies the reality, as in ver. 19; **shall** (not only be, but also) **be called**, i.e. recognized, in the highest sense, both generally, and by the Highest Himself, as such. Let it ever be remembered, according to the order of these beatitudes, and the assertion of James iii. 17, that the wisdom from above is **first pure, then peaceable**, implying no compromise with evil. And it is in the working out of this purity that Luke xii. 51 is especially true. St. Augustine remarks, that martyrs are made not by the mere fact of suffering, but by the *cause* for which they suffer. And therefore it is added, ‘*for righteousness' sake*’

10. persecuted] See 1 Pet. iii. 14; iv. 14, which probably refers to this verse. The repetition of the promise in ver. 8 is a close of the string of promises as it began.

11.] With the preceding verse the beatitudes end, in their general reference, and in this our Lord addresses *His disciples* particularly. The actions described in this verse are the expansion of **persecuted** in the last.

12. your reward] A reward, not of debt, but of grace, as parable in ch. xx. 1 ff. clearly represents it. ‘An expression,’ as De Wette observes, ‘taken from our earthly commerce, and applied to spiritual things;’ in which however we must remember, that the principal reference is to God as the giver, and not to us as the deservers: see the parable above cited, where the reward is not what was *earned*, but what was *covenanted*. These words, *in heaven*, must not be taken as having any bearing on the question as to the *future habitation* of the glorified saints. Their use in this end similar expressions is *not local*, but *spiritual*, indicating the blessed state when the kingdom of heaven shall have fully come. The local question is to be decided by wholly different testimonies of Scripture;—by the general tenor of prophecy, and the analogies of the divine dealings: and all of these seem to point rather to this earth, purified and renewed, than to *the heavens* in any ordinary sense of the term, as the eternal habitation of the blessed.

so persecuted they] For instance, Jeremiah was scourged, Jer. xx. 2; Zechariah son of Jehoiada was stoned, 2 Chron. xxiv. 21; Isaiah, according to Jewish tradition, was sawn asunder by Manasseh.—The reasoning implied in ‘for’ may be thus filled up:

'and great will be *their* reward in heaven.'

13.) The transition from the preceding verses is easy and natural, from the "*persecuted for righteousness' sake,*" of which vv. 11, 12 were a sort of application, and the allusion to the ancient Prophets, to "*ye are the salt of the earth.*"—Elisha healed the unwholesome water by means of *salt* (2 Kings ii. 20), and the ordinary use of salt for culinary purposes is to *prevent putrefaction*: so (see Gen. xviii. 23–33) are the righteous, the people of God, in this corrupt world.

It hardly seems necessary to find instances of the *actual occurrence* of salt losing its savour, for this is merely hypothetical. Yet it is worth noticing, that Maundrell, in his travels, found salt in the Valley of Salt, near Gehul, which had the appearance, but not the taste, having lost it by exposure to the elements (see the citation below);—and that Schöttgen maintains that a kind of bitumen from the Dead Sea was called 'salt of Sodom,' and was used to sprinkle the sacrifices in the temple; which salt was used, when its savour was gone, to strew the temple pavement, that the priests might not slip. This, however, is but poorly made out by him. Dr. Thomson, 'The Land and the Book,' p. 381, mentions a case which came under his own observation: where a merchant of Sidon had stored up a quantity of salt in cottages with earthen floors, in consequence of which the salt was spoiled, and Dr. T. saw "large quantities of it literally thrown into the street, to be trodden under foot of men and beasts." He adds, "It is a well-known fact that the salt of this country, when in contact with the ground, or exposed to rain and sun, does become insipid and useless. From the manner in which it is gathered, much earth and other impurities are necessarily collected with it. Not a little of it is so impure that it cannot be used at all: and such salt soon effloresces and turns to dust—not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown: and this is the reason why it is cast into the street."

the earth means *mankind, and all creation*: but with a more inward reference, as to the working of the salt, than in "*the world,*" ver. 14, where the *light* is something *outwardly shewn*.

shall it be salted] it, i.e. the salt. The sense is: 'If you become untrue to your high calling, and spiritually effete and corrupted, there are no ordinary means by which you can be re-converted and brought back to your former state, inasmuch as you have no teachers and guides over you, but ought yourselves to be teachers and guides to others.' But we must not from this suppose that our Lord denies all repentance to those who have thus fallen: the scope of His saying must be taken into account, which is not to crush the fallen, but to quicken the sense of duty, and cause His disciples to walk worthily of their calling. (See Heb. vi. 4–6, and note on Mark ix. 49, 50.)

The *salt in the sacrifice* is the type of God's *covenant of sanctification*, whereby this earth shall be again hallowed for Him: His people are the *instruments*, in His hand, of this wholesome salting: all His servants in general, but the teachers and ministers of His covenant in particular. There does not appear to be any allusion to *ecclesiastical excommunication*.

14. the light of the world] And yet only in a lower and derivative sense; Christ Himself being "*the true light which lighteth every man,*" John i. 9; "*the light of the world,*" viii. 12. His ministers are "*candles,*" John v. 35, and "*lights,*" Phil. ii. 15, *receiving* their light, and only burning *for a time*: lights *lighted*, whereas He is Light *lighting*, as Augustine. And here too, light in this verse = candle in ver. 15, where the comparison is resumed. so also Eph. v. 8:—**light**, as *partaking of His Light*: for every thing lighted (see note, ib. ver. 13) is light.

cannot be hid] Of course it is possible that our Lord may have had *some town* before Him thus situated, but *not Bethulia*, whose very existence is probably fabulous, being only mentioned in the apocryphal book of Judith. Recent travellers, as Dr. Stanley and Thomson (Sinai and Palestine, p. 429: The Land and the Book, p. 273), have thought that, notwithstanding the fact shewn by Robinson, that the actual city of Safed was not in existence at this time, some ancient portion of it, at all events its fortress, which is 'as aged in appearance as the most celebrated ruins in the country' (Thomson), may have been before the eye of our Lord as He spoke. It is 'placed high on a bold spur of the Galilean Anti-Lebanon,' and answers well to the description of a city 'lying on the mountain top.' 'The only other in view would be the village and fortress of Tabor, distinctly visible from the mount of Beatitudes, though not from the hills on the lake side. Either or both of these would suggest the illustration, which would be more striking from the fact, that this situation of cities on the tops of the hills is as rare in Galilee, as it is common in Judæa.' Stanley, as above. But the CHURCH OF GOD, the *city on a hill* (Isa. ii. 2: Gal. iv. 26: see also Heb. xii. 22), in allusion to their present situation, on a mountain, is most probably leading thought.

15. do men light] literally, **do they light**: shewing, in the spiritual reference of the parable, that these lights of the world are '*lighted*' by Him for whose use they are. See above.

16. so] i.e. *like a candle on a candlestick—like a city on a hill*; not merely, 'so... that,' as our English version seems rather to imply. By rendering in like manner, the ambiguity will be avoided. The sense of this verse is as if it were "*that, seeing your good works they may&c.*"... the *latter* verb, and not the former, carrying the purpose of the action. Thus the praise and glory of a well-lighted and brilliant feast would be given, not to the lights, but to the master of the house; and of a stately city on a hill, not to the buildings, but to those who built them.

The whole of this division of our Lord's sermon is addressed to *all His followers*, not exclusively to the ministers of his word. All servants of Christ are the salt of the earth, the light of the world (Phil. ii. 15). And all that is here said applies to us all. But à fortiori does it apply in its highest sense, to those who are, among Christians, selected to teach and be examples; who are as it were the towers and pinnacles of the city, not only not hid, but seen far and wide above the rest.

17-48.] The SECOND PART OF THE SERMON, in which our Lord sets forth His relation, as a lawgiver, to the law of Moses, especially as currently interpreted according to the letter only

17. I am come] more properly, **I came**. Observe how our Lord, through the whole sermon, sets forth Himself, in his proceeding forth from God, as truly "*He that was to come.*"

the law, or the prophets] It is a question whether our Lord includes the *prophecies*, properly so called, in His meaning here. I think *not*: for no person professing himself to be the Messiah would be thought to *contradict the prophecies*, but to *fulfil them*. Neither, it appears, does He *here* allude to the *sacrificial* and *typical* parts of the law, but to the *moral* parts of both the law and the prophets; which indeed he proceeds to cite and particularize. If however we prefer to include both ceremonial and moral in this assertion, we may understand it in its more general sense, as applying, beyond the instances here given, to His typical fulfilment of the law, which could not as yet be unfolded.

to fulfil] This verb implies more than the *mere fulfilling*: it has the sense of **filling out** or expanding: i.e. here, giving a deeper and holier sense to—fulfilling in the *spirit*, which is nobler than the letter. Theophylact compares the ancient law to a *sketch*, which the painter does not wipe out, but fills in. The gnostic Marcion characteristically enough maintained that the Judaizing Christians had altered this verse, and that it originally stood,—think ye that I came to *fulfil, &c.?* I came to *destroy*, not to *fulfil*.

18. verily] literally, **Amen**: equivalent to “*truly*” in St. Luke, ix. 27; xii. 44; xxi. 3. **jot (Iota)** is the Hebrew Jod, the smallest letter in the alphabet: **tittles**, literally **horns**, *horn-like projections*, are the little turns of the strokes by which one Hebrew letter differs from another similar to it. The Rabbinical writings have many sayings similar in sentiment to this, but spoken of the *literal* written law.

It is important to observe in *these days* how the Lord here *includes the O.T. and all its unfolding of the divine purposes regarding Himself, in His teaching of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven*. I say this, because it is always in *contempt and setting aside of the O.T.* that rationalism has begun. First, *its historical truth*—then *its theocratic dispensation* and the *types and prophecies* connected with it, are swept away; so that Christ came to fulfil nothing, and becomes only a teacher or a martyr: and thus the way is paved for a similar rejection of the N.T.;—beginning with the narratives of the birth and infancy, as theocratic myths—advancing to the denial of His miracles—then attacking the truthfulness of His own sayings which are grounded on the O.T. as a revelation from God—and so finally leaving us nothing in the Scriptures but, as a German writer of this school has expressed it, ‘a mythology not so attractive as that of Greece.’ That this is the course which unbelief *has run* in Germany, should be a pregnant warning to the decriers of the O.T. among ourselves. It should be a maxim for every expositor and every student, that Scripture is a *whole*, and stands or falls together. That this is now beginning to be deeply felt in Germany, we have cheering testimonies in the later editions of their best Commentators, and in the valuable work of Stier on the discourses of our Lord. [Since however these words were first written, we have had lamentable proof in England, that their warnings were not unneeded. The course of unbelief which has issued in the publication of the volume entitled “*Essays and Reviews*,” has been in character and progress, exactly that above described: and owing to the injudicious treatment which has multiplied tenfold the circulation of that otherwise contemptible work, its fallacies are now in the hands and mouths of thousands, who, from the low standard of intelligent Scriptural knowledge among us, will never have the means of answering them. 1862. To this it may now be added, that even a Bishop of the Church of England has come before the world as a champion of that unbelief, in its first phase as described above. We may hope that his work, judging from the blunders already in the renderings of Hebrew words on which his arguments are founded, will soon be added to the catalogue of attacks by which the enemies of our holy faith have damaged nothing save their own reputation and influence. 1863.]

19.] There is little difficulty in this verse, if we consider it in connexion with the verse preceding, to which it is bound by the **therefore** and the **these**, and with the following, to which the **for** (ver. 20) unites it. Bearing this in mind, we see (1) that **break**, on account of what follows in ver. 20 and after, must be taken in the higher sense, as referring to the *spirit* and not the letter: **whosoever shall break** (have broken), in the sense presently to be laid down. (2) That **these least commandments** refers to **one jot or tittle** above, and means one of these minute commands which seem as insignificant, in comparison with the greater, as the *jot* and *tittle* in comparison with great portions of writing. (3) That **shall be called least** does not mean ‘*shall be excluded from*,’ inasmuch as the question is not of *keeping or not keeping* the commandments of in a legal sense, but of *appreciating, and causing others to appreciate*, the import and weight of even the most insignificant parts of God’s revelation of Himself to man; and rather therefore applies to teachers than to Christians in general, though to them also through the “*break*” and “*do.*” (4) That *no deduction can be drawn from these words, binding the Jewish law, or any part of it, as such,*

upon Christians. That this is so, is plainly shewn by what follows, where our Lord proceeds to pour upon the letter of the law the fuller light of the spirit of the Gospel: thus lifting and expanding (not destroying) every jot and tittle of that precursive dispensation into its full meaning in the life and practice of the Christian; who, by the indwelling of the divine Teacher, God's Holy Spirit, is led into all truth and purity. (5) That *these words of our Lord are decisive against such persons*, whether ancient or modern, *as would set aside the Old Testament as without significance, or inconsistent with the New.* See the preceding note, and the Book of Common Prayer, Article vii.

On **shall be called**, see note on ver. 9.

20.) An expansion of the idea contained **fulfil**, ver. 17, and of the difference between **break**, which the Scribes and Pharisees did by enforcing the letter to the neglect of the spirit—and **do and teach**, in which particulars Christians were to exceed the Pharisees, the punctilious observers, and the Scribes, the traditional expounders of the law.

righteousness, *purity of heart and life*, as set forth by example in the doing, and by precept in the teaching. The whole of the rest of our Lord's sermon is a comment on, and illustration of, the assertion in this verse.

scribes] Persons devoted to the work of reading and expounding the law, whose office seems first to have become frequent after the return from Babylon. They generally appear in the N.T. in connexion with the Pharisees: but it appears from Acts xxiii. 9, that there were Scribes attached to the other sects also. In Matt. xxi. 15, they appear with the chief priests; but it is in the *temple*, where (see also Luke xx. 1) they acted as a sort of police. In the description of the assembling of the great Sanhedrim (Matt. xxvi. 3: Mark xiv. 53; xv. 1) we find it composed of *c hief priests, elders, and Scribes:* and in Luke xxii. 66, of *chief priests and Scribes.* The Scribes uniformly opposed themselves to our Lord; watching Him to find matter of accusation, Luke vi. 7; xi. 53, 54; perverting His sayings, Matt. ix. 3, and His actions, Luke v. 30; xv. 2; seeking to entangle Him by questions, Matt. xxii. 35 (see note there); Luke x. 25; xx. 21; and to embarrass Him, Matt. xii. 38. Their authority as expounders of the law is recognized by our Lord Himself, Matt. xxiii. 1, 2; their adherence to the oral traditional exposition proved, Matt. xv. 1 ff.; the respect in which they were held by the people shewn, Luke xx. 46; their existence indicated not only in Jerusalem, but also in Galilee, Luke v. 17,—and in Rome, Josephus, Antt. xviii. 3. 5. They kept schools and auditories for teaching the youth, Luke ii. 46; Acts v. 34, compared with xxii. 3; are called by Josephus *expounders of our patriarchal laws*, Antt. xvii. 6. 2; *sophists*, B.J. i. 33. 2. The literal rendering is "**shall abound more than the Scribes and Pharisees,**" i.e. more than that of the *S.* and *P.* Notice, that not only the *hypocrites* among the Scribes and Pharisees are here meant; but the declaration is, "Your righteousness must be of a *higher order* than any yet attained, or conceived, by Scribe or Pharisee."

ye shall in no case enter, &c.] A very usual formula (see ch. vii. 21; xviii. 3; xix. 17, 23, 24: John iii. 5 al.); implying exclusion from the blessings of the Christian state, and from the inheritance of eternal life.

21–48.] *Six examples of the true FULFILMENT of the law by Jesus.—FIRST EXAMPLE. The law of murder.*

21. Ye have heard] viz. by the reading of the law in the synagogues, and the expositions of the Scribes.

by them of old time] In this case, Moses and his traditional expounders are classed together; but the words may also be rendered, '*to the ancients*',—which last interpretation seems to me to be certainly the right one. Meyer has well observed that "it was said to them of old time" corresponds to "but I say to you," and the "I" to the understood subject of "was said." He has not, however, apprehended the deeper truth which underlies the omission of the *subject of was said*, that it was the *same person* who said both. It will be noticed that our Lord does not here speak against the *abuse* of the law by tradition, but that every instance here given is either from *the law itself, or such traditional teaching as was in accordance with it* (e. g. the latter part of this verse is only a formal expansion of the former). The contrasts here are not between *the law misunderstood and the law rightly understood*, but between *the law and its ancient exposition*, which in their letter, and as given, were *empty*,—and *the same as spiritualized, fulfilled, by Christ*: not between *two lawgivers*, Moses and Christ, but between *they of old time and you*; between (the idea is Chrysostom's) the children by the same husband, of the *bondwoman* and of the *freewoman*. The above remarks comprise a brief answer to the important but somewhat misapprehended question, whether a impugned the Mosaic law itself, or only its inadequate interpretation by the Jewish teachers? There is no inconsistency in the above view with the assertion in ver. 19: the just and holy and true law was necessarily restricted in meaning and degraded in position, until He came, whose office it was to fulfil and glorify it.

the judgment] viz. the courts in every city, ordered Deut. xvi. 18, and explained by Josephus Antt. iv. 8. 14 to consist of seven men, and to have the power of life and death. But "*the judgment*" in the next verse (see note) is the court of judgment in the Messiah's kingdom.

23.) The sense is: 'There were among the Jews three well-known degrees of guilt, coming respectively under the cognizance of the local and the su e courts; and after these is set the Gehenna of fire, the end of the malefactor, whose corpse, thrown out into the valley of Hinnom, was devoured by the worm or the flame. Similarly, in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, shall the sins

even of thought and word be brought into judgment and punished, each according to its degree of guilt, but even the least of them before no less a tribunal than the judgment-seat of Christ.' The most important thing to keep in mind is, that there is no distinction of *kind* between these punishments, only of *degree*. In the thing compared, the "judgment" inflicted death by the sword, the "council" death by stoning, and the disgrace of the "*Gehenna of fire*" followed as an intensification of the horrors of death; but the punishment is one and the same—*death*. So also in the subject of the similitude, *all the punishments are spiritual; all result in eternal death; but with various degrees* (the nature of which is as yet hidden from us), as the degrees of guilt have been. So that the distinction drawn by the Romanists between *venial* and mortal sins, finds not only no countenance, but direct confutation from this passage. The words here mentioned must not be superstitiously supposed to have any damning power in themselves (see below), but to represent *states of anger and hostility*, for which an awful account hereafter must be given.

Raca] i.e. **empty**; a term denoting contempt, and answering to "*O vain man,*" James ii. 20.

Moreh] Two interpretations have been given of this interpretation have been given i word. Either it is (1), as usually understood, a Greek word, '*Thou fool*' and used by our Lord Himself of Scribes and Pharisees, ch. xxiii. 17, 19,—and '*fools*' (literally "*senseless*") of the disciples, Luke xxiv. 25; or (2) a Hebrew word signifying '*rebel*,' and the very word for uttering which Moses and Aaron were debarred from entering the land of promise:.... '*Hear now, ye rebels,*' Num. xx. 10. In presence of this doubt, it is best to leave the word untranslated, as was done with **Raca** before.

hell fire] more properly, **the Gehenna of fire**. To the S.E. of Jerusalem was a deep and fertile valley, called '*the vale of Hinnom*' and rendered "*Gehenna*," Josh xviii. 16 LXX. In this valley (also called Tophet, Isa. xxx. 33: Jer. vii. 31) did the idolatrous Jews burn their children to Moloch, and Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 10) therefore polluted it; and thenceforward it was the place for the casting out and burning all offal, and the corpses of criminals; and therefore its name, "*the Gehenna of fire*," was used to signify the place of everlasting punishment.

23 f. Therefore] An inference from the guilt and danger of all bitterness and hostility of mind towards another declared in the preceding verse.

thy gift, is any kind of gift—sacrificial or eucharistic.

hath ought against thee is remarkable, as being purposely substituted for the converse. It is not *what complaints we have against others* that we are to consider at such a time, but *what they have against us*; not what ground we have given for complaint, but what complaints *they*, as matter of fact, *make* against us.—See the other side dealt with, Mark xi. 25.

24.] be reconciled: i.e. **become reconciled**—*thyself*, without being influenced by the status of the other towards thee. Remove the offence, and make friendly overtures to thy brother. **first** belongs to "*go thy way*," not to "*be reconciled*." "*first go thy way*" is opposed to "*then come*," the *departure* to the *return*, not "*be reconciled*" to "*offer*." No conclusion whatever can be drawn from this verse as to the admissibility of the term *altar* as applied to the Lord's table under the Christian system. The whole language is Jewish, and can only be understood of Jewish rites. The *command*, of course, applies in full force as to reconciliation re the Christian offering of praise and thanksgiving in the Holy Communion; but further nothing can be inferred.

25.] The whole of this verse is the earthly example of a spiritual duty which is understood, and runs parallel with it. The sense may be given: 'As in worldly affairs, it is prudent to make up a matter with an adversary before judgment is passed, which may deliver a man to a hard and rigorous imprisonment, so reconciliation with an offended brother in this life is absolutely necessary before

his wrong cry against us to the Great Judge, and we be cast into eternal condemnation.'—The adversary, in its *abstract personification*, is the *offended law of God*, which will cry against us in that day for *all* wrongs done to others; but in its *concrete representation* it is the *offended brother*, who is to us that law, as long as he has its claim upon us. The *way*, in the interpretation, is the way in which all men walk, the "*way of all the earth*" of 1 Kings ii. 2, the "*way whence I shall not return*" of Job. xvi. 22. In the civil process, it represents the attempt at arbitration or private arrangement before coming into court.

26.] These words, as in the earthly example they imply future liberation, because an earthly debt can be paid in most cases, so in the spiritual counterpart they amount to a negation of it, because the debt can never be discharged. We have "*until he should pay what was due*," in ch. xviii. 30, where the payment was clearly impossible. The minister is the officer of the court who saw the sentences executed. If we are called on to assign a meaning to it in the interpretation, it must represent the chief of those who in ch. xviii. 34, are hinted at by "*the tormentors*," viz, the great enemy, the minister of the divine wrath.

farthing, the fourth of an *as*.

27–30.] SECOND EXAMPLE. *The law of adultery.*

28. whosoever looketh..] The precise meaning should in this verse be kept in mind, as the neglect of it may lead into error. Our Lord is speaking of the sin of *adultery*, and therefore, however the saying may undoubtedly apply by implication to cases where this sin is out of the question—e. g. to the impure beholding of an *un* married woman with a view to fornication (it being borne in mind that spiritually, and before God, all fornication is adultery, inasmuch as the unmarried person is bound in loyalty and chastity to *Him*: see Stier below)—yet the *direct* assertion in this verse must be understood as applying to the cases where *this* sin is in question. And, again, the **looketh on... to lust after**, must not be interpreted of the casual evil thought which is checked by holy watchfulness, but the gazing *with a view to feed that desire*. And again, **hath adulterously used her already in his heart**, whatever it may undoubtedly *imply* respecting the guilt incurred in God's sight, does not *directly state* any thing; but plainly understood, affirms that the man who can do this—viz. ‘gaze with a view to feed unlawful desire’—has already in his heart passed the barrier of criminal intention; made up his mind, stifled his conscience; in thought, committed the deed. But perhaps there is justice in Stier's remark, that our Lord speaks here after the O.T. usage, in which, both in the seventh commandment and elsewhere, *adultery also includes fornication*; for marriage is the becoming one flesh,—and therefore every such union, except that after the manner and in the state appointed by God, is a violation and contempt of that holy ordinance. The rendering of the A.V., “*hath committed adultery with her*,” is objectionable, as making her a party to the sin, which the original does not.

29.] Chrysostom observes, that these commands relate not to the limbs themselves, which are not in fault, but to the evil desire, which *is*. An admonition, arising out of the truth announced in the last verse, to *withstand the first springs and occasions of evil desire, even by the sacrifice of what is most useful and dear to us*. We may observe here, that our Lord grounds His precept of the most rigid and decisive *self-denial* on the considerations of the *truest self-interest*,—**it is profitable for thee**. See ch. xviii. 8, 9, and notes.

31 32.] THIRD EXAMPLE. *The law of divorce.* See note on ch. xix. 7–9. Lightfoot gives a form of the “*writing of divorcement*” which was a divorcement *a mensâ et thoro*, and placed the woman absolutely in her own power, to marry whom she pleased. In Deut. xxiv. 1, the allowable reason of divorce is ‘some uncleanness.’ This the disciples of Shammai interpreted only of adultery; those of Hillel of any thing which amounted to uncleanness in the eyes of the husband.

32.] fornication must be taken to mean sin, not only before marriage, but after it also, in a wider sense, as including *adultery* likewise. In the similar places, Mark x. 11; Luke xvi. 18, this exception does not occur; see however our ch. xix. 9. The figurative senses of *fornication* cannot be admissible here, as the law is one having reference to a definite point in actual life; and this, its aim and end, restricts the meaning to that kind of fornication immediately applicable to the case. Otherwise this one strictly guarded exception would give indefinite and universal latitude.

causeth her to commit adultery] viz. by her second marriage, thus put within her power.

and whosoever] How far the *marriage of the innocent party after separation* (on account of fornication) is *forbidden* by this or the similar passage ch. xix. 9, is a weighty and difficult question. By the Roman Church such marriage is *strictly forbidden*, and the authority of Augustine much cited, who strongly upholds this view, but not without misgivings later in life. On the other hand, the Protestant and Greek Churches *allow* such marriage. Certainly it would appear, from the literal meaning of our Lord's words, that it *should not be allowed*: for if by such divorce the marriage be altogether dissolved, how can the *woman* be said to commit adultery by a second marriage? or how will St. Paul's precept (1 Cor. vii. 11) find place? for stating this as St. Paul does, prefaced by the words “*not I, but the Lord*,” it must be understood, and has been taken, as *referring to this very verse*, or rather (see note there) to ch. xix. 6 ff., and consequently can only suppose fornication as the cause. Besides which, the tenor of our Lord's teaching in other places (see above) seems to set before us the state of marriage as absolutely *indissoluble as such*, however he may sanction the expulsion *a mensâ et thoro* of an unfaithful wife. Those who defend the other view suppose **divorced** to mean, *unlawfully divorced*, not for fornication: and certainly this is not improbable. We may well leave a matter in doubt, of which Augustine could say, that it was so obscure, that error on either side is venial.

33–37.] FOURTH EXAMPLE. *The law of oaths.*

33, 34.] The exact meaning of these verses is to be ascertained by two considerations. (1) That the Jews held all those oaths *not to be binding*, in which the *sacred name of God did not directly occur*:—see Philo and Lightfoot cited in my Gr. Test. A stress is to be laid on this technical distinction in the quotation made by our Lord; and we must understand as belonging to the quotation, ‘but whatever thou shalt swear not to the Lord may be transgressed.’ (2) Then our Lord passes so far beyond this rule, that He lays down (including in it the understanding that all oaths must, be kept *if made*, for that they are all Ultimately referable to swearing by God) the rule of the Christian community, which is *not to swear at all*; for that every such means of strengthening a man's simple affirmation arises out of the evil in human nature, is rendered requisite by the distrust that sin has induced, and is, therefore, out of the question among the just and true and pure of heart. See James v. 12, and note there, as explanatory why, in both cases, swearing by the name of God is not specified as forbidden. In the words, ‘Swear not at all,’

our Lord does not so much make a positive enactment by which all swearing is to individuals forbidden, e.g. on solemn occasions, and for the satisfaction of others, (for that would be a mere technical Pharisaism, wholly at variance with the spirit of the Gospel, and inconsistent with the example of *God himself*, Heb. vi. 13–17; vii. 21; *of the Lord when on earth, whose "verily verily I say unto you"* was a solemn asseveration, and who at once respected the solemn adjuration of Caiaphas, ch. xxvi. 63, 64; of *His Apostles*, writing under the guidance of His Spirit, see Gal. i. 20: 2 Cor. i. 23: Rom. i. 9: Phil. i. 8, and especially 1 Cor. xv. 31; of *His holy angels*, Rev. x. 6,) as declare to us, that the *proper state* of Christians is, to *require no oaths*; that when *evil* is expelled from among them, every *yea* and *nay* will be as decisive as an oath, every promise as binding as a vow. We observe (*a*) that these verses imply the unfitness of *vows* of every kind as rules of Christian action; (*b*) that the greatest regard ought to be had to the scruples of those, not only sects, but individuals, who object to taking an oath, and every facility given in a Christian state for their ultimate entire abolition.

34, 35.] Compare ch. xxiii. 16–22. Dean Trench observes (Serm. on Mount, p. 55), ‘Men had learned to think that, if only God’s name were avoided, there was no irreverence in the frequent oaths by heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem, by their own heads, and these brought in on the slightest need, or on no need at all; just-as now-a-days the same lingering half-respect for the Holy Name will often cause men, who would not be wholly profane, to substitute for that name sounds that nearly resemble, but are not exactly it, or the name, it may be, of some heathen deity.’

36.] Thou hast no control over the appearance of grey hairs on thy head—thy head is not thine own;—thou swearest then by a creature of God, whose destinies and changes are in God’s hand; so that *every oath is an appeal to God*. And, indeed, men generally regard it as such now, even unconsciously.

Yea, yea; Nay, nay] The similar place, James v. 12, admirably illustrates this—“*let your yea be yea, and your nay nay:*”—let these only be used, and they in simplicity and unreservedness.

cometh of evil] The gender of evil is ambiguous, as it may be also in the Lord’s prayer, ch. vi, 13: but see note there. It is quite immaterial to the *sense*, in which gender we understand it; for the evil of man’s corrupt nature is in Scripture spoken of as the *work of “the evil One,”* and is itself “*that which is evil.*” See John viii. 44: 1 John iii. 8.

38–41.] FIFTH EXAMPLE. *The law of retaliation.*

38.] That is, *such was the public enactment of the Mosaic law*, and, as such, it implied a private spirit of retaliation which should seek such redress; for the example evidently refers to *private* as well as public retribution. Here again our Lord appears to speak of the *true state and perfection of a Christian community*,—not to forbid, in those mixed and but half-Christian states, which have ever divided so-called Christendom among them, the infliction of judicial penalties for crime. In fact Scripture speaks, Rom. xiii. 4, of *the minister of such infliction* as the *minister of God*. But as before, our Lord shews us the *condition to which* a Christian community should *tend*, and to further which every private Christian’s own endeavours should be directed. It is quite beside the purpose for the world to say, that these precepts of our Lord are too highly pitched for humanity, and so to find an excuse for violating them. If we were disciples of His in the true sense, these would, in their *spirit*, as indicative of frames of mind, be *strictly observed*; and, *as far as* we are His disciples, we shall *attain to such their observance*.

Here again, our Lord does not *contradict* the Mosaic law, but *expands* and *fulfils* it, declaring to us that the necessity for it would be altogether removed in the complete state of that kingdom which He came to establish.

Against the notion that **an eye for an eye**&c. sanctioned all kinds of private revenge, Augustine remarks that the ancient precept was rather intended to allay, than to stimulate anger; as a limit to vindictiveness, not a licence.

39.] Here again, we have our divine Lawgiver legislating, not in the bondage of the letter, so as to stultify His disciples, and in many circumstances to turn the salt of the earth into a means of corrupting it,—but in the freedom of the spirit, laying down those great principles which ought to regulate the inner purposes and consequent actions of His followers. Taken *slavishly* and *literally*, neither did our Lord Himself conform to this precept (John xviii. 22, 23), nor His Apostles (Acts xxiii. 3). But *truly*, and in the *spirit*, our blessed Redeemer obeyed it: ‘He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting’ (Isa. 1. 6): and his Apostles also, see 1 Cor. iv. 9–13.

evil] i.e. here **the evil man**; ‘him who injures thee.’ Or, perhaps, in the indefinite sense, as before, **evil**, generally, ‘when thus directed against thee.’ Only, the other possible meaning there, ‘*the evil One,*’ is precluded here. “*Resist the devil,*” James iv. 7: but not *this particular form* of his working (viz. malice directed against thyself) so as to revenge it on another.

40, 41.] See note on ver. 39. This is of *legal contention only*, and is thus distinguished from the violence in ver. 39.

take away, i.e. in pledge for a debt: see Exod. xxii. 6.

coat, the inner and less costly garment; **cloke**, the outer and more valuable, used also by the poor as a coverlet by night (Exod. as above). In Luke vi. 29 the order is inverted, and appears to be that in which the two garments would be taken from the body, that verse referring to abstraction by *violence*. See the apostolic comment on this precept, 1 Cor. vi. 7.

compel] The original word is one derived from the Persian name of the post-couriers who carried the government despatches: and is thence used of any compulsory “*pressing*” to go on service. ‘The Jews particularly objected to the duty of furnishing posts for the Roman government; and Demetrius, wishing to conciliate the Jews, promised, among other things, that their beasts of burden should not be pressed for service. Hence our Saviour represents this as a burden.’ Josephus. The billeting of the Roman soldiers and their horses on the Jews was one kind of this compulsion.

42.] The proper understanding of the command in this verse may be arrived at from considering the way in which the Lord Himself, who declares, ‘If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it’ (John xiv. 14), performs this promise to us. It would obviously be, not a promise of love, but a sentence of condemnation to us, understood in its bare literal sense; but our gracious Saviour, knowing what is good for us, so answers our prayers, that we never are sent empty away; not always, indeed, receiving *what* we ask,—but that which, in the very disappointment, we are constrained thankfully to confess is better than our wish. So, in his humble sphere, should the Christian giver act. To give every thing to every one—the sword to the madman, the alms to the impostor, the criminal request to the temptress—would be to act as the enemy of others and ourselves. Ours should be a higher and deeper charity, flowing from those inner springs of love, which are the sources of outward actions sometimes widely divergent; whence may arise both the timely concession, and the timely refusal.

borrow] without *usury*, which was forbidden by the law, Exod. xxii. 25: Levit. xxv. 37: Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.

43–48] SIXTH EXAMPLE. *The law of love and hatred.*

43.] The Jews called all Gentiles indiscriminately ‘*enemies*.’ In the Pharisaic interpretation therefore of the maxim (the latter part of which, although a gloss of the Rabbis, is a true representation of the spirit of the law, which was enacted for the Jews as a theocratic people), it would include the “*hatred for mankind*,” with which the Jews were so often charged. But our Lord’s ‘*fulfilment*’ of neighbourly love extends it to all mankind—not only foreign nations, but even those who are actively employed in cursing, reviling, and persecuting us; and the hating of enemies is, in His *fulfilment* of it, no longer an individual or national aversion, but a coming out and being separate from all that rebel.

45. sons] i.e. in being *like Him*. Of course there is allusion to our *state of children by covenant and adoption*; but the *likeness* is the point especially here brought out. So *imitators of God*, Eph. v. 1. The more we lift ourselves above the world’s view of the duty and expediency of revenge and exclusive dealing, into the mind with which the ‘righteous Judge, strong and patient, who is provoked every day,’ yet does good to the unthankful and evil,—the more firmly shall we assure, and the more nobly illustrate, our place as sons in His family, as *having entered into the kingdom of heaven*.

for] i.e. **because**, ‘in that.’ gives the particular in which the conformity implied by “*sons*” consists. There is a sentiment of Seneca remarkably parallel: “If thou wouldest imitate the gods, confer benefits even on the ungrateful: for the sun rises on the wicked as well as on others, and the seas are open for pirates’ use.”

46. publicans] This race of men, so frequently mentioned as the objects of hatred and contempt among the Jews, and coupled with sinners, were not properly the *publicans*, who were wealthy Romans, the rank of knights, farming the revenues of the provinces; but their underlings, heathens or renegade Jews, who usually exacted with recklessness and cruelty. “The Talmud classes them with thieves and assassins, and regards their repentance as impossible.” Wordsw. In interpreting these verses we must carefully give the persons spoken of their correlative value and meaning: *ye*, Christians, sons of God, the true theocracy, the *Kingdom of heaven*,—these, “*publicans*” or “*Gentiles*,” men of this world, actuated by worldly motives,—‘what thank have *ye* in being like *them*?’

47. salute] Here, most probably in its literal sense, Jews did not salute Gentiles: Mohammedans do not salute Christians even now in the East.

48. Be ye] The original is **Ye shall be**: not altogether imperative in meaning, but including the imperative sense: such shall be the state, the aim of Christians.

perfect] **complete**, in your love of others; not one-sided, or exclusive, as these just mentioned, but all-embracing, and God-like, = “*merciful*” Luke vi. 36.

ye is emphatic. No countenance is given by this verse to the ancient Pelagian or the modern heresy of perfectibility in this life. Such a sense of the words would be utterly at variance with the whole of the discourse. See especially vv. 22, 29, 32, in which the imperfections and conflicts of the Christian are fully recognized. Nor, if we consider this verse as a solemn conclusion of

the second part of the Sermon, does it any the more admit of this view, asserting as it does that likeness to God in inward purity, love, and holiness, must be the continual aim and end of the Christian in all the departments of his moral life. But how far from having attained this likeness we are, St. Paul shews us (Phil. iii, 12); and every Christian feels, just *in the proportion in which he has striven after it.*

Matthew: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. 1-18.] *The THIRD DIVISION OF the SERMON, in which the disciples of Christ are warned against hypocritical display of their good deeds, by the examples of abuses of the duties of almsgiving (ver. 2), praying (ver. 5), and fasting (ver. 16).*

1.] The discourse of our Lord now passes *from actions to motives*; not that He has not spoken to the heart before, but then it was only by inference, now directly.

righteousness] not ‘*benevolence*,’ or ‘*alms*,’ as in rabbinical usage,—for this meaning is never found in the N.T., and here we have **doing alms** treated of as a distinct head below. It is best then to understand **righteousness** as in ch. v. 20, as a general term, including the three duties afterwards treated of.

The words **to be seen of** (by) **them** clearly define the course of action objected to:—not the open benevolence of the Christian who lets his light shine that men may glorify God, but the ostentation of him whose *object* is the praise and glory coming from man. “For,” says Chrysostom, “a man may do his good deeds before men, but not in order to be seen by them; and a man may do them not before men, but in order to be seen by them.”

2-4.] FIRST EXAMPLE. Almsgiving.

2. sound a trumpet] A proverbial expression, not implying any such custom of the hypocrites of that day, but the habit of self-laudation, and display of good works in general. Many Commentators, among whom are Calvin and Bengel, think that the words are to be taken literally: and Euthymius mentions this view. But Lightfoot says, that he finds no trace of such a practice among the customs in almsgiving.

before thee] According to the way in which the former verse is taken, these words are variously understood to apply to the trumpet being *held up before the mouth in blowing, or to another person going before.*

synagogues] If this bears the ordinary meaning of places of worship, the literal meaning of the previous words cannot well be maintained. The synagogues, as afterwards the Christian churches, were the regular places for the collection of alms.

have] literally, **have in full,—exhaust:** not *have* their *due reward.*

3.] **thy**, emphatic: see ch. v. 48. This is another popular saying, not to be pressed so as to require a literal interpretation of it in the act of almsgiving, but implying simplicity, both of intention and act. Equally out of place are all attempts to explain the right and left hand symbolically, as was once the practice. The sound sense of Chrysostom preserves the right interpretation, where even Augustine strays into symbolism.

4. openly] before men and angels; at the resurrection of the just.

5-15] SECOND EXAMPLE. Prayer.

5. standing] No stress must be laid on this word as implying ostentation; for it was the ordinary posture of prayer. See 1 Sam. i. 26: 1 Kings viii. 22. The command in Mark (xi. 25) runs, “*when ye stand praying...*” See also Luke xviii. 11, 13. Indeed, of the two positions of prayer, considering the place, kneeling would have been the more singular and savouring of ostentation. The *synagogues* were *places of prayer*; so that, as Theophylact, it is not the *place* which matters, but the *manner and intent.*

6. enter, &c.] Both Chrysostom and Augustine caution us against taking this merely literally: and warn us, as above, that there may ostentation even in the secret chamber, as there may be the avoiding of it in the open church.

7.] On the original meaning of the word rendered “*use vain repetitions,*” see in my Gr. Test. Taking the word in its largest meaning, that of *saying things irrelevant and senseless*, it may well include all the various senses contended for. What is forbidden is not *much* praying, for our Lord Himself seed whole nights in prayer: not praying *in the same words*, for this He did in the very intensity of His agony at Gethsemane; but the making number and length a *point of observance*, and imagining that prayer will be heard, not because it is the genuine expression of the desire of faith, but because it is of *such a length*, has

been *such a number of times* repeated. The repetitions of Paternosters and Ave Marias in the Romish Church, as *practised* by them, are *in direct violation* of this precept; the *number* of repetitions being *prescribed*, and the *efficacy of the performance made to depend on it*. But the repetition of the Lord's Prayer in the Liturgy of the Church of England is not a violation of it, nor that of the Kyrie Eleison, because it is not the number of these which is the object, but each has its *appropriate place* and *reason* in that which is pre-eminently a reasonable service. Our Lord was also denouncing a Jewish error. Lightfoot quotes from the Rabbinical writings, "Every one who multiplies prayer, is heard."

9-13.] THE LORD' S PRAYER.

9.] There is very slender proof of what is often asserted, that our Lord took nearly the whole of this prayer from existing Jewish formalæ. Not that such a view of the matter would contain in it any thing irreverent or objectionable; for if pious Jews had framed such petitions, our Lord, who came to fulfil every thing that was good under the Old Covenant, might, in a higher sense and spiritual meaning, have recommended the same forms to His disciples. But such does not appear to have been the fact. Lightfoot produces only the most general common-place parallels for the petitions, from the Rabbinical books.

With regard to the prayer itself we may remark, 1. The whole passage, vv. 7-15, is digressive from the subject of the first part of this chapter, which is the discouragement of the performance of religious duties to be seen of men, and is resumed at ver. 16. Neander therefore supposes that this passage has found its way in here as a sort of accompaniment to the preceding verses, but is in reality the answer of our Lord to the request in Luke xi. 1, more fully detailed than by that Evangelist. But to this I cannot assent, believing our Lord's discourses as given by this evangelist to be no collections of scattered sayings, but veritable reports of continuous utterances. That the request related in Luke should afterwards have been made, and similarly answered, is by no means improbable. (That he should have thus related it *with this gospel before him*, is more than improbable.) 2. It has been questioned whether the prayer was led in the very earliest times as a set form delivered for liturgical use by our Lord. The variations in Luke have been regarded as fatal to the supposition of its being used liturgically at the time when these Gospels were written. But see notes on Luke xi. 1. It must be confessed, that we find very few traces of such use in early times. Tholuck remarks, "It does not occur in the Acts, nor in any writers before the third century. In Justin Martyr we find, that the minister prays 'according to his power'... Cyprian and Tertullian make the first mention of the prayer as a '*lawful and ordinary prayer*.'" An allusion to it has been supposed to exist in 2 Tim. iv. 18, where see note. 3. The view of some that our Lord gave this, selecting it out of forms known and in use, as a prayer *ad interim, till the effusion of the Spirit of prayer*, is inadmissible, as we have no traces of any such temporary purpose in our Saviour's discourses, and to suppose any such would amount to nothing less than to set them entirely aside. On the contrary, one work of the Holy Spirit on the disciples was, to *bring to their mind all things whatsoever He said unto them*, the depth of such sayings only then first being revealed to them by Him who *took of the things of Christ and shewed them to them*, John xiv. 26.

After this manner] thus. Considering that other manners of praying have been spoken of above, the "*vain repetition*" and the "*much speaking*," the word, especially in its present position of primary emphasis, cannot well be otherwise understood than '*in these words*,' as a *specimen* of the *Christian's* prayer (the *ye* holds the second place in emphasis), no less than its *pattern*. This, which would be the *inference* from the context here, is decided for us by Luke xi. 2, **when ye pray, say—**

Our Father] This was a form of address almost unknown to the Old Covenant: now and then hinted at, as reminding the children of their rebellion (Isa. i. 2: Mal. i. 6), or mentioned as a last resource of the orphan and desolate creature (Isa. lxiii. 16); but never brought out in its fulness, as indeed it could not be, till He was come by whom we have received the adoption of sons. "The prayer is a fraternal one; He saith not, **My Father**, as if prayed for himself only: bat Our Father, as embracing in one prayer all who are known as brethren in Christ." Aug.

which art in heaven] These opening words of the Lord's Prayer set clearly before us the state of the Christian, as believing in, depending upon, praying to, a real *objective personal GOD*, lifted above himself; to approach whom he must lift up his heart, as the eye is lifted up from earth to heaven. This strikes at the root of all *pantheistic* error, which regards the spirit of man as identical with the Spirit of God,—and at the root of all *deism*, testifying us it does our relation to and covenant dependence on our heavenly Father.

The *local heavens* are no farther to be thought of here, than as Scripture, by a parallelism of things natural and spiritual deeply implanted in our race, universally speaks of *heaven* and *heavenly*, as applying to the habitation and perfections of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth Eternity.

Hallowed be thy name] De Wette observes: 'God's 'Name is not merely His appellation, which we speak-with the mouth, but also and principally the idea which we attach to it,—His Being, as far as it is confessed, revealed, or known.' The 'Name of God' in Scripture is used to signify that revelation of Himself which He has made to men, which is all that we know of Him: into the depths of His Being, as it is, no human soul can penetrate. See John xvii. 6: Rom. ix. 17. **Hallow** here is in the sense of **keep holy, sanctify in our hearts**, as in ref. 1 Pet.

10. Thy kingdom come] **Thy kingdom** here is the fulness of the accomplishment of the kingdom of God, so often spoken of in prophetic Scripture; and by implication, all that process of events which lead to that accomplishment. Meyer, in objecting to all ecclesiastical and spiritual meanings of ‘Thy kingdom,’ forgets that the one for which he contends exclusively, *the Messianic kingdom*, does in fact include or imply them all.

Thy will be done] i.e. not, ‘may our will be absorbed into thy will,’ but may it be conformed to and subordinated to thine. The literal rendering is, **Let thy will be done, as in heaven, (so) also on earth.**

These last words, “*as in heaven, so also on earth,*” may be regarded as applying to the whole of the three preceding petitions, as punctuated in the text. A slight objection may perhaps be found in the circumstance, that the kingdom of God cannot be said to have *come* in heaven, seeing that it has always been fully established there, and thus the accuracy of correspondence in the particulars will be marred. It is true, this may be escaped by understanding, May thy kingdom *come* on earth, so as to be as fully established, as it is already in heaven. So that I conceive we are at liberty to take the prayer either way.

11. our daily bread] **our**—as ‘*created for us,*’ ‘*provided for our use by Thee.*’ The word rendered **daily** has been very variously explained. For a discussion of the probable derivations and meanings, I must refer to my Gr. Test. I have there seen reason to prefer the sense **required for our subsistence—proper for our sustenance.** So that the expression will be equivalent to St. James’s “*things which are needful for the body*” (ii. 16), and the expressions are rendered in the Syriac version by the same word. Thus only, **this day** has its proper meaning. The “*day by day*” in Luke xi. 3 is different; see there. It is a question, how far the expression may be understood *spiritually*—of the Bread of Life. The answer is easy: viz. that we may safely thus understand it, provided we keep in the foreground its primary, physical meaning, and view the other as involved by implication in that. To understand the expression of the Eucharist *primarily*, or even of spiritual feeding on Christ, is to miss the plain reference of the petition to our daily physical wants. But not to recognize those spiritual senses, is equally to miss the great truth, that the “*we*” whose bread is prayed for, are not *mere* animals, but com; of body, soul, and spirit, all of which want daily nourishment by Him from whom all blessings flow.

our debts] i.e. **sins**, short-comings, and therefore ‘debts:’ answers to “*trespasses,*” ver. 14. Augustine remarks, that those sins are not meant which are remitted in the regeneration of baptism, but those which are contracted day by day from the bitter fruits of worldly contact by our infirmity.

as we] Not ‘*for we also,*’ &c. (as in Luke), nor ‘*in the same measure as we also,*’ &c., but **like as we also, &c.**; implying similarity in the two actions, of kind, but no comparison of degree. ‘Augustine uses the testimony of this prayer against all proud Pelagian notions of an absolutely sinless state in this life’ (Trench); and answers the various excuses and evasions by which that sect escaped from the conclusion.

have forgiven here implies that (see ch. v. 23, 24) the act of forgiveness of others is *completed before we approach* the throne of grace.

13.] The sentiment is not in any way inconsistent with the Christian’s joy when he “*falls into divers temptations,*” James i. 2, but is a humble self-distrust and shrinking from such trial in the prospect. The **leading into temptation** must be understood in its plain literal sense: so *will make with the temptation also a way to escape*, 1 Cor. x. 13. There is no discrepancy with James i. 13, which speaks not of the providential bringing about of, but the actual solicitation of, the temptation. Some have attempted to fix on *leading into* and *entering into* temptation, the meaning of *bringing into the power of*, and *entering into, so as to be overcome by*, temptation. But this surely the words will not bear.

But must not be taken as equivalent to ‘*but if thou dost, deliver,*’ &c.; but is rather the opposition to the former clause, and forms in this sense, but one petition with it,—‘*b ring us not into conflict with evil, nay rather deliver (rid) us from it altogether*’ In another view, however, as expressing the deep desire of all Christian hearts to be delivered from *all evil* (for the adjective is here certainly neuter; the introduction of the mention of the ‘evil one’ would seem here to be incongruous). Besides, compare the words of St. Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 18, which look very like a reminiscence of this prayer: see note there) these words form a seventh and most affecting petition, reaching far beyond the last. They are the expression of the yearning for redemption of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 28), and so are fitly placed at the end of the prayer, and as the sum and substance of the personal petitions.

The doxology must on every ground of sound criticism be omitted. Had it formed part of the original text, it is absolutely inconceivable that almost all the ancient authorities should with one consent have omitted it. They could have had no reason for doing so; whereas the habit of terminating liturgical prayers with ascriptions of praise would naturally suggest some such ending, and make its insertion almost certain in course of time. And just correspondent to this is the evidence. We find, *absolutely no trace of it in early times*, in any family of MSS. or in any expositors. The ancient Syriac version *has* it, but whether it *always had*, is another question. It is quite open for us to regard it with Euthymius as “*a solemn ending, added by the holy lights and leaders of the Church,*” and to retain it as such in our liturgies; but in dealing with the sacred text we must

not allow any *à priori* considerations, of which we are such poor judges, to outweigh the almost unanimous testimony of antiquity. The inference to be drawn from the words of St. Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 18, is rather against, than for the genuineness of the doxology. The fact that he there adds a doxology, different from that commonly read here, seems to

testify to the practice, begun thus early, of concluding the Lord's prayer with a solemn ascription of glory to God. This eventually fell into one conventional form, and thus got inserted in the sacred text.

14, 15] Our Lord returns (**for**) to explain the only part of the prayer which *peculiarly* belonged to the new law of Jove, and enforces it by a solemn assurance. On the sense, see Mark xi. 25, and the remarkable parallel, Ecclesiasticus xxviii. 2: “*orgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest.*”

16–18.) THIRD EXAMPLE. Fasting. Another department of the spiritual life, in which *reality in the sight of God*, and not appearance in the sight of man, must be our object. While these verses determine nothing as to the manner and extent of Christian fasting, they clearly recognize it as a solemn duty, ranking it with almsgiving and prayer; but requiring it, like them, (see ch. ix. 14–17,) to spring out of reality, not mere formal prescription.

16. disfigure] The word literally means *make to disappear*. Hence some have explained it, *hide, cover up*, viz. in mourning costume. But in later Greek the meaning was to *disfigure*. One writer uses it of women who paint their faces. The allusion is therefore not to *covering* the face, which could only be regarded as a sign of *mourning*, but to the squalor of the uncleansed face, and hair of the head and beard, as the contrast of washing and anointing shews.

17.] i.e. ‘*appear as usual:*’ ‘seem to men the same as if thou wert not fasting.’ It has been observed that this precept applies only to voluntary and private fasts, (such as are mentioned Luke xviii. 12,) not to public and enjoined ones. But this distinction does not seem to be necessary; the one might afford just as much occasion for ostentation as the other.

19–34.] From cautions against the hypocrisy of formalists, the discourse naturally passes to the *entire dedication of the heart to God*, from which all duties of the Christian should be performed. In this section this is enjoined, 1. (vv. 19–24) with regard to earthly *treasures*, from the impossibility of serving God and Mammon: 2. (vv. 25–34) with regard to earthly *cares*, from the assurance that our Father careth for us.

19, 20. rust] The word is more general in meaning than mere *rust*: it includes the ‘*wear and tear*’ of time, which eats into and consumes the fairest possessions. The **laying up treasures in heaven** would accumulate the “*bags that wax not old, a treasure that faileth not,*” of Luke xii. 33, corresponding to the “*reward*” of ch. v. 12, and the “*shall reward thee*” of vv. 4, 6, 18. See 1 Tim. vi. 19: Tobit iv. 9.

break through] usually joined with “*a house,*” as in ch. xxiv. 43, where the word in the original is the same.

21.] The connexion with the foregoing is plain enough to any but the shallowest reader. ‘The heart is, where the treasure is.’ But it might be replied, ‘I will have a treasure on earth and a treasure in heaven also: a divided affection.’ This is dealt with, and its impracticability shewn by a parable from nature.

22, 23. The light] as lighting and guiding the body and its members: not as containing light in itself. Similarly the inner light, the conscience, lights the spirit and its faculties, but by light supernal to itself.

single, i.e. **clear**, untroubled in vision, as the eye which presents a well-defined and single image to the brain.

evil, i.e. **perverse**, as the eye which dims and distorts the visual images.

full of light, rather, *in full light*, as an object in the bright sunshine; **full of darkness**, rather, as an object in the deep shade.

If therefore&c.] Render, as in margin, If then the LIGHT w **hich is in thee is darkness, how dark is the DARKNESS!**i. e. ‘if the *conscience*, the eye and *light* of the soul, be *darkened*, in how *much grosser* darkness will all the *passions and faculties* be, which are of themselves *naturally dark!*’ This interpretation is that of nearly all the ancient fathers and versions. Stier expands it well: “As the body, of itself a dark mass, has its light from the eye, so we have here compared to it the sensuous, bestial life of men, their appetites, desires, and aversions, which belong to the lower creature. This dark region—human nature under the gross dominion of the flesh—shall become spiritualized, enlightened, sanctified, by the spiritual light: but if *this light* be darkness, how great must then the darkness of the *sensuous life* be!” The A.V., which agrees with the usual modern interpretation, makes the words a mere expression of the greatness of the darkness thereby occasioned, and thus loses the force of the sentence.

24.] And this division in man's being *cannot take place*—he is and must be *one*—light or dark—serving God or Mammon.

serve] Not merely ‘serve,’ as we now understand it, but in that closer sense, in which he who serves is the *slave* of, i.e. belongs to and obeys entirely. See Rom. vi. 16, 17.

for either.... or] is not a repetition; but the suppositions are the reverse of one another: as Meyer expresses it, “He will either hate A and love B, or cleave to A and despise B:” the one and the other keeping their individual reference in both members.

hate and **love** must be given their full meaning, or the depth the saying is not reached: the sense *love less, disparage*, for **hate**, would not bring out the opposition and division of the nature of man by the attempt.

mammon] the Chaldee word for **riches**. Mammon does not appear to have been the name of any Syrian deity, as some assert.

25. Therefore] A direct inference from the foregoing verse: the plainer, since the verb signifies ‘to be distracted,’ ‘to have the mind drawn two ways.’ The A.V., ‘*Take no thought*,’ does not express the sense, but gives rather an exaggeration of the command, and thus makes it unreal and nugatory. **Take not anxious thought**, is far better. In Luke xii. 29 we have “*live not in careful suspense*” (A. V. marg.).

Is not the life] The argument is, ‘Shall not He who gave us the greater, also give us the less?’

26.] The two examples, of the birds and the lilies, are not parallel in their application. The first is an argument from the less to the greater; that our heavenly Father, who feeds the birds, will much more feed us: the second, besides this application, which (ver. 30) it also contains, is a reproof of the vanity of anxiety about clothing, which, in all its pomp of gorgeous colours, is vouchsafed to the inferior creatures, but not attainable by, as being unworthy of, us. Notice, it is not said “*Sow not, reap not, gather not into barns;*”—the birds are not our example to follow in their habits, for God hath made us to differ from them—the doing all these things is part of our “how much better are ye,” and increases the force of the *à fortiori*; but it is said, “*be not anxious,*”—“*be not in suspense*” Luke xii, 24).

your Father, not **their Father**:—thus by every accessory word does our Lord wonderfully assert the truths and proprieties of creation, in which *we*, his sons, are His central work, and the rest for *us*.

of the air, and after-wards **of the field**, as Tholuck remarks, are not superfluous, but serve to set forth the wild and uncaring freedom of the birds and lants. I may add,—also to set forth their lower rank in the scale of creation, as *belonging to* the air and the field. Who could say of all mankind, “*the men of the world?*” Thus the *à fortiori* is more plainly brought out.

27.] These words do not relate to the *stature*, the adding a cubit to which (= a foot and a half) would be a very great addition, instead of a very small one, as is implied here, and expressed in Luke xii. 26, “*if then ye be not able to do that thing which is least,*”—but to the *time of life* of each hearer; as Theophylact on Luke xii. 26, “The measure of life is with God alone, and each man cannot set the measure of his own age.” So the best Commentators: and the *context* seems imperatively to require it; for the object of food and clothing is not to *enlarge the body*, but to prolong life. The application of measures of space to time is not uncommon. See Ps. xxxix. 5: Job ix. 25: 2 Tim. iv. 7. Mimnermus, a Greek poet, speaks of “*a cubit's length of time.*” See other examples in my Gr. Test.

28.] Consider, implying more attention than “Behold.” The birds fly by, and we can but look upon them: the flowers are ever with us, and we can watch their growth. These *lilies* have been supposed to be the crown imperial, (*fritillaria imperialis*), which grows wild in Palestine, or the amaryllis lutea, (Sir J. KE. Smith,) whose golden liliaceous flowers cover the autumnal fields of the Levant. Dr. Thomson, “The Land and the Book,” p. 256, believes the Huleh lily to be meant: “it is very large, and the three inner petals meet above, and form a gorgeous canopy, such as art never approached, and king never sat under, even in his utmost glory. And when I met this incomparable flower, in all its love-Tiness, among the oak woods around the northern base of Tabor, and on the hills of Nazareth, where our Lord spent His youth, I felt assured that it was this to which He referred.” Probably, however, the word here may be taken in a wider im-port, as signifying all wild flowers.

29.] We here have the declaration of the Creator Himself concerning the relative glory and beauty of all human pomp, com-ed with the meanest of His own works. 2 Chron. ix. 15–28. And the mean-ing hidden beneath the text should not escape the student. As the beauty of the flower is unfolded by the divine Creator Spirit from *within*, from the laws and capacities of its *own* individual life, so must all true adornment of man be un-folded *from within* by the same Almighty Spirit. See 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. As nothing from without can defile a man, (ch. xv. 11,) so neither can any thing from without adorn him. Our Lord introduces with “**I say unto you**” His revelations of omniscience: see ch. xviii. 10, 19.

30. the grass] The wild flowers which form part of the meadow-growth are counted as belonging to the grass, and are cut down with it. Cat grass, which soon withers from the heat, is still used in the East for firing. See “The Land and the Book,” p. 341.

the oven] “a covered earthen vessel, a pan, wider at the bottom than at the top, wherein bread was baked by putting hot embers round it, which produced a more equable heat than in the regular oven.” Wilkinson and Webeter’s note.

32. for your heavenly Father knoweth] This second “**for**” brings in an *additional* reason.

33. seek ye first] Not with any reference to seeking these things *after* our religious duties, e.g. beginning with prayer days of avarice and worldly anxiety, but **make your great Object, as we say, your first care.**

his righteousness] Not here the *forensic righteousness of justification*, but the *spiritual purity* inculcated in this discourse. **His righteousness** answers to *His perfection*, spoken of in ch. v. 48, and is another reference to the being as our heavenly Father is. In the Christian life which has been since unfolded, the righteousness of justification is a *necessary condition* of likeness to God; but it is not the righteousness *here* meant.

shall be added unto you] There is a traditional saying of our Lord, “*Ask ye for great things, and small things shall be added unto you: ask for heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added unto you.*”

34] literally, **for the morrow will care for it, viz. for itself,** the morrow mentioned above: i.e. *will bring care enough about its own matters*: implying,—after all your endeavour to avoid worldly cares, you will find quite enough and more of them when to-morrow comes, about to-morrow itself: do not then increase those of to-day by introducing them before their time.’ A hint, as is the following **evil thereof**, that in this state of sin and infirmity the command of ver. 31 will never be com, ly observed.

Matthew: Chapter 7

CHAP. VII. 1–12.] Of our CONDUCT TOWARDS: OTHER MEN: *parenthetically illustrated*, vv. 7–11, by the *benignity and wisdom of God in his dealings with us.* The connexion with the last chapter is *immediately*, the word *evil*, in which a glance is given by the Saviour at the misery and sinfulness of human life at its best;—and now precepts follow, teaching us how we are to live in such a world, and among others sinful like ourselves:—*mediately*, and more generally it is, the continuing caution against hypocrisy, in our-selves and in others.

1] This does not prohibit *all* judgment (see ver. 20, and 1 Cor. v. 12); but, as Augustine, en-joins us to interpret others charitably in all cases where doubt may exist as to the motives of their actions.

judge has been taken for “condemn” here; and this seems necessary, at least in so far that it should be taken as implying an *ill judgment*. For if the command were merely “not to form authoritative judgments of others,” the second member, “*that ye be not judged*,” would not, in its right interpretation, as applying to *God’s judgment of us*, correspond. And the ‘*condemn not*,’ which follows in Luke vi. 87, is perhaps to be taken rather as an additional explanation of *judge*, than as a climax after it.

judged] i.e. ‘*by God*,’ for so doing;—a parallel expression to ch. v. 7; vi. 15; not ‘*by others*.’ The bare passive, without the agent expressed, is solemn and emphatic. See note on Luke vi. 88; xvi. 9; and xii. 20. The sense then is, ‘that you have not to answer before God for your rash judgment and its consequences.’ The same remarks apply to ver. 2.

3–5.] Lightfoot produces instances of this proverbial saying among the Jews. With them, however, it seems only to be used of a person retaliating rebuke; whereas our rd gives us a further application of it, viz. to the incapability of one involved in personal iniquity to form a right judgment on others, and the clearness given to the spiritual vision by conflict with and victory over evil. ere is also no doubt here a lesson given us of the true relative magnitude which our own faults, and those of our brother, ought to hold in our estimation. What is a *mote* to one looking on another, is to that other himself a *beam*: just the reverse of the ordinary estimate.

3.] beholdest, from with-out, a voluntary act: **considerest not, apprehendest not**, from within, that which is already there, and ought to have excited attention before. The same distinction is observed in Luke. **4.] how wilt thou say**, is “*how canst thou say*” in Luke: Luther renders it “*how darest thou say?*”

5. Thou hypocrite] “He calls this man a *hypocrite*, as usurping the office of a physician, when he really fills the place of a sick man: or as in pretence busying him-self about another man’s fault, but in reality doing it with a view to condemning him.” Euthymius. **shalt thou see clearly**, with purified eye. The close is remarkable. *Before, to behold* the mote was all—to stare at thy brother’s faults, and as people do who stand and gaze at an object, attract others to gaze also:—but *now*, the object is a very different one—to *cast out* the mote—to help thy brother to be rid of his fault, by doing him the best and most difficult office of Christian friendship. The *beholding* was vain and idle; the *seeing*

clearly is for a blessed end, viz. (ch. xviii. 15) *to gain thy brother.*

6.] The connexion, see below.

that which is holy] Some have thought this, in the Greek, to a mistranslation of a Chaldee word signifying an earring, or amulet; but the connexion is not at all improved by it. Pearls bear a resemblance to peas or acorns, the food of swine, but earrings none whatever to the food of dogs. The similitude is derived from "*the holy things,*" *the meat offered in sacrifice*, of which no unclean person was to eat (Lev. xxii. 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 16). Similarly in the ancient Christian Liturgies and Fathers, "*the holy things*" are the consecrated elements in the Holy Communion. Thus interpreted, the saying would be one full of meaning to the **Jews**. As Dean Trench observes (Serm. Mount, p. 186), "It is not that the dogs would not eat it, for it would be welcome to them; but that it would be a profanation to give it to them, Exod. xxii. 31." The other part of the similitude is of a different character, and belongs entirely to the swine, who having cast to them pearls, something like their natural food, whose value is inappreciable by them, in fury trample them with their and turning against the donor, rend him with their tusks. The connexion with the foregoing and following verses is this: "*Judge not,*" &c.; "*attempt not the correction of others, when you need it far more yourselves;*" still, "*be not such mere children, as not to distinguish the characters of those with whom you have to do. Give not that which is holy to dogs,*" &c. Then, as a humble hearer might be disposed to reply, '*if this last be a measure of the divine dealings, what bounties can I expect at God's hand?*' (ver. 7), '*ask of God, and He will give to each of you: for this is His own will, that you shall obtain by asking* (ver. 8),—*good things, good for each in his place and degree* (vv. 10, 11), *not unwholesome or unfitting things.* Therefore (ver. 12) *do ye the same to others, as ye wish to be done, and as God does, to you: viz. give that which is good for each, to each, not Judging uncharitably on the one hand, nor casting pearls before swine on the other.*'

7.] The three similitudes are all to be understood of *prayer*, and form a climax.

8.] The only *limitation* to this promise, which, under various forms, is several times repeated by our Lord, is furnished in vv. 9–11, and in James iv. 8, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask *amiss.*" 9.] There are two questions here, the first of which is broken off. See a similar construction in ch. xii. 11. The similitude of bread (a loaf) and a stone also appears in ch. iv. 8. Luke (xi. 12) adds the and the scorpion.

11. evil] i.e. in comparison with God. It is not necessary to suppose a rebuke conveyed here, but only a general declaration of the corruption and infirmity of man. Augustine remarks, in accordance with this view, that the persons now addressed are the same who had been taught to say '*Our Father*' just now. Stier remarks, "This saying seems to me the strongest proof of original sin in the whole of the holy scriptures." Reden Jesu, i. 236.

good things] principally, *His Holy Spirit*, Luke xi. 18. The same argument *a fortiori* is used by our Lord in the parable of the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 6, 7.

12.] Trench (Serm. on the Mount, p. 148) has noticed Augustine's refutation of the sneer of infidels (such as Gibbon's against this precept), that some of our Lord's sayings have been before written by heathen authors. «Pythagoras said this, Plato said it... Well, if any of them is found to have said a thing which Christ also said, we congratulate him, we do not follow him. But, it is said, he *came before* Christ. So then, if a man speaks truth, he is to be esteemed prior to truth itself.»

Therefore is the inference indeed from the preceding eleven verses, but *immediately* from the **give good things to them that ask him**, just said,—and thus closing this section of the Sermon with a lesson similar to the last verse of ch. v., which is, indeed, the ground-tone of the whole Sermon—*"Be ye like unto God."*

even so, viz. *after the pattern of all things whatsoever:* not *those things themselves*, because what might suit **us**, might not suit others. We are to think what we should like done to **us**, and then apply that rule to our dealings with others: viz. by doing to them what we have reason to suppose *they would like done to them.* This is a most important distinction, and one often overlooked in the interpretation of this golden maxim.

13–27.] THE concLusIon oF THE DISCOURSE:—*setting forth more strongly and personally the dangers of hypocrisy*, both in *being led aside by hypocritical teachers*, and in *our own inner life*.—The gate stands at the end of the way, as in the remarkable parallel in the Table of Cebes; "Do you see a certain small door, and a certain path in front of the door, which is not much frequented, but only a few walk in it?... this is the way which leads to true discipline."

14.] **because** gives a second reason, on which that in ver. 13 depends: **strive, &c., for broad is, &c., because narrow is, &c.** The *reason why* the way to destruction is so broad, is *because so few find their way into the narrow path of life.* This is not merely an arbitrary assignment of the *because*, but there is a deep meaning in it. The reason why so many perish is not that it is eo ordained by God, who will have all to come to the knowledge of the truth, but because so few will come to Christ, that

they may have life; and the rest perish in their sins. See notes on ch. xxv. 41.

strait] literally, **restricted**,—**crushed** in, in breadth.

15.] The connexion is,—*strive to enter&c.: but be not misled by persons who pretend to guide you into it, but will not do so in reality.* These **false prophets**, directly, refer to those who were soon to arise, to deceive, if possible, even the very elect, ch. xxiv. 24; and indirectly, to all such false teachers in all ages

in sheep's clothing] There may be allusion to the prophetic dress, ch. iii. 4; but most probably it only means that, in order to deceive, they put on the garb and manners of the sheep themselves.

16.] The **fruits** are both their corrupt doctrines and their vicious practices, as contrasted with the outward shews of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, their sheep's clothing to deceive. See James iii. 12; ch. xii. 38, 34.

17. a corrupt tree] See also ch. xiii. 48. From these two verses, 17, 18, the Manichmans defended their heresy of the two natures, good and bad: but Augustine answers them, that such cannot possibly be their meaning, as it is entirely contrary to the whole scope of the passage (see for example ver. 13), and adds, “A bad tree then cannot bear good fruit: but it may, from bad, become good, in order to the bearing good fruit.” On the other hand, these verses were his weapon against the shallow Pelagian scheme, which would look at men’s deeds apart from the living root in man out of which they grew, and suppose that man’s unaided will is capable of good. Trench, Serm. on the Mount, p. 150.

20. ye shall know them] The original has more force; ‘*ye shall thoroughly know them*’ see 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

21.] The doom of the hypocritical false prophets introduces the doom of all hypocrites, and brings on the solemn close of the whole, in which the hypocrite and the true disciple are parabolically compared.—Observe that here the Lord sets Himself forth as the Judge in the great day, and at the same time speaks not of ‘*my will*,’ but “the will of *my Father*:” an important and invaluable doctrinal landmark in this ve ning of His ministry in the first Gospel. e context must rule the meaning of such wide words as **said**. Here it is evidently used of mere lip homage; but in “*no man can say that Jesus is the Lord*,” 1 Cor. xii. 3, the “*saying*” has the deeper mean-ing of a genuine heartfelt confession. To seek for discrepancies in passages of this kind implies a predisposition to find them: and is to treat Holy Scripture with less than that measure of candour which we ive to the writings of one another.

22. in that day] perhaps refers to ver. 19: or it may be the expression 20 common in the prophets of *the great day of the Lord*. Isa. ii. 20; xxv. 9 al. fr. Sothe Jews called the tt day of judgment “that day.”

in thy name] perhaps better **by thy name**, that name having filled out our belief, and been the object of our confession of faith.

prophesied] i.e., a so often in N.T., **preached**, not necessarily foretold future events. See 1 Cor. xii. 10, and note. On **cast out devils**, see note on ch. viii. 32.

23.] See Luke xiii. 25–27. **will I profess** (more properly, **confess**) is here remarkable, as a statement of the simple truth of facts, as opposed to the false colouring and self-dereit of the hypocrites— ‘I will tell them the plain truth.

I never knew you, i.e. in the sense in which it is said, John x. 14, “*I know my sheep* (lit. *the things that are mine*), and am known by them.” Neither the preaching Christ, nor doing miracles in His Name, is an infallible sign of being His genuine servants, but only the devotion of life to God’s will which this knowledge brings about.

24. these sayings of mine] more probably, **these sayings from me**: see Acts i. 4, *ye have heard of* (from) *me*. The expression, **these sayings**, seems to bind together the Sermon, and preclude, as indeed does the whole structure of the Sermon, the sup-position that these last chapters are merely a collection of sayings uttered at different times.

I will liken] Meyer and Tholuck take this Eword to signify, not ‘*I will compare*,’ but ‘*I will make at that day like*’ But it is, perhaps, more in analogy with the usage of the Lord’s discourses to under-stand it, **I will compare**: so ch. xi. 16: Luke xiii. 18.

25.] This similitude must not be pressed to an allegorical or symbolical meaning in its details, e.g. so that the rain, floods, and winds should mean three distinct kinds of temptation; but the ROCK, as signifying Him who spoke this, is of too frequent use in Scripture for us to overlook it here: cf. 2 Sam. xxii. 2 [Ps. xviii. 2], 82, 47; xxiii. 3: Ps. xxviii. 1; xxxi. 2, al. fr.; lxi. 2: Isa. xxvi. 4 (Heb.); xxxii. 2; xliv. 8 (Heb.): 1 Cor. x. 4, &c. He founds his house on a rock, who, hearing the words of Christ, brings his heart and life into accordance with His expressed will, and is thus by faith in union with Him, founded on Him. he

who merely hears His words, but does them not, has never dug down to the rock, nor become united with it, nor has any stability in the hour of trial.

In the *rock*,—the *sand*,—the articles are categorical, importuning that these two were usually found in the country where the discourse was delivered;—in the *rain*, the *floods*, the *winds*, the same, implying that such trials of the stability of a house were common. In the whole of the similitude, reference is probably made to the Prophetic passage xxviii. 15–18.

27. great] All the greater, because such an one as here supposed is a *professed disciple—hearing these sayings*—and therefore would have the er to fall in case of apostasy.

29.] Chrysostom's comment is, “For He did not say what He said on the authority of others, quoting Moses or the prophets, but every where alleging Himself to be the One who had the power. For when giving the law, he ever added, ‘*But I say to you*,’ shewing that He him-self was the Judge.”

Matthew: Chapter 8

CHAP. VIII. 1–4.] HEALING OF A LEPER. Mark i. 40–46. Luke v. 12–14. We have now (in this and the following chapter), as it were, a *solemn procession of miracles*, confirming the authority wi which our Lord had spoken.

2.] This same miracle is related by St. Luke with-out any mark of definiteness, either as to time or place,—“*And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city...*” In this instance there is, and can be, no doubt that the transactions are identical: and this may serve us as a key-note, by which the less obvious and more intricate harmonies of these two narrations may be ar-ranged. The plain assertion of the account in the text requires that the leper should have met our Lord on His descent from the mountain, while great multitudes were following Him. The accounts in St. Luke and St. Mark require no such fixed date. This narrative therefore fixes the occurrence. I conceive it highly probable that St. Matthew was himself a hearer of the Sermon, and one of those who followed our Lord at this time. From St. Luke's account, the miracle was performed in, or rather, perhaps, in the neighbourhood of, some city: what city, does not appear. As the leper is in all three accounts related to have come to Jesus (“*And behold*” implying it in Luke), he may have been outside the city, and have run into it to our Lord.

a leper] The limits of a note allow of only an abridgment of the most important particulars relating to this dis-ease. Read Leviticus xiii. xiv. for the Mosaic enactments respecting it, and its nature and symptoms. See also Exod. iv. 6: Num. xii. 10: 2 Kings v. 27; xv. 5: 2 Chron. xxvi. 19, 21. The whole ordinances relating to leprosy were symbolical and typical. The disease was *not contagious*: so that the view which makes *them* mere sanitary regulations is out of the question. The fact of its non-contagious nature has been abundantly proved by learned men, and is evident from the Scripture itself: for the priests had continually to be in close contact with lepers, even to handling and examining them. We find Naaman, a leper, commanding the armies of Syria (2 Kings v. 1); Gehazi, though a leper, is conversed with by the king of Terael (2 Kings viii. 4, 5); and in the examination of a leper by the priest, if a man was *entirely* covered with leprosy, he was to be pronounced clean (Levit. xiii. 12, 18). The leper was not shut out from the synagogue, nor from the Christian churches. Besides, the analogy of the other uncleannesses under the Mosaic law, e.g. having touched the dead, having an issue, which are joined with leprosy (Num. v. 2), shews that sanitary caution was not the motive of these ceremonial enactments, but a far deeper reason. This disease was specially selected, as being the most loath-some and incurable of all, to represent the effect of the defilement of sin upon the once pure and holy body of man. “Leprosy was, indeed, nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of the humours, of life; a dissolution, little by little, of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away.” (Trench on the Miracles, p. 218.) See Num. xii. 12. The leper was the type of one dead in sin: the same emblems are used in his misery as those of mourning for the dead: the same means of cleansing as for uncleanness through connexion with death, and which were never used except on these two occasions. Compare Num. xix. 6, 13, 18, with Levit. xiv. 4–7. All this exclusion and mournful separation imported the Perpetual exclusion of the abominable and polluted from the true city of God, as declared Rev. xxi. 27. And David, when after his deadly sin he utters his prayer of penitence, ‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean,’ Ps. li. 7, doubtless saw in his own utter spiritual uncleanness, that of which the ceremonial uncleanness that was purged with hyssop was the type. Thus in the above-cited instances we find leprosy inflicted as the punishment a rebellion, lying, and presumption. ‘I put the plague of in an house’ (Levit. xiv. 34), ‘Remember what the Lord thy God did to Miriam’ (Deut. xxiv. 9), and other passages, point out this plague as a peculiar infliction from God. “The Jews termed it ‘the finger of God,’ and emphatically ‘The’ stroke.’ They said that it attacked first a man's house; and if he did not turn, his clothing; and then, if he persisted in sin, himself. So too, they said, that a man's true repentance was the one condition of his leprosy leaving him.” Trench, 216. The Jews, from the prophecy Isa. iii. 4, had a tradition that the Messiah should be a leper.

worshipped him] “*falling on his face*,” Luke v. 12; ‘*kneeling to him*,’ Mark i. 40. These differences of expression are important. See beginning of note on this verse.

Lord] Not here merely a title of respect, but an expression of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. “This is the *right* utterance of ‘*Lord*,’ which will never be made in vain.” Stier. When Miriam was a leper, ‘‘Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee,’’ Num. xii. 18.

3. touched him] He who just now expansively fulfilled the law by *word and commands*, now does the same by *act and deed*: the law had forbidden the touching of the leper, Levit. v. 3. It was an act which stood on the same ground as the healing on the Sabbath, of which we have so many instances. So likewise the prophets Elijah and Elisha touched the dead in the working of a miracle on them (1 Kings xvii. 21; 2 Kings iv. 34). The same almighty power which suspends natural laws, supersedes ceremonial laws.

Here is a noble example illustrating His own precept so lately delivered, ‘Give to him that asketh thee.’ Again, we can hardly forbear to recognize, in His touching the leper, a deed symbolic of His taking on him, touching, laying hold of, our nature. The same remarkable word is used in the Greek in Luke xiv. 4, “and **taking hold** of him, he healed him,” and in Heb. ii. 16, “He **taketh not hold of angels**, but he **taketh hold** of the seed of Abraham.”

4. See thou tell no man] Either (1) these words were a moral admonition, having respect to the state of the man (teaching him not to boast and seek admiration,” as Chrysostom), for the injunction to silence was not our Lord’s uniform practice (See Mark v. 19,||L.), and in this case they were of lasting obligation, that the cleansed leper **was not** to make his healing a matter of boast hereafter; or (2) they were a cautionary admonition, only binding till he should have shewn himself to the priest, in order to avoid delay in this duty, or any hindrance which might, if the matter should first be blazed abroad, arise to his being pronounced clean, through the malice of the priests; or (3), which I believe to be the true view, our Lord almost uniformly repressed the fame of His miracles, for the reason given in ch. xii. 15–21, that, in accordance with prophetic truth, He might be known as the Messiah not by “wonder-working power, but by the great result of His work upon earth: see ‘ch. xii. 16–19. Thus Apostles always refer primarily to the Resurrection, and only incidentally, if at all, to the wonders and signs. ‘Acts ii, 22–24; iii. 18–16.) These latter were tokens of power common to our Lord and his followers; but in His great conflict, ending in His victory, He trod the winepress alone

shew thyself to the priest] Read Levit. xiv. 182. This command has been used in support of the theory of satisfaction by priestly confession and penance. But even then (Trench on the Miracles, p. 221, where see instances cited) the advocates of it are constrained to acknowledge that Christ alone is the cleanser. It is satisfactory to observe this drawing of parallels between “the Levitical and (popularly so called) Christian priesthood, thus completely shewing the fallacy and untenability of the whole system; all those priests being types, not of future human priests, but of Him, who abideth a Priest for ever in an unchangeable priesthood and in Whom not a class of Christians, but *all* Christians, are in the true sense priests unto God.

a testimony unto them] A **testimony** both *to*, and *against them*. The man disobeyed the injunction, so that our Lord could no more enter the city openly + see Mark i. 45.

5–13.] HEALING OF THE CENTURION’S SERVANT. Luke vii. 1–10, where we have a more detailed account of the former part of this miracle. On the chronological ar-rangement, see Introduction. The centurion did not himself *come* to our Lord, but sent elders of the Jews to Him, who recommended him to His notice as loving their nation, and having built them a synagogue. Such variations, the concise account making a man do *by himself* what the fuller one relates that he *did by another*, are common in all written and oral narrations. In such cases the fuller account is, of course, the stricter one. Augustine, answering Faustas the Manichean, who wished, on account of the words of our Lord in ver. 11, to set aside the whole, and used this variation for that makes the remark, so important in these days, “Does not our human custom fur-nish abundance of such instances? Shall we read, and forget how we speak? Could we that Scripture would speak with us otherwise than in our own manner?” On the non-identity of this miracle with that in John iv. 46 ff, see note there.

5. centurion] he was a *Gentile*, see ver. 10, but one who was deeply attached to the Jews and their religions possibly, though this is uncertain, a of the gate he such term as “*devout*,” “*fearing God*,” is used of him, as commonly of these proselytes; Acts, x. 2 al.).

6.] From Luke we learn that it was “a slave, who was precious to him.” The centurion, perhaps, had *but one* slave, see ver. 9.

8.] The centurion heard that the Lord was coming, Luke vii. 6, and sent friends to Him with this second and still humbler message. He knew and felt himself, as a heathen, to be out of the fold of God, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel; and there-fore unworthy to receive under his roof the Redeemer of Israel.

9.] The meaning is, ‘I know how to obey, being *myself* under authority: and in turn know how others obey, having soldiers under me.’ inferring, ‘if then **I**, in my subordinate station of command, am obeyed, how much more Thou, who art over all, and whom diseases serve as their Master!’ That this is the right interpretation, is shewn by our Lord’s special commendation of his faith, ver. 10.

10. marvelled] to be accepted simply as a fact, as when Jesus rejoiced, wept, was sorrowful; not, as some have foolishly done, to be rationalized away into a mere lesson to *teach us what to admire*. The mysteries of our Lord's humanity are too thus to be sacrificed to the timidity of theologians.

12. the sons] the natural heirs but disinherited by rebellion.

outer darkness] **the darkness outside**, i.e. outside the lighted chamber of the feast, see ch. xxii. 18, and Eph. v. 7, 8. These verses are wanting in St. Luke, and occur when our Lord repeated them on a wholly different occasion, ch. xiii. 28, 29. Compare a remarkable contrast in the Rabbinical books illustrating Jewish pride: "God said to the Israelites, In the world to come I will spread for you a vast table, which the Gentiles shall see and be confounded."

13. was healed] Of what precise disease does not appear. In Luke he was "*ready to die*"—here he is "*sick of the palsy, grievously tormented*." But though these descriptions do not agree with 'the

character of palsy among us, we read of a similar case in 1 Macc. ix. 55, 56: "At that time was Alcimus plagued and his enterprises hindered: for his mouth was stopped, and he was taken with a palsy, so that he could no more speak any thing, nor order any thing concerning his house. So Alcimus died at that time with great torment." The disease in the text may have been an attack of tetanus, which the ancient physicians included under lysis, and which is more common in hot countries than with us. It could hardly have been apoplexy, which usually bereaves of sensation.

14–17.] HEALING OF PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER, AND MANY OTHERS. Mark i. 29–34. Luke iv. 38–41. From the other Evangelists it appears, that our Lord had just healed a demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum: for they both state, 'when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew,' &c. Both Mark and Luke are fuller in their accounts than the text. The expression (of the fever) it **left her**, is common to the three, as is also the circumstance of her ministering *immediately* after: shewing that the fever left her, not, as it would have done if natural means had been used, weak and exhausted, but completely restored.

16.] *at sunset*, Mark ver. 82: Luke ver. 40. From St. Mark we learn that *the whole city was collected at the door*; from St. Luke, that *the devils cried out and said, 'Thou art Christ the Son of God.'* And from both, that *our Lord permitted them not to speak, for they knew Him*. They brought sick in the evening, either because it was cool,—or because the day's work was over, and men could be found to carry them,—or perhaps because it was the sabbath (see Mark i. 21, 29, 82), which ended at sunset.

17.] The exact sense in which these words are quoted is matter of difficulty. Some understand **took** and **bare** as merely 'took away,' and 'healed.' But besides this being a very harsh interpretation of both words, it entirely destroys the force of **Himself**, and makes it explosive. Others suppose it to refer to the personal fatigue, (or even the spiritual exhaustion, [Olshausen,] which perhaps is hardly consistent with sound doctrine,) which our Lord felt by these cures being long protracted into the evening. But believe the true relevancy of the prophecy is to be sought by regarding the miracles generally to have been, as we know so many of them were, lesser and typical outshewings of the great work of bearing the sin of the world, which He came to accomplish; just as diseases themselves, on which those miracles, are all so many testimonies to existence, and types of the effect, of sin. Moreover in these His deeds of mercy, He was 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities:' witness His tears at the grave of and His sighing over the deaf and dumb man, Mark vii. 84. The very act of compassion is (as the name imports) a *suffering with* its object; and if this be true between man and man, how much more strictly so in His case who had taken upon Him the whole burden of the sin of the world, with all its sad train of sorrow and suffering.

18–19. 1.] JESUS CROSSES THE LAKE. INCIDENTS BEFORE EMBARKING. HE STILLS THE STORM. HEALING OF TWO DAEMONIACS IN THE LAND OF THE GADARENES. Mark iv. 35—v. 20: Luke ix. 67–60; viii. 22–39, on which passages compare the notes. 18.) It is obviously the intention of St. Matthew to bind on the following incidents to the occurrence which he had just related.

19.] Both, the following incidents are laced by St. Luke long after, during our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem. For it is quite impossible (with Greswell, Diss. iii. p. 155 sq.) in any common fairness of interpretation, to imagine that two such incidents should have twice happened, and both times have been related together. It is one of those cases where the attempts of the Harmonists do violence to every principle of sound historical criticism. Every such difficulty, instead of being a thing to be wiped out and buried up at all hazards (I am sorry to see, e.g., that Dr. Wordsw. takes no notice, either here or in St. Luke, of the recurrence of the two narratives), is a valuable index and guide to the humble searcher after truth, and is used by him as such (see Introduction).

20. the Son of man] "It is thought that this phrase was taken from Daniel vii. 13, to which passage our Saviour seems to allude in ch. xxvi. 64, and probably Stephen in Acts vii. 56. It appears from John xii. 34, that the Jews understood it to mean

the Messiah: and from Luke xxii. 69, 70, that they considered the *Son of Man* to mean the same as the *Son of God*.” Dr. Burton. It is the name by which the Lord ordinarily in one pregnant word designates Himself as the Messiah—the *Son of God manifested in the flesh of man*—the *second Adam*. And to it belong all those conditions, of humiliation, suffering, and exaltation, which it behoved the Son of Man to go through.

21.] In St. Luke we find, that our Lord *previously commanded him* to follow Him. Clement of Alexandria thus as having been said to *Philip*. But if so, He had long ago ordered Philip to follow Him, taking St. Luke’s order of the occurrence. A tradition of this nature was hardly likely to be wrong; so that perhaps the words **Follow me** are to be taken (as in John xxi. 19, 22) as an admonition occasioned by some slackness or symptom of decadence on the part of the Apostle. The attempt to evade the strong words of our Lord’s command by supposing that to bury my father means, ‘*to reside with my father is death*’ (Theophylact), is evidently futile, since “*first to go and bury*” is plainly said of an *act waiting to be done*; and the reason of our Lord’s rebuke was the peremptory and all-superseding nature of the command “*Follow me*.”

22. the dead] *First* time, as Rev. iii. 1, *spiritually*,—*second, literally* dead. The two meanings are similarly used in one saying by our Lord in John xi. 25, 26. See Heb. vi. 1; ix. 14: and the weighty addition in Luke, ver. 62.

23.] This journey across the lake, with its incidents, is placed by St. Mark and St. Luke after the series of parables commencing with that of the sower, and recorded in ch. xiii. By Mark with a precise Date of sequence: “*the same day, when the even was come*, he saith unto them,” Mark iv. 35.

24. being covered] compare Mark iv. 87: Luke viii. 28. By keeping to the strict imperfect sense, we obviate all necessity for qualifying these words: the ship was becoming covered, &c. All lakes bordered by mountains, and indeed all hilly coasts, are liable to these sudden gusts of wind.

25.] Lord, save us: we perish = *Master, carest thou not that we perish*, Mark iv. 38 = *Master, Master, we perish*, Luke viii. 24. On these and such like variations, notice the following excellent and important remarks of Augustine: “The sense of the disciples waking the Lord and seeking to be saved, is one and the same: nor is it worth while to enquire which of these three was really said to Christ. For whether they said any one of these three, or other words which no one of the Evangelists has mentioned, but of similar import as to the truth of the sense, what matters it?” We may wish that he had always spoken thus. Much useless labour might have been and men’s minds led to the diligent enquiry into the real difficulties of the Gospels, instead of so many spending time in knitting cobwebs. But Augustine himself in the very next sentence descends to the unsatisfactory ground of the Harmonists, *when he adds*. “*Though it may be also, that when many were calling upon Him, all these may have been said, one by one, another by another*.” His mind however was not one to rest contented with such sophisms; and all his deeper and more earnest sayings are in the truer and freer spirit of the above extract. The above remarks are more than ever important, now that a reaction towards the low literal harmonistic view has set in, and the inspiration of the mere letter is set up against those who seek for life in searching the real spirit of the Scriptures.

28.] The time of this rebuke in the text precedes, but in Mark and Luke follows, the stilling of the storm. See the last note. They were of *little* faith, in that they were afraid of perishing while they had on board the slumbering Saviour: they were not *faithless*, for they had recourse to that Saviour to help them. Therefore He acknowledges the faith which they had; answers the prayer of faith, by working a perfect calm: but rebukes them for not having the stronger, firmer faith, to trust Him even when He seemed insensible to their danger.

The symbolic application of this occurrence is too striking to have escaped general notice. The Saviour with the company of His disciples in the ship tossed on the waves, seemed a typical reproduction of the Ark bearing mankind on the flood, and a foreshadowing of the Church tossed by the tempests of this world, but having Him with her always. And the personal application is one of comfort, and strengthening of faith, in danger and doubt.

27. the men] The men who were in the ship, besides our Lord and His disciples.

28.] Among the difficulties attendant on this narrative, the situation and name of the place where the event happened are not the least. Origen discusses the three, *Gerasa*, which he found in the text in his time, but pronounces to be a city of Arabia, having no sea or lake near it,—*Gadara*, which he found in a few MSS., but disapproves, as a city of Judæa, not near any lake or sea with cliffs;—and *Gergesa*, which he says is a city on the lake of Tiberias, with a cliff hanging over the lake, where the spot of the miracle was shewn. Notwithstanding this, it appears very doubtful whether there ever was a town named *Gergesha* (or *sa*) near the lake. There were the Gergashites (Joseph. i. 6. 2) in former days, but their towns had been destroyed by the Israelites at their first irruption, and never, that we hear of, afterwards rebuilt (see Deut. vii. 1: Josh. xxiv. 11). *Gerasa* (now Dscherasch) lies much too far to the East. The town of *Gadara*, alluded to in the text, was a strong chief city in Peræa, opposite Scythopolis and Tiberias to the East, in the mountain, at whose foot were the well-known warm baths. It was on the river Hieromax, and sixty stadia from Tiberias, a Greek city (see raff. to Josephus and Eusebius in my Gr. Test.). It was destroyed in the civil wars of the Jews, and rebuilt by Pompeius, presented by Augustus to King Herod, and after his death

united to the province of Syria. It was one of the ten cities of Decapolis. Burckhardt and others believe that they have found its ruins at Omkeis, near the ridge of the chain which divides the valley of Jordan from that of the sea of Tiberias. The territory of this city might well extend to the shore of the lake. It may be observed, that there is nothing in any of the three accounts to imply that the city was close to the scene of the miracle, or the scene of the miracle close to the herd of swine, or the herd of swine, at the time of their possession, close to the lake. Indeed the expression "*a good way off from them*," ver. 30, implies the contrary with regard to the swine. It appears, from Burckhardt, that there are many tombs in the neighbourhood of the ruins of Gadara to this day, hewn in the rock, and thus capable of affording shelter. It may be well in fairness to observe, that "*Gergesenes*" can hardly have arisen, as sometimes represented, entirely from Origen's conjecture, as it pervades so many MSS. and ancient (it is true, not the *most* ancient) versions. We cannot say that a part of the territory of Gadara may not have been known to those who, like Matthew, were locally intimate with the shores of the lake, by this ancient and generally disused name. Still however, we are, I conceive, bound in a matter of this kind to follow the most ancient extant testimony. See further on the parallel places in Mark and Luke.

two possessed with devils] In Mark v. 2, and Luke viii. 27, but *one* is mentioned. All three Evangelists have some particulars peculiar to themselves; but Mark the most, and the most striking, as having evidently proceeded from an eye-witness. The "*we are many*" of Mark is worth noticing, in reference to the discrepancy of number in the two accounts, as perhaps connected with the mention of more than one by our Evangelist, who omits the circumstance connected with that speech.

exceeding fierce] See the terribly graphic account of St. Mark (v. 3–6). The dæmoniac was without clothes, which though related only by St. Luke (viii. 27), yet, with remarkable consistency, appears from St. Mark's narrative, where he is described as sitting, *clothed*, and in his right mind, at Jesus's feet, after his cure.

so that no man] Peculiar to this Gospel.

29.] before the time, is peculiar to this Gospel: **Son of God**, common to all.

30. a good way off] The Vulgate rendering, "*not far off*," does not seem accordant with the other accounts, both of which imply distance: Mark v. 11: Luke viii. 32. These, especially the first, would seem to imply that the swine were on the hills, and the scene of the miracle at some little distance, on the plain.

31.] St. Mark and St. Luke give, as the ground of this request, that they might not be *sent out of the land = into the abyss*, i.e. out of their permitted residence on earth to torment before the time in the abyss. See note on Luke.

32.] This remarkable narrative brings before us the whole question of DÆMONIACAL POSSESSIONS in the Gospels, which I shall treat here once for all, and refer to this note hereafter.

I would then remark in general, (I. 1) that the Gospel narratives are *distinctly pledged to the historic truth of these occurrences*. Either they are true, or the Gospels are false. For they do not stand in the same, or a similar position, with the discrepancies in detail, so frequent between the Evangelists: but they form part of that general groundwork in which all agree. (2) Nor can it be said that they represent the *opinion of the time*, and use words in accordance with it. This might have been difficult to answer, but that they not only give such expressions as *possessed with devils*, *demonized* (Mark v. 16: Luke viii. 36), and other like ones, but relate to us words *spoken by the Lord Jesus*, in which the *personality and presence of the demons is distinctly implied*. See especially Luke xi. 17–26. Now either our Lord spoke these words, or He did not. If He did not, then we must at once set aside the concurrent testimony of the Evangelists to a plain matter of fact; in other words establish a principle which will overthrow equally every fact related in the Gospels. If He did, it is wholly at variance with any Christian idea of the perfection of truthfulness in Him who was Truth itself, to suppose Him to have used such plain and solemn words repeatedly, before His disciples and the Jews, in encouragement of, and connivance at, a lying superstition. (8) After these remarks, it will be unnecessary to refute that view of dæmoniacal possession which makes it *identical with mere bodily disease*,—as it is included above; but we may observe, that it is every where in the Is distinguished from disease, and in such a way as to shew that, at all events, the two were not in that day confounded. (See ch. ix. 32, 33, and compare Mark vii. 32.) (4) The question then arises, *Granted the plain historical truth of demoniacal pos-session, WHAT WAS IT?* This question, in the suspension, or withdrawal, of the gift of 'discerning of spirits' in the modern Church, is not easy to answer. But we may gather from the Gospel narratives some important ingredients for our description. The dæmoniac was one whose being was strangely interpenetrated ('*possessed*' is the most exact word that could be found) by one or more of those fallen spirits, who are constantly asserted in Scripture (under the name of *daemons*, *evil spirits*, *unclean spirits*, their chief being *the devil or Satan*) to be the enemies and tempters of the souls of men. (See Acts v. 3: John xiii. 2, and *passim*.) He stood in a totally different position from the abandoned wicked man, who morally is given over to the devil. This latter would be a subject for punishment; but the dæmoniac for deepest compassion. There appears to have been in him a *double will and double consciousness*—sometimes the cruel spirit thinking and speaking in him, sometimes his poor crushed self crying out to the Saviour of men for mercy: a terrible advantage taken, and a personal realization, by the malignant powers of evil, of the struggle between sense and conscience in the man of morally divided life. Hence it has been not improbably supposed, that

some of these daemonicacs may have arrived at their dreadful state through various progressive degrees of guilt and sensual abandonment. ‘Lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would often, a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial band between body and soul, may have laid open these un-happy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness.’ (Trench on the Miracles, p. 160.) (5) The frequently urged objection, How comes it that this malady is not *now* among us? admits of an easy answer, even if the assumption be granted. The period of our Lord’s being on earth was certainly more than any other in the history of the world under the dominion of evil. The foundations of man’s moral being were broken up, and the ‘hour and power of darkness’ prevailing. Trench excellently remarks, ‘It was exactly the crisis for such soul-maladies as these, in which the spiritual and bodily should be thus strangely interlinked, and it is nothing wonderful that they should have abounded at that time; for the predominance of certain spiritual maladies at certain epochs of the world’s history which were specially fitted for their generation, with their gradual decline and disappearance in others less congenial to them, is a fact itself admitting no manner of question’ (pp. 162, 163). Besides, as the same writer goes on to observe, there can be no doubt that the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and the continual testimony of Jesus borne by the Church in her preaching and ordinances, have broken and kept down, in some measure, the grosser manifestations of the power of Satan. (See Luke x. 18.) But (6) the assumption contained in the objection above must not be thus unreservedly granted. We cannot tell in how many cases of insanity the malady may not even now be traced to direct daemonicac possession. And, finally, (7) the above view, which I am persuaded is the only one honestly consistent with any kind of belief in the truth of the Gospel narratives, will offend none but those who deny the existence of the world of spirits altogether, and who are continually striving to narrow the limits of our belief in that which is invisible; a view which at every step involves difficulties far more serious than those from which it attempts to escape. But (II.) a fresh difficulty is here found in the latter part of the narrative, in which the devils *enter into the swine*, and *their destruction follows*. (1) Of the *reason* of this permission, we surely are not competent judges. Of this however we are sure, that ‘if this granting of the request of the evil spirits helped in any way the cure of the man, caused them to resign their hold on him more easily, mitigated the paroxysm of their going forth (see Mark ix. 26), this would have been motive enough. Or still more probably, it may have been necessary, for the permanent healing of the man, that he should have an outward evidence and testimony that the hellish powers which held him in bondage had quitted him.’ (Trench, p. 172.) (2) The destruction of the swine is not for a moment to be thought of in the matter, as if that were an act repugnant to the merciful character of our Lord’s miracles. It finds its parallel in the cursing of the fig-tree (ch. xxi. 18–22); and we may well think that, if God has appointed so many animals daily to be slaughtered for the sustenance of men’s bodies, He may also be pleased to destroy animal life when He sees fit for the liberation or instruction of their souls. Besides, if the confessedly far greater evil of the possession of *men* by evil spirits, and all the misery thereupon attendant, was permitted in God’s inscrutable purposes, surely much more this lesser one. Whether there may have been special reasons in this case, such as the contempt of the Mosaic law by the keepers of the swine, we have no means of judging: but it is at least possible. (3) The fact itself related raises a question in our minds, which, though we cannot wholly answer, we may yet approximate to the solution of. How can we imagine the bestial nature capable of the reception of daemonic influence? If what has been cited above be true, and the unchecked indulgence of sensual appetite afforded an inlet for the powers of evil to possess the human demoniac, then we have their influence joined to that part of man’s nature which he has in common with the brutes that perish, the *animal and sensual soul*. We may thus conceive that the same animal and sensual soul in the brute may be receptive of similar daemonicac influence. But with this weighty difference: that whereas in man there is an individual, immortal spirit, to which alone belongs his personality and deliberative will and reason, and there was ever in him, as we have seen, a struggle and a protest against this tyrant power; the oppressed soul, the real ‘I,’ calling out against the usurper—

this would not be the case with the brute, in whom this personality and reflective consciousness is wanting. And the result in the text confirms our view; for as soon as the demons enter into the swine, their ferocity, having no self-conserving balance as in the case of man, impels them headlong to their own destruction.

34.] This request, which is related by all three Evangelists, was probably not from humility, but for fear the miraculous powers of our Lord should work them still more worldly loss. For the additional particulars of this miracle, see Mark v. 15, 16, 18–20; Luke vii. 35, and notes.

Matthew: Chapter 9

IX. 1.] Certainly this verse should be the sequel of the history in the last chapter. It is not connected with the miracle following;—which is placed by St. Luke at a different time, but with the indefinite introduction of “*it came to pass on a certain day*.”

his own city] Capernaum, where our Lord now dwelt: cf. ch. iv. 13.

2–8.] HEALING OF A PARALYTIC AT CAPERNAUM. Mark ii. 1–12: Luke v. 17–26, in both of which the account is more particular.

2. their faith] Namely, in letting him down through the roof, because the whole house and space round the door was full, Mark ii. 4 their must be supposed to include the sick man, who was at least a consenting party to the bold step which they took. These words are common to the three Evangelists, as also “*thy sins be forgiven.*”

Neander has some excellent remarks on this man’s disease. Either it was the natural consequence of sinful indulgence, or by its means the feeling of sinfulness and guilt was more strongly aroused in him, and he recognized the misery of his disease as the punishment of his sins. At all events spiritual and bodily pain seem to have been connected and interchanged within him, and the former to have received accession of strength from the presence of the latter. Schleiermacher supposes the haste of these bearers to have originated in the prospect of our Lord’s speedy departure thence; but, as Neander observes, we do not know enough of the paralytic’s own state to be able to say whether there may not have been some cause for it in the man himself.

4. knowing] lit., **seeing:** viz. by the spiritual power indwelling in Him: See John ii. 24, 25. No other interpretation of such passages is admissible. St. Mark’s expression, “*perceived in his spirit,*” is more precise and conclusive. From **wherefore** to **thine house** is common (nearly verbatim) to the three Evangelists.

5.] “In our Lord’s argument it must be carefully noted, that He does not ask, *which is easiest, to forgive sins, or to raise a sick man*—for it could not be affirmed that that of forgiving was easier than this of healing—but, which is easiest, to *claim this power or that, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?* That (i. e. the former) is easiest, and I will now prove my right to say it, by saying with effect and with an outward consequence setting its seal to my truth, the harder word, Arise and walk. By doing that, which is capable of being put to the proof, I will vindicate my right and power to do that which in its very nature is incapable of being proved. By these visible tides of God’s grace I will give you to know in what direction the great under-currents of His love are setting, and that both are obedient to My word. From this, which I will now do openly and before you all, you may conclude that it is ‘no robbery’: (Phil. ii. 6, but see note there) upon my part to claim also the power of forgiving men their sins.” Trench on the Miracles, p. 206.

6. the Son of man] The Messiah: an expression regarded by the Jews as equivalent to “*the Christ, the Son of God,*” ch. xxvi. 63. See also John v. 27. “The Alexandrian Fathers, in their conflict with the Nestorians, made use of this passage in proof of the entire transference which there was of all the properties of Christ’s divine nature to His human; so that whatever one had, was so far common, that it might also be predicated of the other. It is quite true that had not the two natures Been indissolubly knit together in a single Person, no such language could have been used; yet I should rather suppose that ‘Son of Man’ being the standing title whereby the Lord was well pleased to designate Himself, bringing out by it that He was at once one with humanity, and the crown of humanity, He does not so use it that the title is every where to be pressed, but at times simply as equivalent to Messiah.” Trench, p. 208.

on earth] Distinguished from “*in heaven,*” as in ch. xvi. 19; xviii. 18. Bengel finely remarks, “This saying savours of heavenly origin.” The Son of Man, as God manifest in man’s flesh, has on man’s earth that power, which in its fountain and essence belongs to God in heaven. And this not by delegation, but “because He (being God) is the Son of Man.” John v. 27.

then saith he] See a similar interchange of the persons in construction, Gen. iii. 22, 23.

8. unto men] Not plur. for sing. ‘*to a man,*’ nor, ‘*for the benefit of men;*’ but to **mankind**. They regarded this wonder-working as something by God granted to men—to mankind; and without supposing that *they* had before them the full meaning of their words, those words were true in the very highest sense. See John xvii. 8. In Mark they say, “*We never saw it in this fashion:*” in Luke, “*We have seen strange things to-day.*”

9–17.] THE CALLING OF MATTHEW: THE FEAST CONSEQUENT ON IT: ENQUIRY OF JOHN’ S DISCIPLES RESPECTING FASTING:—AND OUR LORD’ S ANSWER. Mark ii. 13–22: Luke v. 27–39. Our Lord was going out to the sea to teach, Mark, ver. 13. All three Evangelists connect this calling with the preceding miracle, and the subsequent entertainment. The real difficulty of the narrative is the question as to the identity of Matthew in the text, and Levi in Mark and Luke. I shall state the arguments on both sides. (1) There can be no question that *the three narratives relate to the same event.* They are identical almost verbatim: inserted between narratives indisputably relating the same occurrences. (2) The almost general consent of all ages has supposed the *two persons the same.*

On the other hand, (3) *our Gospel makes not the slightest allusion to the name of Levi*, either here, or in ch. x. 3, where we find “*Matthew the publican*” among the Apostles, clearly identified with the subject of this narrative: whereas the *other two Evangelists*, having in this narrative spoken of Levi in their enumerations of the Apostles (Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15), *mention Matthew without any note of identification with the Levi called on this occasion.* This is almost inexplicable, on the supposition of his having borne both names. (4) *Early tradition separates the two persons.* Clement of Alexandria, quoting from Heracleon the Gnostic, mentions Matthew, Philip, Thomas, Levi, and many others, as eminent men who had not suffered martyrdom from a public confession of the faith. (5) Again, Origen, when Celsus has called the Apostles publicans and sailors,

after acknowledging Matthew the publican, adds, “And there may be also Levi a publican among Jesus’s followers. But he was not of the number of His Apostles, except according to some copies of Mark’s Gospel.” It is not quite clear from this, whether the copies of Mark substituted Levi’s (?) name for Matthew’s, or for some other: but most probably the latter. (6) It certainly would hence appear, as if there were in ancient times an idea that the two names belonged to distinct persons. But in the very passages where it is mentioned, a confusion is evident, which prevents us from drawing any certain conclusion able to withstand the general testimony to the contrary, arising from the *prima facie* view of the Gospel narrative. (7) It is probable enough that St. Matthew, in his own Gospel, would *mention only his apostolic name*, seeing that St. Mark and St. Luke also give him this name, *when they speak of him as an Apostle*. (8) It is remarkable, as an indication that St. Matthew’s frequently unprecise manner of narration did not proceed from want of information,—that in this case, when he of all men must have been best informed, his own account is the least precise of the three. (9) With regard to the narrative itself in the text, we may observe, that this solemn and peculiar call seems (see ch. iv. 19, 22) *hardly to belong to any but an Apostle*; and that, as in the case of Peter, it here also *implies a previous acquaintance and discipleship*. (10) We are told in Luke v. 29, that Levi *made him a great feast in his house*; and, similarly, Mark has “*in his house*.” The narrative in our text is so closely identical with that in Mark, that it is impossible to suppose, with Greswell, that a different feast is intended. The arguments by which he supports his view are by no means weighty. From the words **the house**, he infers that the house was not that of Matthew, but that in which our Lord usually dwelt, which he supposes to be intended in several other places. But surely the article might be used without any such significance, or designating any particular house,—as would be very likely if Matthew himself is here the narrator. Again, Greswell presses to verbal accuracy the terms used in the accounts, and attempts to shew them to be inconsistent with one another. But surely the time is past for such dealing with the historic text of the Gospels; and, besides, he has overlooked a great inconsistency in his own explanation, viz. that of making in the second instance, according to him, Scribes and Pharisees present at the feast given by a Publican, and exclaiming against that which they themselves were doing. It was not *at*, but *after* the feast that the discourse in vv. 11–17 took place. And his whole inference, that the *great feast* must be the great meal in the day, and consequently in the evening, hangs on too slender a thread to need refutation. The real difficulty, insuperable to a Harmonist, is the connexion here of the raising of Jairus’s daughter with this feast: on which see below, ver. 18.

11.] These Pharisees appear to have been the Pharisees *of the place*: Luke has “*their Scribes and Pharisees*.” The very circumstances related shew that this remonstrance cannot have taken place *at* the feast. The Pharisees say the words to the disciples: our Lord hears it. This denotes an occasion when our Lord and the disciples were present, but not surely intermixed with the *great company of publicans*.

12. whole... sick] Both words, in the application of the saying, must be understood *subjectively* (an ironical concession, as Calvin, Meyer): as referring to their respective opinions of themselves; as also **righteous** and **sinners**, ver. 13:—not as though the Pharisees were *objectively* either “whole” or “righteous,” however much objective truth “sick” and “sinners” may have had as applied to the publicans and sinners.

13.] The whole of this discourse, with the exception of the citation, is almost verbatim in Mark, and (with the addition of “*to repentance*”) Luke also.

14.] According to the detailed narrative of St. Mark (ii. 18) it was the disciples of John *and of the Pharisees* who ed this question. St. Luke continues the discourse as that of the former Pharisees and Scribes. This is one of those instances where the three accounts imply and confirm one another, and the hints incidentally dropped by one Evangelist form the prominent assertions of the other.

The fasting often of the disciples of John must not be understood as done in mourning for their master’s imprisonment, but as belonging to the asceticism which John, as a preacher of repentance, inculcated. On the fasts of the Pharisees, see Lightfoot in loc.

15. mourn] = “*fast*,” Mark and Luke. The difference of these two words is curiously enough one of Greswell’s arguments for the non-identity of the narratives. Even if there were any force in such an argument, we might fairly set against it that the Greek word rendered **taken** is common to all three Evangelists, and occurs no where else in the N.T.

the bridegroom] This appellation of Himself had from our Lord peculiar appropriateness as addressed to the disciples of John. Their master had himself used the figure, and the very word in John iii. 29. Our Lord, in calling Himself the Bridegroom, announces the fulfilment in Him of a whole cycle of O.T. prophecies and figures: very probably with *immediate* reference to Hosea ii., that prophet having been cited just before: but also to many other passages, in which the Bride is the Church of God, the Bridegroom the God of Israel. See especially Isa. liv. 5–10 Heb. and E.V. As Stier (i. 320, edn. 2) observes, the article **the** here must not be considered as merely introduced on account of the parable, as usual elsewhere, but the parable itself to have sprung out of the emphatic name, “**the bridegroom**.” The **sons of the bridechamber** are more than the mere guests at the wedding: they are the bridegroom’s friends who go and fetch the bride.

the days will come] How sublime and peaceful is this early announcement by our Lord of the bitter passage before Him! Compare the words of our Christian poet: ‘measuring with calm presage the infinite descent.’ It has been asked, “What man ever looked so calmly, so lovingly, from such an height down to such a depth!”

shall be] more properly, **shall have been taken from them:** when His departure shall have taken place.

and then shall (better, will) they fast] These words are not a declaration of a duty, or of an ordinance, as binding on the Church in the days of her Lord’s absence: the whole spirit of what follows is against such a supposition: but they declare, in accordance with the parallel word “*mourn*,” that in those days they shall have *real occasion* for fasting; sorrow enough; see John xvi. 20:—a fast of God’s own appointing in the solemn purpose of His will respecting them, not one of their own arbitrary laying on. This view is strikingly brought out in Luke, where the question is, “Can ye *make* the sons, &c. *fast*,” i.e. by your rites and ordinances? “but, &c.” and *then shall they fast*: there is no constraint in this latter case: they shall (will) fast. And this furnishes us with an analogous rule for the fasting of the Christian life: that it should be the genuine offspring of inward and spiritual sorrow, of the sense of the absence of the Bridegroom in the soul,—not the forced and stated fasts of the old covenant, now passed away. It is an instructive circumstance that in the Reformed Churches, while those stated fasts which were retained at their first emergence from Popery are in practice universally disregarded even by their best and holiest sons, —nothing can be more affecting and genuine than the universal and solemn observance of any real occasion of fasting placed before them by God’s Providence: It is also remarkable how uniformly a strict attention to artificial and prescribed fasts accompanies a hankering after the hybrid ceremonial system of Rome.

Meyer remarks well that **then** refers to a definite point of time, not to the whole subsequent period.

16.] Our Lord in these two parables contrasts the old and the new, the legal and evangelic dispensations, with regard to the point on which He was questioned. The idea of the *wedding* seems to run through them; the preparation of the robe, the pouring of the new wine, are connected by this as their leading idea to one another and to the preceding verses.

The old system of prescribed fasts for fasting’s sake must not be patched with the new and sound piece; the complete and beautiful whole of Gospel light and liberty must not be engrafted as a mere addition on the worn-out system of ceremonies. For the *filling it up*, the completeness of it, the new patch, by its weight and its strength pulls away the neighbouring weak and loose threads by which it holds to the old garment, and a worse rent is made. Stier notices the prophetic import of this parable: in how sad a degree the Lord’s saying has been fulfilled in the History of the Church, by the attempts to patch the new, the Evangelic state, upon the old worn-out ceremonial system. ‘Would,’ he adds, ‘that we could say in the interpretation, as in the parable, *No man doeth this!*’ The robe must be *all new*, all consistent: old things, old types, old ceremonies, old burdens, sacrifices, priests, sabbath, and holy days, all are passed away: behold all things are become new.

a worse rent is made] a worse rent, because the old, original rent was included within the circumference of the *patch*, whereas this is outside it.

17.] This parable is not a repetition of the previous one, but a stronger and more exact setting forth of the truth in hand. As is frequently our Lord’s practice in His parables, He advances from the immediate subject to something more spiritual and higher, and takes occasion from answering a cavil, to preach the sublimest truths. The garment was something *outward*; this wine is *poured in*, is something *inward*, the spirit of the system. The former parable respected the outward freedom and simple truthfulness of the New Covenant; this regards its inner spirit, its pervading principle. And admirably does the parable describe the vanity of the attempt to keep the new wine in the *old skin*, the old ceremonial man, unrenewed in the spirit of his mind: *the skins are broken*: the new wine is something too living and strong for so weak a moral frame; it shatters the fair outside of ceremonial seeming; and *the wine runneth out*, the spirit is lost; the man is neither a blameless Jew nor a faithful Christian; both are spoiled. And then the result: not merely the damaging, but the utter destruction of the vessel,—*the skins perish*. According to some expositors, the *new patch* and *new wine* denote the *fasting*; the *old garment* and *old bottles*, the *disciples*.

This view is stated and defended at some length by Neander; but I own seems to me, as to De Wette, far-fetched. For how can fasting be called *a patch of new* (unfulled) *cloth*, or how compared to new wine? And Neander himself, when he comes to explain the important addition in Luke (on which see Luke v. 39, and note), is obliged to change the meaning, and understand the new wine of the spirit of the Gospel. It was and is the custom in the East to carry their wine on a journey in *leather bottles*, generally of goats’ skin, sometimes of asses’ or camels’ skin. **18–26.] RAISING OF JAEIRUS’S DAUGHTER, AND HEALING OF A WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD.** Mark v. 21–43; Luke viii. 41–56. In Luke and Mark this miracle follows immediately after the casting out of the devils at Gadara, and our Lord’s recrossing the lake to Capernaum; but without any precise note of time as here. He may well have been by the sea (as seems implied by Mark and Luke), when the foregoing conversation with the disciples of John and the Pharisees took place. The account in the text is the most concise of the three; both Mark and Luke, but especially the latter, giving many additional particulars. The miracle forms a very instructive point of comparison between the three Gospels.

18. a certain ruler] A *ruler of the synagogue*, named Jaeirus. In all except the connecting words, “*while he spake these things unto them,*” the account in the text is summary, and deficient in particularity. I have therefore reserved full annotation for the account, in Luke, which see throughout.

is even now dead] She was *not dead*, but *dying*; at the last extremity. St. Matthew, omitting the message from the ruler’s house (Mark v. 35; Luke viii. 49), gives the matter summarily in these words.

20.] The “**hem**,” see ref. Num., was the fringe or tassel which the Jews were commanded to wear on each corner of their outer garment, as a sign that they were to be holy unto God. The article, as in ch. xiv. 36, designates the particular tassel which was touched.

22.] The cure was effected on her touching our Lord’s garment, Mark v. 27–29; Luke viii. 44. And our Lord enquired who touched Him (Mark, Luke), for He perceived that virtue had gone out of Him (Luke). She, knowing what had been done to her, came fearing and trembling, and told Him all.

24.] No inference can be drawn from *these words* as to the fact of the maiden’s actual death; for our Lord uses equivalent words respecting Lazarus (John xi. 11). And if it be answered that there He explains the sleep to *mean death*, we answer, that this explanation is only in consequence of the disciples misunderstanding his words. In both cases the words are most probably used *with reference to the speedy awaken-ing which was to follow*; “Think not the damsel dead, but sleeping; for she shall soon return to life.” Luke: appends, after “*they laughed him to scorn,*”—“*knowing that she was dead,*” in which words there is at least no recognition by the Evangelist of a mere apparent death. **25.] took her by the hand** is common to the three Evangelists. From Luke we learn that our Lord said “*Maid, arise;*” from Mark we have the words He actually uttered, Talitha Cum: from both we learn that our Lord only took with him Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden,—that she was twelve years old,—and that our Lord commanded that something should be given her to eat. She was an *only* daughter, Luke viii. 42.

21–31.] HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN. Peculiar to Matthew.

27.] departed thence is too vague to be taken as a fixed note of sequence; for “*thence*” may mean the house of Jaeirus, or the town itself, or even that part of the country,—as ver. 26 has generalized the locality, and implied some pause of time.

son of David] a title of honour, and of recognition as the Messiah. It is remarkable that, in all the three narratives of giving sight to the blind in this Gospel, the title **Son of David** appears.

28. the house] perhaps, as Euthymius, the house of some disciple. Or, the house which our Lord inhabited at Capernaum; or perhaps the expression need not mean any particular house, merely, as we sometimes use the expression, *the house*, as opposed to *the open air*.

to do this] i.e. the healing, implied in “*have mercy on us.*”

29.] Touching, or anointing the eyes, was the ordinary method which our Lord took of impressing on the blind the action of the divine power which healed them. Ch. xx. 34: Mark viii. 25: John ix. 6. In this miracle however we have this peculiar feature, that no direct word of power passes from our Lord, but a relative concession, making that which was done *a measure of the faith* of the blind men: and from the result the degree of their faith appears. Stier remarks, “We may already notice, in the history of this first period of our Lord’s ministry, that, from having at first yielded immediately to the request for healing, He begins, by degrees, to prove and exercise the faith of the applicants.”

30. straitly charged] The word is said to mean “*to command with threatening,*” “*to enjoin austerity.*” The purpose of our Lord’s earnestness appears to have been twofold: (1) that He might not be so occupied and overpressed with applications as to have neither time nor strength for the preaching of the Gospel: (2) to prevent the already-excited people from taking some public measure of recognition, and thus arousing the malice of the Pharisees before His hour was come.

No doubt the two men were guilty of an act of disobedience in thus breaking the Lord’s solemn injunction: for obedience is better than sacrifice; the humble observance of the word of the Lord, than the most laborious and wide-spread will-worship after man’s own mind and invention. Trench (Miracles, p. 197) well remarks, that the fact of almost all the Romish interpreters having applauded this act, “is very characteristic, and rests on very deep differences.”

32–34.] HEALING OF A DUMB DAEMONIAC. *Peculiar to Matthew.* The word **as they went out** places this miracle in direct connexion with the foregoing. This narration has a singular affinity with that in ch. xii. 22, or still more with its parallel in Luke xi. 14. In both, the same expression of wonder follows; the same calumny of the Pharisees; only that in ch. xii. the

dæmoniac is said (not in Luke xi.) to have been likewise blind. These circumstances, coupled with the immediate connexion of *this* miracle with the cure of the blind men, and the mention of ‘the Son of David’ in both, have led some to suppose that the account in ch. xii. is a repetition, or slightly differing version of the account in our text, intermingled also with the preceding healing of the blind. But the supposition seems unnecessary,—as, the habit of the Pharisees once being to ascribe our Lord’s expulsion of devils to Beelzebub, the repetition of the re-mark would be natural:—and the other coincidences, though considerable, are not exact enough to warrant it.

This was a dumbness *caused* by dæmoniacal possession: for the difference between this and the natural infirmity of a deaf and dumb man, see Mark vii. 31–37.

33. so seen] viz. the casting out of devils:—‘*never was seen to be followed by such results as those now manifested.*’ See above.

35–38.] OUR LORD’S COMPASSION FOR THE MULTITUDE. *Peculiar to Matthew.* In the same way as ch. iv, 23–25 introduces the Sermon on the Mount, so do these verses the calling and commissioning of the Twelve. These *general descriptions* of our Lord’s going about and teaching at once *remove all exactness of date from the occurrence which follows*—as taking place at some time during the circuit and teaching just described. Both the Sermon on the Mount and this discourse are introduced and closed with these marks of indefiniteness as to time. This being the case, we must have recourse to the other Evangelists, by whose account it appears (as indeed may be implied in ch. x. 1), that the Apostles *had called to their distinct office some time before this.* (See Mark iii. 16: Luke vi. 13.) After their calling, and selection, they probably remained with our Lord for some time before they were sent out upon their mission.

36. the multitudes] Wherever He went, in all the cities.

harassed] plagued,—viz. literally, with weariness in following Him; or spiritually, with the tyranny of the Scribes and Pharisees, their *heavy burdens*, ch. xxiii. 4,

scattered abroad] neglected, cast hither and thither, as sheep would be who had wandered from their pasture. The context shews that our Lord’s compassion was excited by their being without competent spiritual leaders and teachers.

37.] The *harvest* was primarily that of the Jewish people, the multitudes of whom before Him excited the Lord’s compassion. Chrysostom remarks that we see not only our Lord’s freedom from vainglory, in sending out his disciples rather than drawing all notice to Himself, but His wisdom, in giving them this preliminary practice for their future work: making, as he expresses it, *Palestine a palestra* for the world.

The Lord, says Chrysostom, having given this command, does not join them in such a prayer, but Himself sends them out as labourers—shewing plainly that He Himself is the Lord of the harvest, and recalling to them the Baptist’s image of the threshing-floor, and One who shall purge it.

Matthew: Chapter 10

X. 1–XI. 1.] MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES. Mark vi. 7–13: Luke ix. 1–6,—for the *sending out* of the Apostles: Mark iii. 13–19: Luke vi. 13–16,—for their *names*. On the characteristic differences between this discourse and that delivered to the Seventy (Luke x. 1 ff.) see notes there.

Notice, that this is not the *choosing*, but merely the *mission* of the twelve. The choosing had taken place some time before, but is not any where distinctly detailed by the Evangelists.

2.] We have in the N.T. *four* catalogues of the Apostles: the present one,—and those at Mark iii. 16,—Luke vi. 14,—Acts i. 13. All seem to follow one common out-line, but fill it up very differently. The following table will shew the agreements and differences:—

	Matthew x. 2.	Mark iii. 16.	Luke vi. 14.	Acts i. 13.
1		Simon Peter		
2	Andrew	James	Andrew	John
3	James	John	James	James
4	John	Andrew	John	Andrew

5	Philip			
6	Bartholomew			Thomas
7	Thomas	Matthew		Bartholomew
8	Matthew	Thomas		Matthew
9	James (the son) of Alphaeus.			
10	Lebbæus	Thaddæus	Simon called the Zelotes	Simon Zelotes
11	Simon of Cananæan		Judas (the bro.) of James.	
12	Judas Iscariotes	Judas Iscarioth		Vacant.

From this it appears (1), that in all four *three classes* are enumerated, and that each class contains (assuming at present the identity of Lebbæus with Thaddæus, and of Thaddæus with Judas (the brother of James), the *same persons* in all four, but in different order, with the following exceptions:—that (2) *Peter, Philip, James (the son?) of Alph æ us*, and *Judas Iscariot* hold the same places in all four. (3) That in the *first* class the two arrangements are (*a*) that of Matt. and Luke (Gospel),—*Peter and Andrew, brothers; James and John, brothers*;—i. e. according to their order of calling and connexion, and with reference to their being sent out in couples, Mark vi. 7: (*b*) Mark and Luke (Acts),—*Peter, James, John*, (the three principal,) and *Andrew*;—i. e. according to their personal pre-eminence. In the *second* class (*c*), that of Matt., Mark, and Luke (Gospel),—*Philip and Bartholomew, Mat-thew and Thomas*,—i. e. in *couples*: (*d*) Luke (Acts),—*Philip, Thomas, Barth. Matthew* (reason uncertain). In the *third* class (*e*), Matt. and Mark,—*James (the son?) of Alph æ us* and (*Lebb.*) *Thaddeus, Simon the Canan æ an and Judas Iscariot*; i.e. in *couples*: (*f*) Luke (Gosp. and Acts) *James (the son?) of Alph æ us, Simon Zelo-tes, Judas (the brother?) of James and Judas Iscariot* (uncertain). (*g*) Thus in *all four*, the leaders of the three classes are *the same*, viz. *Peter, Philip, and James (the son?) of Alph æ us*; and the traitor is always last. (4) It would appear then that the only difficulties are these two: the identity of Lebbæus with Thaddæus, and with Judas (the brother?) of James, and of Simon the Cananæan with Simon Zelotes. These will be discussed under the names.

The first] Not only as regards arrangement, or mere priority of calling, but as first in rank among equals. This is clearly shewn from James and John and Andrew being set next, and Judas Iscariot the last, in all the catalogues. We find Simon Peter, not only in the lists of the Apostles, but also in their history, prominent on various occasions before the rest. Sometimes he *speaks in their name* (Matt. xix. 27: Luke xii. 41); sometimes *answers when all are addressed* (Matt. xvi. 16[]); sometimes our Lord addresses him as *principal*, even among the three favoured ones (Matt. xxvi. 40: Luke xxii. 31); sometimes he is addressed by others as *representing the whole* (Matt. xvii. 24: Acts ii. 37). He appears as the *organ of the Apostles* after our Lord's ascension (Acts i. 15; ii. 14; iv. 8; v. 29): the first speech, and apparently that which decided the Council, is spoken by him, Acts xv. 7. All this accords well with the bold and energetic character of Peter, and originated in the unerring discernment and appointment of our Lord Himself, who saw in him a person adapted to take precedence of the rest in the founding of His Church, and shutting (Acts v. 3, 9) and opening (Acts ii. 14, 41; x. 5, 46) the doors of the kingdom of Heaven. That however no such idea was current among the Apostles as that he was destined to be the *Primate of the future Church*, is as clear as the facts above mentioned. For (1) *no trace of such a pre-eminence is found in all the Epistles of the other Apostles*; but when he is mentioned, it is either, as 1 Cor. ix. 5, as one of the Apostles, one example among many, but in no wise the chief;—or as in Gal. ii. 7, 8, with a distinct account of a peculiar province of duty and preaching being allotted to him, viz. the apostleship of the circumcision (see 1 Pet. i. 1,) as distinguished from Paul, to whom was given the apostleship of the uncircumcision;—or as in Gal. ii. 9, as one of the principal *pillars*, together with James and John;—or as in Gal. ii. 11, as subject to rebuke from Paul as from an equal. And (2) *wherever by our Lord Himself the future constitution of His Church is alluded to, or by the Apostles its actual constitution, no hint of any such primacy is given* (see note on Matt. xvi. 18), but the whole college of Apostles are spoken of as absolutely equal. Matt. xix. 27, 28; xx. 26, 28: Eph. ii. 20, and many other places. Again (3) *in the two Epistles which we have from his own hand, there is nothing for, but every thing against, such a supposition*. He exhorts the presbyters as being their co-presbyter (1 Pet. v. 1): describes himself as a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: addresses his second Epistle to them that have obtained the like precious faith with ourselves (2 Pet. i. 1): and makes not the slightest allusion to any pre-eminence over the other Apostles.

So that **first** here must be understood as signifying the prominence of Peter among the Apostles, as well as his early calling. (See John i. 42.)

called Peter] Or Cephas, so named by our Lord Himself (John as above) at His first meeting with him, and again more solemnly, and with a direct reference to the meaning of the name, Matt. xvi. 18.

Andrew] He, in conjunction with John (see note on John i. 37–41), was a disciple of the Baptist, and both of them followed our Lord, on their Master pointing Him out as the Lamb of God. They did not however from that time constantly accompany Him, but received a more solemn calling (see Matt. iv. 17–22: Luke v. 1–11)—i the narrative of which Peter is prominent, and so *first* called as an Apostle, at least of those four.

James (the son) of Zebedee, and John his brother] Partners in the fishing trade with Peter and Andrew, Luke v. 10.

3. Philip, and Bartholomew] Philip was called by our Lord the second day after the visit of Andrew and John, and the day after the naming of Peter. He was also of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, James and John.

Andrew and Philip are Greek names. See John xii. 20–22.

Bartholomew, i.e. in Heb., *son of Talmai or Tolom æ us*, has been generally supposed to be the same with *Nathanael of Cana in Galilee*; and with reason: for (1) the name Bartholomew is not his own name, but a patronymic:— (2) He follows next in order, as *Nathanael*, in John i. 46, to the Apostles just mentioned, with the same formula which had just been used of Philip's own call (ver. 44),— “*Philip findeth Nathanael*.”— (3) He is there, as here, and in Mark and Luke (Gospel), *in connexion with Philip* (that he was his *brother*, was conjectured by Dr. Donaldson; but rendered improbable by the fact that John, in the case of Andrew a few verses above, expressly says “*he findeth his own brother Simon*,” whereas in ver. 46 no such specification occurs):— (4) in John xxi. 2, at the appearance of our Lord on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, Nathanael is mentioned as present, where seven apostles (“*disciples*”) are recounted.

Thomas, and Matthew the Publican] Thomas, in Greek *Didymus* (the twin). John xi. 16; xx. 24; xxi. 2.

Matthew the publican is clearly by this appellation identified with the Matthew of ch. ix. 9. We hear nothing of him, except in these two passages. Dr. Donaldson believed Matthew and Thomas to have been twin brothers. Eusebins preserves a tradition that Thomas's real name was Judas.

James (the son) of Alphæus] From John xix. 25, some infer (but see note there), that Mary the (wife) of Clopas was sister of Mary the mother of our Lord. From Mark xv. 40, that Mary was the mother of James “*the little*,” which may be this James. Hence it would appear, if these two passages point to the same person, that Alphæus = Clopas. And indeed the two Greek names are but different ways of expressing the Hebrew name. If this be so, then this James the Less *may possibly be “the brother of the Lord”* mentioned Gal. i. 19 apparently as an apostle, and one of “*His brethren*” mentioned Matt. xiii. 55 (where see note) (?). But on the difficulties attending this view, see note on John vii. 5.

Lebbæus] Much difficulty rests on this name, both from the various readings, and the questions arising from the other lists. The received reading appears to be a conjunction of the two ancient ones, Lebbæus and Thaddæus: the latter of these having been introduced from Mark: where, however, one of the ancient MSS. has *Lebbæus*. Whichever of these is the true reading, the Apostle himself has generally been supposed to be identical with “*Judas of James*” in both Luke's catalogues, i.e. (see note there) Judas the brother (Dr. Donaldson supposed *son*: see note on Luke xxiv. 13) of James, and so son of Alpheus, and commonly supposed to be (?) one of the brethren of the Lord named Matt. xiii. 55. In John xiv. 22 we have a ‘Judas, not Iscariot,’ among the Apostles: and the catholic epistle is written by a ‘Judas brother of James.’ What in this case the names Lebbæus and Thaddæus are, is impossible to say. So that the whole rests on conjecture; which however does not contradict any known fact, and may be allowed as the only escape from the difficulty.

4. Simon the Cananæan] This is not a local name, but is derive from *Canan*, which is equivalent to *Zelotes* (Luke, Gospel and Acts). We may therefore suppose that before his conversion he belonged to the sect of the *Zealots*, who after the example of Phinehas (Num. xxv. 7, 8) took justice into their own hands, and punished offenders against the law. This sect eventually brought upon Jerusalem its destruction.

Judas Iscariot] Son of Simon (John vi. 71; [xii. 4 various reading;] xiii. 2, 26). Probably a native of Kerioth in Juda, Josh. xv. 25. *Ish Kerioth*, a man of Kerioth, as *Istobus*, a man of Tob, Joseph. Antt. vii. 6. 1. That the name Iscariot cannot be a surname, as Bp. Middleton supposes, the expression “*Judas Iscariot the son of Simon*,” used in all the above places of John, clearly proves. Dr. Donaldson assumed it as certain that the Simon last mentioned was the father of Judas Iscariot. But surely this is very uncertain, in the case of so common a name as Simon.

5. saying] If we compare this verse with ch. xi. 1, there can be little doubt that this discourse of our Lord was *delivered at one time* and that, the *first sending of the Twelve*. How often its solemn injunctions may have been repeated on similar occasions we cannot say: many of them reappear at the sending of the Seventy in Luke x. 2 ff.

Its primary reference is to the *then mission of the Apostles to prepare His way*; but it includes, in the germ instructions prophetically delivered for the ministers and missionaries of the Gospel to the *end of time*. It may be divided into THREE GREAT PORTIONS, in each of which different departments of the subject are treated, but which follow in natural sequence on one another. In the FIRST of these (vv. 5–15), our Lord, taking up the position of the messengers whom He sends from the declaration with which the Baptist and He Himself began their ministry, “*The Kingdom of heaven is at hand*,” gives them commands, *mostly literal, and of present import, for their mission to the cities of Israel*. This portion concludes with a denunciation of judgment against that unbelief which should reject their preaching. The SECOND (vv. 16–23) refers to the

general mission of the Apostles as *developing itself, after the Lord should be taken from them, in preaching to Jews and Gentiles* (vv. 17, 18), and subjecting them to persecutions (vv. 21, 22). This portion ends with the end of the apostolic period properly so called, ver. 23 referring primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem. In this portion there is a foreshadowing of what shall be the lot and duty of the teachers of the Gospel to the end, inasmuch as the ‘coming of the Son of Man’ is ever typical of His final coming to judgment. Still the direct reference is to the Apostles and their mission, and the other only by inference. The THIRD (vv. 24–42), the longest and weightiest portion, is spoken *directly* (with occasional reference only to the Apostles and their mission [ver. 40]) *of all disciples of the Lord*,—their position,—their encouragements,—their duties,—and finally concludes with the last great reward (ver. 42).

In these first verses, 5, 6,—we have the *location*; in 7, 8, the *purpose*; in 9, 10, the *fitting out*; and in 11–14, the *manner of proceeding*,—of their mission: ver. 15 concluding with a prophetic denunciation, tending to impress them with a deep sense of the importance of the office entrusted to them.

Samaritans] The Samaritans were the Gentile inhabitants of the country between Judaea and Galilee, consisting of heathens whom Shalmaneser king of Assyria brought from Babylon and other places. Their religion was a mixture of the worship of the true God with idolatry (2 Kings xvii. 24–41). The Jews had no dealings with them, John iv. 9. They appear to have been not so unready as the Jews to receive our Lord and His mission (John iv. 39–42; Luke ix. 51 ff., and notes);—but *this* prohibition rested on judicial reasons. See Acts xiii. 46. In Acts i. 8 the prohibition is expressly taken off: ‘Ye shall be witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost of the earth.’ And in Acts viii. 1, 5, 8, we find the result. See ch. xv. 21–28.

6. the lost sheep] See besides reff. ch. ix. 36: John x. 16.

7.] This announcement shews the *preparatory* nature of this first apostolic mission. Compare, as shewing the difference of their ultimate message to the world, Col. i. 26–28.

8. freely, &c.] See Acts viii. 18–20.

9. Provide neither...] All the words following depend on this verb, and it is explained by the parallel expressions in Mark and Luke. They were to make no preparations for the journey, but to take it in dependence on Him who sent them, just as they were. This forbidden provision would be of three kinds (1) *Money*: in Mark (vi. 8) (literally) “brass,” in Luke (ix. 3) “silver.” here all the three current in order of value, connected by the **nor**, introducing a climax—no gold, nor yet silver, nor yet brass—in their girdles (so, literally, Luke x. 4). In the Greek it is, ‘no gold, nor even silver, nor even brass.’ So again in ver. 10. (2) *Food*: here **scrip**, in Mark “*no scrip, no bread*.” similarly Luke. (3) *Clothing*—**neither two coats**: so Mark and Luke.—**neither shoes**; in Mark expressed by “*be shod with san, dals*.” explained in Luke x. 4 by “*carry no shoes*,” i.e. a second pair.—**nor yet a staff** = “*save a staff only*” Mark. They were not to procure *expressly for this journey* even a staff: they were to take with them their usual staff only. The missing of this explanation has probably led to the reading *staves* both here and in Luke. If it be genuine, it does not mean *two staves*; for who would ever think of taking a *spare* staff? but a *staff* each. The whole of this prohibition was temporary only; for their then journey, and no more. See Luke xxii. 35, 36.

10. for the workman...] This is a common truth of life—men give one who works for them his food and more; here uttered however by our Lord in its highest sense, as applied to the workmen in His vineyard. See 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14: 2 Cor. xi. 8: 3 John 8. It is (as Stier remarks, vol. i.p. 352, ed. 2) a gross perversion and foolish bondage to the letter, to imagine that ministers of congregations, or even missionaries among the heathen, at this day are bound by the *literal* sense of our Lord’s commands in this passage. But we must not therefore imagine that they are not bound by the *spirit* of them. This literal first mission was but a foreshadowing of the spiritual subsequent sending out of the ministry over the world, which ought therefore *in spirit* every where to be conformed to these rules.

11. worthy] *Inclined to receive you and your message,—worthy that you should become his guest.* Such persons in this case would be of the same ind as those spoken of Acts xiii. 48 as “*disposed to eternal life*” (see there). The precept in this verse is very much more fully set forth by Luke, x. 7 ff.

till ye go thence] i.e. Until ye depart out of the city.

13.] The peace mentioned is that in the customary Eastern salutation, Peace be with you. Luke has *Peace be to this house* (x. 5). Compare with the spirit of vv. 10–13,—ch. vii. 6. Stier remarks that the spirit of these commands binds Christian ministers to all accustomed courtesies of manner in the countries and ages in which their mission may lie. So we find the Greek salutation instead of the Jewish form of greeting, Acts xv. 23: James i. 1. And the same spirit forbids that repelling official pride by which so many ministers lose the affections of their people. And this is to be *without any respect to the worthiness or otherwise* of the inhabitants of the house. In the case of *unworthiness*, ‘let your peace return (See Isa. xlvi. 23) to you,’ i.e. ‘be as though you had never spoken it.’

14.] See Acts, in the references. A solemn act which might have two meanings: (1) as Luke x. 11 expresses at more length,—‘We take nothing of yours with us, we free ourselves from all contact and communion with you,’ or (2),—which sense probably lies beneath both this and ver. 13, ‘We free ourselves from all participation in your condemnation: will have nothing in common with those who have rejected God’s message.’ See 1 Kings ii. 5, where the *shoes on the feet* are mentioned as *partakers in the guilt of blood*. It was a custom of the Pharisees, when they entered Judæa from a Gentile land, to do this act, as renouncing all communion with Gentiles: those then who would not receive the apostolic message were to be treated as no longer Israelites, but Gentiles. Thus the verse forms a kind of introduction to the next portion of the discourse, where the future mission to the Gentiles is treated of.

The **or city** brings in the alternative; “house, if it be a house that rejects you, city, if a whole city.”

15.] The *first verily I say unto you*; with which expression our Lord *closes each portion* of this discourse.

day of judgment, i.e. *of final judgment*, = “*that day*” Luke x. 12. It must be noticed that this denunciatory part, as also the command to shake off the dust, applies *only to the people of Israel*, who had been long prepared for the message of the Gospel by the Law and the Prophets, and recently more particularly by John the Baptist; and in this sense it may still apply to the rejection of the Gospel by professing Christians; but as it was not then applicable to the Gentiles, so neither now can it be to the heathen who know not God.

16–23.] SECOND PART OF THE DISCOURSE. See above on ver. 5, for the subject of this portion.

16.] I is not without meaning. It takes up again the subject of their sending, and reminds them WHO sent them.

send forth, Gr. *apostello*, is in direct connexion with their name **Apostles**.

sheep in the midst of wolves] This comparison is used of the people of Israel in the midst of the Gentiles, in a Rabbinical work cited by Stier: see also Eccl. xiii. 17.

17. beware] The wisdom of the serpent is needed for this part of their course; the simplicity of the dove for the **take not anxious thought** in ver. 19.

The **but** turns from the internal character to behaviour in regard of outward circumstances.

councils] See Acts iv. 6, 7; v. 40. They are the *courts of seven* (on which see Deut. xvi. 18), appointed in every city, to take cognizance of causes both civil and criminal, ch. v. 21: here perhaps put for any courts of assembly in general. The scourging in the synagogues is supposed to have been inflicted by order of the Tribunal of Three, who judged in them.

18. and] literally, **yea; and more-over**; assuming what has just been said, and passing on to something more.

governors—Proconsuls, Proprætors, Procurators, as (Pontius Pilate,) Felix, Festus, Gallio, Sergius Paulus.

kings, as (Herod,) Agrippa. The former verse was of *Jewish* persecution; this, of *Gentile*: the concluding words shew that the scope of both, in the divine purposes, as regarded the Apostles, was the same, viz. **for a testimony**. The “*testimony*” is in both senses—a testimony *to*, and *against* them (see ch. viii. 4, note), and refers to both sets of persecutors: to *them*, i.e. the Jews (not the “*rulers and kings*,” for they are in most cases Gentiles themselves), **and to the Gentiles**. It was a testimony in the best sense to Sergius Paulus, Acts xiii. 7, but *against* Felix, Acts xxiv. 25; and this double power ever belongs to the word of God as preached—it is a “*two-edged sword*” Rev. i. 16; ii. 12).

19. take not anxious (or distracting) thought] A spiritual prohibition, answering to the literal one in vv. 9, 10. See Exodus iv. 12.

20. For it is not ye....] This shews the reference of the to a *future* mission of the Apostles, see John xv. 26, 27. (1) It is to be observed that our Lord never in speaking to His disciples says *our Father*, but either *my Father* (ch. xviii. 10), or *your Father* (as here), or both conjoined (John xx. 17); never leaving it to be inferred that God is in the same sense His Father and our Father. (2) It is also to be observed that in the great work of God in the world, human individuality sinks down and vanishes, and God alone, His Christ, His Spirit, is the worker.

21.] Spoken perhaps of *official information* given against Christians, as there are no female relations mentioned. But the general idea is also included.

22. all men] i.e. *all else but yourselves*; not, as sometimes interpreted, a strong expression, intended to signify *many*, or *the majority of mankind*.

but he that endureth] In order to understand these words it is necessary to enter into the character of our Lord's prophecies respecting His coming, as having an *immediate literal*, and a *distant foreshadowed fulfilment*. Throughout this discourse and the great prophecy in ch. xxiv., we find the first apostolic period used as a type of the whole ages of the Church; and the vengeance on Jerusalem, which historically put an end to the old dispensation, and was in its place with reference to that order of things, the coming of the Son of Man, as a type of the final coming of the Lord. These two subjects accompany and interpenetrate one another in a manner wholly inexplicable to those who are unaccustomed to the wide import of Scripture prophecy, which speaks very generally not so much of *events themselves, points of time*,—as of *processions of events*, all ranging under one great description. Thus in the present case there is certainly direct reference to the destruction of Jerusalem; the *end* directly spoken of is that event, and the **shall be saved** the preservation provided by the warning afterwards given in ch. xxiv. 15–18. And the next verse directly refers to the journeys of the Apostles over the actual cities of Israel, territorial, or where Jews were located. But as certainly do all these expressions look onwards to the great final coming of the Lord, the *end* of all prophecy; as certainly the **shall be saved** here bears its full scripture meaning, of *everlasting salvation*; and the endurance to the end is the *finished course of the Christian*; and the precept in the next verse is to apply to the conduct of Christians of all ages with reference to persecution, and the announcement that hardly will the Gospel have been fully preached to all nations (or, to all the *Jewish nation*, i.e. *effectually*) when the Son of Man shall come. It is most important to keep in mind the great *prophetic parallels* which run through our Lord's discourses, and are sometimes separately, sometimes simultaneously, presented to us by Him.

24–42.] THIRD PART OF THE DISCOURSE. See note on ver 5. It treats of (I.) the *conflicts* (vv. 24–26), *duties* (vv. 26–28), and *encouragements* (vv. 28–32) of all Christ's disciples. (II.) The *certain issue of this fight in victory*; the *confession by Christ of those who confess Him*, set in strong light by the contrast of those who deny Him (vv. 32, 33); the *necessity of conflict to victory*, by the nature of Christ's mission (vv. 34–37), the *kind of self-devotion which he requires* (vv. 37–39); concluding with the *solemn assurance that no reception of His messengers for His sake, nor even the smallest labour of love for Him, shall pass without its final reward*. Thus we are carried on to the end of time and of the course of the Church.

24.] This proverb is used in different senses in Luke vi. 40 and John xiii. 16. The view *here* is, that disciples must *not expect a better lot* than their Master, but be well satisfied if they have no worse. The threefold relation of our Lord and His followers here brought out may thus be exemplified from Scripture: *disciple and teacher*, Matt. v. 1; xxiii. 8: Luke vi. 20; *servant and lord*, John xiii. 13: Luke xii. 35–48: Rom. i. 1: 2 Pet. i. 1: Jude 1; *master of the house and household*, Matt. xxvi. 26–29||: Luke xxiv. 30: Matt. xxiv. 45 ff.||.

25. Beelzebub] (or—bul) (Either 'lord of dung,'—or, as in 2 Kings i. 2, 'lord of flies,'—a god worshipped at Ekron by the Philistines; there is however another derivation more probable than either of these, from *baal*, lord, and *zeboul*, a house, by which it would exactly correspond to the term used.)—A name by which the prince of the devils was called by the Jews, ch. xii. 24,—to which accusation, probably an usual one (see ch. ix. 34), and that in John viii. 48, our Lord probably refers. In those places they had not literally called *Him* Beelzebub, but He speaks of their mind and intention in those charges. They may however have literally done so on other unrecorded occasions.

26.] The force of this is: 'Notwithstanding their treatment of Me your Master, Mine will be victory and triumph; therefore ye, My disciples, in your turn, need not fear.' Compare Rom. viii. 37.

for there is nothing] This solemn truth is again and again enounced by our Lord on different occasions, with different references. See Luke viii. 17; xii. 2. The former part of the verse drew comfort and encouragement from the *past*: this does so from the *future*. 'All that is hidden must be revealed—(1) it is God's purpose in His Kingdom that the everlasting Gospel shall be freely preached, and this purpose ye serve. (2) Beware then of hypocrisy (see Luke xii. 2) through fear of men, for all such will detected and exposed hereafter: and (3) fear them not, **for**, under whatever aspersions ye may labour from them, the day is coming which shall clear you and condemn them, if ye are fearlessly doing the work of Him that sent you' (ch. xiii. 43).

27.] *An expansion of the duty of freeness and boldness of speech implied in the last verse.* The words may bear *two meanings*: either (1) that which Chrysostom gives, taking the expressions relatively, of His speaking to them only, and in a little corner of Palestine, as compared with the subsequent publicity of the Word; or (2) as this part of the discourse relates to the *future* principally, the *secret speaking* may mean the communication which our Lord would hold with them hereafter by His Spirit, which they were to preach and proclaim. See Acts iv. 20. These senses do not exclude one another, and are possibly both implied.

There is no need, with Lightfoot and others, to suppose any allusion to a custom in the synagogue, in the words **hear in the ear**. They are a common expression, derived from common life: we have it in a wider sense Acts xi. 22, and Gen. 1. 4.

upon the housetops] On the flat roofs of the houses. Thus we have in Josephus, “Going up on the roof, and with his hand quieting their tumult... he said....”

28.] On the *latter part* of this verse much question has of late been raised, which never was, as far as I have been able to find, known to the older interpreters. Stier designates it as ‘the only passage of Scripture whose words may equally apply to God and the enemy of souls.’ He himself is strongly in favour of the *latter* interpretation, and defends it at much length; but I am *quite unable to assent to his opinion*. It seems to me *at variance with the connexion of the discourse*, and with the *universal tone of Scripture regarding Satan*. If such a phrase as “*to fear the devil*” could be instanced as equivalent to “*to guard against the devil*,” or if it could be shewn that any where power is attributed to Satan analogous to that indicated by “*able to destroy both soul and body in hell*,” I then should be open to the doubt whether he might not here be intended; but seeing that “**fear not**,” indicating terror, is changed into “*fear*” so usually followed by “*God*” in a higher and holier sense (there is *no such contrast* in ver. 26, and therefore that verse cannot be cited as ruling the meaning of this), and that GOD ALONE is throughout the Scripture the *Almighty dispenser of life and death both temporal and eternal*, seeing also that Satan is ever represented as the *condemned* of God, not one able to destroy, I must hold by the general interpretation, and believe that both here and in Luke xii. 3–7 our Heavenly Father is intended, as the right object of our fear. As to this being inconsistent with the character in which He is brought before us in the next verse, the very change of meaning in “*fear*” would lead the mind on, out of the terror before spoken of, into that better kind of fear always indicated by that expression when applied to God, and so prepare the way for the next verse. Besides, this sense is excellently in keeping with ver. 29 in another way. ‘Fear Him who is the only Dispenser of Death and Life: *of death, as here; of life*, as in the case of the sparrows for whom He cares.’ ‘Fear Him, above men: trust Him, in spite of men.’

In preparing the 2nd edn. of my Greek Test., I carefully reconsidered the whole matter, and went over Stier’s arguments with the connexion of the discourse before me, but found myself more than ever persuaded that it is quite impossible, for the above and every reason, to apply the words to the enemy of souls. The similar passage, James iv. 12, even in the absence of other considerations, would be decisive. Full as his Epistle is of our Lord’s words from this Gospel, it is hardly to be doubted that in “*there is one lawgiver [and judge] who is able to save and to destroy*,” he has this very verse before him. The depth of this part of the discourse I take to be, the setting before Christ’s messengers their Heavenly Father as the sole object of childlike trust and childlike fear—the former from His love,—the latter from His power,—His *power* to destroy, it is not said *them*, but absolute, *body and soul*, in hell. Here is the true depth of the discourse: but if in the midst of this great subject, our Lord is to be conceived as turning aside, upholding as an object of fear the chief enemy, whose ministers and subordinates He is at the very moment, commanding us *not to fear*, and speaking of *him as he that is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*, to my mind all true and deep connexion is broken.

29. sparrows] any small birds. **a farthing]** Gr. *assarion*. This word, derived from ‘*as*,’ was used in Greek and Hebrew to signify the meanest, most insignificant amount.

fall on the ground] which birds do when struck violently, or when *frozen*, wet or starved: it is therefore equivalent to die: “*not one of them is forgotten before God*,” Luke xii. 6.

30.] See 1 Sam. xiv. 45: Luke xxi. 18: Acts xxvii. 34. The **your** is emphatic, corresponding to the **ye** at the end of ver. 31. But the emphatic **ye** spoken directly to the Apostles, is generalized immediately by the **whosoever** in ver. 32.

32. confess me] The context shews plainly that it is a practical consistent confession which is meant, and also a practical and enduring denial. The Lord will not confess the confessing Judas, nor deny the denying Peter; the traitor who denied Him in act is denied: the Apostle who confessed Him even to death will be confessed. Cf. 2 Tim. ii. 12. We may observe that both in the Sermon on the Mount (ch. vii. 21–23) and here, *after mention of the Father*, our Lord describes *Himself* as the Judge and Arbiter of eternal life and death.

34.] In Luke xii. 51–53 this announcement, as here, is closely connected with the mention of our Lord’s own sufferings (ver. 38). As He won His way to victory thro the contradiction of sinners and strife, so must those who come after Him. The immediate reference is to the divisions in families owing to conversions to Christianity. Ver. 35 is quoted nearly literally from Micah vii. 6. When we read in Commentators that these divisions were not the purpose, but the inevitable results only, of the Lord’s coming, we must remember that with God, *results* are all *purposed*.

37.] Compare Deut. xxxiii. 9, and Exod. xxxii. 26–29, to which passages this verse is a reference. Stier well remarks, that under the words **worthy of me** there lies an exceeding great reward which counterbalances all the *seeming asperity* of this saying.

38.] How strange must this prophetic announcement have seemed to the Apostles! It was no Jewish proverb (for crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment), no common saying, which our Lord here and so often utters. See ch. xvi. 24: Mark x. 21: Luke ix. 23. He does not here plainly mention *His Cross*; but leaves it to be understood, see ver. 25. This is one of those sayings of

which John xii. 16 was eminently true.

39. his life... it] refer to the *same thing*, but in somewhat different senses. The first “**life**” is the *life of this world*, which we here all count so dear to us; the *second*, implied in “**it**,” *the real life of man* in a blessed eternity.

hath found = “*loveth*.” John xii. 25 = “will save,” Mark viii. 35. The past participles are used in anticipation, with reference to that day when the loss and gain shall become apparent. But “**hath found**” and “**hath lost**” are again somewhat different in position: the first implying *earnest desire* to save, but not so second any will or voluntary act to destroy. This is brought out by the **for my sake**, which gives the ruling providential arrangement whereby the *losing* is brought about. But besides the primary meaning of this saying as regards the laying down of life literally for Christ’s sake, we cannot fail to recognize in it a far deeper sense, in which he who loses his life shall find it. In Luke ix. 23, the taking up of the cross is to be “*daily*;” in ch. xvi. 24|[Mk. “*let him deny himself*” is joined with it. Thus we have the crucifying of the life of this world,—the death to sin spoken of Rom. vi. 4–11, and life unto God. And this life unto God is the real, true **life**, which the self-denier shall find, and preserve unto life eternal. See John xii. 25 and note.

40.] Here in the conclusion of the discourse, the Lord recurs again to His Apostles whom He was sending out. From ver. 32 has been connected with **whosoever**, and therefore general.

receiveth, see ver. 14; but it has here the wider sense of not only receiving to house and board,—but *receiving* in heart and life *the message* of which the Apostles were the bearers. On the sense of the verse, see John xx. 21, and on **him that sent me**, “*I send you*,” ver. 16, and Heb. iii. 1. There is a difference between the representation of Christ by His messengers, which at most is only official, and even then broken by personal imperfection and infirmity (see Gal. ii. 11; iv. 13, 14),—and the perfect unbroken representation of the Eternal Father by His Blessed Son, John xiv. 9: Heb. i. 3.

41. a prophet’s reward] either, such a reward as a prophet or a righteous man would receive for the like service,—or, such a reward as a prophet or a righteous man shall receive as such. Chrysostom.

in the name of] i.e. **because he is:** i.e. ‘for the love of Christ, whose prophet he is.’ The sense is, ‘He who by receiving (see above) a prophet because he is a prophet, or a holy man because he is a holy man, recognizes, enters into, these states as appointed by Me, shall receive the blessedness of these states, shall derive all the spiritual benefits which these states bring with them, and share their everlasting reward,

42. these little ones] To whom this applies is not very clear. Hardly, as some think, to the despised and meanly-esteemed for Christ’s sake. I should rather imagine some *children* may have been *present*: for of such does our Lord elsewhere use this term, see ch. xviii. 2–6. Though perhaps the expression may be meant of lower and less advanced converts, thus keeping up the gradation from the *prophet*. This however hardly seems likely: for how could a disciple be in a downward gradation from *a righteous man*?

his (i. e. the doer’s) **reward:** not, ‘the reward of *one of these little ones*,’ as before *a prophet’s reward, a righteous man’s reward*.

Matthew: Chapter 11

XI. 1. thence] No fixed locality is assigned to the foregoing discourse. It was not delivered at Capernaum, but *on a journey*, see ch. ix. 35,

their cities is also indeterminate, as in ch. iv. 23; ix. 35.

2–30.] MESSAGE OF ENQUIRY FROM THE BAPTIST: OUR LORD’S ANSWER, AND DISCOURSE THEREON TO THE MULTITUDE. Luke vii. 18–35. There have been several different opinions as to the reason why this enquiry was made. I will state them, and append to them my own view. (1) It has been a very generally received idea that the question was ask: *for the sake of the disciples themselves*, with the sanction of their master, and for the purpose of confronting them, who were doubtful and jealous of our Lord, with the testimony of His own mouth. This view is ably maintained by Chrysostom, and has found strenuous defenders in our own day. The objections to it are,—that the text evidently treats the question as coming from John himself; the answer is directed to John; and the following discourse is on the character and position of John. These are answered by some with a supposition that John *allowed the enquiry to be made* in his name; but surely our Saviour would not in this case have made the answer as we have it, which clearly implies that the object of the miracles done was *John’s* satisfaction. (2) The other great section of opinions on the question is that which supposes doubt to have existed, for some reason or other, in the Baptist’s own mind. This is upheld by Tertullian and others, and advocated by De Wette, who thinks that the doubt was perhaps respecting not our Lord’s *mission*, but His *way of manifesting Himself*, which did not agree with the

theocratic views of the Baptist. This he considers to be confirmed by ver. 6. Olshausen and Neander suppose the ground of the doubt to have lain partly in the Messianic idea of the Baptist, partly in the weakening and bedimming effect of imprisonment on John's mind. Lightfoot carries this latter still further, and imagines that the doubt arose from dissatisfaction at not being liberated from prison by some miracle of our Lord. Others have supposed that John, perplexed by the various reports about the worker of these miracles, sent his disciples to ascertain whether it was really He who had been borne witness to by himself. (3) It appears to me that there are objections against each of the above suppositions, too weighty to allow either of them to be entertained. There can be little doubt on the one hand, that our Saviour's answer is directed to *John*, and not to the disciples, who are bona fide messengers and nothing more:— “**Go and shew John**” can I think bear no other interpretation: and again the words “*blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me*” must equally apply to John in the first place, so that, *in some sense*, he had been offended at Christ. On the other hand, it is exceedingly difficult to suppose that there can have been in John's own mind any real doubt that our Lord was *He that should come*, seeing that he himself had borne repeatedly such notable witness to Him, and that under divine direction and manifestation (see ch. iii, 16, 17: John i. 26–37).

The idea of his objective faith being shaken by his imprisonment is quite inconsistent not only with John's character, but with our Lord's discourse in this place, whose description of him seems almost framed to guard against such a supposition.

The last hypothesis above mentioned is hardly probable, in the form in which it is put. We can scarcely imagine that John can have doubted who this Person was, or have been confounded by the discordant rumours which reached him about His wonderful works. But that *one form* of this hypothesis is the right one, I am certainly disposed to believe, until some more convincing considerations shall induce me to alter my view. (4) The form to which I allude is this: John having heard all these reports, being himself fully convinced Who this Wonderworker was, was becoming impatient under the slow and unostentatious course of our Lord's self-manifestation, and desired to obtain from our Lord's own mouth a declaration which should set such rumours at rest, and (possibly) which might serve for a public profession of His Messiahship, from which hitherto He had seemed to shrink. He thus incurs a share of the same rebuke which the mother of our Lord received (John ii. 4); and the purport of the answer returned to him is, that the hour was not yet come for such an open declaration, but that there were sufficient proofs given by the works done, to render all inexcusable, who should be offended in Him. And the return message is so far from being a satisfaction designed for the *disciples*, that they are sent back like the messenger from Gabii to Sextus Tarquinius, with indeed a significant narrative to relate, but no direct answer; they were but the intermediate transmitters of the symbolic message, known to Him who sent it, and him who received it.

It is a fact not to be neglected in connexion with this solution of the difficulty, that John is said to have heard of the works, not of *Jesus*, but of (*the*) **Christ**: the only place where that name, standing alone, is given to our Lord in this Gospel. So that it would seem as if the Evangelist had purposely avoided saying *of Jesus* to shew that the works were reported to John not as those of the Person whom he had known as Jesus, but of the Deliverer—the Christ; and that he was thus led to desire a distinct avowal of the identity of the two. I have before said that the opening part of the ensuing discourse seems to have been designed to prevent, in the minds of the multitude, any such unworthy estimations of John as those above cited. The message and the answer might well beget such suspicions, and

could not from the nature of the case be explained to them in that deeper meaning which they really bore; but the character of John here given would effectually prevent them, after hearing it, from entertaining any such idea.

2. had heard] From *his own disciples*, Luke vii. 18. The place of his imprisonment was Machæerus, a frontier town between the dominions of Aretas and Herod Antipas. Our Lord in that hour wrought many cures, Luke ver. 21. Verses 4–6 are nearly verbatim in the two Gospels.

5.] The words **the dead are raised up** have occasioned some difficulty; but surely without reason. In Luke, the raising of the widow's son at Nain immediately precedes this message; and in this Gospel we have had the ruler's daughter raised. These miracles might be referred to by our Lord under the words **the dead are raised up**; for it is to be observed that He bade them tell John not only what things they saw, but what things they *had heard*, as in Luke.

It must not be forgotten that the words here used by our Lord have an inner and spiritual sense, as betokening the blessings and miracles of divine grace on the souls of men, of which His outward and visible miracles were symbolical. The words are mostly cited from Isa. xxxv. 5, where the same spiritual meaning is conveyed by them. They are quoted here, as the words of Isa. liii. are the Evangelist in ch. viii. 17, as applicable to their partial external fulfilment, which however, like themselves, pointed onward to their greater spiritual completion.

the poor have the gospel preached to them (are evangelized)] Stier remarks the coupling of these miracles together, and observes that with **the dead are raised**, this is united, as being a thing hitherto unheard of and strange, and an especial fulfilment of Isa. lxi. 1.

6.] See note on ver. 2.

offended in] scandalized at, take offence at.

7–30.] The discourse divides itself into TWO PARTS: (1) vv. 7–19, *the respective characters and mutual relations of John and Christ*: (2) vv. 20–30, *the condemnation of the unbelief of the time*—ending with *the gracious invitation to all the weary and heavy laden to come to Him, as truly He that should come*.

7.] The following verses set forth to the people the real character and position of John; identifying him who cried in the wilderness with him who now spoke from his prison, and assuring them that there was the same dignity of office and mission throughout. They are not spoken till after the departure of the disciples of John, probably because they were not meant for them or John to hear, but for the people, who on account of the question which they had heard might go away with a mistaken depreciation of John. And our Lord, as usual, takes occasion, from reminding them of the impression made on them by John's preaching of repentance, to set forth to them deep truths regarding His own Kingdom and Office. **8. But]** i.e. what was it, if it was not that?

what went ye out] The repetition of this question, and the order of the suggestive answers, are remarkable. The first sets before them the scene of their desert pilgrimage—the banks of Jordan with its reeds, but no such trifles were the object of the journey: this suggestion is rejected without an answer. The second reminds them that it was a *man*—but not one in soft clothing, for such are not found in deserts. The third brings before them the real object of their pilgrimage in his holy office, and even amplifies that office itself. So that the great Forerunner is made to rise gradually and sublimely into his personality, and thus his preaching of repentance is revived in their minds.

in soft raiment] Contrast this with the garb of John as described ch. iii. 4. Such an one, in soft raiment, might be the forerunner of a proud earthly prince, but not the preacher of repentance before a humble and suffering Saviour; might be found as the courtly flatterer in the palaces of kings, but not as the stern rebuker of tyrants, and languishing in their fortress dungeons.

9.] We read, ch. xxi. 26, that 'all accounted John as a prophet.'—John was more than a prophet, because he did not write of, but *saw and pointed out*, the object of his prophecy;—and because of his proximity to the kingdom of God. He was moreover more than a prophet, because he himself was the subject as well as the vehicle of prophecy. But with deep humility he applies to himself only that one, of two such prophetic passages, which describes him as *a voice of one crying*, and omits the one which gives him the title of *my messenger*, here cited by our Lord.

10. thy] Our Lord here changes the person of the original prophecy, which is *my*. And that He does so, making that which is said by Jehovah of Himself, to be addressed to the Messiah, is, if such were needed (compare also Luke i. 16, 17, and 76), no mean indication of His own eternal and co-equal God-head. It is worthy of remark that all three Evangelists quote this prophecy *similarly changed*, although St. Mark has it in an entirely different place. Also, that the high dignity and honor, which our Lord here predicates of the Baptist, has a further reference: He was thus great above all others, *because he was the forerunner of Christ*. How great then above all others and him, must HE be.

11. hath... risen] Not merely a word of course, but especially used of prophets and judges, see reff., and once of our Saviour Himself, Acts v. 30.

he that is least] This has been variously rendered and understood. Chrysostom and other ancient interpreters, put the pause after "least," and take the words "*in the Kingdom of heaven*" with what follows: understanding "*he that is least*" of our Lord. But such an interpretation is surely adverse to the spirit of the whole discourse. We may certainly say that our Lord in such a passage as this would not designate Himself as "*he that is least*" compared with John, in any sense: nor again is it our Lord's practice to speak of Himself as one *in the Kingdom of heaven*, or of His own attributes as belonging to or dependent on that new order of things which this expression implies, and which was *in Him* rather than He in it. Again, the analogy of such passages as Matt. v. 19; xviii. 1, would lead us to connect the preceding adjective *least* with *in the Kingdom of heaven*, and not the following. The other, the usual interpretation, I am convinced, is the right one: **but he that is least in the of heaven, is greater than he.**

There is very likely an allusion to Zech. xii. 8: "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David."

Thus the parallelism is complete: *John*, not inferior to any born of women—but *these, even the least of them*, are born of *another birth* (John i. 12, 13; iii. 5). *John*, the nearest to the King and the Kingdom—*standing on the threshold*

—but never having himself entered; *these, "in the Kingdom,"* subjects and citizens and indwellers of the realm, *whose citizenship is in heaven*. He, the friend of the Bridegroom: they, however weak and unworthy members, *His Body, and His Spouse*.

12.] The sense of this verse has been much disputed. (1) the verb rendered “*suffereth violence*” has been taken in a *middle sense*; ‘*forcibly introduces itself, breaks in with violence*,’ as in the similar passage Luke xvi. 16. Certainly such a sense agrees better with “*is preached*” which we find in Luke, than the passive explanation: but it seems inconsistent with the latter half of the verse to say that *it breaks in by force*, and then that *others break by force into it*. (2) the verb is taken *passively*; ‘**suffereth violence.**’ And thus the construction of the verse is consistent: ‘and the violent take it by force.’ Believing this latter interpretation to be right, we now come to the question, *in what sense are these words spoken?* Is the verb in a good or a bad sense? Does it mean, ‘*is taken by force*,’ and the following, ‘*and men violently press in for their share of it, as for plunder*;’—or does it mean, ‘*is violently resisted, and violent men tear it to pieces?*’ (viz. its opponents, the Scribes and Pharisees?) This latter meaning bears no sense as connected with the discourse before us. The subject is not the *resistance made* to the kingdom of heaven, but *the difference between a prophesied and a present kingdom of heaven*. The fifteenth verse closes this subject, and the complaints of the arbitrary prejudices of ‘this generation’ begin with ver. 16. We conclude then that these words imply **From the days of John the Baptist un!now** (i. e. inclusively, from the beginning of his preaching), **the kingdom of heaven is pressed into, and violent persons**—eager, ardent multitudes—**seize on it**. Of the truth of this, notwithstanding our Lord’s subsequent reproaches for unbelief, we have abundant proof from the multitudes who follow and outwent Him, and thronged the doors where He was, and would (John vi. 15) take Him by force to make Him a king. But our Lord does not mention this so much to commend the *violent persons*, as to shew the undoubted fact that *He that should come was come*:—that the kingdom of heaven, which before had been the subject of distant prophecy, a closed fortress, a treasure hid, was now *undoubtedly upon earth* (Luke xvii. 21 and note), laid open to the entrance of men, spread out that all might take. Thus this verse connects with ver. 28, “*Come unto Me all*,” and with Luke xvi. 16, “*every man presseth into it*.” Compare also with this throwing open of the kingdom of heaven for all to press into, the stern prohibition in Exod. xix. 12, 13, and the comment on it in Heb. xii. 18–24.

13, 14.] The whole body of testimony as yet has *prophetic*,—the Law and Prophets, from the first till Zacharias the priest and Simeon and Anna prophesied; and according to the declaration of prophecy itself, John, in the spirit and power of Elias, was the forerunner of the great subject of all prophecy. Neither this—nor the testimony of our Lord, ch. xvii. 12—is inconsistent with John’s own denial that he was Elias, John i. 21. For (1) that question was evidently asked as implying a *re-appearance of the actual Elias upon earth*: and (2) our Lord cannot be understood in either of these passages as meaning that the prophecy of Malachi iv. 5 received its *full completion* in John. For as in other prophecies, so in this, we have a partial fulfilment both of the coming of the Lord and of His forerunner, while the great and complete fulfilment is yet future—at the great day of the Lord. Mal. iv. 1. The words here are not “*which was for to come*,” but are *strictly future, who shall come*. Compare ch. xvii. 11, where the future is used. The **if ye will (are willing to) receive it** must be taken as referring to the partial sense of the fulfilment implied: for it was (and is to this day) the belief of the Jews that Elias in person should come before the end. **15.]** These words are generally used by our Lord when there is a further and deeper meaning in His words than is expressed: as here—‘if John the Baptist is Elias, and Elias is the forerunner of the coming of the Lord, then know surely that the Lord is come.’

16. But] Implying ‘the men of this generation have ears, and hear not; will not receive this saying: are arbitrary, childish, and prejudiced, not knowing their own mind.’

whereunto shall I liken] See similar questions in Mark iv. 30: Luke xiii. 18, 20; and note on ch. vii. 24.

like unto children: as children in their games imitate the business and realities of life, so these in the great realities now before them shew all the waywardness of children. The similitude is to two bodies of children, the one inviting the other to play, first at the imitation of a wedding, secondly at that of a funeral;—to neither of which will the others respond. Stier remarks that the great condescension of the preaching of the Gospel is shewn forth in this parable, where the man sent from God, and the eternal Word Himself, are represented as children among children, speaking the language of their sports. Compare Heb. ii. 14. It must not be supposed that the two bodies of children are two divisions of the Jews, as some (e. g. Olsh.) have done: the children who *call* are the *Jews*,—those *called to, the two Preachers*; both belonging, according to the flesh, to **this generation**,—but neither of them corresponding to the kind of *mourning* (in John’s case) with which the Jews would have them mourn, or the kind of *joy* (in the Lord’s case) with which the Jews would have them rejoice. The converse application, which is commonly made, is against the **is like unto children**, by which the first *children* must be the *children of this generation*; and nothing can be more perplexed than to understand *is like unto* as meaning ‘*may be illustrated by*,’ and invert the persons in the parable. Besides which, this interpretation would lay the waywardness to the charge of the *Preachers*, not to that of the Jews.

18. neither eating nor drinking] Luke vii. 33 fills up this expression by inserting *bread and wine*. See ch. iii. 4 The neglect of John’s preaching, and rejection of his message, is implied in several places of the Gospels (see ch. xxi. 23–27: John v. 35); but hence only do we learn that they brought against him the same charge which they afterwards tried against our Lord. See John vii. 20; x. 20.

19.] Alluding to our Lord's practice of frequenting entertainments and feasts, e.g. the marriage at Cana, the feast in Levi's house, &c. See also ch. ix. 14.

But] literally, **and**; i.e. **and yet**; see John xvi. 32.

wisdom] the divine wisdom which hath ordered these things.

was justified—the same tense as “*came*” both times—refers to the *event*, q.d., ‘they were events in which wisdom was justified, &c.’ The force of the past tense is not to be lost by giving a *present* meaning to either of the verbs. The meaning seems to be, that the waywardness above described was not universal, but that the *children of wisdom* (in allusion probably to the Book of Proverbs, which constantly uses similar expressions: see ch. ii. 1; iii. 1, 11, 21; iv. 1, &c.) were led to receive and justify (= clear of imputation) the Wisdom of God, who did these things. Cf. Luke vii. 29, where in this same narrative it is said, *the publicans justified God*. The *children of wisdom* are opposed to the wayward *children* above, the child *like* to the child *ish*; and thus this verse serves as an introduction to the saying in ver. 25.

of, not exactly equivalent to ‘*by*,’ but implying ‘*at the hands of*’ the person whence the justification comes

20–30.] SECOND PART OF THE DISCOURSE. See on ver. 7. **20. Then began he]** This expression betokens a change of subject, but not of locality or time. The whole chapter stands in such close connexion, one part arising out of another (e. g. this out of ver. 16–19), and all pervaded by the same great undertone, which sounds forth in vv. 28–30, that it is quite impossible that this should be a collection of our Lord's sayings uttered at different times. I would rather regard the **then began he** as a token of the report of an ear-witness, and as pointing to a pause or change of manner on the part of our Lord. See note on Luke x. 13.

because they repented not] Connect this with the first subject of our Lord's preaching, ch. iv. 17. The reference is to some unrecorded miracles, of which we know (Luke iv. 23; John xxi. 25) that there were many.

21. Chorazin] According to Jerome, *a town of Galilee*, two (according to Eusebius *twelve*, but most likely an error in the transcriber) *miles from Capernaum*. It is nowhere mentioned except here and in the similar place of Luke.

Bethsaida] Called a *city*, John i. 45,—a *village* (literally), Mark viii. 23,—*in Galilee*, John xii. 21:—*on the western bank of the lake of Gennesaret, near the middle, not far from Capernaum*; the birth-place of Simon Peter, Andrew, and Philip. Both this and Chorazin appear to be put as examples of the lesser towns in which our Lord had wrought his miracles (the *towns*, literally, *village-towns*, of Mark i. 38), as distinguished from Capernaum, the chief town (ver. 23) of the neighbourhood.

Tyre and Sidon] These wealthy cities, so often the subject of prophecy, had been chastised by God's judgment under Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander, but still existed (Acts xii. 20; xxi. 3, 7; xxvii. 3). **repented... in sackcloth and ashes** is probably an allusion to Jonah iii. 6, or to general Eastern custom.

23.] The sense has been variously interpreted. Some suppose it to allude to the *distinguished honour conferred on Capernaum* by our Lord's residence there. Others to the *rich fisheries carried on at Capernaum*, by means of which the town was proud and prosperous. Others refer the expression to the *lofty situation of Capernaum*, which however is very uncertain. The first interpretation appears to me the most probable, seeing that our Lord chose that place to be the principal scene of His ministry and residence, “*his own city*,” ch. ix. 1. The very sites of these three places are now matter of dispute among travellers. See Robinson, vol. iii, pp. 283–300. Dr. Thomson, “The Land and the Book,” p. 359, was sure he found Chorazin in the ruins bearing the name Khorazy, lying in a side valley of the Wady Nashif, which runs down to the lake on the East of Tell Hûm (Capernaum). And this, in spite of Dr. Robinson's rejection of the identification.

in Sodom] The comparison between sinful Israel and Sodom is common in the O.T. See Deut. xxxii. 32: Isa. i. 10: Lam. iv. 6: Ezek. xvi. 46–57.

it would have remained] This declaration of the Lord of all events, opens to us an important truth, that the destruction of Sodom was brought about, not by a necessity in the divine purposes—still less by a connexion of natural causes—but by the iniquity of its inhabitants, who, had they turned and repented, might have averted their doom. The same is strikingly set before us in the history of Jonah's preaching at Nineveh.

24, and 22.] These verses are connected with those respectively preceding them thus:—‘If these mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon—in Sodom—they would have, &c.; but, since no such opportunity was afforded *them*, and *ye*, Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum, have had and rejected such, it shall be more tolerable, &c.’ And as to the saying of our Lord, ‘If more warnings had been given they would have repented,’—it is not for the infidel to say, ‘Why then were not more given?’ because every act of God for the rescue of a sinner from his doom is purely and entirely of free and undeserved grace, and the

proportion of such means of escape dealt out to men is ruled by the counsel of His will who is holy, just, and true, and willeth not the death of the sinner; but whose ways are past our finding out. We know enough when we know that all are inexcusable, having (see Rom. i. ii.) the witness of God in their consciences; and *our* only feeling should be overflowing thankfulness, when we find ourselves in possession of the light of the glorious Gospel, of which so many are deprived.

That the reference here is to the *last great day* of judgment is evident, by the whole being spoken of in the future. Had our Lord been speaking of the *outward* judgment on the rebellious cities, the future might have been used of *them*, but could not of Sodom, which was already destroyed.

This shall be more tolerable is one of those mysterious hints at the future dealings of God, into which we can penetrate no further than the actual words of our Lord reveal, nor say to what difference exactly they point in the relative states of those who are compared. See also Luke xii. 47, 48.

25.] This is certainly a continuation of the foregoing discourse; and the **answered**, which seems to have nothing to refer to, does in reality refer to the words which have immediately preceded. The **at that time** is not *chronological*, but gives additional solemnity to what follows. There may have been a slight break in the discourse; the older interpreters, and others, insert the return of the Apostles: but I do not see any necessity for it. The whole ascription of praise is an *answer*: an answer to the mysterious dispensations of God's Providence above recounted. With regard to the arrangement in Luke, see note on Luke x. 21.

I thank thee] Not merely, '*I praise Thee*,' but in the force of the Greek word, **I confess to Thee**, '*I recognize the justice of Thy doings;*' viz. in the words **Even so, Father**, &c. Stier remarks that this is the *first public mention* by our Lord of His Father; the words in ch. x. 32, 33 having been addressed to the twelve (but see John ii. 16). We have two more instances of such a public address to His Father, John xi. 41; xii. 28; and again Luke xxiii. 34. It is to be observed that He does not address the Father as *His Lord*, but as *Lord of heaven and earth*: as *He who worketh all things after the counsel of His will*, Eph. i. 11.

hast hid.... hast revealed] more properly, **didst hide**, and **didst reveal**, in the deeper and spiritual sense of the words; the time pointed at being that in the far past, when the divine decrees as to such hiding and revealing were purposed. See 1 Cor. ii. 9–12.

these things, these mysterious arrangements, by which the sinner is condemned in his pride and unbelief, the humble and childlike saved, and God justified when He saves and condemns. These are '*revealed*' to those who can in a simple and teachable spirit, as *babes*, obey the invitation in vv. 28–30, but '*hidden*' from the wise and clever of this world, who attempt their solution by the inadequate instrumentality of the mere human understanding. See 1 Cor. i, 26–31.

27.] In one other place only in the three first Gospel (besides the similar passage, Luke x. 22) does the expression **the Son** occur; viz. Mark xiii. 32. The spirit of this verse, and its form of expression, are quite those of the Gospel of John; and it serves to form a link of union between the three synoptic Gospels and the fourth, and to point to the vast and weighty mass of discourses of the Lord which are not related except by John. We may also observe another point of union:—*this very truth* (John iii. 35) had been part of the testimony *borne to Jesus by the Baptist*—and its repetition here, in a discourse of which the character and office of the Baptist is the suggestive groundwork, is a coincidence not surely without meaning. The verse itself is in the closest connexion with the preceding and following, and is best to be understood in that connexion: **all things were delivered to me** answers to "*thou hast revealed*" in ver. 25 (on the tenses, see note above, ver. 25), only "*revealed*" could not be used of the Eternal Son, for He is Himself the Revealer;—**no man** (no one) **knoweth the Son....**, none but the Almighty Father has full entire possession of the mystery of the Person and Office of the Son: it is a depth hidden from all being but His, Whose Purposes are evolved in and by it: **neither... the Father...** nor does any fully apprehend, in the depths of his being, the love and grace of the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son, by the Eternal Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, will reveal Him. Then in close connexion with the **to whomsoever the Son will**, which by itself might seem to bring in an arbitrariness into the divine counsel, follows, by the Eternal Son Himself, the **Come unto me, all....**, the wonderful and merciful generalization of the call to wisdom unto salvation.

28.] This is the great and final answer to the question, *Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?* As before, we may observe the closest connexion between this and the preceding. As the Son is *the great Revealer*, and as the *to whomsoever He will* is by His grace extended to *all the weary*—all who feel their need—so He here *invites them to receive this revelation, learn of Me*. But the way to this heavenly wisdom is by quietness and confidence, rest unto the soul, the reception of the divine grace for the pardon of sin, and the breaking of the yoke of the corruption of our nature.

No mere man could have spoken these words. They are parallel with the command in Isa. xlvi. 22, which is spoken by Jehovah Himself.

labour are heavy laden] the active and passive sides of human misery, the *labouring* and the *burdened*, are invited.

Doubtless, outward and bodily misery is not shut out; but the promise, **rest to your souls**, is only a spiritual promise. Our Lord does not promise to those who come to Him *freedom from* toil or burden, but *rest in the soul*, which shall make all yokes easy, and all burdens light. The main invitation however is to those burdened with the yoke of sin, and of the law, which was added because of sin. All who feel that burden are invited.

29.] **learn of Me**, both '*from My example*,' which however is the lower sense the words, and '*from My teaching*,' from which alone the *rest* can flow; the *revelation* of vv. 25 and 27.

ye shall find rest unto your souls is quoted from Jer. vi. 16 Heb. Thus we have it revealed here, that the rest and joy of the Christian soul is, *to become like Christ*: to attain by His teaching this *meekness* and *lowliness* of His.

Olshausen makes an excellent distinction between *lowly in heart*, an attribute of divine Love in the Saviour, and *lowly*, or *poor, in spirit*, ch. v. 3: Prov. xxix. 23, which can only be said of sinful man, knowing his unworthiness and need of help.

heart is *only here* used of Christ.

30.] **easy**, 'not exacting,' answering to '*kind*,' spoken of persons, Luke vi. 35. See 1 John v. 3. Owing to the conflict with evil ever incident to our corrupt nature even under grace, the *rest* which Christ gives is yet to be viewed as a yoke and a burden, seen on this its painful side, of conflict and sorrow: but it is a *light yoke*; the inner rest in the soul giving a peace which passeth understanding, and bearing it up against all. See 2 Cor. iv. 16.

Matthew: Chapter 12

XII. 1–8.] THE DISCIPLES PLUCK EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH. OUR LORD' S ANSWER TO THE PHARISEES THEREON. Mark ii. 23–28: Luke vi. 1–5. In Mark and Luke this incident occurs after the discourse on fasting related Matt. ix. 14 sq.; but in the former without any definite mark of time. The expression **at that time** is, I conceive, a more definite mark of connexion than we find in the other Gospels, but cannot here be fixed to the meaning which it clearly has in ch. xi. 25, where the context determines it. We can merely say that it seems to have occurred about the same time as the last thing mentioned—in the same journey or season.

The plucking the ears was allowed Deut. xxiii. 25, but in the Talmud expressly forbidden on the Sabbath. It was also (Levit. xxiii. 14, apparently, but this is by no means certain: see note on Luke) forbidden until the sheaf of first-fruits had been presented to God, which was done on the second day of the feast of unleavened bread at the Passover. This incident, on that supposition, must have occurred between that day and the harvest. It is generally supposed to have been on the first Sabbath after the Passover. For a fuller discussion of the time and place, see note on Luke as before.

3.] It appears from 1 Sam. xxi. 6, that hot bread had been put in on the day of David's arrival; which therefore, Levit. xxiv. 8, was a sabbath. The example was thus doubly appropriate. Bengel maintains, on the commonly received interpretation of Luke vi. 1, that 1 Sam. xxi. was the lesson for the day. But the Jewish calendar of lessons cannot be shewn to have existed in the form which we now have, in the time of the Gospel history.

5.] The priests were ordered to offer double offerings on the Sabbath (Num. xxviii. 9, 10), and to place fresh (*hot*, and therefore baked that day) shewbread. In performing these commands they must commit many of what the Pharisees would call profanations of the Sabbath. So that, as Stier (ii. 4), not only does the sacred *history* furnish examples of exception to the law of the Sabbath from *necessity*, but the *Law itself ordains* work to be done on the Sabbath as a *duty*.

6.] The Greek has merely **greater**, and the best MSS, have it in the neuter gender, which sustains the parallel better: **a greater thing than the temple is here**. See John ii. 19. The inference is, 'If the priests in the temple and for the temple's sake, for its service and ritual, profane the Sabbath, as ye account profanation, and are blameless, how much more these disciples who have grown hungry in their appointed following of Him who is greater than the temple, the *true Temple of God on earth*, the Son of Man!' I cannot agree with Stier that the *neuter* would represent only "something greater, more weighty than the temple,—namely, merciful consideration of the hungry, or the like:" it seems to me, as above, to bear a more general and sublime sense than the masculine; see ver. 41, &c.

7.] The law of this new Temple-service is the law of charity and love:—mercy and not sacrifice, see ch. ix. 13;—all for man's sake and man's good;—and if their hearts had been ready to receive our Lord, and to take on them this service, they would not have condemned the guiltless.

8.] On the important verse preceding this in Mark ii. 27, see note there. The sense of it must here be supplied to complete the inference. Since the Sabbath was an ordinance instituted for the use and benefit of man,—the Son of Man, who has taken

upon Him full and complete Manhood, the great representative and Head of humanity, has this institution under his own power. See this teaching of the Lord illustrated and expanded in apostolic practice and injunctions, Rom. xiv. 4, 5, 17: Col. ii. 16, 17.

9–14.] HEALING OF THE WITHERED HAND. Mark iii. 1–6: Luke vi. 6–11.

9. when he was departed thence] This change of place is believed by Greswell to have been a journey back to Galilee after the Passover. (Diss. viii. vol. ii.) It is true that no such change is implied in Mark and Luke; but the words here point to a journey undertaken, as in ch. xi. 1; xv. 29, the only other places in this Gospel where the expression occurs. In John vii. 3, the cognate expression, “*Depart hence*,” is used of a journey from Galilee to Judæa. So that certainly it is not implied here (as Meyer, al., suppose) that the incident took place on the *same day* as the previous one. We know from Luke vi. that it was on another (the next?) sabbath.

their] not, of the Pharisees; but of the Jews generally, of the people of the place.

10.] This narrative is found in Mark and Luke with considerable variation in details from our text, those two Evangelists agreeing however with one another. In both these accounts, they (*the Scribes and Pharisees*, Luke) were watching our Lord to see whether He would heal on the Sabbath:—and He (*knowing their thoughts*, Luke) ordered the man to stand forth in the midst, and asked *them* the question here given. The question about the animal does not occur in either of them, but in Luke xiv. 5, on a similar occasion. The additional particulars given are very interesting. By Luke,—it was the *right* hand; by Mark, —*our Lord looked round on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts*:—And the *Herodians were joined with the Pharisees* in their counsel against Him. See notes on Luke.

dry] “*withered*,” literally “*dried up*,” as in Mark: of which the use had been lost and the vital powers withered. The construction of this verse is involved: there is a double question, as in ch. vii. 9.

Our Lord evidently asks this as being a thing allowed and done at the time when He spoke: but subsequently (perhaps, suggests Stier, on account of these words of Christ), it was forbidden in the Talmud; and it was only permitted to *lay planks for the beast to come out*.

13.] Our Lord does no outward act: the healing is performed without even a word of command. The stretching forth the hand was to prove its soundness, which the divine power wrought in the act of stretching it forth. Thus his enemies were disappointed, having no legal ground against Him.

14.] This is the first mention of counsel being taken by the Pharisees (*and Herodians*, Mark, as above) to put our Lord to death.

15–21.] *Peculiar in this form to Mat-thew.* See Mark iii. 7–12: Luke vi. 17–19.

15.] them all: see similar expressions, ch. xix. 2: Luke vi. 19;—i. e. ‘*all who wanted healing*,’

16. charged them] see ch. viii. 4, and note.

17.] On **that it might be fulfilled**, see note on ch. i. 22. It must not be understood ‘*and thus was fulfilled*:’ it is used only of the *purpose*, not of the *result*, here or anywhere. It is strange that any should be found, at this period of the progress of exegesis, to go back to a view which is both superficial and ungrammatical. The prophecy is partly from the LXX, partly an original translation. The LXX have ‘Jacob my servant... Israel my chosen...,’ but the Rabbis generally understood it of the Messiah.

18.] he shall shew (announce) judgment to the Gentiles, viz. in his office as Messiah and Judge. In these words the majesty of his future glory is contrasted with the meekness about to be spoken of: q.d. ‘And yet He shall not,’ &c.

20.] A proverbial expression for, ‘He will not crush the contrite heart, nor extinguish the slightest spark of repentant feeling in the sinner.’

Until He shall have brought out the conflict, the cause, the judgment, unto victory,—caused it, i.e. to *issue in victory*: i.e. such shall be his behaviour and such his gracious tenderness, during the day of grace: while the conflict is yet going on,—the judgment not yet decided.

22–45.] ACCUSATION OF CASTING OUT DEVILS BY BEELZEBUB, AND OUR LORD’S DISCOURSE THEREON. DEMAND OF A SIGN FROM HIM: HIS FURTHER DISCOURSE. Mark iii. 20–30: Luke xi. 14–36, where also see notes.

This account is given by Luke later in our Lord's ministry, but without any fixed situation or time, and with less copiousness of detail. See also ch. ix. 32, and notes there. St. Mark (iii. 23–29) gives part of the dis-course which follows, but without any determinate sequence, and omitting the miracle which led to it.

23. Is not this] This, form of question is properly a doubtful denial, involving in fact a surmise in the affirmative. ‘Surely this is not...?’

the son of David] see ch. ix. 27, and note.

24.] St. Mark states (iii. 22) that this accusation was brought by the “*scribes who came down Jerusalem;*” Luke (xi. 15), by “*some of them,*” i.e. of the multitude. the charge itself, Trench remarks, ‘A rigid monotheistic religion like the Jewish, left but one way of escape from the authority of miracles, which once were acknowledged to be indeed such, and not mere collusions and sleights of hand. There remained nothing to say but that which we find in the N.T. the adversaries of our Lord continually did say, namely, that these works were works of hell.’

25.] The Pharisees said this covertly to some among the multitude; see Luke, vv. 15, 17. “There is at first sight a difficulty in the argument which our Saviour draws from the oneness of the kingdom of Satan: viz. that it seems the very idea of this kingdom, that it should *be this anarchy;* blind rage and hate not only against God, but each part of it warring against every other part. And this is most deeply true, that hell is as much in arms against itself as against Heaven: neither does our Lord deny that *in respect of itself* that kingdom is infinite contradiction and division: only He asserts that in relation to the *kingdom of goodness* it is at one: there is one life in it and one soul in relation to that. Just as a nation or kingdom may embrace within itself infinite parties, divisions, discords, jealousies, and heartburnings: yet, if it is to subsist as a nation at all, it must not, *as regards other nations,* have lost its sense of unity; when it does so, of necessity it falls to pieces and perishes.” Trench, Miracles, p. 58. We may observe (1) that our Lord here in the most solemn manner re-asserts and confirms the truths respecting the kingdom of evil which the Jews also held. The *kingdoms* are so set parallel with one another, that the denial of the reality of the one with its *chief*, or the supposing it founded merely in assent on the part of our Lord to Jewish notions, inevitably brings with it the same conclusions with regard to the other. They are both *real*, and so is the conflict between them. (2) That our Lord here appeals not to *an insulated case* of casting out of devils, in which answer might have been made, that the craft of Satan might sometimes put on the garb and arts of an adversary to himself for his own purposes,—but to the *general and uniform tenor of all such acts* on his part, in which He was found as the continual Adversary of the kingdom of Satan. (3) That our Lord proceeds to shew that the axiom is true of all human societies, even to a family, the smallest of such. (4) That He does *not* state the same of an individual man, ‘*Every man divided against himself falleth,*’ rests upon deeper grounds, which will be entered on in the notes on vv. 30, 31.

27.] The interpretation of this verse has been much disputed; viz. as to whether the casting out by the sons of the Pharisees (**scholars,—disciples;** see 2 Kings ii. 3 and *passim*) were real or pretended exorcisms. The occurrence mentioned Luke ix. 49 does not seem to apply; for there John says, *Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy Name*, which hardly could have been the case with those here referred to. Nor again can the vagabond Jews, *exorcists*, of Acts xix. 13 be the same as these, inasmuch as they also named over the possessed *the name of the Lord Jesus*: or at all events it can be no such invocation which is *here* referred to. In Josephus (Antt. viii. 2. 5) we read that Solomon “left forms of exorcism, by which they cast out demons so that they never return. And,” he adds, “this kind of cure is very common among us to this day.” It is highly necessary to institute this enquiry as to the reality of their exorcisms: for it would leave an unworthy impression on the reader, and one very open to the cavils of disbelief, were we to sanction the idea that our Lord would have solemnly compared with his own miracles, and drawn inferences from, a system of imposture, which on that supposition, these Pharisees *must have known* to be such. I infer then that the *sons of the Pharisees did really cast out devils*, and I think this view is confirmed by what the multitudes said in ch. ix. 33, where upon the dumb speaking after the devil was cast out they exclaimed, “*It never was so seen in Israel:*” meaning that this was a more complete healing than they had ever seen before. The difficulty has arisen mainly from forgetting that miracles, *as such*, are *no test of truth*, but have been permitted to, and prophesied of, false religions and teachers. See Exodus vii. 22; viii. 7: ch. xxiv. 24, &c.: Deut. xiii. 1–5. There is an important passage in Justin Martyr, in which he says that the Name of the Son of God Himself never failed to cast out dæmons, whereas those of the Jewish kings, prophets, and patriarchs, failed. “But,” he adds, “if you used the Name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, perhaps it might prevail.” Irenæus says that by this invocation the Jews cast out dæmons even in his time. Jerome, Chrysostom, and others understood “*your sons*” to mean *the Apostles*.

your judges, in the sense of *convicting you partiality*.

28. by the Spirit of God] equivalent to “*by the finger of God*,” Luke; see Exod. viii. 9.

is come, emphatic in position: but merely, **has come unto (upon) you**: not ‘is *already* upon you,’ i.e. ‘before you looked for it,—as Stier and Wesley.

29.] Luke has the word “*a stronger*” applied to the spoiler in this verse; a title given to our Lord by the Baptist, ch. iii. 11 and parallels; see also Isa. xl. 10; xlix. 24, 25; liii. 12. Compare note on Luke xi. 21 f., which is the fuller report of this parabolic saying.

30.] These words have been variously understood. Chrysostom and Euthymius understand them to refer to the devil: Bengel, Schleiermacher, and Neander, to the Jewish exorcists named above. Grotius and others understand it as merely a general proverb, and the “*me*” to mean ‘*any one*,’ and here to apply to Satan, the sense being, ‘*If I do not promote Satan’s kingdom, which I have proved that I do not, then I must be his adversary.*’ But this is on all accounts improbable: see below on *gathereth* and *scattereth*. We must regard it as a saying setting forth to us generally the entire and complete disjunction of the two kingdoms, of Satan and God. There is and can be in the world *no middle party*: they who are not with Christ, who do not gather with Him,—are against Him and his work, and as far as in them lies are undoing it. See Rom. viii. 7. And thus the saying connects itself with the following verse:—this being the case, **Wherfore I say unto you**,—the sin of an open belying of the present power of the Holy Spirit of God working in and for His Kingdom, assumes a character surpassingly awful. This saying is no way inconsistent with that in Mark ix. 40: Luke ix. 50. That is not a conversion of this, for the terms of the respective propositions are not the same. See note on Mark ix. 40.

As usual, this saying of our Lord reached further than the mere occasion to which it referred, and spoke forcibly to those many half-persuaded hesitating persons who flattered themselves that they could strike out a line avoiding equally the persecution of men and the rejection of Christ. He informed them (and informs us also) of the impossibility of such an endeavour.

In the **gathereth** there is an allusion to the idea of gathering the harvest: see ch. xiii. 30: John xi. 52, and for **scattereth**, John x. 12, in all which places the words exactly bear out their sense here.

31, 32.] Wherfore, because this is the case: see last note. Notice again the **I say unto you**, used by our Lord when He makes some revelation of things hidden from the sons of men: see ch. vi. 29, and xviii. 10, 19: and ver. 36 below. The distinction in these much controverted verses seems to be, between 1) the sin and blasphemy which arises from culpable ignorance and sensual blindness, as that of the fool who said in his heart ‘There is no God,’—of those who, e.g. Saul of Tarsus, opposed Jesus as not being the Christ; which persons, to whatever degree their sin may unhappily advance, are capable of enlightenment, repentance, and pardon:—and (2) the blasphemy of those who, acknowledge God, and seeing his present power working by his Holy Spirit, *openly oppose* themselves to it, as did, or as were very near doing (for our Lord does not actually imply that they *had* incurred this dreadful charge), these Pharisees. They may as yet have been under the veil of ignorance; but this their last proceeding, in the sight of Him who knows the hearts, approximated very near to, or perhaps reached, this awful degree of guilt. The principal misunderstanding of this passage has arisen from the prejudice which possesses men’s minds owing to the use the words, ‘the sin against the Holy Ghost.’ It is not a particular species of sin which is here condemned, but a definite act shewing a *state* of sin, and that state a wilful determined opposition to the present power of the Holy Spirit; and this as shewn by its fruit, *blasphemy*. The declaration, in substance, often occurs in the N.T. See 1 John v. 16, and note on “sin” there: 2 Tim. iii. 8: Jude 4, 12, 13: Heb. x. 26–31; vi. 4–8.

No *sure* inference can be drawn from the words **neither in the world to come**—with regard to forgiveness of sins in a future state. Olshausen remarks that a parallel on the other side is found in ch. x. 41, 42, where the *recognition* of divine power in those sent from God is accompanied with promise of eternal reward. He himself however understands the passage (as many others have done) to imply forgiveness on repentance in *the imperfect state of the dead* before the judgment, and considers it to be cognate with 1 Pet. iii. 18 ff. Augustine speaks very strongly: “It could not be said with truth of any, that ‘it shall not be forgiven them neither in this world nor either in the world to come,’ unless there were some who are to be forgiven not in this world, but in the world to come.” See, on the whole subject, note on 1 Pet. iii. 18 ff. In the almost entire silence of Scripture on any such doctrine, every principle of sound interpretation requires that we should hesitate to support it by two difficult passages, in neither of which does the plain construction of the words absolutely require it.

The expressions **this world** (equivalent to “*this present world*,” Tit. ii, 12: 2 Tim. iv. 10; “*this time*,” Mark x. 30; “*the course (age) of this world*,” Eph. ii. 2; “*this present evil world*,” Gal. i. 4) and **the world to come** (see Mark x. 30; equivalent to “*that world*,” Luke xx. 35; “*the ages to come*,” Eph. ii. 7) were common among the Jews, and generally signified respectively the time before and after the coming of the Messiah. In the N.T. these significations are replaced by—*the present life*, and *that to come*: the present mixed state of wheat and tares, and the future completion of Messiah’s Kingdom after the great harvest. These terms seem to differ from “*the kingdom of heaven*,” or “*of God*,” in never being spoken of, or as in, individuals, but as an age of time belonging to the universal Church.

33, 34.] not, as generally understood, equivalent to ‘*represent..... as:*’ for then the clause ‘*for out&c.*’ loses its meaning:—but literally, **make**. The verse is a parable, not merely a similitude. ‘There are but two ways open: either *make the tree and its fruit both good*, or both *bad*: *for* by the fruit the tree is known.’ How *make*, the parable does not say: but let us remember, the Creator speaks, and sets forth a law of his own creation, with which our judgments must be in accord. This verse resumes again the leading argument, and sets forth the inconsistency of the Pharisees in representing Him as in league with evil, whose

works were uniformly good. But the words have a double reference: to our Lord Himself, who could not be evil, seeing that His works were good; and (which leads on to the next verse) to the Pharisees, who could not speak good things, because their works were evil.

35–37.] The treasure spoken of is that inner storehouse of good and evil only seen by God and (partially) by ourselves. And on that account—because words, so lightly thought of by the world and the careless, spring from the inner fountains of good and ill, therefore they will form subjects of the judgment of the great day, when the whole life shall be unfolded and pronounced upon. See James iii. 2–12.

idle is perhaps best taken here in its milder and negative sense, as not yet determined on till the judgment: so that our Lord's declaration is a deduction “a minori,” and if of every *idle* saying, then how much more of every *wicked* saying!

37.] The *speech*, being the *overflow of the heart*, is a specimen of what is within: is the outward utterance of the *man*, and on this ground will form a subject of strict enquiry in the great day, being a considerable and weighty part of our works.

38.] St. Luke (xi. 15, 16) places the accusation of casting out devils by Beelzebub and this request together, and then the discourse follows. It seems that the first of the discourse gave rise, as here related, to the request for a sign (from Heaven); but, as we might naturally expect, and as we learn from St. Luke, on the part of *different persons from those who made the accusation*. In consequence of our Lord declaring that His miracles were wrought by the Holy Ghost, they wish to see some decisive proof of this by a sign, not from Himself, but *from Heaven*. The account in ch. xvi. 1–4 manifestly relates to a different occurrence: see notes there. Cf. John vi. 30, 31; xii. 28.

39.] adulterous (see reff.), because they been the peculiar people of the Lord, and so in departing from Him had broken the covenant of *marriage*, according to the similitude so common in the prophets.

The expression **there shall no sign be given to it** does not, as has been maintained, exclude our Lord's miracles from being *signs*: but is the direct answer to their request in the sense in which we know they used the word, ‘a sign, not *wrought Him, and so able to be suspected of magic art*, but one *from Heaven*.’ Besides, even if this were not so, how can the refusing to work a miracle to *satisfy them*, affect the nature or signification of those wrought on different occasions, and with a totally different view? The *sign of Jonas* is the most remarkable foreshadowing in the O.T. of the resurrection of our Lord. It was of course impossible that His resurrection should be represented by an actual resurrection, as his birth was by births (Isaac, Samson, Samuel, Mahershahalhashbaz), and His death by deaths (Abel; the substitute for Isaac; Zechariah the prophet; the daily and occasional sacrifices); so that we find the events symbolic of his resurrection (Joseph's history; Isaac's sacrifice; Daniel's and Jonah's deliverance), representing it in a figure (lit., “*a parable*,” Heb. xi. 19). In the case before us the figure was very remarkable, and easily to be recognized in the O.T. narrative. For Jonah himself calls the belly of the sea monster (Jonah ii. 2), ‘the belly of Hades,’ = *the heart of the earth* here. And observe, that the type is not of our Lord's *body being deposited in the tomb* of Joseph of Arimathea, for neither could that be called ‘the heart of the earth,’ nor could it be said that ‘the Son of Man’ was there during the time; but of our Lord's *personal descent into the place of departed souls*:—see Eph. iv. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 19, and note on Luke xxiii. 43.

40.] If it be necessary to make good the three days and nights during which our Lord was in the heart of the earth, it must be done by having recourse to the Jewish method of computing time. In the Jerusalem Talmud (cited by Lightfoot) it is said “that a day and night together make up a day (*night-day*), and that any part of such a period is counted as the whole.” See Gen. xl. 13, 20; 1 Sam. xxx. 12, 13; 2 Chron. x. 5, 12; Hos. vi. 2.

41.] In this verse there is no reference to the *sign of Jonas spoken of above*, but to a different matter, another way in which he should be a sign to this generation. See Luke xi. 29 f., and note. (But the preaching of Jonas to the Ninevites was a sign after his resurrection: so shall the preaching of the Son of Man by His Spirit in His Apostles be after His resurrection. Stier.)

On the adjective, here and ver. 42, being in the *neuter*, see above, ver. 6, note.

There is more than Jonas here] No matter so worthy of arousing repentance had ever been revealed or preached as the Gospel: no matter so worthy of exciting the earnest attention of all. And the Lord *Himself*, the Announcer of this Gospel, is greater than all the sons of men: his *preaching*, greater than that of Jonah: his *wisdom*, than that of Solomon.

42. The queen of the south] Josephus calls her the woman who then reigned over Egypt and *Æthiopia*, i.e. over Meroe (whose queens were usually called Candace. Plin. Hist. vi. 29). Abyssinian tradition agrees with this account, calls her Maqueda, and supposes her to have embraced the Jewish religion in Jerusalem. The Arabians on the other hand also claim her, calling her Balkis, which latter view is probably nearer the truth, Sheba being a tract in Arabia Felix, near the shores of the Red Sea, near the present Aden, abounding in spice and gold and precious stones.

43.] This important parable, in the similitude itself, sets forth to us an evil spirit driven out from a man, wandering in his misery and restlessness through desert places, the abodes and haunts of evil spirits (see Isa. xiii. 21, 22; xxxiv. 14), and at last determining on a return to his former victim, whom he finds so prepared for his purposes, that he associates with himself seven other fiends, by whom the wretched man being possessed, ends miserably. In its interpretation we may trace three distinct references, each full of weighty instruction. (1) The direct application of the parable is to the *Jewish people*, and the parallel runs thus:—The old dæmon of idolatry brought down on the Jews the Babylonish captivity, and was cast out by it. They did not after their return fall into it again, but rather endured persecution, as under Antiochus Epiphanes. The emptying, sweeping, and garnishing may be traced in the growth of Pharisaic hypocrisy and the Rabbinical schools between the return and the coming of our Lord. The re-possession by the one, and accession of seven other spirits more malicious than the first, hardly needs explanation. The desperate infatuation of the Jews after our Lord's ascension, their bitter hostility to His Church, their miserable end as a people, are known to all. Chrysostom, who gives in the main this interpretation, notices their continued infatuation in his own day; and instances their joining in the impieties of Julian. (2) Strikingly parallel with this runs the history of the Christian Church. Not long after the apostolic times, the golden calves of idolatry were set up by the Church of Rome. What the effect of the captivity was to the Jews, that of the Reformation has been to Christendom. The first evil spirit has been cast out. But by the growth of hypocrisy, secularity, and rationalism, the house has become empty, swept, and garnished: swept and garnished by the decencies of civilization and discoveries of secular knowledge, but empty of living and earnest faith. And he must read prophecy but ill, who does not see under all these seeming improvements the preparation for the final development of the man of sin, the great re-possession, when idolatry and the seven *worse spirits* shall bring the outward frame of so-called Christendom to a fearful end. (3) Another important fulfilment of the prophetic parable may be found in the histories of individuals. By religious education or impressions, the devil has been cast out of a man; but how often do the religious lives of men spend themselves in the sweeping and garnishing (see Luke xi. 39, 40), in formality and hypocrisy, till utter emptiness of real faith and spirituality has prepared them for that second fearful invasion of the Evil One, which is indeed worse than the first! (See Heb. i. 4, 6: 2 Pet. ii. 20–22.)

46–50.] HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN SEEK TO SPEAK WITH HIM. Mark iii. 31–35. Luke viii. 19–21. In Mark the incident is placed as here: in Luke, after the parable of the sower.

46.] In Mark iii. 21 we are told that his relations *went out to lay hold on Him, for they said, He is beside Himself*: and that the reason of this was his continuous labour in teaching, which *had not left time so much as to eat*. There is nothing in this care for his bodily health (from whatever source the act may have arisen on the part of his *brethren*, see John vii. 5) inconsistent with the known state of his *mother's* mind (see Luke ii. 19, 51).

They stood, i.e. outside the throng of hearers around our Lord; or, perhaps, outside the house. He meets their message with a reproof, which at the same time conveys assurance to His humble hearers. He came for *all men*: and though He was born of a woman, He who is the second Adam, taking our entire humanity on Him, is not on that account more nearly united to her, than to all those who are united to Him by the Spirit; nor bound to regard the call of earthly relations so much as the welfare of those whom He came to teach and to save.

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

Stier remarks (Reden Jesu, ii. 57 note), that the juxtaposition of *sister* and *mother* in the mouth of our Lord makes it probable that the *brethren* also were his actual brothers according to the flesh: see note on ch. xiii. 55.

Matthew: Chapter 13

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

1, 2.] Mark iv. 1.

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

3. in parables] The senses of this word in the N.T. are various. My present concern with it is to explain its meaning as applied to the “*parables*” of our Lord. (1) The *Parable* is not a *Fable*, inasmuch as the Fable is concerned only with the maxims of worldly prudence, whereas the parable conveys spiritual truth. The *Fable* in its form rejects probability, and teaches through the *fancy*, introducing speaking ant or even inanimate things; whereas the *Parable* adheres to probability, and teaches through the *imagination*, introducing only things which may possibly happen. “*A parable is a story of that which purports to have happened,—has not actually happened, but might have happened.*” (2) Nor is the Parable a *Myth*: inasmuch as in Mythology the course of the story is set before us as *the truth*, and simple minds receive it as the truth, only the reflective mind penetrating to the distinction between the vehicle and the thing conveyed; whereas in the Parable these two stand distinct from one another to all minds, so that none but the very simplest would ever believe in the Parable as fact. (3) Nor is the Parable a *Proverb*: though the Greek word (*parabolé*) is used for *both* in the N.T. (Luke iv. 23; v. 36: Matt. xv. 14, 15.) It is indeed more like a Proverb than either of the former; being an expanded Proverb, and a Proverb a concentrated parable, or fable, or result of human experience expressed without a figure. Hence it will be seen that the Proverb ranges far wider than the parable, which is an expansion of only one particular case of a proverb. Thus ‘*Physician heal thyself*’ would, if expanded, make a parable; “*dog eat dog*,” a fable; “*honesty is the best policy*,” neither of these. (4) Nor is the Parable an *Allegory*: inasmuch as in the Allegory the imaginary persons and actions are placed in the very places and footsteps of the real ones, and stand there instead of them, declaring all the time by their names or actions who and what they are. Thus the Allegory is self-interpreting, and the persons in it are invested with the attributes of those represented; whereas in the Parable the courses of action related and understood run indeed parallel, but the persons are strictly confined to their own natural places and actions, which are, in their relation and succession, typical of higher things. (5) It may well hence be surmised what a Parable *is*. It is a *serious narration, within the limits of probability, of a course of action pointing to some moral or spiritual Truth*; and derives its force from real analogies impressed by the Creator of all things on His creatures. The great Teacher by Parables therefore is He who needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man, John ii. 25: moreover, He *made* man, and orders the course and character of human events. And this is the reason why none can, or dare, teach by parables, except Christ. We do not, as He did, see the inner springs out of which flow those laws of eternal truth and justice, which the Parable is framed to elucidate. *Our* parables would be in danger of perverting, instead of guiding aright. The Parable is especially adapted to different classes of hearers at once: it is understood by each according to his measure of understanding. See note on ver. 12.

The seven Parables related in this chapter cannot be regarded as a collection made by the Evangelist as relating to one subject, the Kingdom of Heaven, and its development; they are clearly indicated by ver. 53 to have been all spoken on *one and the same occasion*, and form indeed a complete and glorious whole in their inner and deeper sense. The *first four* of these parables appear to have been spoken *to the multitude from the ship* (the interpretation of the parable of the sower being interposed); the *last three, to the disciples in the house*.

From the expression **he began** in the parallel place in St. Mark, compared with the question of the disciples in ver. 10,—and with ver. 34—it appears that this was the *first beginning of our Lord's teaching by parables*, expressly so delivered, and properly so called. And the natural sequence of things here agrees with, and confirms Matthew's arrangement against those who would place (as Ebrard) this chapter before the Sermon on the Mount. He there spoke *without parables*, or mainly so; and continued to do so till the rejection and misunderstanding of his teaching led to His judicially adopting the course here indicated, *without a parable spake He not (nothing) unto them*. The other order would be inconceivable; that after such parabolic teaching, and such a reason assigned for it, the Lord should, that reason remaining in full force, have deserted his parabolic teaching, and opened out his meaning as plainly as in Sermon on the Mount.

3–9.] THE SOWER. Mark iv. 2–9: Luke viii. 4–8. See note on the locality in vv. 51, 52.

3.] For the explanation of the parable see on vv. 19–23. **4. by the way side] by** (by the side of, along the line of) the **path** through the field. Luke inserts “*and it was trodden down*,” and after *fowls*—“*of the air*.”

5.] the stony places (= “*the rock*” Luke), places where the native rock is but slightly covered with earth (which abound in Palestine), and where therefore the radiation from the face of the rock would cause the seed to spring up quickly, the shallow earth being heated by the sun of the day before.

6.] root = “*moisture*” Luke. If the one could have struck down, it would have found the other.

7. among the thorns] In places where were the roots of thorns, beds of thistles, or such like.

sprung up = “*sprung up with it*” Luke: Mark adds “*and it yielded no fruit*.”

8.] After fruit Mark inserts “*that sprang up and increased*.” Luke gives only “*as hundredfold*.”

9.] is common to all three Evangelists (Mark and Luke insert “*to hear*”).

10–17.] OUR LORD' S REASON FOR TEACHING IN PARABLES. Mark iv. 10–12. Luke viii. 9, 10, but much abridged.

10.] the disciples = “*they that were about him with the twelve,*” Mark. This question took place during a pause in our Lord's teaching, not when He had entered the house, ver. 36. The question shews the *newness of this method of teaching to the disciples.* It is not mentioned in Mark: only the enquiry into the meaning of the parable just spoken: nor in Luke: but the answer implies it.

11.] The Kingdom of Heaven, like other kingdoms, has its secrets (**mysteries**,—see a definition by St. Paul in Rom. xvi. 25 f., —viz. “Something kept secret since the world began, but now made manifest”) and inner counsels, which strangers must not know. These are only revealed to the humble diligent hearers, **to you:** to those who were immediately around the Lord with the twelve; not **to them** = “*the rest*” Luke, = “*them that are without*” Mark. (1 Cor. v. 12, 13.)

it is not given is represented by “*in parables*” Luke, and “*all things are done in parables*” Mark.

12.] In this saying of the Lord is summed up the *double force*—the *revealing* and *concealing* properties of the parable. By it, he who *hath*,—he who not only hears with the ear, but understands with the heart, has more given to him; and it is for this main purpose undoubtedly that the Lord spoke parables: to be to His Church revelations of the truth and mysteries of His Kingdom. But His present purpose in speaking them, as further explained below, was the quality possessed by them, and declared in the latter part of this verse, of hiding their meaning from the hard-hearted and sensual. By them, he who *hath not*, in whom there is no spark of spiritual desire nor meetness to receive the engrafted word, has taken from him even that which he hath (“*seemeth to have*,” Luke); even the poor confused notions of heavenly doctrine which a sensual and careless life allow him, are further bewildered and darkened by this simple teaching, into the depths of which he cannot penetrate so far as even to ascertain that they exist. No practical comment on the latter part of this saying can be more striking, than that which is furnished to our day by the study of the German rationalistic (and, I may add, some of our English harmonistic) Commentators; while at the same time we may rejoice to see the approximate fulfilment the former in such commentaries as those of Olshausen, Neander, Stier, and Trench. In ch. xxv. 29, the fuller meaning of this saying, as applied not only to hearing, but to the whole spiritual life, is brought out by our Lord.

13.] because they seeing see not, &c. = (in Mark, Luke; similarly below) “*that seeing they may... not....*” &c. In the deeper view of the purpose of the parable, both of these run into one. Taking the saying of ver. 12 for our guide, we have “*whosoever hath not*,”—“*because seeing they see not*,”—and “*from him shall be taken away even that he hath*,”—“*that seeing they may not see.*” The difficulties raised on these variations, and on the prophecy quoted in vv. 14, 15, have arisen entirely not keeping this in view.

14, 15.] This prophecy is quoted with a similar reference John xii. 40: Acts xxviii. 26, 27; see also Rom. xi. 8.

is fulfilled] is being fulfilled, ‘finds one of the stages of its fulfilment:’ a partial one having taken place in the contemporaries of the prophet. The prophecy is cited verbatim from the LXX, which changes the imperative of the Hebrew (‘Make the heart of this people fat,’ &c., E.V.) into the indicative, as bearing the same meaning.

in them properly signifies relation, ‘with regard to them.’

is waxed gross] literally, **grew fat;** from prosperity.

are dull of hearing] literally, **heard heavily**, ‘*sluggishly and imperfectly.*’

their eyes they have closed] (Heb. ‘*smeared over.*’) All this have they done: all this is increased in them by their continuing to do it, and all lest they should (and so that they cannot) hear, see, understand, and be saved.

I should heal them = “*it should be forgiven them*” Mark. This citation gives no countenance to the fatalist view of the passage, but rests the whole blame on the hard-heartedness and unreadiness of the hearers, which is of itself the cause why the very preaching of the word is a means of further darkening and condemning them (see 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4).

16, 17.] See ref. Prov. These verses occur again in a different connexion, and with the form of expression slightly varied, Luke x. 23, 24. It was a saying likely to be repeated. On the fact that prophets, &c. desired to see those things, see 2 Sam. xxiii. 5: Job xix. 23–27: also Exod. iv. 13, and Luke ii. 29–32.

18–23.] INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER. Mark iv. 10–20. Luke viii. 9–18, who incorporate with the answer of our Lord to the request of the disciples, much of our last section.

18.] Hear, in the sense of the verse before—**hear the true meaning** of, ‘*hear in your hearts.*’ With regard to the Parable

itself, we may remark that its great leading idea is that “*mystery of the Kingdom*,” according to which the grace of God, and the receptivity of it by man, work ever together in bringing forth fruit. The *seed* is one and the same every where and to all: but *seed does not spring up without earth, nor does earth bring forth without seed*; and the success or failure of the seed is the consequence of the adaptation to its reception, or otherwise, of the spot on which it falls. But of course, on the other hand, as the enquiry, “Why is this ground rich, and that barren?” leads us up into the creative arrangements of God,—so a similar enquiry in the spiritual interpretation would lead us into the inscrutable and sovereign arrangements of Him who ‘preventeth us that we may have a good will, and worketh with us when we have that will’ (Art. X. of the Church of England). See, on the whole, my Sermons before the University of Cambridge, February, 1858.

19.] In Luke we have an important preliminary declaration, implied indeed here also: “*the seed is the word of God*.” This *word* is in this parable especially meant of the word *preached*, though the word *written* is not excluded: nor the word *unwritten*—the providences and judgments, and even the creation, of God. (See Rom. x. 17, 18.) The similitude in this parable is alluded to in 1 Pet. i. 23; James i. 21. The sower is first the Son of Man (ver. 37), then His ministers and servants (1 Cor. iii. 6) to the end. He sows over all the field, unlikely as well as likely places; and commands His sowers to do the same, Mark xvi. 15. Some, Stier says, have objected to the parable a want of truthful correspondence to reality, because sowers do not thus waste their seed by scattering it where it is not likely to grow; but, as he rightly answers,—the simple idea of the parable must be borne in mind, and its limits not transgressed—‘a sower went out to sow’—his SOWING—sowing over all places, is the idea of the parable. We see him only as a *sower*, not as an economist. The parable is not about *Him*, but about the *seed* and *what happens to it*. He is the fit representative of *God, who giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not*, James i. 5.

and understandeth it not is peculiar to Matthew, and very important; as in Mark and Luke this first class of hearers are without any certain index to denote them. The *reason* of this *not understanding* is clearly set forth by the parable: the heart is hardened, trodden down; the seed cannot penetrate.

the wicked one = “*Satan*” (Mark, who also inserts “*immediately*”), = “*the devil*” (Luke). The parable itself is here most satisfactory as to the *manner* in which the Evil One proceeds. By fowls of the air—passing thoughts and desires, which seem insignificant and even innocent—does Satan do his work, and rob the heart of the precious seed. St. Luke adds the purpose of Satan in taking away the word: “*lest they should believe and be saved*.”

he that was sown by the way side (not, as A.V. “*he that received seed by the way side*”). This is not a confusion of similitudes,—no ‘primary and secondary interpretation’ of *the seed*,—but the deep truth, both of nature and of grace. The seed sown springing up in the earth, *becomes the plant*, and bears the fruit, or fails of bearing it; it is therefore the representative, when sown, of the individuals of whom the discourse is. And though in this first case it does not spring up, yet the same form of speech is kept up: throughout they are *they that were sown*, as, when the question of bearing fruit comes, they must be. We are said to be “*born again by the word of God*,” 1 Pet. i. 23. It takes us up into itself, as the seed the earth, and we become a new plant, a *new creation*: cf. also below, ver. 38, “*the good seed, are the children of the Kingdom*.”

20, 21.] In this *second* case, the surface of the mind and disposition is easily stirred, soon excited: but beneath lies a heart even harder than the trodden way. So the plant, springing up under the false heat of excitement, having no root struck down into the depths of the being, is, when the real heat from without arises, which is intended to strengthen and forward the healthy-rooted plant, withered and destroyed. The Greek word signifies not only ‘dureth for a while,’ but also ‘is the creature of circumstances,’ changing as they change. Both ideas are included. St. Luke has, “*in time of temptation fall away*,” thus accommodating themselves to that *time*.

22.] In this *third* sort, *all as regards the soil is well*; the seed goes deep, the plant springs up; all is as in the next case, with but one exception, and that, *the bearing of fruit—becometh unfruitful = bring no fruit to perfection* (Luke). And this because the seeds or roots of thorns are in, and are suffered to spring up in the heart, and to overwhelm the plant. There is a divided will, a half-service (see on ch. vi. 25) which ever ends in the prevalence of evil over good. This class is not confined to the *rich: riches* in Scripture is not riches *absolutely*, as possessed, but riches *relatively*, as estimated by the desire and value for them. St. Mark adds, *and the lusts of (the) other things, viz. the other things which shall be added to us if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness*. The identity of the *seeds sown* with the individuals of these classes, as maintained above, is strikingly shewn in Luke here: *that which fell among thorns, (these) are they &c.* (viii. 14.) We may notice: (I) That there is in these three classes a PROGRESS, and that a *threefold* one:—(1) in TIME:—the first receives a hindrance *at the very outset*: the seed never springs up:—the second *after it has sprung up*, but *soon after*:—the third *when it has entered, sprung up, and come to maturity: or while it is so coming*.—(2) in APPARENT DEGREE. The climax is *apparently* from *bad* to *better*;—the first *understand not*: the second *understand and feel*: the third *understand, feel, and practise*. But also (3) in REAL DEGREE, from *bad* to *worse*. Less awful is the state of those who *understand not* the word and lose it *immediately*, than that of those who *feel it, receive it with joy*, and in time of trial *fall away*: less awful again this last, than that of those who *understand, feel, and practise*, but are *fruitless and impure*. It has been noticed also that the first is more the fault of *careless inattentive CHILDHOOD*; the second of *ardent shallow YOUTH*; the third of *worldly self-seeking AGE*. (II) That these classes do *not EXCLUDE one another*. They are great general divisions, the outer circles of which fall into one another, as

they very likely might in the field itself, in their different combinations.

23.] Here also the *fourth* class must not be understood as a decided well-marked company, excluding all the rest. For the soil is *not good by nature*: the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; but every predisposition to receive them is of God:—even the shallow soil covering the rock, even the thorny soil, received its power to take in and vivify the seed, from God. So that divine grace is the enabling, vivifying, cleansing power throughout: and these sown on the good land are no naturally good, amiable, or pure class, but those prepared by divine grace—receptive, by granted receptive power. The sowing is not necessarily the *first* that has ever taken place: the field has been and is continually resown, so that the *care of the husbandman* is presupposed. Again, no irresistible grace or absolute decree of God must be dreamt of here. God working not barely *upon*, but *with* man, is, as we said above, the *mystery of the Kingdom* here declared,—see Jer. iv. 3: Hosea x. 12: Gal. vi. 7. See note on Luke viii. 15.

an hundred, sixty, thirty, the different degrees of faithfulness and devotedness of life with which fruit is brought forth by different classes of persons. There is no point of comparison with the different classes in the parable of the *talents*: for he who had five talents yielded the *same* increase as he who had two.

24–30.] SECOND PARABLE. THE TARES OF THE FIELD. *Peculiar to Matthew.* For the explanation of this parable see below, vv. 36–43.

24.] **is likened unto a man**, i.e. ‘*is like the whole circumstances about to be detailed; like the case of a man,’ &c.* A similar form of construction is found in ch. xviii. 23, and in other parables in Matthew.

25.] **men**; i.e. not, ‘*the men*’ belonging to the owner of the field, but **men** generally: and the expression is used only to designate ‘*in the night time,*’ not to charge the servants with any want of watchfulness.

sowed] more than this: the verb means, **sowed over the first seed.**

tares] The Greek word is *zizania*: apparently the *darnel*, or *bastard wheat* (*loliu album*), so often seen in our fields and by our hedgerows; if so, what follows will be explained, that the **tares** appeared when the wheat came into ear, having been previously not noticeable. It appears to be an Eastern word.

Our Lord was speaking of an act of malice practised in the East:—persons of revengeful disposition watch the ground of a neighbour being ploughed, and in the night following sow destructive weeds. (The practice is not unknown even in England at present. Since the publication of the first edition of my Greek Test., a field belonging to myself, at Gaddesby in Leicestershire, was maliciously sown with charlock [*sinapis arvensis*] over the wheat. An action at law was brought by the tenant, and heavy damages obtained against the offender.)

29.] Jerome in loc, says: “Between wheat and tares, which we call *loliu*, as long as both are in the blade, and the stalk is not yet in ear, there is a great similitude, and discrimination is difficult, if not impossible.” Jerome, it must be remembered, resided in Palestine.

31, 32.] THIRD PARABLE. THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED. Mark iv. 30–34: Luke xiii. 18, 19. On the connexion of this parable with the two last, Chrysostom observes: “Having told them that of the seed three parts perish, and only one is preserved, and that in the preserved portion itself there is such deleterious mixture,—for fear they might say, ‘And who then and how many will be the faithful?’ He goes on to remove this fear by the parable of the mustard seed, helping their faith, and shewing them that, all this notwithstanding, the kingdom shall spread and flourish.”

The comparison of kingdoms to *trees* was familiar to the Jews; see Daniel iv. 10–12, 20–22: Ezek, xxxi. 3–9; xvii. 22–24: Ps. lxxx. 8–11.

32. **least of all]** literally, **less than all**. The words are not to be pressed to their literal sense, as the mustard seed was a well-known Jewish type for any thing exceedingly small. e mustard tree attains to a size in Judæa. See citations from Lightfoot in my Greek Test. This parable, like most others respecting the kingdom of God, has a *double reference—general and individual.* (1) In the *general* sense, the insignificant beginnings of the kingdom are set forth: the little babe cast in the manger at Bethlehem; the Man of sorrows with no place to lay His Head; the crucified One; or again the hundred and twenty names who were the seed of the Church after the Lord had ascended; then we have the Kingdom of God waxing onward and spreading its branches here and there, and different nations coming into it, “He must increase,” said the great Forerunner. We must beware however of imagining that the *outward Church-form* is this Kingdom. It has rather *reversed* the parable, and is the worldly power waxed to a great tree and the Churches taking under the shadow of it. It may be, where not corrupted by error and superstition, subservient to the growth of the heavenly plant: but is not itself that plant. It is at best no more than (to change the figure) the scaffolding to aid the building, not the building itself, (2) The *individual* application of the parable

points to the small beginnings of divine grace; a word, a thought, a passing sentence, may prove to be the little seed which eventually fills and shadows the whole heart and being, and calls ‘all thoughts, all passions, all delights’ to come and shelter under it.

33.] FOURTH PARABLE. THE LEAVEN. Luke xiii. 20, 21. Difficulties have been raised as to the interpretation of this parable which do not seem to belong to it. It has been questioned whether **leaven** must not be taken in the sense in which it so often occurs in Scripture, as symbolic of *pollution* and *corruption*. See Exod. xii. 15, and other enactments of the kind, *passim* in the law; and ch. xvi. 6: 1 Cor. v. 6, 7. And some few have taken it thus, and explained the parable of the *progress of corruption and deterioration* in the outward visible Church. But then, how is it said that the *Kingdom of Heaven is like* this leaven? For the construction is not the same as in ver. 24, where the similitude is to the *whole course of things related*, but answers to “*a grain of mustard seed which a man took*,” &c.: so “*leaven, which a woman took*,” &c. Again, if the progress of the Kingdom of Heaven be *towards corruption, till the whole is corrupted*, surely there is an end of all the blessings and healing influence of the Gospel on the world. It will be seen that such an interpretation cannot for a moment stand, on its *own* ground; but much less when we connect it with the parable preceding. The two are intimately related. *That* was of the *inherent self-developing power* of the Kingdom of Heaven, as a seed, containing in itself the principle of expansion; *this*, of the *power which it possesses of penetrating and assimilating a foreign mass*, till all be taken up into it. And the comparison is not only to the *power*, but to the *effect* of leaven also, which has its *good* as well as its bad side, and for that good is used: viz. to make wholesome and fit for use that which would otherwise be heavy and insalubrious. Another striking point of comparison is in the fact that leaven, as used ordinarily, is a *piece of the leavened loaf* put amongst the new dough, just as the Kingdom of Heaven is the renewal of humanity by the righteous Man Christ Jesus.

The Parable, like the last, has its *general* and its *individual* application: (1) in the penetrating of the *whole mass of humanity*, by degrees, by the influence of the Spirit of God, so strikingly witnessed in the earlier by the dropping of heathen customs and worship;—in modern times more gradually and secretly advancing, but still to be plainly seen in the various abandonments of criminal and unholy practices (as e.g. in our own time of slavery and duelling, and the increasing abhorrence of war among Christian men), and without doubt in the end to be signally and universally manifested. But this effect again is not to be traced in the establishment or history of so-called Churches, but in the hidden advancement, without observation, of that deep leavening power which works irrespective of human forms and systems. (2) In the transforming power of the ‘new leaven’ on the whole being of individuals. “In fact the Parable does nothing less than set forth to us the mystery of regeneration, both in its first act, which can be but once, as the leaven is but once hidden; and also in the consequent (subsequent?) renewal by the Holy Spirit, which, as the ulterior working of the leaven, is continual and progressive.” (Trench, p. 97.) Some have contended for this as the sole application of the parable; but not, I think, rightly.

As to whether the **woman** has any especial meaning, (though I am more and more convinced that such considerations are not always to be passed by as nugatory,) it will hardly be of much consequence here to enquire, seeing that *women bakers* would be every where a matter of course. Three of these measures, which composed an ephah, appear to have been the usual quantity prepared for a baking: see Gen. xviii. 6: Judg. vi. 19: 1 Sam. i. 24. This being the case, we need not perhaps seek for any symbolical interpretation: though Olshausen’s hint that the *body, soul, and spirit* may perhaps be here intended can hardly but occur to us, and Stier’s, that “*of the three sons of Noah* was the whole earth overspread,” is worth recording.

34, 35.] CONCLUSION OF THE PARABLES SPOKEN TO THE MULTITUDES. Mark iv. 33, 34.

35. that it might be fulfilled] See note on ch. i. 22. The *prophet*, according to the superscription of Psalm lxxviii., is Asaph, so called 2 Chron. xxix. 30, LXX.

36–43.] INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TARES OF THE FIELD. *Peculiar to Matthew.*

38.] This verse has been variously interpreted, notwithstanding that its statements are so plain. The consideration of it will lead us into that of the general nature and place of the parable itself. **The field is the world;** if understood of the Church, then the Church only as *commensurate with the world*, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature* (Mark xvi. 15); **THE CHURCH standing for THE WORLD**, not, the *world* for the *Church*. And the parable has, like the former ones, its various references to various counter-workings of the Evil One against the grace of God. Its two principal references are, (1) to the *whole history of the world* from beginning to end; the coming of sin into the world by the malice of the devil,—the mixed state of mankind, notwithstanding the development of God’s purposes by the dispensations of grace—and the final separation of the good and evil at the end. The very declaration ‘the harvest is the *end of the world*’ suggests the original sowing as the *beginning* of it. Yet this sowing is not in the fact, as in the parable, *one only*, but repeated again and again.

In the parable the Lord gathers as it were the whole human race into *one lifetime*, as they will be gathered in one harvest, and sets that forth as simultaneous, which has been scattered over the ages of time. But (2) as applying principally to the *Kingdom of heaven*, which lay in the future and with the Lord’s incarnation, the parable sets forth to us the *universal sowing of GOOD SEED by the Gospel*: it sows *no bad seed*: all this is done by the enemy, and further we may not enquire. Soon, even as soon

as Acts v. in the History of the Church, did the tares begin to appear; and in remarkable coincidence with the wheat bringing forth fruit (see Acts iv. 32–37). Again, see Acts xiii. 10, where Paul calls Elymas by the very name, “*son of the devil*.” And ever since, the same has been the case; throughout the whole world, where the Son of Man sows good seed, the Enemy sows tares. And it is not the office, however much it may be the desire, of the servants of the householder, the labourers in His field, to collect or root up these tares, to put them out of the world literally, or of the Church spiritually (save in some few exceptional cases, such as that in Acts v.); this is reserved for another time and for other hands,—for the harvest, the end; for the reapers, the angels. (3) It is also most important to notice that, as the Lord here gathers up ages into one season of seed time and harvest, so He also gathers up the various changes of human character and shiftings of human will into two distinct classes. We are not to suppose that the wheat can never become tares, or the tares wheat: this would be to contradict the purpose of Him who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; and this gracious purpose shines through the command “*let both grow together*”—let time be given (as above) for the leaven to work. As in the parable of the sower, the various classes were the concentrations of various dispositions, all of which are frequently found in one and the same individual, so here the line of demarcation between wheat and tares, so fixed and impassable at last, is during the probation time, the time of growing together, not yet determined by Him who will have to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. In the very first example, that of our first parents, the good seed degenerated, but their restoration and renewal was implied in the promises made to them, indeed in their very punishment itself; and we their progeny are by nature the children of wrath, till renewed by the same grace. The parable is delivered by the Lord as knowing all things, and describing by the final result; and gives no countenance whatever to predestinarian error. (4) The parable has an historical importance, having been much in the mouths and writings of the Donatists, who, maintaining that the Church is a perfectly holy congregation, denied the applicability of this Scripture to convict them of error, seeing that it is spoken not of the Church, but of the world: missing the deeper truth which would have led them to see that, after all, the world is the Church, only overrun by these very tares. **the good seed, (these) are the sons** strikingly sets forth again the identity of the seed, in its growth, with those who are the plants: see above on ver. 19.

the sons of the kingdom] not in the same sense as in ch. viii. 12,—SONS there, by covenant and external privilege: here,—by the effectual grace of adoption: the KINGDOM, there, in mere paradigm, on this imperfect earth: here, in its true accomplishment, in the new heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness: but in their state among the tares, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

41. things that offend] generally understood of those men who give cause of offence, tempters and hinderers of others: it is better to understand it rather of things, as well as men, who are afterwards designated.

43.] shall shine, literally, **shine out** (their light here being enfeebled and obscured), as the sun from a cloud.

of their Father, answering to *the sons*, ver. 38. This sublime announcement is over and above the interpretation of the parable.

44.] FIFTH PARABLE. THE HIDDEN TREASURE. *Peculiar to Matthew.* This and the following parable are closely connected, and refer to two distinct classes of persons who become possessed of the treasure of the Gospel. Notice that these, as also the seventh and last, are spoken not to the multitude, but to the disciples.

In this parable, a man, labouring perchance for another, or by accident in passing, finds a treasure which has been hidden in a field; from joy at having found it he goes, and selling all he has, buys the field, thus (by the Jewish law) becoming the possessor also of the treasure. Such hiding of treasure is common even now, and was much more common in the East (see Jer. xli. 8: Job iii. 21: Prov. ii. 4).

This sets before us the case of a man who unexpectedly, without earnest seeking, finds, in some part of the outward Church, the treasure of true faith and hope and communion with God; and having found this, for joy of it he becomes possessor, not of the treasure without the field (for that the case supposes impossible), but of the field at all hazards, to secure the treasure which is in it: i.e. he possesses himself of the means of grace provided in that branch of the Church, where, to use a common expression, he has “gotten his good:” he makes that field his own.

45, 46.] SIXTH PARABLE. THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE. In this parable our Lord sets before us, that although in ordinary cases of finding ‘the truth as it is in Jesus,’ the buying of the field is the necessary prelude to becoming duly and properly possessed of it; yet there are cases, and those of a nobler kind, where such condition is not necessary. We have here a merchantman,—one whose business it is,—on the search for goodly pearls; i.e. a man who intellectually and spiritually is a seeker of truth of the highest kind. “He whom this pursuit occupies is a merchantman; i.e. one trained, as well as devoted, to business. The search is therefore determinate, discriminate, unremitting. This case then corresponds to such Christians only as from youth have been trained up in the way which they should go. In these alone can be the settled habits, the effectual self-direction, the convergence to one point of all the powers and tendencies of the soul, which are indicated by the illustration.” (Knox’s Remains, i. 460.) But as the same writer goes on to observe, even here there is a discovery, at a particular time. The

person has been seeking, and finding, goodly pearls; what is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report: but at last he finds *one pearl* of great price—the efficacious principle of inward and spiritual life. We hear of no emotion, no great joy of heart, as before; but the same decision of conduct: he sells all and buys it. He chooses vital Christianity, at whatever cost, for his portion. But here is no *field*. The pearl is bought pure—by itself. It is found, not unexpectedly in the course of outward ordinances, with which therefore it would become to the finder inseparably bound up,—but by diligent search, spiritual and immediate, in its highest and purest form. Trench instances Nathanael and the Samaritan woman as examples of the finders without seeking:—Augustine, as related in his Confessions (we might add St. Paul, see Phil. iii. 7), of the diligent seeker and finder. Compare with this parable Prov. ii. 3–9, and to see what kind of buying is *not* meant, Isa. iv. 1: ch. xxv. 9, 10. Also see Rev. iii. 18.

47–52.] SEVENTH PARABLE. THE DRAW-NET. *Peculiar to Matthew.*

47.] The net spoken of is a drag, or **draw-net**, drawn over the bottom of the water, and permitting nothing to escape it. The leading idea of this parable is the ultimate separation of the holy and unholy in the Church, with a view to the selection of the former for the master's use. We may notice that the *fishermen* are kept out of view and never mentioned: the comparison not extending to them. A net is cast into the sea and gathers of every kind (of *fish*: not of *things*, as mud, weeds, &c., as some suppose); when this is full, it is drawn to shore, and the good collected into vessels, while the bad (the legally unclean, those out of season, those putrid or maimed) are cast away. This net is the *Church gathering from the sea* (a common Scripture similitude for nations: see Rev. xvii. 15: Isa. viii. 7: Ps. lxv. 7) of the *world, all kinds* (see Rev. vii. 9); and when it is full, it is drawn to the *bank* (the limit of the ocean, as the *end* (literally, *consummation*) is the limit of the *world*, [literally, *age*]), and the *angels* (not the same as the fishers; for in the parable of the tares the *servants* and *reapers* are clearly distinguished) shall gather out the wicked from among the just, and cast them into everlasting punishment. It is plain that the comparison must not be strained beyond its limits, as our Lord shews us that the earthly here gives but a faint outline of the heavenly. Compare the mere “*cast away*” of the one, with the fearful antitype of vv. 49, 50.

51, 52.] SOLEMN CONCLUSION OF THE PARABLES. When our Lord asks, ‘Have ye understood all these things?’ and they answer, ‘Yea, [Lord,]’ the reply must be taken as spoken from their *then standing-point*, from which but little could be seen of that inner and deeper meaning which the Holy Spirit has since unfolded. And this circumstance explains the following parabolic remark of our Lord: that every **scribe** (*they*, in their study of the Lord's sayings, answering to the then *scribes* in their study of the Law) who is **instructed** (discipled), enrolled as a disciple and taught as such, is like an householder (the Great Householder being the Lord Himself, compare ch. xxiv. 45) who puts forth from his store new things and old; i.e. ‘ye yourselves, scribes of the Kingdom of Heaven, instructed as ye shall fully be in the meaning of these sayings, are (shall be) like householders, from your own stores of knowledge respecting them hereafter bringing out not only your present understanding of them, but ever new and deeper meanings.’

And this is true of **every** scribe: *Every* real spiritually-learned scribe of the Kingdom of Heaven is able, from the increasing stores of his genuine experimental knowledge of the word (not merely from books or learning, or the Bible itself, but *out of his treasure*), to bring forth things new and old.

The **therefore** is an expression of *consequence*, but not a strong one: answering nearly to our **Well, then.**

This is perhaps the fittest place to make a few *general remarks* on this wonderful cycle of Parables. We observe, (1) How naturally they are evolved from the objects and associations surrounding our Lord at the time (see on this the very interesting section of Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, ch. xiii. §2, p. 420 ff, “On the Parables”). He sat in a boat in the sea, teaching the people who were on the land. His eye wandered over the rich plain of Gennesaret:—the field-paths, the stony places, the neglected spots choked with wild vegetation, the plots of rich and deep soil, were all before him. The same imagery prevails in the parable of the tares of the field, and in that of the mustard seed; and the result of the tilling of the land is associated with the leaven in the lump. Then He quits the sea-shore and enters the house with the disciples. There the link to the former parable is the exposition of the tares of the field. From the working of the land for seed to finding a treasure in a field the transition is easy—from the finding without seeking to seeking earnestly and finding, easy again: from the seed to the buried treasure, from the treasure to the pearl,—the treasure of the deep,—again simple and natural. The pearl recalls the sea; the sea the fishermen with their net; the mixed throng lining the beach, the great day of separation on the further bank of Time. (2) The seven Parables compose, in their inner depth of connexion, a great united whole, beginning with the first sowing of the Church, and ending with the consummation. We must not, as Stier well remarks, seek, with Bengel, &c., minutely to apportion the series prophetically, to various historical periods: those who have done so (see Trench, p. 142, edn. 4) have shewn caprice and inconsistency; and the *parable*, though in its manifold depths the light of prophecy sometimes glimmers, has for its main object to *teach*, not to foretell. More than a general outline, shewn by the prominence of those points to which the respective parables refer, in the successive periods of the Church, we can hardly expect to find. But as much we unquestionably do find. The apostolic age was (1) the greatest of all the seed times of the Church: then (2) sprang up the tares, heresies manifold, and the attempts to root them out, almost as pernicious as the heresies themselves: nay, the so-called *Church Catholic* was for ages employed in rooting up the wheat also. Notwithstanding this (3) the little seed waxed onward—

the kingdoms of the earth came gradually in—(4) the leaven was secretly penetrating and assimilating. Then is it, (5) during the period of dissensions, and sects, and denominations, that here and there by this man and that man the treasure shall be found: then is it, (6) during the increase of secular knowledge and cultivation of the powers of the intellect, that merchantmen shall seek goodly pearls up and down the world, and many shall find, each for himself, the Pearl of Price. And thus we are carried on (7) through all the ages during which the great net has been gathering of every kind, to the solemn day of inspection and separation, which will conclude the present state.

53–58.] TEACHING, AND REJECTION, AT NAZARETH. Mark vi. 1–6. See Luke iv. 16–29 and notes.

53, 54.) his own country, viz. Nazareth. Perhaps the proceedings of ch. viii 18–ix. 34 are to be inserted between those two verses. In Mark iv. 35, the stilling of the storm and voyage to the Gadarenes are bound to the above parables by what appears a distinct note of sequence: ‘*the same day, when the even was come.*’ The teaching was on the Sabbath (Mark).

55. his brethren] It is an enquiry of much interest and some difficulty, who these were. After long examination of the evidence on the subjects I believe that the truth will best be attained by disencumbering the mind in the first place of all *à priori considerations*, and *traditions* (which last are very inconsistent and uncertain), and fixing the attention on the *simple testimony of Scripture itself*. I will trace “*His brethren*,” or “*the brethren of the Lord*,” through the various mentions of them in the N.T., and then state the result; placing at the end of the note the principal traditions on the subject, and the difficulties attending them. (I) The expression “*His brethren*,” occurs *nine times* in the Gospels, and *once* in the Acts. Of these the *three first* are in the narratives of the coming of His mother and brethren to speak with Him, Matt. xii. 46: Mark iii, 31: Luke viii. 19: the *two next* are the present passage and its||in Mark vi. 3, where they are mentioned in connexion with His mother and sisters; the *four others* are in John ii. 12; vii. 3, 5, 10; in the *first* of which He and his mother and brethren and disciples are related to have gone down to Capernaum: and in the *three last* His brethren are introduced as urging Him to shew Himself to the world, and it is stated that they did not believe on Him. The *last* is in Acts i. 14, where we read that the Apostles ‘continued in prayer and supplication with the women, and with Mary the mother of Jesus, *and with his brethren*,’ In another place, 1 Cor. ix. 5, Paul mentions “*the other Apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas.*” Such are all the places where the meaning is *undoubted*, that persons called, and being in some usual sense, *brethren of the Lord*, are mentioned. (Besides these the Lord, Himself uses the words “*my brethren*,” Matt. xxviii. 10; John xx. 17, but apparently with a wider meaning, including at least the eleven Apostles in the term, as He does in Matt. xii. 49, and parallels.) Now I would observe (a) that in all the mentions of them in the Gospels, except those in John vii., they are *in connexion with His mother*: the same being the case in Acts i. 14. (b) That it is nowhere asserted or implied that any of them were *of the number of the Twelve*; but from John vii. 5, following upon vi. 70 (by “*after these things*,” vii. 1), they are *excluded from that number*. St. John would certainly not have used the words “*for neither did his brethren believe on him*,” had *any of them* believed on Him at that time (see this substantiated in note there):—and again in Acts i. 14, by being mentioned after the Apostles have been enumerated by name, and after the mother of Jesus, they are indicated at that time also to have been *separate from the twelve*, although, *then certainly believing on Him*. (c) Their *names*, as stated here and in Mark vi. 3, were JACOB (JAMES), JOSEPH, (or JOSES), SIMON, and JUDAS, all of them among the commonest of Jewish names. Of JOSEPH (or JOSES)—certainly not the Joseph Barnabas Justus of Acts i. 23: see ib. ver. 21) and SIMON (not Simon Cananæus or Zelotes: see above) *we know from Scripture nothing*. Of the *two others* we have the following traces—(d) JACOB (JAMES) appears in the apostolic narrative as *the Lord’s brother*, Gal. i. 19: he is there called an *apostle*. This however determines nothing as to his having been among *the Twelve* (which is a very different matter); for *Paul and Bareabas are called apostles*, Acts xiv. (4) 14, and Paul always calls himself such. See also Rom. xvi. 7; 1 Thess. ii. 7 compared with i. 1. That he is identical with the James of Gal. ii. 9, whom Paul mentions with Cephas and John as having given him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, fourteen years after the visit in ch. i. 19, does not appear for certain, but has been pretty generally assumed. (See this whole subject, discussed in the Introduction to the Epistle of James.) (e) The JUDE who has left an epistle, and was brother of James, not only does not call himself an apostle, ver. 1 (as neither does James, nor indeed John himself, so that this cannot be urged), but in ver. 17 (see note there) seems to draw 8 distinction between himself and the Apostles. Whether this indicates that the James and Jude, the authors of the Epistles, were two of these *brethren of the Lord*, is uncertain; but it may at least be mentioned in the course of our enquiry.

I shall now state the result of that enquiry, which has been based on Scripture testimony only. (1) That there were *four persons known as “His brethren,” or “the brethren of the Lord,” NOT OF THE NUMBER OF THE TWELVE*. (2) That these persons are found in all places (with the above exception) where their names occur in the Gospels, *in immediate connexion with Mary, the mother of the Lord*. [It is a strange phænomenon in argument, that it should have been maintained by an orthodox writer, that my inference from this *proves too much*, because Joseph is here introduced as *His father*: as if a mistake of the Jews with regard to a supernatural fact, which they could not know, invalidated their cognizance of a natural fact which they knew full well.] (3) That not a word is anywhere dropped to prevent us from inferring that these *brethren* were His relations *in the same literal sense* as we know *His mother* to have been; but that His own saying, where He distinguishes His relations according to the flesh from His disciples (ch. xii. 50 and parallels), seems to *sanction that inference*. (4) That nothing is said from which it can be inferred whether Joseph had been married before he appears in the Gospel history;—or again, whether these *brethren* were, according to the flesh, older or younger than our Lord. (5) That the silence of the Scripture narrative leaves it free for

Christians to believe these to have been *real* (younger) *brethren and sisters of our Lord, without incurring any imputation of unsoundness of belief as to His miraculous conception.* That such an imputation has been cast, is no credit to the logical correctness of those who have made it, who set down that, because this view *has been taken* by impugners of the great Truth just mentioned, *therefore* it eventually leads, or may fairly be used towards the denial of it; for no attempt is made to shew its connexion with such a conclusion. The fact is, that the two matters, the *miraculous conception of the Lord Jesus* by the Holy Ghost, and the *subsequent virginity of His mother, are ESSENTIALLY AND ENTIRELY DISTINCT;* see note on Matt. i. 25: see also respecting a supposed difficulty attending this view, note on John xix. 27. (II) I will now state the principal *traditional* views respecting the brethren of the Lord. (1) That they were *all sons of Alpheus* (or Clopas) and *Mary the sister of the mother of our Lord;* and so *cousins* of Jesus, and called agreeably to Jewish usage *His brothers.* This is the view taken in a remarkable fragment of Papias, adopted by Jerome, and very generally received in ancient and modern times. But it seems to me that a comparison of the Scripture testimonies cited above will prove it untenable. One at least of the sons of this Alphæus was an apostle, *of the number of the twelve*, viz. James the son of Alphæus (see all the lists, on ch. x. 3); which (see above) would *exclude him from the number of the brethren of the Lord.* But even if *one* of the four could be thus detached (which, from John vii. 5, I cannot believe), it is generally assumed that "*Judas of James*" (so in the Greek) (see Luke's two lists as above) is Jude the *brother* of James; and if so, this would be *another* son of Alphæus, and another subtraction from the number who did not believe on Hin. Again Matthew (see note on Matt. ix. 9), if identical with Levi (Mark ii. 14), was *another son of Alpheus;* which would make a fifth brother, and leave therefore, *out of five, three believing on Him at the time when it was said, "neither did his brethren believe on Him."* This view besides labours under the difficulty arising from these brethren accompanying and being found in connexion with Mary the mother of our Lord, whereas throughout that time *their own mother was living.* The way in which the assertors of this view explain John vii. 5, is either by supposing that all the brethren are not *there* implied, or that all are not *here* mentioned; both suppositions, it seems to me, very unlikely (compare e.g. John's minute accuracy where an exception was to be made, ch. vi. 23, 24). (2) That they were *children of Joseph by a former marriage* (or even by a later one with Mary wife of Clopas, to raise up seed to his dead *brother*,—as Clopas is said to have been: but this needs no refutation). This view was taken by several early Fathers, and mentioned by Origen, who says respecting it, "*those who maintain this, wish to uphold the perpetual virginity of Mary.*" This however, while *by no means impossible*, and in some respects agreeing with the *apparent* position of these brothers as older (according to the flesh) than the Lord (John vii. 3), has no countenance whatever in Scripture, either in their being called sons of any other woman, or in any distinct mention of Joseph as their father, which surely in this case would be required. (III) On the *à priori considerations* which have influenced opinions on this matter, see note on Matt. i. 25; and on the *traditional literature*, see the references given in my Greek Testament. Neander brings out the importance of the view which I have above, under (I), endeavoured to justify, asshewing that the account of the miraculous conception is *not mythical*, in which case all would have been arranged to suit the views of virginity from which it had arisen,—but *strictly historical*, found as it is with no such arrangements or limitations.

58.] **did not; could not do**, Mark vi. 5, where see note. On the identity, or not, of this preaching at Nazareth with that related much earlier by Luke iv. 16 sq., see note there,

Matthew: Chapter 14

CHAP. XIV. 1–12.] HEROD HEARS OF THE FAME OF JESUS. PARENTHETICAL ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. Mark vi. 14–29. Luke ix. 7–9, who does not relate the death of John.

1.] This Herod was Herod ANTIPAS, son of Herod the Great, by Malthacé, a Samaritan woman,—and own brother of Archelaus. The portion of the kingdom allotted to him by the second will of his father (in the first he was left as king) was the tetrarchy of Galilee and Peræa (Jos. Antt. xvii. 8. 1). He married the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas; but having during a visit to his half-brother Herod Philip (not the tetrarch of that name, but another son of Herod the Great, disinherited by his father) become enamoured of his wife Herodias, he prevailed on her to leave her husband, and live with him. (See below, on ver. 4.) This step, accompanied as it was with a stipulation of putting away the daughter of Aretas, involved him in a war with his father-in-law, which however did not break out till a year before the death of Tiberius (A. D. 37, U.C. 790), and in which he was totally defeated and his army destroyed by Aretas; a divine vengeance, according to the Jews as reported by Josephus, for the death of John the Baptist. He and Herodias afterwards went to Rome at the beginning of Caligula's reign, to complain of the assumption of the title of king by Agrippa his nephew, son of Aristobulus; but Caligula having heard the claims of both, banished Antipas and Herodias to Lyons in Gaul, whence he was afterwards removed to Spain, and there died.

The following events apparently took place at Machærus, a frontier fortress between Peræa and Arabia: see below on ver. 10.

It was the fame of the *preaching and miracles of the Twelve*, on their mission, of which Herod heard,—probably in conjunction with the works of Christ: see parallel place in Mark.

2.] **he himself** is emphatic; equivalent in English to "*it is he and no other, that*"... In Luke ix. 7 it is said that Herod *was*

perplexed because it was said of some that John was risen from the dead. There is no inconsistency in these accounts: the report originated with others: but if Herod was perplexed concerning it, he, in the terrors of a guilty conscience; doubtless gave utterance to these words himself. There is no evidence that Herod was a Sadducee, or a disbeliever in the resurrection as then held by the Pharisees. See also note on Mark viii. 14.

There is no allusion here to the transmigration of souls, but to the veritable bodily resurrection, and supposed greater power acquired by having passed through death. This is an incidental confirmation of John x. 41, where we read that John *wrought no miracle while living.*

4.] The marriage was unlawful for these three reasons: (1) *The former husband of Herodias, Philip, was still living.* This is expressly asserted by Josephus. (2) *The former wife of Antipas was still living*, and fled to her father Aretas on hearing of his intention to marry Herodias. (3) *Antipas and Herodias were already related to one another within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity.* For she was daughter of Aristobulus, the brother of Antipas and Philip.

5.] This verse is further expanded in Mark vi. 20, which see. Josephus, not being aware of any other grounds for his imprisonment, alleges purely political ones, that Herod was afraid lest John's power of persuading the people might be turned to seditious purposes.

6. **birthday**] Some hold that the word here means the feast of Herod's *accession*: but they give no proof that it ever had such a meaning. A great feast was given to the nobility of Galilee, Mark vi. 21. The damsel's name was Salome, daughter of Herodias by her former husband Philip. She afterwards married her uncle Philip, tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis: and he dying childless, she became the wife of her cousin Aristobulus son of Herod, king of Chalcis, by whom she had three sons, Herod, Agrippa, and Aristobulus.

The dance was probably a pantomimic dance.

9.] **the king** was a title which Herod never properly possessed. Subsequently to this event, Herodias prevailed on him to go to Rome to get the title, which had been granted to his nephew Agrippa. He was opposed by the emissaries of Agrippa, and was exiled to Lugdunum. Herod was *grieved*, because he heard John gladly (Mark vi. 20), and from policy did not wish to put him to death on so slight a cause. This is not inconsistent with his *wishing to put him to death*: his estimate of John was wavering and undecided, and he was annoyed at the decision being taken out of his hands by a demand, compliance with which would be irrevocable.

10.] It appears from the damsel's expression *give me here*, and this verse, that the feast was held either at Machæerus or at no great distance from it. Antipas had a palace near; but he was not there *on account of the war with Aretas*,—see above.

13–21.] FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND. Mark vi. 30–44. Luke ix. 10–17. John vi. 1–13, where also see notes.

13.] There is some difficulty here in conceiving how the narration is to proceed continuously. The death of the Baptist is evidently retrospectively and parenthetically inserted; and yet the retirement of our Lord in this verse seems to be the immediate consequence of his hearing of that occurrence. But this may well have been so: for (1) the disciples of John would be some days in bringing the news from Machæerus to Capernaum, and the report mentioned in ver. 1 might reach Herod meantime; (2) the expression with which that report is introduced, "*At that time*," extends it over a considerable space of time; and (3) the message which the disciples of John brought to our Lord might have included both particulars, the death of their Master, and the saying of Herod respecting Himself.

He went across the lake (John vi. 1) into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida (Luke ix. 10). His retirement (Luke, *ibid.*, and Mark vi. 30) was connected also with the return of the Twelve from their mission: compare the full and affecting account of the whole transaction in Mark vi. 30–36.

14.] went forth, from His place of retirement.

15.] This **evening** was the *first evening*, the decline of the day, about 3 p.m.; the **evening**, in ver. 23, after the miracle, was *late in the night*.

the time is now past] i.e. **the time of the day is now late.**

16, 17.] **give ye them to eat**, which is common to the three first Evangelists, is considerably expanded in the more detailed account of John, ver. 3–7; it was *Andrew who spoke* in ver. 17, and the five loaves and two fishes were *brought by a lad*: John vi. 8, 9. They were *barley loaves and (salt) fish*; *ibid.* And we have (perhaps, but see note there) the vast concourse accounted for in John by the fact that the *Passover was at hand*, and so they were collected on their journey to Jerusalem.

See a very similar miracle in 2 Kings iv. 42–44; only then there were twenty barley loaves and an hundred men. See also Numbers xi. 21, 22.

19. blessed] St. Luke supplies “*them*,” i.e. the loaves and fishes: St. John has for it **gave thanks**. Both are one. The thanks to heaven is the blessing on the meat. This miracle was one of symbolic meaning for the Twelve, who had just returned from their mission, as pointing to the “*freely ye received, freely give*” of ch. x. 8 in a higher sense than they then could have understood it:—but see the symbolic import of the miracle treated in the notes to John vi.

Meyer well remarks, that the *process* of the miracle is thus to be conceived:—the Lord blessed, and gave the loaves and fishes to the disciples, *as they were*; and then, *during their distribution of them*, the miraculous increase took place, so that they broke and distributed enough for all. The *cophinus* (which is the word here rendered *basket*) was the usual accompaniment of the Jew: see quotation from Juvenal in my Gr. Test. Reland supposes that the basket was to carry their own meats on a journey, for fear of pollution by eating those of the Gentiles.

21.] beside women and children is peculiar to Matt., although this might have been inferred from *men* being mentioned in the other three Evangelists. See note on John vi. 10.

22–23.] JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA. Mark vi. 45–52. (Luke omits this incident.) John vi. 16–21. The conviction of the people after the foregoing miracle was, that Jesus was the Messiah; and their disposition, to take Him by force, and make Him a king. See John vi. 14, 15. For this reason he constrained His disciples to leave Him, because they were but too anxious to second this wish of the multitude; and *their* dismissal was therefore an important step towards the other.

22.] Mark adds “*to Bethsaida*,” John “*to Capernaum*:” for the Bethsaida, the city of Philip and Andrew and Peter, was distinct from Bethsaida Julias, in whose neighbourhood the miracle took place,—and in the direction of Capernaum.

25.] The *fourth watch* according to the *Roman* calculation, which was by this time common among the Jews (who themselves divided the night into three parts or watches). This would be,—near the vernal equinox, which this was,—*between three and six in the morning*. The words **walking on the sea** are common to the three Evangelists, and can have no other meaning here, than that the Lord *walked bodily on the surface of the water*. In Job. ix. 8 we read of the Almighty, “*Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea*.” Mark adds “*and would have passed by them*.” John, “*and drawing nigh unto the ship*.” See notes on John.

28.] This narrative respecting Peter is peculiar to Matthew. It is in very strict accordance with his warm and confident character, and has been called almost a ‘rehearsal’ of his denial afterwards. It contains one of the most pointed and striking revelations which we have of the *nature and analogy of faith*; and a notable example of the power of the higher spiritual state of man over the inferior laws of matter, so often brought forward by our Lord. See ch. xvii. 20; xxi. 21.

32.] John (vi. 21) adds “*and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went*:”—see note there.

33.] These persons were probably the crew of the ship, and distinct from the disciples. On **Son of God**, see ch. iv. 3. It is the first time that our Lord is called so by *men* in the three first Gospels. See ch. iii. 17; iv. 3; viii. 29; John i. 34, 50. This feeling of amazement and reverence pervaded *the disciples also*: see the strong expressions of Mark vi. 52.

34–36.] Mark vi. 53–56. *Gennesar* or *Gennesaret*, a district from which the lake was also occasionally so called, extended along its western shore. Josephus gives a glowing description of the beauty and fertility of this plain, Jewish Wars, iii. 10. 7. At its northern end was Capernaum, near which our Lord landed, as would appear from John vi. 24, 25.

36.] On **hem**, see note on ch. ix. 20.

Matthew: Chapter 15

CHAP. XV. 1–20.] DISCOURSE CONCERNING EATING WITH UNWASHED HANDS. Mark vii. 1–23. From Mark it appears that these Scribes and Pharisees had come *expressly* from Jerusalem to *watch our Lord*: most probably after that Passover which was nigh at the time of feeding the five thousand, John vi. 4.

2.] The Jews attached more importance to the traditional exposition than to the Scripture text itself. They compared the written word to water; the traditional exposition to the wine which must be mingled with it.

The duty of washing before meat is not inculcated in the law, but only in the traditions of the Scribes. So rigidly did the Jews

observe it, that Rabbi Akiba, being imprisoned, and having water scarcely sufficient to sustain life given him, preferred dying of thirst to eating without washing his hands.

The “elders” here, as in Heb. xi. 2, must be taken to mean **the ancients**. See ref. Heb.

3. ye also] The *also* implies that there was a transgression also on *their part*—acknowledging that on the part of the disciples.

the commandment of God] A remarkable testimony from our Lord to the divine origin of the Mosaic law: not merely of the Decalogue, as such, for the second command quoted is not in the Decalogue, and it is to be observed that where the text has **God commanded**, Mark (vii. 10) has **Moses said**.

5.] Lightfoot on this verse shews that the expression cited by our Lord did not always bind the utterer to consecrate his property to religious uses, but was by its mere utterance sufficient to absolve him from the duty of caring for his parents: see further on the word Corban in Mark vii. 11. The construction of this and the following verse is: **But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, That from which thou mightest have been benefited by me, is an offering (consecrated to God; see above).... (understand, is free). [And] such an one will certainly not honour his [father or his mother].**

Of course the latter member of the sentence is *our Lord's* saying, not that of the Pharisees.

8.] The portion of Isaiah from which this citation is made (ch. xxiv.—xxxv.) sets forth, in alternate threatenings and promises, the punishment of the mere nominal Israel, and the salvation of the true Israel of God. And, as so often in the prophetic word, its threats and promises are for all times of the Church;—the particular event then foretold being but one fulfilment of those deeper and more general declarations of God, which shall be ever having their successive illustrations in His dealings with men.

10.] “He leaves the Scribes and Pharisees, as incorrigible, and already silenced and put to shame, and turns His discourse to the multitude as more worthy of being addressed.” Euthymius.

12.] This took place after our Lord had entered the house and was apart from the multitude: see Mark ver. 17.

this (literally the) saying] the saying addressed to the multitude in ver. 11.

13.] The **plant** is the teaching of the Pharisees, altogether of human, and not of divine planting. That this is so, is clear by “*let them alone*” following, and by the analogy of our Lord’s parabolic symbolism, in which *seed*, *plant*, &c., are compared to *doctrine*, which however in its growth becomes identified with, and impersonated by, its recipients and disseminators. See this illustrated in notes on the parable of the sower, ch. xiii. On this verse see John xv. 1, 2.

15.] The saying in ver. 11, which is clearly the subject of the question, was not strictly a *parable*, but a plain declaration; so that either Peter *took it* for a parable,—or the word must be taken in its wider sense of ‘an hard saying.’ Stier thinks that their questioning as to the meaning of parables in ch. xiii. had habituated them to asking for explanations in this form.

16.] The saying in ver. 11 was spoken for the multitude, who were exhorted “*Hear and understand:*” much more then ought the disciples to have understood it.

17.] “The mouth, through which, as Plato said, mortal things go in, but immortal things go out. For there go in meats and drinks, the perishable food of the perishable body: but there go forth words, the immortal laws of the immortal soul, by which the life of the reason is directed.” Philo.

21–28.] THE CANAANITISH WOMAN. Mark vii. 24–30: omitted by Luke. It is not quite clear whether our Lord actually passed the frontier into the land of the heathen, or merely was *on* the frontier. The usage of “*into the parts*” in Matthew favours the former supposition: see ch. ii. 22; xvi. 13; also for coasts, ch. ii. 16; iv. 13; viii. 34. Exod. xvi. 35, ‘to the borders of Canaan,’ has been quoted as supporting the other view; but the usage of our Evangelist himself seems to carry greater weight. And the question is not one of importance; for our Lord did not go to teach or to heal, but, as it would appear, to avoid the present indignation of the Pharisees.

Mark’s account certainly implies that the woman was in the same place where our Lord was wishing to be hid, and could not.

22. a Canaanitish woman of those districts came out] i.e. from her house, or town, or village. They were going by the way, see ver. 23.

The inhabitants of these parts are called Canaanites, Num. xiii. 29; Judg. i. 30, 32, 33; Exod. vi. 15; Josh. v. 1. St. Mark calls

her “*a Greek*,” i.e. a heathen by religion, and “*a Syro-Phenician by nation*:” and describes her only as having come to our Lord *in the house*. But by the account in our text, she had been crying after the Lord and the disciples by the way previously; and St. Mark’s account must be understood to begin at ver. 25. From Mark iii. 8, Luke vi. 17, we learn that, the fame of our Lord had been spread in these parts, and multitudes from thence had come to Him for healing. It was not this woman’s dwelling-place, but her *descent*, which placed the bar between her and our Lord’s ministrations. The expression “*Son of David*” shews her acquaintance with Jewish expressions and expectations; but the whole narrative is against the supposition, that she may have been a proselyte of the gate.

23.] The reason alleged by the disciples must be coupled with our Lord’s unwillingness to be known, stated by St. Mark (vii. 24), and means, ‘she will draw the attention of all upon us.’ **Send her away** does not necessarily imply granting her request, nor the contrary; but simply **dismiss her**, leaving the method to our Lord Himself.

24.] See ch. x. 5. Such was the purpose of our Lord’s personal ministry; yet even that was occasionally broken by such incidents as this. The ‘fountain sealed’ sometimes broke its banks, in token of the rich flood of grace which should follow. See Rom. xv. 8.

25.] **came she**, i.e. into the house where our Lord was. See Mark vii. 24.

26. **dogs**] literally, **little dogs**. No contempt is indicated by the *diminutive*, still less any allusion to the *daughter* of the woman: the word is commonly used of *tame* dogs, as diminutives frequently express familiarity.

27.] The sense of the original is not given by ‘*yei*’ in the E.V. The woman, in her humility, *accepts* the appellation which our Lord gives her, and *grounds her plea upon an inference from it*. Her words also have a reference to “*let the children first be filled*,” expressed by Mark vii. 27. It is, **Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat: or, for the dogs too eat**. Our Lord, in the

use of the familiar diminutive, has expressed not the *uncleanness* of the dog 20 much, as his *attachment to and dependence on the human family*: she lays hold on this favourable point and makes it her own, ‘If we are dogs, then may we fare as such;—be fed with the crumbs of Thy mercy.’ She was, as it were, under the edge of the table—close on the confines of Israel’s feast. Some say that the *crumbs* are the pieces of bread on which the hands were wiped; but the “*which fall*” looks more like accidental falling, and the Greek word better expresses *minute* crumbs.

28.] In Mark, “*For this saying, go thy way.*” The greatness of the woman’s faith consisted in this, that in spite of all discouragements she continued her plea; and not only so, but accepting and laying to her account all adverse circumstances, she out of them made reasons for urging her request.

St. Mark gives the additional circumstance, that on returning to her house she found the devil gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

29–39.] HEALING BY THE SEA OF GALILEE. Peculiar to Matthew (see Mark vii. 31–37). FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND. Mark viii. 1–10.

29.] **the mountain** is the high land on the coast of the lake, not any particular mountain. From this account it is uncertain to which side of the lake our Lord came; from Mark vii. 31 we learn that it was to the eastern side, *through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis*.

30.] The **maimed** are properly persons *maimed in the hands*. The word is also sometimes used of the feet. The meaning need not be, that a *wanting member was supplied* to these persons; but that a debility, such as that arising from paralysis or wound, was healed.

cast them down, not in neglect, but from haste and rivalry.

31.] St. Mark (vii. 32–37) gives an instance of **dumb speaking**.

the God of Israel] Perhaps this last word is added as an expression of the joy of the disciples themselves, who contrasted the fulness and abundance of the acts of mercy now before them, with the instance which they had just seen of the difficulty with which the faith of a Gentile had prevailed to obtain help.

32.] The modern German interpreters assume the identity of this miracle with that narrated in ch. xiv. 14 ff. If this be so, then our Evangelists must have *invented* the speech attributed to our Lord in ch. xvi. 9, 10. But as Ebrard justly remarks, every circumstance which could vary, does vary, i in the two accounts. The situation in the wilderness, the kind of food at hand, the blessing and breaking, and distributing by means of the disciples, these are *common to the two accounts*, and were likely to be

so: but *here* the matter is introduced by our Lord Himself with an expression of pity for the multitudes who had continued with Him three days: here also the provision is greater, the numbers are less than on the former occasion. But there is one small token of authenticity which marks these two accounts as referring to two distinct events, even had we not such direct testimony as that of ch. xvi. 9, 10. It is, that whereas the baskets in which the fragments were collected on the other occasion are called by all four Evangelists *cophini*, those used for that purpose after this miracle are in both Matt. and Mark *spyrides*. And when our Lord refers to the two miracles, *the same distinction is observed*; a particularity which could not have arisen except as pointing to a matter of fact, that, whatever the distinction be, which is uncertain, different kinds of baskets were used on the two occasions. Perhaps the strangest reason for supposing the two identical is an imagined difficulty in the questions of the disciples, “*Whence should we have*” &c., so soon after the former miracle; as if the same slowness to believe and trust in divine power were not repeatedly found among men, and instanced in Scripture itself;—compare Exod. xvi. 13 with Num. xi. 21, 22: and read in Exod. xvii. 1–7 the murmurings of the Israelites immediately after their deliverance at the Red Sea. And even could we recognize this as a difficulty, it is not necessarily implied in the text. Our Lord puts the matter to them as a question, without the slightest intimation of His intention to supply the want supernaturally. They make answer in the same spirit, without venturing (as indeed it would have been most unbecoming in them to do, see John ii. 3, 4) to suggest the working of a miracle.

37.] The basket here spoken of (*spyris*) was large enough to contain a man’s body, as Paul was let down in one from the wall of Damascus, Acts ix. 25. Greswell supposes that they may have been used to sleep in, during the stay in the desert.

39.] Of **Magadan** nothing is known. Lightfoot, shews *Magdala* to have been only a Sabbath-day’s journey from Channath Gadara on the Jordan, and on the east side of the lake: but probably he is mistaken, for most travellers place it about three miles from Tiberias, on the west side of the lake, where is now a village named Madschel. *Dalmanutha*, mentioned by St. Mark (viii. 10), seems to have been a village in the neighbourhood.

Matthew: Chapter 16

CHAP. XVI. 1–4.] REQUEST FOR A SIGN FROM HEAVEN. Mark viii. 11–13, but much abridged. See also Luke xii. 54 and notes.

1.] See notes at ch. xii. 38. There is no ground for supposing that this narrative refers to the same event as that. What can be more natural than that the adversaries of our Lord should have met His miracles again and again with this demand of a sign *from heaven*? For in the Jewish superstition it was held that daemons and false gods could give signs *on earth*, but only the true God signs *from heaven*. In the apocryphal Epistle of Jeremiah, ver. 67, we read of the gods of the heathen, “*Neither can they shew signs in the heavens among the heathen....*” And for such a notion they alleged the bread from heaven given by Moses (see John vi. 31), the staying of the sun by Joshua (Josh. x. 12), the thunder and rain by Samuel (1 Sam. xii. 17, compare Jer. xiv. 22), and Elijah (James v. 17, 18). And thus we find that immediately after the first miraculous feeding the same demand was made, John vi. 30, and answered by the declaration of our Lord that He was the true bread from heaven. And what more natural likewise, than that our Lord should have uniformly met the demand by the same answer,—the *sign of Jonas*, one so calculated to baffle His enemies and hereafter to fix the attention of His disciples? Here however that answer is accompanied by other rebukes sufficiently distinctive.

It was now probably the evening (see Mark viii. 10, “*straightway*”), and our Lord was looking on the glow in the west which suggested the remark in ver. 2, On the practice of the Jews to *demand a sign*, see 1 Cor. i. 22.

2.] Mark viii. 12 adds “*He sighed deeply in his spirit...*,” omitting however the sentences following. The Jews were much given to prognosticating the rains, &c. of the coming season in each year.

3.] **of the times**, generally. The Jews had been, and were, most blind to the signs of the times, at all the great crises of their history;—and also particularly to the times in which they were *then* living. The scepter had departed from Judah, the lawgiver no longer came forth from between his feet, the prophetic weeks of Daniel were just at their end; yet they discerned none of these things.

4.] See note on ch. xii. 39.

5–12. WARNING AGAINST THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES. Mark viii. 13–21.

5.] This crossing of the lake was not the voyage to Magadan mentioned in ch. xv. 39, for after the dialogue with the Pharisees, Mark adds (viii. 13), “*entering into the ship again he departed to the other side.*”

they forgot to take bread; viz. *on their land journey further*. This is also to be understood in Mark (viii. 14), who states their

having only one loaf in the ship, not to shew that they *had* forgotten to take bread before starting, but as a reason why they should have provided some on landing.

6. the leaven] See beginning of note on ch. xiii. 33. It is from the penetrating and diffusive power of leaven that the comparison, whether for good or bad, is derived. In Luke xii. 1, where the warning is given on a wholly different occasion, the leaven is explained to mean, *hypocrisy*; which is of all evil things the most penetrating and diffusive, and is the charge which our Lord most frequently brings against the Jewish sects. In Mark we read, “*and the leaven of Herod.*” The Herodians were more a political than a religious sect, the dependants and supporters of the dynasty of Herod, for the most part Sadducees in religious sentiment. These, though directly opposed to the Pharisees, were yet united with them in their persecution of our Lord, see ch. xxii. 16; Mark iii. 6. And their leaven was the same,—*hypocrisy*,—however it might be disguised by external difference of sentiment. They were all unbelievers at heart.

8–12.] Not only had they forgotten these miracles, but the weighty lesson given them in ch. xv. 16–20. The reproof is much fuller in Mark, where see note.

On the two sorts of baskets (*cophini* on the former occasion, *spyrides* on the latter), see note, ch. xv. 36.

This voyage brought them to Bethsaida: i.e. Bethsaida Jatias, on the North-Eastern side of the lake, see Mark viii. 22, and the miracle there related.

13–20.] CONFESSION OF Peter. Mark viii. 27–30. Luke ix. 18–21. Here St. Luke rejoins the narrative common to the three Evangelists, having left it at ch. xiv. 22. We here begin the *second great division* of our Saviour’s ministry on earth, introductory to His sufferings and death. Up to this time we have had no distinct intimation, like that in ver. 21, of these events. This intimation is brought in by the solemn question and confession now before us. And as the former period of His ministry was begun by a declaration from the Father of His Sonship, so this also, on the Mount of Transfiguration.

13. Cæsarea Philippi] A town in Gaulonitis at the foot of Mount Libanus, not far from the source of the Jordan, a day’s journey from Sidon, once called Laish (Judg. xviii. 7, 29) and afterwards Dan (*ibid.*), but in later times Paneas, or Panias, from the mountain Panium, under which it lay. The tetrarch Philip enlarged it and gave it the name of Cæsarea. In after times King Agrippa further enlarged it and called it Neronias in honour of the Emperor Nero. This must not be confounded with the Cæsarea of the Acts, which was Cæsarea Stratonis, on the Mediterranean. See Acts x. 1, and note. The following enquiry took place *by the way*, Mark viii. 27. St. Luke gives it without note of place, but states it to have been asked on the disciples joining our Lord, who was praying alone, Luke ix. 18.

The reading of the last words of the verse is somewhat uncertain. Some of the oldest authorities have, **Who do men say that the Son of Man is?** Some would render as if our Lord had said, ‘*Who say men that I am? the Son of Man?*’ i.e. *the Messiah?* but this is inadmissible, for the answer would not then have been expressed as it is, but *affirmatively* or *negatively*. Equally inadmissible is Olshausen’s rendering, ‘*Me, who am, as ye are aware, the Son of Man?*’ an expression, Olshausen says, by which the disciples would be led to the idea of the *Son of God*. But then this would destroy the simplicity of the following question, **But who say ye that I am?** because it would put into their mouths the answer intended to be given. The A.V. has beyond doubt the right rendering of *this reading*: and **the Son of Man** is a pregnant expression, which we now know to imply the *Messiahship in the root of our human nature*, and which even then was taken by the Jews as = *the Son of God*, (see Luke xxii. 69, 70,) which would serve as a test of the faith of the disciples, according to their understanding of it.

14.] It is no contradiction to this verdict that some called him *the Son of David* (ch. ix. 27; xii. 23; xv. 22); for either these were or were about to become His disciples, or are quoted as examples of rare faith, or as in ch. xii. 23, it was the passing doubt on the minds of the multitude, not their settled opinion. The same may be said of John vii. 26, 31; iv. 42. On our Lord’s being taken for John the Baptist, see ch. xiv. 2, from which this would appear to be the opinion of the *Herodians*.

one of the prophets] “*that one of the old prophets is risen again,*” Luke ix. 19. It was not a metempsychosis, but a bodily resurrection which was believed. On Elias, see note at ch. xi. 14. Jeremiah is mentioned first as being accounted by the Jews first in the prophetic canon. The confession is not made in the terms of the other answer: it is not ‘we say’ or ‘I say,’ but **Thou art.** It is the expression of: an inward conviction wrought by God’s Spirit. The excellence of this confession is, that it brings out both the human and the divine nature of the Lord: **the Christ** is the Messiah, the Son of David, the anointed King: **the Son of the living God** is the Eternal Son, begotten of the Eternal Father, not ‘Son of God’ in any inferior figurative sense, not *one* of the sons of God, of angelic nature, but THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD, having in Him the Sonship and the divine nature *in a sense in which they could be in none else*. This was a view of the Person of Christ quite distinct from the Jewish Messianic idea, which appears to have been that he should be a man born from men, but selected by God for the office on account of his eminent virtues. This distinction accounts for the solemn blessing pronounced in the next verse.

16.] The word **living** must not for a moment be taken here as it sometimes is used, (e. g. Acts xiv. 15,) as merely

distinguishing the true God from dead idols: it is here emphatic, and imparts force and precision to **Son**.

That Peter when he uttered the words, understood by them in detail all that we now understand, is not of course asserted: bot that they were his testimony to the true Humanity and true Divinity of the Lord, in that sense of deep truth and reliance, out of which springs the Christian life of the Church.

17.] Blessed art thou, as in ch. v. 4, &c., is a solemn expression of blessing, an inclusion of him to whom it is addressed in the kingdom of heaven, not a mere word of praise. And the reason of it is, the fact that the Father had revealed the Son to him (see ch. xi. 25–27); cf. Gal. i. 15, 16, in which passage the occurrence of the word “*reveal*” seems to indicate a reference to this very saying of the Lord. The whole declaration of St. Paul in that chapter forms a remarkable parallel to the character and promise given to St. Peter in our text,—as establishing Paul’s claim to be another such *rock* or *pillar* as Peter and the other great Apostles, because the Son had been revealed in him not of man nor by men, but by God Himself. The name **Simon Bar-jona** is doubtless used as indicating his fleshly state and extraction, and forming the greater contrast to his spiritual state, name, and blessing, which follow. The same ‘Simon son of Jonas’ is uttered when he is reminded, by the thrice repeated enquiry, ‘Lovest thou me?’ of his frailty, in his previous denial of his Lord.

18.] The name **Peter** (not now first given, but prophetically bestowed by our Lord on His first interview with Simon, John i. 43) or *Cephas*, signifying a rock, the termination being only altered from *Petra* to *Petros* to suit the masculine appellation, denotes the *personal position of this Apostle in the building of the Church of Christ*. He was the first of those *foundation-stones* (Rev. xxi. 14) on which the living temple of God was built: this building itself beginning on the day of Pentecost by the laying of *three thousand living stones* on this very foundation. That this is the simple and only interpretation of the words of our Lord, the whole usage of the New Testament shews: in which not doctrines nor confessions, but *men*, are uniformly the pillars and stones of the spiritual building. See 1 Pet. ii. 4–6; 1 Tim. iii. 15 (where the pillar is not Timotheus, but the congregation of the faithful) and note: Gal. ii. 9; Eph. ii. 20; Rev. iii. 12. And it is on Peter, as by divine revelation making this confession, as thus under the influence of the Holy Ghost, as standing out before the Apostles in the strength of this faith, as himself founded on the one foundation, **Jesus Christ**, 1 Cor. iii. 11—that the Jewish portion of the Church was built, Acts ii. —v., and the Gentile, Acts x., xi. After this last event, we hear little of him; but during this, the first building time, he is never lost sight of: see especially Acts i. 15; ii. 14, 37; iii. 12; iv. 8; v. 15, 29; ix. 34, 40; x. 25, 26. We may certainly exclaim with Bengel, “*All this may be said with safety; for what has this to do with Rome?*” Nothing can be further from any legitimate interpretation of this promise, than the idea of a perpetual primacy in the successors of Peter; the very notion of *succession* is precluded by the form of the comparison, which concerns the person, and *him* only, so fur as it involves a *direct* promise. In its other and general sense, as applying to all those living stones (Peter’s own expression for members of Christ’s Church) of whom the Church should be built, it implies, as Origen excellently comments on it, saying, that all this must be understood as said not only to Peter, as in the letter of the Gospel, but to every one who is such as Peter here shewed himself, as the spirit of the Gospel teaches us. The application of the promise to St. Peter has been elaborately impugned by Dr. Wordsworth. His zeal to appropriate the rock to Christ has somewhat overshot itself. In arguing that the term can apply to none but God, he will find it difficult surely to deny all reference to a rock in the name Peter. To me, it is equally difficult, nay impossible, to deny all reference, in “upon this rock,” to the preceding word **Peter**. Let us keep to the plain straightforward sense of Scripture, however that sense may have been misused by Rome.

church] This word occurs but in one place besides in the Gospels, ch. xviii. 17, and there in the same sense as here, viz. **the congregation of the faithful:** only there it is one portion of that congregation, here the whole.

The **gates of hell (Hades)**, by a well-known Oriental form of speech, is equivalent to the *power of the kingdom of death*. The form is still preserved when the Turkish empire is known as ‘the Ottoman Porte.’ is promise received a remarkable literal fulfilment in the person of Peter in Acts xii. 6–18, see especially ver. 10.

The meaning of the promise is, that over the Church so built upon him who was by the strength of that confession the Rock, no adverse power should ever prevail to extinguish it.

19.] Another personal promise to Peter, remarkably fulfilled in his being *the first to admit both Jews and Gentiles into the Church*; thus using the power of the keys to open the door of salvation. As an instance of his shutting it also, witness his speech to Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21.

whatsoever thou shalt bind, &c.] This same promise is repeated in ch. xviii. 18, to *all the disciples generally*, and to *any two or three gathered together in Christ’s name*. It was first however verified, and in a remarkable and prominent way, to Peter. Of the *binding*, the case of Ananias and Sapphira may serve as an eminent example: of the *loosing*, the “*Such as I have, give I thee*,” to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. But strictly considered, the binding and loosing belong to the *power of legislation* in the Church committed to the Apostles, in accordance with the Jewish way of using the words *bind* and *loose* for *prohibit* and *allow*. They cannot relate to the *remission and retention of sins*, for though to *loose sins* certainly appears to mean to *forgive sins*, to *bind sins* for retaining them would be altogether without example, and, I may add, would

bear no meaning in the interpretation: it is *not the sin*, but the *sinner*, that is *bound*, “*liable to eternal sin*” (so in text) (Mark iii. 29). Nor can the ancient custom of fastening doors by means of cord be alluded to; for the expressions clearly indicate *something bound* and *something loosed*, and not merely the power of the keys just conferred. The meaning in John xx. 23, though an expansion of this in one particular direction (see note there), is not to be confounded with this.

20.] See note on ch. viii. 4.

21–28.] OUR LORD ANNOUNCES HIS APPROACHING DEATH AND RESURRECTION. REBUKE OF PETER. Mark viii. 31–ix. 1. Luke ix. 22–27. See note on ver. 13. Obscure intimations had before been given of our Lord’s future sufferings, see ch. x. 38: John iii. 14, and of His resurrection, John ii. 19 (x. 17, 18?), but never yet plainly, as now. With St. Mark’s usual precise note of circumstances, he adds, “*He spake that saying openly.*”

21.] On **must**, which is common to the three Evangelists, see Luke xxiv. 26: John iii. 14, and ch. xxv. 54.

suffer many things] “*be rejected*” in Mark and Luke. *These many things* were afterwards explicitly mentioned, ch. xx. 18: Luke xviii. 31, 32.

elders and chief priests and scribes] The various classes of members of the Sanhedrin: see note on ch. ii. 4.

On the prophecy of the *resurrection*, some have objected that the disciples and friends of our Lord appear *not to have expected it* (see John xx. 2: Luke xxiv. 12). But we have it directly asserted (Mark ix. 10 and 32) that they *did not understand the saying*, and therefore were not likely to make it a ground of expectation. Certainly enough was known of such a prophecy to make the Jews set a watch over the grave (Matt. xxvii. 63), which of itself answers the objection. Some Commentators reason about the state of the disciples after the crucifixion, just as if they had not suffered any remarkable overthrow of their hopes and reliances, and maintain that they *must* have remembered this precise prophecy if it had been given by the Lord. But on the other hand we must remember how slow despondency is to take up hope, and how many of the Lord’s sayings must have been completely veiled from their eyes, owing to their non-apprehension of His sufferings and triumph as a *whole*. He Himself reproaches them with this very slowness of belief after His resurrection. It is in the highest degree improbable that the precision should have been given to this prophecy *after the event*, as Meyer supposes: both from the character of the Gospel History in general (see Prolegomena), and because of the carefulness and precision in the words added by St. Mark; see above.

22.] The same Peter, who but just now had made so noble and spiritual a confession, and received so high a blessing, now shews the weak and carnal side of his character, becomes a stumbling-block in the way of his Lord, and earns the very rebuff with which the Tempter before him had been dismissed. Nor is there any thing improbable in this; the expression of spiritual faith may, and frequently does, precede the betraying of carnal weakness; and never is this more probable than when the mind has just been uplifted, as Peter’s was, by commendation and lofty promise.

took (hold of) him] *by the dress or hand*, or perhaps took him aside privately.

The “*Be it far from thee*” of the A.V. is literally (**God be**) **gracious** (or, **propitious**) **to thee**.

this shall not be unto thee] It is an authoritative declaration, as it were, on Peter’s part. **This shall not happen to thee**, implying that he *knew better*, and could ensure his divine Master against such an event. It is this spirit of confident rejection of God’s revealed purpose which the Lord so sharply rebukes.

23.] As it was Peter’s *spiritual discernment*, given from above, which made him a foundation-stone of the Church, so is it his *carnality*, proceeding from want of unity with the divine will, which makes him an adversary now. Compare ch. iv. 10, also Eph. vi. 12.

thou art an offence unto me] literally, **Thou art my stumbling-block** (not merely a stumbling-block to me), “*rock (petra) of offence*,” in Peter’s own remarkable words, 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8,—joined too with the very expression, *which the builders disallowed (rejected)*, which, as above noticed, occurs in this passage in Mark and Luke. Before this rebuke St. Mark inserts “*when he had turned about and looked on his disciples*,” that the reproof might be before them all.

24.] *When he had called the people unto him with his disciples also*, Mark viii. 34; *he said to them all*, Luke ix. 23. This discourse is a solemn sequel to our Lord’s announcement respecting Himself and the rebuke of Peter: teaching that not only He, but also His followers, must suffer and self-denry; that they all have a life to save, more precious than all else to them; and that great day of account of that life’s welfare should be ever before them. On this and the following verse, see ch. x. 38, 39. After **his cross** Luke inserts “*daily*.”

26.] There is apparently a reference to Psalm xl ix. in this verse. Compare especially the latter part with ver. 7, 8, of that Psalm.

lose his own life = “*lose himself*,” Luke. Compare also 1 Pet. i. 18.

what shall a man give in exchange for his life?] We must not here render *soul*, but life, understanding it in the higher sense, life here and hereafter.

27.] A further revelation of this important chapter respecting the Son of Man. He is to be JUDGE OF ALL—and, as in ch. xiii. 41, is to appear with *His* angels, and in the glory of His Father—the “*glory which thou hast given me*,” John xvii. 22. Mark and Luke place here, not this declaration, but that of our ch. x. 33. Our Lord doubtless joined the two. Compare ch. xxiv. 30; xxv. 31.

For implies, “And it is not without reason that I thus speak: a time will come when the truth of what I say will be shewn.”

his work, considered as *a whole*: his *habit of action*.

28.] This declaration refers, in its full meaning, certainly *not to the transfiguration which follows*, for that could in no sense (except that of being a *foretaste*: compare Peter's own allusion to it, 2 Pet. i. 17, where he evidently treats it as such) be named ‘the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom,’ and the expression, **some... shall not taste cf death, till...**, indicates a distant event,—but to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the full manifestation of the Kingdom of Christ by the annihilation of the Jewish polity; which event, in this aspect as well as in all its terrible attendant details, was a *type* and *earnest* of the final coming of Christ. See John xxi. 22, and compare Deut. xxxii. 36 with Heb. x. 30. This dreadful destruction was indeed judgment beginning at the house of God. The interpretation of Meyer, &c., that our Lord referred to His *ultimate glorious coming*, the time of which was hidden from Himself (see Mark xiii. 32: Acts i. 7), is self-contradictory on his own view of the Person of Christ. That our Lord, in His humanity in the flesh, *did not know* the day and the hour, we have from His own lips: but that *not knowing it*, He should have uttered a determinate and solemn prophecy of it, is utterly impossible. His **verily I say unto you** always introduces His solemn and authoritative revelations of divine truth. The fact is, there is a reference back in this discourse to that in ch. x., and the *coming* here spoken of is the same as that in ver. 23 there. Stier well remarks that this cannot be the great and ultimate coming, on account of the terms of the announcement, which imply that they *should taste of death after they had seen it*, and would therefore be inapplicable to the final coming. This is denied by Wordsworth, who substitutes for the simple sense of “*shall not taste of death*,” the far-fetched one, “*shall not feel its bitterness*,” “*shall not taste of the death of the soul*,” and then, thus interpreting, gives the prophecy, as it seems to me, the very opposite of its plain sense: “*they will not taste of death till I come: much less will they taste of it then*.”

Matthew: Chapter 17

CHAP. XVII. 1–13.] THE TRANSFIGURATION. Mark ix. 2–13. Luke ix. 28–36. This weighty event forms the solemn installation of our Lord to His sufferings and their result. Those three Apostles were chosen to witness it, who had before witnessed His power over death (Mark v. 37), and who afterwards were chosen to accompany Him in His agony (ch. xxvi. 37), and were (John xx. 2: Mark xvi. 7) in an especial sense witnesses of His resurrection. The Two who appeared to them were the representatives of the *law* and the *prophets*: both had been removed from this world in a mysterious manner:—the one without death,—the other by death indeed, but so that his body followed not the lot of the bodies of all; both, like the Greater One with whom they spoke, had endured that supernatural fast of forty days and nights: both had been on the holy mount in the visions of God. And now they came, endowed with glorified bodies before the rest of the dead, to hold converse with the Lord on that sublime event, which had been the great central subject of all their teaching, and solemnly to consign into His hands, once and for all, in a symbolical and glorious representation, their delegated and expiring power. And then follows the Divine Voice, as at the Baptism, commanding however here in addition the *sole hearing and obedience* of Him whose power and glory were thus testified.

There can arise no question of the *absolute historical reality* of this narration. It is united by definite marks of date with what goes before; and by intimate connexion with what follows. It cannot by any unfairness be severed from its context. Nor again is there any thing mentioned which casts a doubt on the reality of the appearances (see below, on vision, ver. 9). The persons mentioned *were seen all—spoke—and were recognized*. The concurrence between the three Evangelists is exact in all the circumstances, and the fourth alludes, not obscurely, to the event, which it was not part of his purpose to relate; John i. 14. Another of the three spectators distinctly makes mention of the facts here related, 2 Pet. i. 16–18. I cannot but add, having recently returned from the sight of the wonderful original at Rome, that the great last picture of Raffaelle is one of the best and noblest comments on this portion of the Gospel history.—The events passing, at the same time, on, and under, the Mount of Transfiguration, are by the painter combined, to carry to the mind of the spectator the great central truth, *There is none but Christ to console and to glorify our nature*. It is a touching reflection, that this picture was left unfinished by the painter, and carried in his funeral procession.

1.] "About an eight days after these sayings," Luke ix. 28. The one computation is inclusive, the other not; or perhaps, from the "about" being inserted, the one is precise, the other roughly stated. The time of the transfiguration was probably *night*, for the following reasons. (1) St. Luke informs us that the Lord had gone up to the mount *to pray*; which He usually did at night (Luke vi. 12; xxi. 87; xxii. 89; Matt. xiv. 28, 24 al.). (2) All the circumstances connected with the glorification and accompanying appearances would thus be more prominently seen. (3) The Apostles were *asleep*, and are described, Luke, ver. 32, as '*having kept awake through it.*' (4) They *did not descend till the next day* (Luke, ver. 37), which would be almost inexplicable had the event happened by day, but a matter of course if by night.

an high mountain] The situation of this mountain is uncertain. It was probably not Tabor, according to the legend; for on the top of Tabor then most likely stood a fortified town (De Wette, from Robinson). Nor is there any likelihood that it was Panium, near Caesarea Philippi, for the six days would probably be spent in journeying; and they appear immediately after to have come to Capernaum. It was most likely one of the mountains bordering the lake. St. Luke speaks of it merely as "*the mountain*" (country). Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 399, contends for Hermon: as does, though doubtfully, Dr. Thomson, The Land and the Book, p. 231. Stanley thinks that our Lord would still be in the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi: and that "it is impossible to look up from the plain to the towering of Hermon, almost the only mountain which deserves the name in Palestine, and one of whose ancient titles ('the lofty peak') was derived from this very circumstance, and not be struck with its appropriateness to the scene.... High up on its southern slopes there must be many a point where the disciples could be taken 'apart by themselves.' Even the transient comparison of the celestial splendour with the snow, where alone it could be seen in Palestine, should not perhaps be wholly overlooked."

2.] was transfigured = "*the fashion of his countenance was altered,*" Luke. In what way, is not stated; but we may conclude from what follows, by being lighted with radiance both from without and from within.

white as the light = "*white and glistening,*" Luke; = "*exceeding white [as snow] so as no fuller on earth can whiten them,*" Mark.

3.] There need be no question concerning the *manner* of the recognition of Moses and Elias by the disciples: it may have been intuitive and immediate. We can certainly not answer with Olshausen, that it may have arisen from subsequent information derived from our Lord, for Peter's words in the next verse preclude this. St. Luke adds, "*who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish in Jerusalem.*"

4.] St. Luke inserts, that the Apostles *had been asleep*, but wakened through this whole occurrence;—thereby distinguishing it from a mere vision of sleep; and that this speech was made "*as they departed from him.*" Both Mark and Luke add, that Peter knew not what he said: and Mark—"for they were sore afraid." The speech was probably uttered with reference to the sad announcement recently made by our Lord, and to which his attention had been recalled by the converse of Moses and Elias.

It is one of those remarkable coincidences of words which lead men on, in writing, to remembrances connected with those words, that in 2 Peter i. 14, 15, *tabernacle and decease* (*exodus*, as here) have just been mentioned before the allusion to this event: see note there.

Lord] *Rabbi*, Mark,—*Master*, Luke.

5.] them, viz. our Lord, Moses and Elias. St. Luke adds, "*they feared as they entered into the cloud.*" That the Apostles did not enter the cloud, is shewn by the voice being heard **out of the cloud**. The **hear him**, and disappearance of the two heavenly attendants, are symbolically connected,—as signifying that God, who had spoken in times past to the Fathers by the Prophets, henceforth would speak by His Son.

Vv. 6, 7 are peculiar to Matthew.

9.] No unreality is implied in the word *vision*, for it is expressed by "*what they had seen*" in Mark and in Luke: see Num. xxiv. 3, 4. St. Luke, without mentioning the condition of time imposed on them, remarkably confirms it by saying, "*they told no man in those days....*"

10.] The occasion of this enquiry was, that they had just seen Elias withdrawn from their eyes, and were enjoined not to tell the vision. How *then* should this be? If this was not the coming of Elias, *was he yet to come?* If it was, how was it so *secret* and so short?

On ver. 12, see note on ch. xi. 14.

Our Lord speaks here plainly *in the future*, and uses the very word of the prophecy Mal. iv. 6, The *double* allusion is only the assertion that the Elias (in spirit and power) who foreran our Lord's first coming, was a partial fulfilment of the great

prophecy which announces the *real Elias* (the words of Malachi will hardly bear any other than a personal meaning), who is to forerun His greater and second coming.

14–21.] HEALING oF A POSSESSED Lunatio. Mark ix. 14–29. Luke ix. 87–42. By much the fullest account of this miracle is contained in Mark, where

see notes. It was *the next day*: see Luke ix. 87, and note on our ver. 1. Our Lord found the Scribes and the disciples disputing (Mark).

15.] He was an *only* son, Luke ix. 88. The demon had deprived him of speech, Mark ix. 17.

17.] Bengel remarks, that in our Lord's severe reproof, the disciples are numbered with the multitude.

19.] It was in the house, Mark ix. 28.

22, 23.] OUR LORD' S SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT OF His DEATH AND RESURRECTION. Mark ix. 30—32. Luke ix. 43—45. This followed immediately after the miracle (Mark ix. 30). Our Lord went privately through Galilee; For *he taught his disciples, &c.*—the imparting of this knowledge more accurately to His disciples, which he had begun to do in the last chapter, was the reason for his privacy. For more particulars, see Luke ver. 45 Mark ver. 32.

24–27.] DEMAND OF THE SACRED TRIBUTE, AND OUR LORD's REPLY. Peculiar to Matthew. The narrative connects well with the whole chapter, the aim of the events narrated in which is, to set forth Jesus as the undoubted Son of God.

24. the two drachmas] This was a sum paid annually by the Jews of twenty years old and upwards, *towards the temple* in Jerusalem. Exod. xxx. 18: 2 Kings xii. 4: 2 Chron. xxiv. 6, 9. Josephus says of Vespasian, “He levied a tribute on the Jews all over the world, compelling each man to pay two drachmas yearly into the Capitol, as they formerly used to do to the temple at Jerusalem.” It does not quite appear whether this payment was *compulsory* or not; the question here asked would look as if it were *voluntary*, and therefore *by some declined*.

Many Commentators both ancient and modern, and among them no less names than Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Jerome, and Augustine, seem to have missed the meaning of this miracle, by interpreting the payment as a *civil* one, which it certainly was not. Peter answered in the affirmative, probably because he had known it paid before.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matthew: Chapter 18

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

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

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

2.] From Mark ix. 36 it appears that our Lord first placed the child in the midst, and then took it in His arms: possibly drawing a lesson for His disciples from its ready submission and trustfulness.

3. **turned**] The word also conveys the idea of *turning back* from the course previously begun, viz. that of ambitious rivalry. Without this they should not only not be pre-eminent in, but not even admitted into, the Christian state—the Kingdom of Heaven.

4.) Not “*as this little child humbleth itself:*” the child was *naturally humble*: and such as the child was by nature, we are to be by choice.

5.] Having shewn the child as the pattern of humility, the Lord proceeds to shew the honour in which children are held in His heavenly kingdom; and not only actual, but *spiritual* children—for both are understood in the expression one such little child. The receiving in my name is the serving (Mark ix. 35) with Christian love, and as belonging to Christ (see also ch. xxv. 40).

6.] Here St. Mark and St. Luke insert the saying of John respecting one casting out demons in Jesus’ name, who followed not with the Apostles: which it appears gave rise to the remark in this verse. St. Luke however goes on no farther with the discourse: St. Mark inserts also our ch. x. 42. The punishment here mentioned, *drowning*, may have been practised in the sea of Galilee: see Jerome cited in my Gr. Test. De Wette however denies this, saying that it was not a Jewish punishment; but it certainly was a Roman, for Suetonius mentions it as practised by Augustus on the rapacious attendants of Caius Caesar: and on a certain Macedonian also: see as above.

millstone] the word implies a stone longing, to a mill *turned by an ass*, and therefore larger than the stones of a hand-mill.

7.] See 1 Cor. xi. 19. Stier suggests that Judas, who took offence at the anointing in Bethany, may have been on other occasions the man by whom the offence came, and so this may have been said with special reference to him. Still its *general import* is undeniable and plain. See also Acts ii. 23.

8.] The connexion is— ‘*Wilt thou avoid being the man on whom this woe is pronounced?—then cut off all occasion of offence in thyself first.*’ The cautions following are used in a wider sense than in ch. v. 29, 30. In Mark, the ‘*foot*’ is expanded into a separate iteration of the command.

everlasting fire (literally the **fire which is eternal**), which here first occurs, is more fully expressed in Mark, vv. 43, 44 ff.

10.] Hitherto our text has been lel with that of Mark ix.; from this, Matthew stands alone.

The warning against contempt of these little ones must not be taken as only implying that special care must be taken not to scandalize them, nor indeed as relating exclusively, or even principally, to children. We must remember with what the discourse began—a contention who should be greatest among them: and the **little ones** are those who are the furthest from these ‘greatest,’ the humble and new-born babes of the spiritual kingdom. And despise must be understood of that kind of contempt which ambition for superiority would induce for those who are by weakness or humility incapacitated for such a strife. There is no doubt that *children are included* in the word **little ones**, as they are always classed with the humble and simple-minded, and their character held up for our imitation. The *little children* in the outward state of the Church are in fact the only disciples who are sure to be that in reality, which their Baptism has put upon them, and so exactly answer to the wider meaning here conveyed by the term; and those who would in afterlife enter into the kingdom must turn back, and become as these little children—as they were when they had just received the new life in Baptism. The whole discourse is in deep and constant reference to the *covenant with infants*, which was to be made and ratified by an ordinance, in the Kingdom of Heaven, just as then.

On the reason assigned in the latter part of this verse, there have been many opinions; some of which (e. g. that given Webster

and Wilkinson, ‘**angels**, their *spirits* after death:’ a meaning which the word never bore, and one respecting which our Lord would not have spoken in the present tense, with **always**) have been broached merely to evade the plain sense of the words, which is—that *to individuals* (whether invariably, or under what circumstances of minor detail, we are not informed) *certain angels are allotted as their especial attendants and guardians*. We know elsewhere from the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament (Ps. xxxiv. 7; xci. 11: Heb. i. 14 al.), that the angels do *minister about the children of God*: and what should forbid that in this service, a *prescribed order* and *appointed duty* should regulate their ministrations? Nay, is it not certain by analogy that such would be the case? But this saying of our Lord assures us that such *is* the case, and that those angels whose honour is high before God are entrusted with the charge of the humble and meek,—the children in age and the children in grace.

The phrase **I say unto you**, as in Luke xv. 7, 10, is an introduction to a revelation of some previously unknown fact in the spiritual world.

Stier has some very beautiful remarks on the guardian angels, and on the present general neglect of the doctrine of angelic tutelage, which has been doubtless a reaction from the idolatrous angel-worship of the Church of Rome (see Acts xii, 15: Daniel xii. 1: in the former case we have an individual, in the latter a national guardianship).

behold the face, &c. i.e. are in high honour before God; not perhaps *especially* so, but the meaning may be, ‘for they have angelic guardians, who always,’ &c. See Tobit xii. 15.

11.] The angels are the servants and messengers of the Son of Man; and they therefore (**for &c.**) are appointed to wait on these little ones whom He came to save; and who, in their utter helplessness, are especially examples of *that which was lost*. ‘Here,’ remarks Stier, ‘is Jacob’s ladder planted before our eyes: beneath are the little ones;—then their angels;—then the Son of Man in heaven, in whom alone man is exalted above the angels, Who, as the Great Angel of the Covenant, cometh from the Presence and Bosom of the Father;—and above Him again (ver. 14) the Father Himself, and His good pleasure.’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

further from the spirit of our Lord's command than proceedings in what are oddly enough called 'ecclesiastical' courts.

let him be, &c.] 'let him no longer be accounted as a brother, but as one of those without,' as the Jews accounted Gentiles and Publicans. Yet even then, *not with hatred*, see 1 Cor. v. 11, and compare 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, and 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

18.] This verse re-asserts in a wider and more general sense the grant made to Peter in ch. xvi. 19. It is here not only to him as the first stone, but to the whole building. See note there, and on John xx. 23, between which and our ch. xvi. 19 this is a middle point. This refers to that entire accordance of hearty faith, which could hardly have place except also in accordance with the divine will. It was apparently misunderstood by the Apostles James and John;—see St. Mark's account, ch. x, 36, in which they nearly repeat these words. Notice again the [verily] **I say unto you:** see on ch. xvi. 28.

30.] A generalization of the term church (**assembly**), and the powers conferred on it, which renders it independent of particular forms of government or ceremonies, and establishes at once a canon against pseudo-catholicism in all its forms: compare 1 Cor. i. 2.

there am I must be understood of the presence of the Spirit and Power of Christ, see chap. xxviii. 20.

21–35.] Referring to Peter's QUESTION RESPECTING THE LIMIT OF FORGIVENESS; AND BY OCCASION, THE PARABLE OF THE FORGIVEN BUT UNFORGIVING SERVANT. See Luke xvii. 3, 4. It is possible that Peter may have asked this question in virtue of the power of the keys before (ch. xvi. 19) entrusted to him, to direct him in the use of them: but it seems more likely, that it was asked as in the person of any individual: that Peter wished to follow the rules just laid down, but felt a difficulty as to the limit of his exercise of forgiveness.

The Rabbinical rule was, to forgive *three times and no more*; this they justified by Amos i. 3, &c., Job xxxiii, 29, 30 LXX, and marg. E.V. The expression 'seven times a day' is found Prov. xxiv. 16, in connexion with sinning and being restored: see also Levit. xxvi. 18–28. In our Lord's answer we have most likely a reference to Gen. iv. 24,

22.] On **seventy times seven**, Chrysostom remarks,* that our Lord does not here lay down a number, but prescribes that which is infinite and continuous and everlasting.

23. Therefore] 'because this is so,' because unlimited forgiveness is the law of the Kingdom of Heaven. The servants here are not *slaves*, but ministers or stewards. By the *commanding to be sold* of ver. 25 they could not be slaves in the literal sense. But in Oriental language all the subjects of the king, even the great ministers of state, are *called slaves*. The individual example is one in *high trust*, or his debt could never have reached the enormous sum mentioned. See Isa. i. 18.

24.] Whether these are talents of silver or of gold, the debt represented is enormous, and far beyond any private man's power to discharge. 10, 000 talents of silver is the sum at which Haman reckons the revenue derivable from the destruction of the whole Jewish people, Esth. iii. 9, Trench remarks (Parables, p. 124) that we can best appreciate the sum by comparing it with other sums mentioned in Scripture. In the construction of the tabernacle, twenty-nine talents of gold were used (Exod. xxxviii. 24): David prepared for the temple 3000 talents of gold, and the princes 5000 (1 Chron. xxix. 4–7: the Queen of Sheba presented to Solomon 120 talents (1 Kings x. 10): the King of Assyria laid on Hezekiah thirty talents of gold (2 Kings xviii. 14): and in the extreme impoverishment to which the land was brought at last, one talent of gold was laid on it, after the death of Josiah, by the King of Egypt (2 Chron. xxxvi. 3).

25.] See Exod. xxii. 3: Levit. xxv. 39, 47: 2 Kings iv. 1. The similitude is however rather from Oriental despotism: for the selling was under the Mosaic law softened by the liberation at the year of jubilee. The imprisonment also, and the tormentors, vv. 30, 34, favour this view, forming no part of the Jewish law.

26.] Luther explains this as the voice of mistaken self-righteousness, which when bitten by sense of sin and terrified with the idea of punishment, runs hither and thither, seeking help, and imagines it can build up a righteousness before God without having yet any idea that God Himself will help the sinner. Trench remarks, "It seems simpler to see in the words nothing more than exclamations characteristic of the extreme fear and anguish of the moment, which made him ready to promise impossible things, even mountains of gold," p. 127.

28.] Perhaps we must not lay stress on **went out**, as indicating any wrong frame of mind already begun, as some do:—the sequel shews how completely he had 'gone out' from the presence of his Lord. At all events the word corresponds to the time when the trial of our principle takes place: when we 'go out' from the presence of God in prayer and spiritual exercises, into the world. We may observe, that *forgiveness of sin* does not imply *a change of heart or principle in the sinner*.

The fellow-servant is probably not in the same station as himself, but none the less a fellow-servant. The insignificance of the sum is to shew us how trifling any offence against one another is in comparison to the vastness of our sin against God.

Chrysostom finely remarks: "He paid no regard even to the words by which he owed his own deliverance,—the petition which won for him the forgiveness of those ten thousand talents: he recognized not the harbour where he escaped his impending shipwreck: the posture of the suppliant did not remind him of his lord's kindness: but rejecting all such considerations in his avarice and his cruelty and his unforgiveness, he was more cruel than wild beast seizing and throttling his fellow-servant. What doest thou, O man? Seest thou not that thou art exacting from *thyself*? drawing the sword against *thyself*, retorting upon thyself the denial, and refusing for thyself the free forgiveness?"

that thou owest must be understood as a haughty expression of one ashamed to meet the mention of the paltry sum really owing, and by this very expression generalizing his unforgiving treatment to all who owed him aught.

31.] The fellow-servants **were grieved**, the lord **is angry**. *Anger* is not *man's* proper mood towards sin, but *sorrow* (see Ps. cxix. 186), because all men are sinners. These fellow-servants are the *praying people of God*, who plead with Him against the oppression and tyranny in the world.

32.] "When he owed 10, 000 talents, he never called him wicked, nor reviled him, but had compassion on him." Chrysostom.

34. the tormentors] not merely the *prison-keepers*, but **the torturers**. Remember he was to have been sold into slavery before, and now *his punishment is to be greater*. The condition following would amount in the case of the sum in the parable to *perpetual imprisonment*. So Chrysostom, "that is, forever; for he will never repay." See note on ch. v. 26.

There is a difficulty made, from the punishment of this debtor for *the very debt which had been forgiven*, and the question has been asked, 'whether sins once remitted come back again.' But it is the spiritual meaning which has here ruled the form of the parable. He who falls from a state of grace falls into a state of condemnation, and is overwhelmed with 'all that debt,' not of this or that actual sin formerly remitted, but of a *whole state* of enmity to God.

Meyer well remarks, that the motive held up in this parable could only have full light cast on it by the great act of Atonement which the Lord was about to accomplish. We may see from that consideration, how properly it belongs to this last period of His ministry.

35.] my **Father**, not **your Father**, as in the similar declaration in ch. vi. 14, 15. This is more solemn and denunciatory, "for it is not seemly that God should be called the Father of such an one, so wicked and malicious." Chrysostom.

Matthew: Chapter 19

CHAP. XIX. 1–12.] REPLY TO THE PHARISEE'S QUESTION CONCERNING DIVORCE, Mark x. 1–12. This appears to be the journey of our Lord into the region beyond Jordan, mentioned John x. 40. If so, a considerable interval has elapsed since the discourse in ch. xviii.

1.] **The borders of Judwa beyond Jordan** forms one continuous description. Bethany, where He went, was beyond Jordan, but on the confines of Judaea. See notes on Mark x. 1, and Luke ix. 51.

2.] This agrees with what is said John x. 41, 42. For **healed**, St. Mark has *taught*.

3.] This was a question of dispute between the rival Rabbinical schools of Hillel and Shammai; the former asserting the right of arbitrary divorce, from Deut. xxiv. 1, the other denying it except in case of adultery. It was also, says De Wette, a delicate question in the place where our Lord now was,—in the dominions of Herod Antipas.

for every cause;—i. e. *is any charge which a man may choose to bring against his wife to justify him in divorcing her?*

4–6.] On these verses we may remark, (1) that our Lord refers to the Mosaic account of the Creation as *the historical fact* of the first creation of man; and grounds his argument on the *literal* expressions of that narrative.

(2) That He cites both from the first and second chapters of Genesis, and in immediate connexion; thus shewing them to be consecutive parts of a continuous narrative,—which, from their different diction, and apparent repetition, they have sometimes been supposed not to be.

(3) That he quotes as *spoken by the Creator* the words in Gen. ii. 24, which were actually said by Adam; they must therefore be understood as said in prophecy, by divine inspiration, which indeed the terms made use of in them would require, since the relations alluded to by those terms did not yet exist. As Augustine says, 'God said by man that which man foretold.'

(4) That the force of the argument consists in the *previous unity* of male and female, not indeed organically, but by implication, in Adam. Thus it is said in Gen. i, 27, **He made them** (man, as a race) **male** (not a male) **and female** (not, *man and woman*): but *then* the male and female were implicitly shut up in one; and therefore after the creation of woman from man, when one man and one woman were united in marriage they should be *one flesh*, because woman was taken out of man. The answer then is, that *abstractedly*, from the nature of marriage, *it is indissoluble*. The words **they twain** are in the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch, but not in the Hebrew.

5. one flesh] Stier remarks, that the essential bond of marriage consists *not in unity of spirit and soul*, by which indeed the marriage state should ever be hallowed and sweetened, but without which it still exists in all its binding power:—the wedded pair are **ONE FLESH**, i.e. **ONE MAN** *within the limits of their united life in the flesh, for this world*: beyond this limit, the marriage is broken by the *death of the flesh*. And herein alone lies the justification of a *second* marriage, which in no way breaks off the unity of love in spirit with the former partner, now deceased.

7-9.] In this second question, the Pharisees imagine that they have overthrown our Lord's decision by a *permission* of the law, which they call a *command* (compare ver. 7 with ver. 8). But He answers them that this was done by Moses *on account of their hardness and sinfulness, as a lesser of evils*, and belonged to that dispensation which *entered*, Rom. v. 20; *was added because of transgressions*, Gal. iii. 19. This He expresses by the **your** and **you**, as opposed to the general terms used before. Only that **fornication**, which *itself breaks marriage*, can be a ground for dissolving it. The question, whether demonstrated *approaches* to fornication, short of the act itself, are to be regarded as having the same power, must be dealt with cautiously, but at the same time with full remembrance that our Lord does not confine the guilt of such sins to the outward act only: see ch. v. 28. St. Mark gives this last verse (9) as spoken *to the disciples in the house*; and his minute accuracy in such matters of detail is well known. This enactment by our Lord is a formal repetition of what He had said before in the Sermon on the Mount, ch. v. 32. Some expositors (principally modern) have fallen into the mistake of supposing that the dictum applies to the marrying a woman divorced on account of fornication. But the full English way of rendering the sentence, would be, **a woman thus divorced**, viz. not on account of fornication.

10.] the case, not the cause of divorce just mentioned; nor, the condition of the man with his wife: but **the account to be given**, '*the original ground and principle*,' of the relationship of man and wife. The disciples apprehend that the trials and temptations of marriage would prove sources of sin and misery. This question and its answer are peculiar to Matthew.

11, 12.] this saying, viz. of yours. The **for** in ver. 12 shews that the sense is carried on.

Our Lord mentions the *three exceptions*, the *to whom it is given not to marry*. 1. Those who from natural incapacity, or if not that, inaptitude, *have no tendencies* towards marriage: 2. Those who by actual physical deprivation, or compulsion from men, *are prevented* from marrying: 3. Those who in order to do the work of God more effectually (as e.g. St. Paul), *abstain* from marriage, see 1 Gor. ii, 26. The **eunuchs** and **made eunuchs** in the two first cases are to be taken both literally and figuratively: in the latter, figuratively only. It is to be observed that our Lord does not here utter a word from which any superiority can be attributed to the state of celibacy: the imperative in the last clause being not a command but a permission, as in Rev. xxii. 17. His estimate for us of the expediency of celibacy, as a general question, is to be gathered from the parable of the talents, where He visits with severe blame the burying of the talent for its safer custody. The remark is Neander's, and the more valuable, as he himself lived and died unmarried.

13-15.] THE BRINGING OF CHILDREN TO JESUS. Mark x. 13-16. Luke xviii. 16-17. After the long divergence of ch. ix. 51—xviii. 14, Luke here again falls into the synoptic narrative. This incident is more fully related in Mark, where see notes.

Our Evangelist has **that he should put his hands on them, and pray** (see Gen. xlvi. 14: Acts vi. 6), where the other two have only '*that He should touch them*.' The connexion in which it stands here and in Mark seems to be **natural, immediately after the discourse on marriage**. Some further remarks of our Lord, possibly on the fruit of marriage, may have given rise to the circumstance.

16-30.] ANSWER TO THE ENQUIRY OF A RICH YOUNG MAN, AND DISCOURSE THEREUPON. Mark x. 17-31. Luke xviii. 18-30.

16.] From Luke ver. 18 we learn that he was *a ruler*: from Mark ver. 17, that he *ran* to our Lord. The spirit in which he came, —which does not however appear here so plainly as in the other gospels, from the omission of "good," and the form of our Lord's answer,—seems to have been that of excessive admiration for Jesus as a man of eminent virtue, and of desire to know from Him by what work of exceeding merit he might win eternal life. This spirit He reproves, by replying that there is but One Good, and that the walking by His grace in the way of holiness is the path to life. On the question and answer, as they stand in the received text,—and on their doctrinal bearing, see notes to Mark. This passage furnishes one of the most instructive and palpable cases of the smoothing down of apparent discrepancies by correcting the Gospels out of one another and thus reducing them to conformity.

18.] De Wette observes well, that our Lord gives this enumeration of the commandments to *bring out the self-righteous spirit of the young man*, which He before saw. He only mentions those of the second table, having in ver. 17, in His declaration respecting “good,” included those of the first. Mark has the addition of “*Defraud not,*” representing probably the tenth commandment.

19.] The addition of *Thou shalt love&c.* is peculiar to Matthew.

20.] We may remark that this young man, though self-righteous, was *no Hypocrite*, no Pharisee: he spoke earnestly, and really strove to keep, as he really believed he had kept, all God’s commandments. Accordingly St. Mark adds, that Jesus looking upon him *loved him*: in spite of his error there was a nobleness and openness about him, contrasted with the hypocritical bearing of the Pharisees and Scribes.

21, 22.] Our Lord takes him on his own shewing. As St. Mark and St. Luke add, “*One thing is wanting to thee.*” Supposing thy statement true, this topstone has yet to be laid on the fabric. But then it is to be noticed, that part of that one thing is Come and follow me (*taking up thy cross*, Mark). Stier remarks, that this was a test of his observance of the *first commandment* of the first table: of breaking which he is by the result convicted.

24.] Lightfoot brings instances from the Talmud of similar proverbial expressions regarding an *elephant*: we have a case in ch. xxiii. 24, of a *camel* being put for any thing very large: and we must remember that the object here was to set forth the greatest human impossibility,

and to magnify divine grace, which could accomplish *even that*.

25.] Who, not *What rich man*, which would have been a far shallower and narrower enquiry, but a general question—**what man?**

Besides the usual reason given for this question, “*since all are striving to be rich*,” we must remember that the disciples yet looked for a temporal Kingdom, and therefore would naturally be dismayed at hearing that it was so difficult for any rich man to enter it.

26. beheld them] Probably to give force to and impress what was about to be said, especially as it was a saying reaching into the spiritual doctrines of the Gospel, which they could not yet apprehend.

this, salvation in general, and even of those least likely to be saved.

with, in both cases, means, ‘in the estimation of.’

27.] The disciples, or rather Peter speaking for them, recur to the “*shalt have treasure in heaven*” said to the young man, and enquire what *their* reward shall be, who have done all that was required of them. He does not ask respecting *salvation*, but *some pre-eminent reward*, as is manifest by the answer. The ‘all’ which the Apostles had left, was not in every case contemptible. The sons of Zebedee had hired servants (Mark i. 20), and Levi (Matthew?) could make a great feast in his house. But whatever it was, it was *their all*.

28–30.] We may admire the *simple truthfulness* of this answer of our Lord. He does not hide from them their reward: but tells them prophetically, that in the new world, the accomplishment of that regeneration which He came to bring in (see Acts iii. 21: Rev. xxi. 5: Matt. xxvi. 29), when He should sit on His throne of glory, then they also should sit (see in my Greek Test. on the peculiar force of the two different forms of the verb sit, as applied to our Lord, sitting on His throne as His own act, and to the Apostles, as being promoted to, and taking their seats on, their thrones, as the will of another) on twelve thrones judging (see ref. 1 Cor.) the twelve tribes of Israel (see Rev. xx. 4; xxi. 12, 14:—one throne, Judas’s, another took, Acts i. 20). At the same time he informs them, ver. 29, that this reward should *not* in its most blessed particulars be *theirs alone*, but that of *every one who should deny himself for Him* (see 2 Tim. iv. 8): and (ver. 30) cautions them, referring perhaps especially to Judas, but with a view to all, as appears by the following parable, that *many first should be last, and last first*.

On ver. 29, Stier remarks that the family relations are mentioned by St. Matthew in the order in which *they would be left*. On the other points requiring notice, see note on Mark x. 29, 30.

Matthew: Chapter 20

CHAP. XX. 1–16.] PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD. Peculiar to Matthew. In interpreting this

difficult Parable, we must first carefully observe its occasion and connexion. It is bound by the **For** to the conclusion of chap. xix., and arose out of the question of Peter in ver. 27, *what shall we have therefore?* (1) Its salient point is, that the Kingdom of God is of *grace*, not of debt; that *they who were called first, and have laboured longest, have no more claim upon God than those who were called last*: but that *to all, His covenant promise shall be fulfilled in its integrity*. (2) Its primary application is to the *Apostles*, who had asked the question. They were not to be of such a spirit, as to imagine, with the murmurers in ver. 11, that they should have something super-eminent (because they were called first, and had laboured longest) above those who *in their own time* were to be afterward called (see 1 Cor. xv. 8–11). (3) Its secondary applications are to all those to whom such comparison, of *first and last called*, will apply:—nationally, to the **Jews**, who were first called, and with a *definite covenant*, and the Heathens who came in afterwards, and on a covenant, though *really made* (see Jer. xxxi. 38; Zech. viii. 8; Heb. viii. 10), yet not so open and prominent:—individually, to those whose call has been in early life, and who have spent their days in God's active service, and those who have been summoned later; and to various other classes and persons between whom comparison, not only of *time*, but of advantages, talents, or any other distinguishing characteristic, can be made: that none of the first of these can boast themselves over the others, nor look for higher place and greater reward, inasmuch as there is but one “gift” of God according to the covenant of grace. And the “first” of these are to see that they do not by pride and self-righteousness become the “last,” or worse—be rejected, as nationally were the Jews; for among the many that are called, there are few chosen—many who will fail of the reward in the end. (4) In subordination to this leading idea and warning of the Parable must the circumstances brought before us be interpreted. The *day* and its *hours* are not any fixed time, such as the duration of the world, or our Lord's life on earth, or the life of man, exclusively: but the *natural period of earthly work* as applied to the various meanings of which the parable is capable. The *various times of hiring* are not to be pressed as each having an exclusive meaning in each interpretation: they serve to spread the calling over the various periods, and to shew that it is again and again made. They are the *quarters* of the natural day, when the aliquot parts of the day's wages could be earned, and therefore labourers would be waiting. The *last* of these is inserted for a special purpose, and belongs more expressly to the instruction of the parable. (5) The **hire** bears an important part in the interpretation. I cannot with Stier (whose comment on this le I think much inferior to his remarks) suppose it to mean “the promise of this life” attached to godliness. His anxiety to escape from the danger of *eternal life being matter of wages*, has here misled him. But there is no such danger in the interpretation of the parable which I believe to be the true one. The **hire** is the *promise of the covenant*, uniformly represented by our Lord and His Apostles as a ‘reward,’ Matt. v. 12; Luke vi. 85; xiv. 14; John iv. 86; 1 Cor. iii. 14; 2 John 8; Heb. x. 85; xi. 6 al., reckoned indeed of free grace: but still, forensically considered, answering to, and represented by, ‘wages,’ as claimed under God's covenant with man in Christ. (The freeness and sovereignty of God's gift of grace is pointedly set before us in ver. 14, It is my will to give&c.) This **hire** I believe then to be *eternal life*, or, in other words, GOD **HIMSELF** (John xvii. 3). And this, rightly understood, will keep us from the error of supposing, that the parable involves a declaration that all who are saved will be in an absolute equality. This gift is, and will be to each man, as he is prepared to receive it. To the envious and murmurers, it will be as the fruit that turned to ashes in the mouth: by their own unchristian spirit they will “lose the things that they have wrought” (2 John 8), and their reward will be null: in other words, they will, as the spiritual verity necessitates, *not enter into that life to which they were called*. God's covenant is fulfilled to them—they have received their denarius—but from the essential nature of the “hire” are disqualified from enjoying its use: for as Gregory the Great remarks, “the kingdom of heaven none who murmurs, inherits: none who inherits, can murmur.” To those who have known and loved God, it will be, to each, as he has advanced in the spiritual life, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

1, early in the morning] See Jer. xxxv. 14, and other places.

labourers] in the primary meanings of the parable, ‘apostles, prophets, ministers:’ distinct from the *vines* in the vineyard. But inasmuch as every workman is himself subject to the treatment of the husbandman (see John xv. 1, 2), and every man in the Kingdom of God is in some sense or other a worker on the rest, the distinction is not to be pressed—the parable ranges over both comparisons.

vineyard] not the Jewish church *only*, as Greswell, Parables, iv. 355 ff., maintains. The Jewish Church was God's vineyard especially and typically; *His Church in all ages* is His *true* vineyard, see John xv. 1.

2.] The *denarius a day* was the pay of a Roman soldier in Tiberius' time, a few years before this parable was uttered. Polybius (but in illustrating the exceeding fertility and cheapness of the country) mentions that the charge for a day's entertainment in the inns in Cisalpine Gaul was half an as, = 1/20th of the denarius. This we may therefore regard as liberal pay for the day's work.

3, 4] The *third hour*, at the equinox our 9 a.m., and in summer 8, was sometimes called “*the height of the market*,”—when the market was fullest.

“The market-place of the world is contrasted with the vineyard of the Kingdom of God: the greatest man of business in worldly things is a mere idle gazer, if he has not yet entered on the true work which alone is worth any thing or gains any reward.” Stier.

No positive stipulation is made with these second, but they are to depend on the justice of the house-holder. They might expect 3/4ths of a denarius. From the same dialogue being implied at the sixth and ninth hour (“*he did likewise*”) the “*whatsoever is right*” is probably in each case the corresponding part of the denarius, at least *in their expectation*; so that *it cannot be said that no covenant was made*.

8.] By the Mosaic law (Deut. xxiv. 15) the wages of an hired servant were to be paid him *before night*. This was at the twelfth hour, or sunset: see ver. 12. I do not think the **steward** must be pressed as having a spiritual meaning. If it has, it represents Christ (see Heb. iii. 6, and ch. xi. 27).

beginning is not merely expletive, but definite, as in Luke xxiii. 5.

13, 14.] **Friend**, at first sight a friendly word merely, assumes a more solemn aspect when we recollect that it is used in ch. xxii. 12 to the guest who had not the wedding garment; and in ch. xxvi. 50 by our Lord to Judas.

go thy way hardly denotes (as Stier in his 1st edn.) expulsion and separation from the householder and his employment: it is here only a word of course, commanding him to do what a paid labourer naturally should do.

15. **evil**] here **envious**: so also Prov. xxviii. 22.

16.] The last were first, *as equal to the first*; first, *in order of payment*; first, *as superior to the first* (no others being brought into comparison), in that their reward was *more* in proportion to their work, and *not married* by a murmuring spirit. The first were last in these same respects.

The last words of the verse belong not so much to the parable, as to the first clause, and are placed to account for its being as there described; for, while multitudes are called into the vineyard, many, by murmuring and otherwise disgracing their calling, will nullify it, and so, although first by profession and standing, will not be of the number of the elect: although called, will not be chosen. In ch. xxiii. 14 the reference is different.

17–19.] Mark x. 32–34. Luke xviii. 31–34. FULLER DECLARATION OF HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH—*revealing His being delivered to the Gentiles*—and (but in Matthew only) *His crucifixion*. See the note on the more detailed account in Mark.

20–28.] AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF THE MOTHER OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE; OUR LORD’ S REPLY. Mark x. 35–45; not related by Luke. This request seems to have arisen from the promise made to the twelve in ch. xix. 28. In Mark’s account, the *two brethren themselves* make the request. But the *narration* in the text is the more detailed and exact; and the two immediately coincide, by our Lord *addressing His answer* to the two Apostles (ver. 22). The difference is no greater than is perpetually to be found in narrations of the same fact, persons being often related to have done *themselves* what, accurately speaking, they did *by another*. The mother’s name was *Salome*;—she had followed our Lord from Galilee,—and afterwards witnessed the crucifixion, see Mark xv. 40. Probably the two brethren had directed this request *through their mother*, because they remembered the rebuke which had followed their former contention about precedence.

21.] The *places close to the throne were those of honour*, as in Josephus, where speaking of Saul, he describes Jonathan his son as seated on his right hand, and Abner the captain of the host on his left. In a Rabbinical work, it is said, that God will seat the King Messiah at his right hand, and Abraham at his left.

One of these brethren, John, the beloved disciple, had his usual place close to the Lord, John xiii. 23: *the other* was among the chosen Three (this request hardly can imply in their minds any idea of the rejection of Peter from his peculiar post of honour by the rebuke in ch. xvi. 23, for since then had happened the occurrences in ch. xvii. 1–8, and especially ib. vv. 24–27). *Both* were called Boanerges, or the sons of thunder, Mark iii. 17.

They thought the Kingdom of God was *immediately to appear*, Luke xix. 11.

22.] One at least of these brethren saw *the Lord on His Cross—on His right and hand the crucified thieves*. Bitter indeed must the remembrance of this ambitious prayer have been at that moment! Luther remarks, ‘The flesh ever seeks to be glorified, before it is crucified: exalted, before it is abased.’

The ‘cup’ is a frequent Scripture image for joy or sorrow: see Ps. xxiii. 5; cxvi. 13: Isa. li. 22: Matt. xxvi. 42. It here seems to signify more the *inner* and spiritual bitterness, resembling the agony of the Lord Himself,—and the *baptism*, which is an important addition in Mark, more the *outer* accession of persecution and trial,—through which we must pass to the Kingdom of God. On the latter image see Ps. xlvi. 7; lxix. 2; oxxiv. 4

Stier rightly observes that this answer of our Lord contains in it *the kernel of the doctrine of the Sacraments* in the Christian Church: see Rom. vi. 1–7; 1 Cor. xii. 18, and note on Luke xii. 50.

Some explain in their answer as if they understood the Lord to speak of *drinking out of the royal cup, and washing in the royal ewer*: but the words **are ye able to drink**, and **we are able**, indicating a *difficulty*, preclude this.

23.] The *one* of these brethren was the *first of the Apostles to drink the cup Of suffering, and be baptized with the baptism of blood*, Acts xii. 1, 2: the *other had the longest experience among them of a life of trouble and persecution*.

The last clause of the verse may be understood as in the text, ‘is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father,’ So Meyer, al.; or, ‘is not mine to give, *except* to those for whom,’ &. So Chrysostom and others. If however we understand after but ‘it shall be given by Me,’ the two interpretations come to the same.

26–28.] great.... first, i.e. in the *next life*, let him be **minister** and **servant here**. Thus also the **came**, ver. 28, applies to the coming of the Son of man *in the flesh only*.

a ransom for many, is a plain declaration of the sacrificial and vicarious nature of the death of our Lord. The principal usages (in the Greek Scriptures) of the word rendered **ransom** are the following:—(1) a payment as equivalent for a life destroyed; (2) the price of redemption of **a slave**; (3) ‘propitiation for.’

many here is equivalent to “*all*” 1 Tim. ii. 6. No stress is to be laid on this word “*many*” as not being “*all*” here; it is placed in opposition to the *one* life which is given—the *one for many*—and not with any distinction from “*all*.” (I may observe once for all, that in the usage of these two words, as applied to our redemption by Christ, “*all*” is the OBJECTIVE, “*many*” the SUBJECTIVE designation of those for whom Christ died. He *died for all*, as outward matter of fact; but as matter of individual participation, the great multitude ‘whom no man can number, “*many*,” will be the saved by Him in the end.) ‘As the Son of man came to give His life for many and to serve many, so ye, being many, should be to each one the object of service and self-denial.’

29–34] HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN ON HIS DEPARTURE FROM JERICHO. Mark x. 46–52. Luke xviii. 35–43; xix. 1, with however some remarkable differences. In the much more detailed account of St. Mark, we have but one blind man, mentioned by name as Bartimaeus; St. Luke also relates it of only one, and besides says that it was “as he was come nigh to Jericho.” The only fair account of such differences is, that they existed in the sources from which each Evangelist took his narrative. This later one is easily explained, from the circumstance having happened close to Jericho—in two accounts, just on leaving it—in the third, on approaching to it: but he must be indeed a slave the the *letter*, who would stumble at such discrepancies, and not rather see in them the corroborating coincidence of testimonies to the fact itself. Yet some strangely suppose our Lord to have healed *one blind man* (as in Luke) *on entering Jericho*, and *another* (Bartimaeus, as in Mark) *on leaving it*,—and St. Matthew to have, ‘with his characteristic brevity in relating miracles,’ *combined both these in one*. But then, what becomes of St. Matthew’s assertion, “*as they departed from Jericho?*” Can we possibly imagine, that the Evangelist, having both *facts* before him, could combine them and preface them with what he *must know to be inaccurate*? It is just thus that the Harmonists utterly destroy the credibility of the Scripture narrative. Accumulate upon this the absurd improbabilities involved in two men, under the same circumstances, addressing our Lord in the same words at so short an interval,—and we may be thankful that biblical criticism is at length being emancipated from ‘forcing narratives into accordance.’ See notes on Mark.

JERICHO, 150 stadia (18 rom. miles) N.E. of Jerusalem (Jos. B.J. iv. 8 3), and 60 (7. 2 rom. miles) w. from the Jordan (Jos. ibid.), in the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 21), near the borders of Ephraim (Josh. xvi. 7). The environs were like an oasis surrounded by high and barren limestone mountains,—well watered and fertile, rich in palm-trees (Deut. xxxiv. 8; Judg. i. 16; iii. 18), roses (Eccl. xxiv. 14), and balsam (Jos. Antt. iv. 6. 1 al.). After its destruction by Joshua, its rebuilding was prohibited under a curse (Josh. vi. 26) which was incurred by Hiel the Bethelite in the days of Ahab (1 Kings xvi. 84): ie. he *fortified* it, for it was an inhabited city before (see Judg. iii. 18: 2 Sem. x. 5). We find it the seat of a school of the prophets, 2 Kings ii. 4 ff. After the captivity we read of it, Ezra ii. 34; Neh. vii. 36: and in 1 Macc. ix. 50 we read that Jonathan strengthened its fortifications. It was much embellished by Herod the Great, who had a palace there (Jos. Antt. xvi. 5. 2 al.), and at this time was one of the principal cities of Palestine, and the residence of a *chief publication* on account of the balsam trade (Luke xix. 1). At present there is on or near the site only a miserable village, Richa or Ericha.

30, 31.] The multitude appear to have silenced them, lest they should be wearisome and annoying to our Lord; not because they called Him the Son of David,—for the multitudes could have no reason for repressing this cry, seeing that they themselves (being probably for the most part the same persons who entered Jerusalem with Jesus) raised it very soon after: see ch. xxi. 9. I have before noticed (on ch. ix. 27) the singular occurrence of these words, ‘Son of David,’ in the three narratives of healing the blind in this Gospel.

32.] called them = (literally) “said, call ye him” Mark, “commanded him to be brought” Luke.

34.] touched their eyes, not mentioned in the other Gospels. In both we have the addition of the Lord’s saying, “thy faith hath saved thee.” The question preceding was to elicit their faith.

Matthew: Chapter 21

CHAP. XXI. 1–17.] TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM: CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE. Mark xi. 1–11, 16. Luke xix. 29–44. John. xii. 12–36. This occurrence is related by all four Evangelists, with however some differences, doubtless easily accounted for, if we knew accurately the real detail of the circumstances in chronological order. In John (xii. 1),—our Lord came six days before the Passover to Bethany, where the anointing (of Matt. xxvi. 6–13) took place: and on the morrow, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem was made. According to Mark xi. 11,—on the day of the triumphal entry He only entered the city, went to the temple, and looked about on all things,—and then, when now it was late in the evening, returned to Bethany, and on the morrow the cleaning of the temple took place. The account in Luke, which is the fullest and most graphic of the four, agrees chronologically with that in the text.

I would venture to suggest, that the supposition of the triumphal entry in Mark being related *a day too soon*, will bring all into unison. If this be so, our Lord’s first entry into Jerusalem was *private*: probably the journey was interrupted by a short stay at Bethany, so that He did not enter the city with the multitudes. That this was the fact, seems implied in Mark xi. 11. Then it was that, “when He had looked round about upon all things,” He noticed the abuse in the temple, which next day He corrected. Then in the evening He went back with the twelve to Bethany, and the supper there, and anointing, took place. Meantime the Jews (John xii. 9) knew that he was at Bethany; and many went there that evening to see Him and Lazarus. (Query, had not Lazarus followed Him to Ephraim?) Then on the morrow multitudes came out to meet Him, and the triumphal entry took place, the weeping over the city (Luke xix. 41), and the cleansing of the temple. The cursing of the fig-tree occurred early that morning, as He was leaving Bethany with the twelve, and before the multitude met Him or the aases were sent for. (On Matthew’s narrative of this event see below on ver. 18.) According to this view, our narrative omits the supper at Bethany, and the anointing (in its right place), and passes to the events of the next day. On the day of the week when this entry happened, see note on John xii. 1,

1. Behphagé = Heb. *the house of figs*: a considerable suburb, nearer to Jerusalem than Bethany, and sometimes reckoned part of the city. No trace of it now remains: see “The Land and the Book,” p. 697.

2, 3] The village over against you, i.e. Bethphagé. Mark and Luke mention the *colt* only, adding “wheroon never yet man sat” (see note on Mark): John “a young ass.” Justin Martyr connects this verse with the prophecy in Gen. xl ix. 11.

The Lord, here, ‘**the LORD,’ Jehovah**: most probably a general intimation to the owners, that they were wanted *for the service of God*. I cannot see how this interpretation errs against decorum, as Stier asserts. The meanest animals might be wanted for the service of the Lord Jehovah. And after all, what difference is there as to *decorum*, if we understand with him “*the Lord*” to signify “the King Messiah?” The two disciples were perhaps Peter and John: compare Mark xiv. 13 and Luke xxii. 8.

4.] A formula of our Evangelist’s (see ch. i, 22), spoken with reference to the *divine counsels*, but *not to the intention of the doors* of the act; for this application of prophecy is in John xii. 16 distinctly said not to have occurred to the *disciples* at the time, but after Jesus was glorified.

6, 7.] In Mark, “they found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met.” Our Lord sat on the *foal* (Mark, Luke), and the mother accompanied, apparently after the manner of a sumpter, as prophets so riding would be usually accompanied (but not of course doing the work of a sumpter). That this riding and entry were *intentional* on the part of our Lord, is clear: and also that He did not thereby mean to give any countenance to the temporal ideas of His Messiahship, but solemnly to fulfil the Scriptures respecting Him, and to prepare the way for His sufferings, by a public avowal of His mission. The typical meaning also is not to be overlooked. In all probability the evening visit to the temple was on the very day when the Paschal Lamb was to be taken up—i. e. set apart for the sacrifice.

8, 9.] Which was a royal honour: see 2 Kings ix. 13.

a very great multitude, literally, **the greater part of the multitude**.

Hosanna] from Psalm cxviii. 25; = “save now,” a formula originally of supplication, but conventionally of gratulation, so that it is followed by “*to&c.*” and by “in the highest,” meaning, ‘may it be in heaven!’ see 1 Kings i. 36: Luke ii. 14, where however it is an *assertion*, not a wish. Luke has “*the king that cometh*,” John “*the king of Israel that cometh*.”

12.] Compare the notes on John ii. 13–18. The cleansing related in our text is *totally distinct* from that related there. It is impossible to suppose that St. Matthew or St. John, or any one but moderately acquainted with the events which he undertook to relate, should have made such a gross error in chronology, as must be laid to the charge of one or other of them, if these two occurrences were *the same*. I rather view the omission of the first in the synoptic accounts as in remarkable consistency with what we otherwise gather from the three Gospels—that their narrative is *exclusively Galilean* (with one exception, Luke iv. 44 in our text), *until this last journey to Jerusalem*, and consequently the first cleansing is passed over by them. On the difference from Mark, see note on ver. 1. Both coming of Jehovah to His temple were partial fulfilments of Mal. iii. 1–3,—which shall not receive its final accomplishment till His great and decisive visit at the latter day. The temple here spoken of was the *court of the Gentiles*.

We have no traces of this *market* in the O.T. It appears to have first arisen after the captivity, when many would come from foreign lands to Jerusalem. This would also account for the *money-changers*, as it was unlawful (from Exod. xxx. 18) to bring foreign money for the offering of atonement.

dovés] the poor were allowed to offer these instead of the lambs for a trespass-offering, Lev. v. 7; also for the purification of women, Lev. xii. 8: Luke ii. 24.

13.] Stier remarks that the verse quoted from Jeremiah is in connexion with the charge of *murder*, and the *shedding of innocent blood* (see Jer. vii. 6). On the intention of this act of our Lord, see notes on John ii. 15. It was a purely Messianic act; see Mal. iii. 1–3.

15, 16.] The circumstance that *the children were crying ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’ in the temple*, seems to me to fix this event, as above, *on the of the triumphal entry*.

Psalm viii. is frequently cited in the N.T. of Christ: see 1 Cor. xv. 27: Heb. ii. 6: Eph. i. 22. In understanding such citations as this, and that in ver. 4, we must bear in mind the important truth, that the external fulfilment of a prophecy is often itself only a type and representation of that inner and deeper sense of the prophecy which belongs to the spiritual dealings of God.

17.] If this is to be literally understood of the *village* (and not of a district round it, including part of the Mount of Olives; see Luke xxi. 37), this will be the *second night spent at Bethany*. I would rather of the two understand it *literally*, and that the spending the nights *on the Mount of Olives* did not begin till the *next night* (Tuesday).

18–22.] THE CURSE OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE. Mark xi. 12–14, 20–26, where see notes, St. Luke omits the incident.

The cursing of the fig-tree *had in fact taken place on the day before*, and the withering of it was *now noticed*. St. Mark separates the two accounts, which are here given together. We must remember that this miracle was *wholly typical and parabolical*. The fig-tree was THE JEWISH PEOPLE—full of the leaves of an useless profession, but without fruit:—and further, all hypocrites of every kind, in every age. It is true, as De Wette observes, that no trace of a parabolic meaning appears in the narrative (and yet strangely enough, he himself a few lines after, denying the truth of the miracle, accounts for the narrative by supposing it to have *arisen out of a parable* spoken by our Lord); but neither does there in that of the driving out the buyers and sellers from the temple, and in those of many other actions which we know to have been symbolic.

19.] one fig tree, i.e. a solitary fig-tree. It was the practice to plant fig-trees by the road-side, because it was thought that the dust, by absorbing the exuding sap, was conducive to the production of the fruit.

21, 22.] This assurance has occurred before in ch. xvii. 20. That truest and *highest faith*, which implies a mind and will perfectly in unison with that of God, can, even in its least degree, have been in Him only who spoke these words. And by it, and its elevating power over the functions and laws of inferior natures we may reverently believe that His most notable miracles were wrought. It is observable, that such a state of mind entirely precludes the idea of an *arbitrary exercise of power*—none such can therefore be intended in our Lord’s assertion—but we must understand,—“if expedient.” Though we cannot reach this faith in its fulness, yet every approach to it (ver. 21) shall be endowed with some of its wonderful power,—in obtaining requests from God. the remarkable and important addition in Mark xi. 25, 26.

23–32.] Mark xi. 27–83. Luke xx. 1–8. OUR LORD’S AUTHORITY QUESTIONED. HIS REPLY. Now commences that series of parables, and discourses of our Lord with his enemies, in which He develops more completely than ever before his hostility to their hypocrisy and iniquity:—and so they are stirred up to compass His death.

23. the chief priests and the elders of the people St. Mark and St. Luke add *the scribes*, and so make up the members of the Sanhedrim. It was an *official message*, sent with a view to make our Saviour declare Himself to be a prophet sent from God—in which case the Sanhedrim had power to take cognizance of His proceedings, as of a professed Teacher."Thus the

Sanhedrim sent a deputation to John on his appearing as a Teacher, John i. 19. The question was *the result of a combination to destroy Jesus*, Luke xix. 47, 48. They do not now ask, as in John ii. 18, *What shewest Thou unto us, seeing thou doest these things?* for they had had many signs, which are now included in their “*these things.*” The second question is an expansion of the first.

25.] The baptism, meaning thereby *the whole office and teaching*, of which the *baptism* was the central point and seal. If they had recognized the heavenly mission of John, they must have also acknowledged the authority by which Jesus did these things, for John expressly declared that he was sent to testify of Him, and bore witness to having seen the Holy Spirit descend and rest upon Him. John i. 33, 34.

believe him, ‘give credit to his words:’ ‘for those words were testimonies to Me.’

26, 27.] These ‘blind leaders of the blind’ had so far made an insincere concession to the people’s persuasion, as to allow John to pass for a prophet; but they shrunk from the reproof which was sure to follow their acknowledging it now. This consultation among themselves is related almost verbatim by the three Evangelists. The intelligence of it may have been originally derived from Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathaea. The neither tell I you of our Lord is an answer, not to their outward words, “*we cannot tell,*” but to their inward thoughts, “*we will not tell.*”

28.] But what think ye? a formula of connexion—but doubtless here intended to help the questioners to the true answer of their difficulty about John’s baptism. The following parable (peculiar to Matthew) refers, under the image of the two sons, to two classes of persons, both summoned by the great Father to “work in His vineyard” {s00 ch. xx. 1}; *both Jews*, and of His family. The *first* answer the summons by a direct and open refusal—these are the *open sinners*, the publicans and harlots, who disobey God to His face. But afterwards, when better thoughts are suggested, they repent, and go. The *second* class receive the summons with a respectful assent (not unaccompanied with a self-exaltation and contrast to the other, implied in the emphatic I, sir)—having however no intention of obeying (there is no mention of a *change of mind* in this case): but go not. These are the *Scribes and Pharisees*, with their shew of legal obedience, who “said, and did not” (ch. xxiii. 3). It will of course admit of wider applications—to Jews and Heathens, or any similar pair of classes who may thus be compared.

31.] The go.... before you may be taken either as *declarative*—**go before you**, in the matter of God’s arrangements,—or as *assertive* of the mere matter of fact, **are going before you. I**

prefer this latter on account of the explanation following:—‘go before,’—not *entirely without hope* for you, that you may *follow*, but *not necessarily implying* your following. The door of mercy was not yet shut fo them: see John xii. 35: Luke xxiii. 34. The idea of ‘shewing the way’ by being their example, is also included. There were publicans among the disciples, and probably repentant harlots among the women who followed the Lord.

32.] in the way of righteousness, not only in the **way of God’s commandments**, so often spoken of, but in the very path of ascetic purity which you so much approve; yet perhaps it were better to let the simpler sense here be the predominant one, and take *righteousness* for ‘repentance,’ as Noah is called a *preacher of righteousness* (2 Pet. ii. 5) in similar circumstances.

repent afterward are words repeated from the parable (ver. 29), and serving to fasten the application on the hearers.

33–46.] PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO HUSBANDMEN. Mark xii. 1–12. Luke xx. 9–19. This parable is in intimate connexion with Isa. v. 1 ff., and was certainly intended by our Lord as an express application of that passage to the Jews of His time. Both St. Mark and St. Luke open it with a “*began to speak...*,” as a fresh beginning, by our Lord, of a series of parables. St. Luke adds, that it was spoken to *the people*. Its subject is, of course, *the continued rejection of God’s prophets by the people of Israel, till at last they rejected and killed His only Son.* **The householder planted a vineyard:** i.e. ‘selected it out of all His world, and fenced it in, and dug a receptacle for the juice (in the rock or ground, to keep it cool, into which it flowed from the press above, through a grated opening), and built a tower (of recreation—or observation to watch the crops).’ This exactly coincides with the state of the Jewish nation, under covenant with God as His people. All these expressions are in Isaiah V. The *letting out to husbandmen* was probably that kind of letting where the tenant pays his rent *in kind*, although the fruits *may* be understood of money. God began about 430 years after the Exodus to send His prophets to the people of Israel, and continued even till John the Baptist; but all was in vain; they “persecuted the prophets,” casting them out and putting them to death. (See Neh. ix. 26. Matt. xxiii. 31, 37: Heb. xi. 36–38.)

The *different sendings* must not be pressed; they probably imply the *fulness and sufficiency of warnings given*, and set the longsuffering of the Householder; and the increasing rebellion of the husbandmen is shewn by their increasing ill-treatment of the messengers.

37.] See Luke ver. 18: Mark ver. 6. Our Lord sets forth His heavenly Father in haman wise deliberating, “*What shall I do?*”

(Luke) and “it may be they will reverence him,” to signify His gracious adoption, for man’s sake, of every means which may turn sinners to repentance. The difference here is fully made between the Son and all the other messengers; see Mark,—“having yet therefore one Son, his wellbeloved...” and, as Stier remarks, this is the real and direct answer to the question in ver. 23. The Son appears here, not in his character of Redeemer, but in that of a preacher—a messenger demanding the fruits of the vineyard. (See ch. iv. 17.)

38. This is] So Nicodemus, John iii. 2, “we know that thou art a teacher come from God,” even at the beginning of His ministry; how much more then after three years spent in His divine working. The latent consciousness that Jesus was the Messiah, expressed in the prophecy of Caiaphas (John xi. 49–62, compare the **Thou hast said** of our ch. xxvi. 64), added no doubt to the guilt of the Jewish rulers in rejecting and crucifying Him, however this consciousness may have been accompanied with ignorance of one kind or other in all of them,—see Acts iii. 17 and note.

the heir] This the Son is in virtue of His human nature: see Heb. i. 1, 2.

come, let us kill him] The very words of Gen. xxxvii. 20, where Joseph’s brethren express a similar resolution: and no doubt used by the Lord in reference to that history, so deeply typical of His rejection and exaltation. This resolution had actually been taken, see John xi. 53: and that immediately after the manifestation of His power as the Son of God in the raising of Lazarus, and also immediately after Caiaphas’s prophecy.

let us seize] See John xi. 48. As far as this, the parable is History: from this point, Prophecy.

39.] This is partly to be understood of our Lord being given up to the heathen to be judged; but also literally, as related by all three Evangelists. See also John xix. 17, and Heb. xiii. 11, 12. In Mark the order is different, “they killed him, and cast him out Of the vineyard.”

40, 41.] See Isa. v. 5. All means had been tried, and nothing; but judgment was now left. St. Mark and St. Luke omit the important words **they say unto him**, though St. Luke has given us the key to them, in telling us that the parable was spoken in the hearing of the people, who seem to have made the answer. Perhaps however the Pharisees may have made this answer, having missed, or pretended to miss, the sense of the parable; but from the strong language used, I incline to the former view. Whichever said it, it was a self-condemnation, similar to that in ch. xxvii. 25: the last form, as Nitzsch finely remarks (cited by Stier), of the divine warnings to men, ‘when they themselves speak of the deeds which they are about to do, and pronounce judgment upon them.’ So striking, even up to the last moment, is the mysterious union of human free-will with divine foresight (see Acts ii. 23: Gen. 1. 20), that after all other warnings frustrated, the conscience of the sinner himself interposes to save him from ruin. In the original the adverb rendered “miserably” is that belonging to the adjective rendered “wicked.” This could hardly be given in a version in English: it may be represented by some such expression as, “He will destroy them wretchedly, wretches as they are.”

The **which**, applied to persons, is not equivalent to *who*: it means, of a **kind, who:** “*who*” would identify, “*which*” classifies. They do not specify *who*, but only *of what sort*, the new tenants will be. The clause is peculiar to Matthew. We may observe that our Lord here makes **when the lord... cometh coincide with the destruction of Jerusalem**, which is uncontestedly the overthrow of the wicked husbandmen. This passage forms therefore an important key to our Lord’s prophecies, and a decisive justification for those who, like myself, firmly hold that *the coming of the Lord* is in many places to be identified, primarily, with that overthrow.

42.] A citation from *the same Psalm of triumph from which the multitudes had taken their Hosannas*. This verse is quoted with the same signification in Acts iv. 11: 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7, where also the cognate passage Isa. xxvii. 16 is quoted, as in Rom. ix. 33. The builders answer to the husbandmen, and the addition is made in this changed similitude to shew them that though they might reject and kill the Son, yet He would be victorious in the end.

the head of the corner] The corner-stone binds together both walls of the building; so Christ unites Jews and Gentiles in Himself. See the comparison beautifully followed into detail, Eph. ii. 20–22.

On **maryellowes in our eyes**, compare Acts iv. 13, 14.

43.] Our Lord here returns to the parable, and more plainly than ever before announces to them their rejection by God. The *vineyard* is now the *kingdom of God*. The **nation** here spoken of is not the Gentiles in general, but the *Church of the truly Faithful*,—the “*holy nation, peculiar people*” of 1 Pet. ii. 9: see Acts xv. 14,

44.] A reference to Isa. viii. 14, 15, and Dan. ii. 44, and a plain identification of the stone there mentioned with that in Ps. cxviii. The stone is the whole kingdom and power of the Messiah summed up in Himself.

he that hath fallen....] he that *takes offence, that makes it a stone of stumbling*, (or perhaps, he that *is superimposed on it*, as a stone in the building: but not so probably, as the *breaking* would want due interpretation,) **shall be broken:** see Luke ii. 34: but **on whomsoever**, as its enemy, *it shall come in vengeance*, as prophesied in Daniel, **it shall dash him in pieces.** Meyer maintains that the meaning of the word is not this, but literally '*shall winnow him*, 'throw him off as chaff. But the confusion thus occasioned in the parable is quite unnecessary. The result of winnowing is complete separation and dashing away of the worthless part: and it is surely far better to understand this *result* as the work of the falling of the stone, than to apply the words to a part of the operation for which the *falling of a stone* is so singularly unsuited.

45, 46.] All three Evangelists have this addition. St. Mark besides says "*and they left him and went their way,*" answering to our ch. xxii. 22. Supposing St. Mark's insertion of these words to be in the precise place, we have the following parable spoken to the people and disciples: see below.

Matthew: Chapter 22

CHAP. XXII. 1–14.] PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING' S SON. Peculiar to Matthew. A parable resembling this in several particulars occurs in Luke xiv. 15–24, yet we must not hastily set it down as the same. Many circumstances are entirely different: the locality and occasion of delivery different, and in both cases stated with precision. And the difference in the style of the parables is correspondent to the two periods of their utterance. That in Luke is delivered earlier in our Lord's ministry, when the enmity of the Pharisees had yet not fully manifested itself: the refusal of the guests is more courteous, their only penalty, *exclusion*;—here they *maltreat the servants*, and are *utterly destroyed*. This binds the parable in close connexion with that of the wicked husbandmen in the last chapter, and with this period of our Lord's course.

2.] The *householder* of the former parable is the KING here, who makes a *marriage* for his Son. The word thus rendered not always necessarily "a marriage," but any great celebration, as accession to the throne, or coming of age, &c. Here however the notion of a marriage is *certainly included*; and the interpretation is, *the great marriage supper* (Rev. xix. 9) of the Son of God: i.e. His full and complete union to His Bride the Church in glory: which would be to the guests the ultimate result of accepting the invitation. See Eph. v. 25–27. The difficulty, of the *totality of the guests* in this case constituting the *Bride*, may be lessened by regarding the ceremony as an enthronization, in which the people are regarded as being espoused to their prince. On the whole imagery, compare Ps. xlv.

3.] These **servants** are not the prophets, not the same as the servants in ch. xxi. 34, as generally interpreted:—the parable takes up its ground nearly from the conclusion of that former, and is altogether a *New Testament parable*. The office of these **servants** was to *summon* those who had been invited, as was customary (see Esth. v. 8 and vi. 14); these being the *Jewish people*, who had been before, by their prophets and covenant, invited. These first *servants* are then the *first messengers of the Gospel*,—John the Baptist, the Twelve, and the Seventy,—who preached, saying 'The Kingdom of heaven at hand.' And even our Lord Himself must in some sort be here included, inasmuch as He *took the form of a servant*, and preached this same truth, with however the weighty addition of **Come unto Me.**

4.] We now come to a different period of the Evangelic announcement. Now, all is ready: *the sacrifice*, or the meat for the feast, *is slain*. We can hardly help connecting this with the declarations of our Lord in John vi. 51–59, and supposing that this second invitation is the preaching of the Apostles and Evangelists *after the great sacrifice was offered*. That *thus* the slaying of the Lord is not the *doing of the invited*, but is mentioned as *done for the Feast*, is no real difficulty. Both sides of the truth may be included in the parable, as they are in Acts ii. 23, and indeed wherever it is set forth. The discourse of Peter in that chapter is the best commentary on "*all things are ready, come to the marriage.*" The meal designated is not that which we understand by *dinner*, but the meal at noon, with which the course of marriage festivities *began*. This will give even greater precision to the meaning of the parable as applying to these preparatory foretastes of the great feast, which the Church of God now enjoys. As the former parable had an O.T. foundation, so this: viz. Prov. ix. 1 ff.

5, 6.] Two classes are here represented: the *irreligious* and careless *people* (notice **his own** farm, bringing out the selfish spirit), and the *rulers*, who *persecuted and slew God's messengers*. Stephen,—James the brother of John, James the Just, and doubtless other of the Apostles, of whose end we have no certain account, perished by the hands or instigation of the Jews: they persecuted Paul all through his life, and most probably brought him to his death at last: and the guilt of the death of the Lord abode upon them (ch. xxvii. 25). They repeatedly insulted and scourged the Apostles (see Acts iv. 3; v. 18, 40).

7.] The occurrence of this verse before the opening of the Feast to the Gentiles has perplexed some interpreters: but it is strictly exact: for although the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, yet the final rejection of the Jews and the *substitution of the Gentiles* did not take till that event.

his armies] The Roman armies; a similar expression for the unconscious instruments of God's anger is used Isa. x. 5; xiii. 5: Jer. xxv. 9: Joel ii. 25.

their city] no longer *His*, but *their city*. Compare *your house*, ch. xxiii. 38. This is a startling introduction of the *interpretation into the parable*; we knew not before that they had *a city*.

8–10.] On not worthy, see Acts xiii. 46.

were: the past tense passes them by as done with. **The highways** here spoken of are the places of resort at the meetings of streets, the squares, or confluences of ways. De Wette and Meyer are wrong in saying that they are not in the city, ‘for that was destroyed’; it is not *the city of the murderers*, but *that in which the feast is supposed to be held*, which is spoken of: not Jerusalem, but God’s world.

bad and good] Both the open sinners and the morally good together. See ch. xiii. 47, where the net collects of *every kind*. Stier remarks, that we might expect, from ch. xxi. 31, to find the guest who by and by is expelled, *among the good*. Here, so to speak, the *first act* of the parable closes; and here is the situation of the Church at this day;—collected out of all the earth, and containing both bad and good.

was filled is emphatic.

11, 12.] This second part of the parable is in direct reference to the word of prophecy, Zeph. i. 7, 8: “*The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, that I will punish.... all such as are clothed with strange apparel.*” The coming of the King to see his guests is the final and separating Judgment of the Church, see ch. xxv. 19,—when that distinction shall be made, which God’s ministers have no power nor right to make in admissions into the visible Church. Yet as Trench remarks (*Parables*, p. 207), this coming of the King is not *exclusively* the final one, but every trying and sifting judgment adumbrates it in some measure.

With regard to the **wedding garment**, we must not, I think, make too much of the usually cited Oriental custom of presenting the guests with such garments at feasts. For (1) it is not distinctly proved that such a custom existed; the passages usually quoted (Gen. xiv. 22: Judg. xiv. 12: 2 Kings v. 22) are nothing to the purpose; 2 Kings x. 22 shews that the worshippers of Baal were provided with vestments, and *at a feast*: and at the present day those who are admitted to the presence of Royalty in the East are clothed with a *caftan*: but all this does not make good the assumption: and (2) even granting it, it is not to be pressed, as being manifestly not the salient point of this part of the parable. The guest was bound to provide himself with this proper habit, out of respect to the feast and its Author: *how* this was to be provided, does not *here* appear, but does *elsewhere*. The garment is *the imputed and inherent righteousness of the Lord Jesus*, put on *symbolically* in Baptism (Gal. iii. 27), and *really* by a true and living faith (ib. ver. 26),—without which none can appear before God in His Kingdom of glory;—Heb. xii. 14: Phil. iii. 7, 8: Eph. iv. 24: Col. iii. 10: Rom. xiii. 14:—which truth could not be put forward here, but at its subsequent manifestation threw its great light over this and other such similitudes and expressions. This guest imagines *his own garment* will be as acceptable, and therefore neglects to provide himself. See 1 John v. 10: Isa. lxiv. 6; lxi. 10: Rev. xix. 8.

Friend] see note on ch. xx. 13.

13, 14.] These **servants** (*diaconoi, ministers*) are not the same as the above, but *the angels*, see ch. xiii. 41, 49. The ‘binding of his feet and hands’ has been interpreted of his being now *in the night, in which no man can work*; but I doubt whether this be not too fanciful. Rather should we say, with Meyer, that it is to render his escape from the outer darkness impossible. In ver. 14 our Lord shews us that this guest, thus single in the parable, is, alas, to be the representative of a numerous class in the visible Church, who although sitting down as guests before His coming, have not on the *wedding garment*.

15–22.] REPLY CONCERNING THE LAWFULNESS OF TRIBUTE TO CÆSAR. Mark xii. 13–17. Luke xx. 20–26. On the *Herodians*, see above, ch. xvi. 6. By the union of these two hostile parties they perhaps thought that the “*spies*” or “*suborned persons*” (Luke), who were to feign themselves honest men, Luke xx. 20, would be more likely to *deceive our Lord*. For this also is their *flattery* here designed. ‘The devil never lies so foully, as when he speaks the truth.’ Meyer compares that other “*we know that*,” John iii. 2. The application may have been as if to settle a dispute which had sprung up between the Pharisees, the strong theocratic repudiators of Roman rule, and the Herodians, the hangers-on of a dynasty created by Cæsar. In case the answer were *negative*, these last would be witnesses against Him to the governor (Luke xx. 20); as indeed they became, with false testimony, when they could not get true, Luke xxiii. 2; in case it were *affirmative*, He would be compromised with the Roman conquerors, and could not be the people’s Deliverer, their expected Messias; which would furnish them with a pretext for stirring up the multitudes against Him (see Deut. xvii. 15).

17.] The **tribute** here spoken of was a poll-tax, which had been levied since Judea became a province of Rome.

18–22.] Our Lord not only detects their plot, but answers their question; and in answering it, teaches them each a deep lesson.

The **tribute money** was a denarius: see on ch. xx. 2. It was a saying of the Rabbis, quoted by Lightfoot and Wetstein, that ‘wherever any king’s money is current, there that king is lord.’ The Lord’s answer convicts them, by the matter of fact that this money was current among them, of subjection to (Tiberius) Cæsar, and recognition of that subjection: **Pay therefore**, He says, **the things which are Cæsar’s to Cæsar, and** (not perhaps without reference to the Herodians, but also with much deeper reference) **the things that are God’s, to God.** These weighty words, so much misunderstood, bind together, instead of separating, the political and religious duties of the followers of Christ. See Jer. xxvii. 4–18; Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14; John xix. 11. The second clause comprehends the first, and gives its true foundation: as if it had been, ‘this obedience to Cæsar is but an application of the general principle of obedience to God, of Whom is all power.’ The latter clause thus reaches infinitely deeper than the former: just as our Lord in Luke x. 41, 42 declares a truth reaching far beyond the occasion of the meal. *Man is the coinage, and bears the image, of God* (Gen. i. 27): and this image is not lost by the fall (Gen. ix. 6: Acts xvii. 29: James iii. 9. See also notes on Luke xv. 8, 9). We owe then ourselves to God: and this solemn duty is implied, of giving ourselves to Him, with all that we have and are. The answer also gives them the real reason why they were now under subjection to Cæsar: viz. because had fallen from their allegiance to God. ‘The question was as if an adulterer were to ask, whether it were lawful for him to pay the penalty of his adultery.’ (Claudius, cited by Stier.) They had again and again rejected their theocratic inheritance;—they refused it in the wilderness;—they would not have God to reign over them, but a king;—therefore were they subjected to foreigners (see 2 Chron. xii. 8).

23–33.] REPLY TO THE SADDUCEES RESPECTING THE RESURRECTION. Mark xii. 18–27. Luke xx. 27–40. From Acts xxiii. 8, the Sadducees denied resurrection, angel, and spirit; consequently the *immortality of the soul, as well as the resurrection of the body.* This should be borne in mind, as our Lord’s answer is directed against both errors. It is a mistake into which many Commentators have fallen, to suppose that the Sadducees recognized only the Pentateuch: they acknowledged the prophets also, and rejected tradition only.

24. raise up seed] The firstborn son of such a marriage was reckoned and registered as the son of the deceased brother.

29, 30.] Ye do not understand the Scriptures, which imply the resurrection (ver. 31), **nor the power of God**, before which all these obstacles vanish (ver. 30). See Acts xxvi. 8: Rom. iv. 17; viii. 11: 1 Cor. vi. 14.

Our Lord also asserts here against them the *existence of angels*, and reveals to us the similarity of our future glorified state to their present one.

are as angels of God in heaven] because the *risen will not be in heaven, but on earth.* Tho *Rabbinical* decision of a similar question was, that a woman who had been the wife of two husbands on earth, is restored in the next life to the former of them.

31–33.] Our Lord does not cite the strong testimonies of the Prophets, as Isa. xxvi. 19: Ezek. xxxvii. 1–14: Dan. xii. 2, but says, as in Luke (xx. 37), ‘even Moses has shewn,’ &c., leaving those other witnesses to be supplied. The books of Moses were the great and ultimate appeal for all doctrine: and thus the assertion of the Resurrection comes from the very source whence their difficulty had been constructed. On the passage itself, and our Lord’s interpretation of it, much has been written. Certain in it is, that our Lord brings out in this answer a depth of meaning in the words, which without it we could not discover. Meyer finely says, “Our Lord here testifies of the conscious intent of God in speaking the words. God uttered them, He tells us, to Moses, in the consciousness of the still enduring existence of His peculiar relation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” The groundwork of our Lord’s argument seems to me to be this:—The words “I am thy God” imply a covenant; there is another side to them: “thou art Mine” follows upon “I am thine.” When God therefore declares that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He declares their continuance, as the other parties in this covenant. It is an assertion which could not be made of an annihilated being of the past. And notice also, that Abraham’s (&c.) body having had upon it the seal of the covenant, is included in this. Stier remarks that this is a weighty testimony against the so-called ‘sleep of the soul’ in the intermediate state. Compare “for all live unto Him” Luke xx. 38. Thus the burden of the Law, ‘I AM THE LORD THY GOD,’ contains in it the seed of immortality, and the hope of the resurrection.

34–40.] REPLY CONCERNING THE GREAT COMMANDMENT. Mark xii. 28–34. In the more detailed account of Mark (Luke has a similar incident in another place, x. 25), this question does not appear as that of one maliciously tempting our Lord: and his seems to me the view to be taken,—as there could not be any evil consequences to our Lord, whichever way He had answered the question. See the notes there.

35. a lawyer] These were Mosaic jurists, whose special province was the interpretation of the Law. *Scribe* is a wider term, including them.

tempting] See above.

36. which is the great commandment] This should more exactly be rendered, **which (what kind of a) commandment is great in the law?** In Mark, otherwise.

40. the law and the prophets] in the sense of ch. v. 17; vii. 12: all the details of God's ancient revelation of His will, by whomsoever made. **41–46.] THE PHARISEES BAFFLED BY**

A QUESTION RESPECTING CHRIST AND

DAVID. Mark xii. 35–37. Luke xx. 41–44. [See also Acts ii. 34.] Our Lord now questions his adversaries (according to Matt.:—in Mark and Luke He asks the question not *to*, but *concerning* the Scribes or interpreters of the law), and again convicts them of ignorance of the Scriptures. From the universally recognized title of the Messiah as the Son of David, which by his question He elicits from them, He takes occasion to shew them, who understood this title in a mere worldly political sense, the difficulty arising from David's own reverence for this his Son: the solution lying in the incarnate Godhead of the Christ, of which they were ignorant.

43. in spirit] i.e. **by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:** “*by (in) the Holy Ghost,*” Mark. This is a weighty declaration by our Lord of the inspiration of the prophetic Scriptures. St. Mark (ver. 37) adds to this “the common people heard him gladly.” Here then end the endeavours of His adversaries to entrap Him by questions: they now betake themselves to other means. “A new scene, as it were, henceforth opens.” Bengel.

Matthew: Chapter 23

CHAP. XXIII. 1–39.] DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. Peculiar to Matthew.

1.] Much of the matter of this discourse is to be found in Luke xi. and xiii. On its appearance there, see the notes on those passages. There can, I think, be no doubt that it was delivered, as our Evangelist here relates it, all at one time, and in these the last days of our Lord's ministry. On the notion entertained by some recent critics, of St. Matthew having arranged the scattered sayings of the Lord into longer discourses, see Introduction to Matthew. A trace of this discourse is found in Mark xii. 38–40; Luke xx. 45–47. In the latter place it is spoken *to the disciples, in hearing of the crowd*: which (see ver. 8 ff.) is the exact account of the matter. It bears many resemblances to the Sermon on the Mount, and may be regarded as the solemn close, as that was the opening, of the Lord's public teaching. It divides itself naturally into three: (1) introductory description of the Scribes and Pharisees, and contrast to Christ's disciples (vv. 1–12); (2) solemn denunciations of their hypocrisy (vv. 14–33); (3) conclusion, and mournful farewell to the temple and Jerusalem.

2.] Moses' seat in the office of judge and lawgiver of the people: see Exod. ii. 13–25; Deut. xvii. 9–13. Our Lord says, ‘In so far as the Pharisees and Scribes enforce the law and precepts of Moses, obey them: but imitate not their conduct.’

The verb rendered **sit** must not be pressed too strongly, as conveying blame,—‘*have seated themselves;*’—it is merely stated here as a *matter of fact*. Vv. 8, 10 however apply to their *leadership* as well as their faults; and declare that *among Christians* there are to be *none sitting on the seat of Christ*.

3. all therefore] The **therefore** here is very significant:—*because* they sit on Moses' seat: and this clears the meaning, and shews it to be, ‘all things which they, as successors of Moses, out of his law, command you, do;’ there being a distinction between their lawful teaching as expounders of the law, and their frivolous traditions superadded thereto, and blamed below.

4.] The warning was, *imitate them not*—for they do not themselves what they enjoin on others. And this verse must be strictly connected with ver. 3. The **burdens** then are not, as so often misinterpreted, *human traditions* and observances;—but the *severity of the law*, which they enforce on others, but do not observe (see Rom. ii. 21–23): answering to the **weightier matters of the law** of ver. 23. The irksomeness and unbearableness of these rites did not belong to the Law *in itself*, as rightly explained, but were created by the rigour and ritualism of these men, who followed the letter and lost the spirit; who spent all their labour in enforcing and amplifying ceremonies.

5–7.] But whatever they *do* perform, has but one motive.

phylacteries were strips of parchment with certain of Scripture, viz. Exod. xiii. 11–16 and 1–10: Deut. xi. 13–21; vi. 4–9, written on them, and worn on the forehead between the eyes, on the left side next the heart, and on the left arm. The name in the text was given because they were considered as charms. They appear not to have been worn till after the captivity; and are still in use among the rabbinical Jews. Their use appears to have arisen from a superstitious interpretation of Exod. xiii. 9: Deut. vi. 8, 9. See Joseph. Antt. iv. 8. 13. The **hems** or *fringes*, were commanded to be worn for a memorial, Num. xv. 38. See note on ch. ix. 20.

6, 7.] See Mark xii. 38, 39: Luke xx. 46, 47. On the **uppermost place at feasts**, see Luke xiv. 7.

8–10.] The prohibition is against loving, and in any religious matter, using such titles, signifying dominion over the faith of others. It must be understood in the spirit and not in the letter. Paul calls Timotheus his ‘son’ in the faith, 1 Tim. i. 2, and exhorts the Corinthians (1 Cor. xi. 1) to be followers of him as he of Christ. To understand and follow such commands in the slavery of the letter, is to fall into the very Pharisaism against which our Lord is uttering the caution. See (e. g.) Barnes’s note here.

Rabbi: i.e. ‘*my master:*’ an expression used, and reduplicated as here, by scholars to their masters, who were never called by their own name by their scholars. So the Lord says, John xiii. 13, “*ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am.*” The Teacher is probably not *Christ*, as supplied here in the received text, but the Holy Spirit (see John xiv. 26; Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27), only *not here named*, because this promise was only given in private to *the disciples*. If this be so, we have God, in His Trinity, here declared to us as the only Father, Master, and Teacher of Christians; the only One, in all these relations, on whom they can rest or depend. They are all *brethren*: all substantially equal—*none by office or precedence nearer to God than another; none standing between his brother and God.* ‘And the duty of all Christian teachers is to bring their hearers to the confession of the Samaritans in John iv. 42: “*Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is the Saviour of the world.*”

9.] Literally, **name not any Father of you on earth;** no ‘*Abba*’ or ‘*Papa*’ (see the account of the funeral of John Wesley, Coke and More’s Life, p. 441, and the opening, of the Author’s dedication of the book).

11.] It may serve to shew us how little the letter of a precept has to do with its true observance, if we reflect that he who of all the Heads of sects has most notably violated this whole command, and caused others to do so, calls himself ‘*servus servorum Dei*’ (“servant of the servants of God”).—It must be noted (see margin) that the word here rendered “*servant*” in the A.V., is not that usually so translated (*doulos*), which properly means *slave* or *bondsman*: but *diaconos*, which is in the same version rendered *minister* in chap. xx. 26.

12.] This often-repeated saying points here not only to the universal character of God’s dealings, but to the speedy humiliation of the lofty Pharisees; and as such finds a most striking parallel in Ezek. xxi. 26, 27.

13.] In Luke xi. 52 it is added “*ye have taken away the key of knowledge*”—the Key being, not the Key *of*, i.e. *admitting to*, Knowledge, but the Key *which is the Knowledge itself*, the true simple interpretation of Scripture, which would have admitted them, and caused them to admit others, into the Kingdom of Heaven, by the recognition of Him of whom the Scriptures testify; whereas now by their perverse interpretations they had shut out both themselves—and others from it. See a notable instance of this latter in John ix. 24. They shut the door as it were in men’s faces who were entering. [On the interpolated ver. 14, see notes on Mark (xii. 40). It is wanting in almost all the oldest authorities. It appears to have been inserted here by the copyists from Mark, as above, or from Luke xx. 47.]

15.] And with all this betrayal of your trust as *the teachers of Israel* (John iii. 10 literally), *as if all your work at home were done.* This was their work of supererogation—not commanded them, nor in the spirit of their law. The Lord speaks not here of those pious Godfearing men, who were found dwelling among the Jews, favouring and often attending their worship—but of the *proselytes of righteousness*, so called, who by persuasion of the Pharisees, took on them the *whole Jewish law and its observances*. These were rare—and it was to the credit of our nature that they were. For what could such a proselyte, made by such teachers, become? A disciple of hypocrisy merely—neither a sincere heathen nor a sincere Jew—doubly the child of hell: condemned by the religion which he had left—condemned again by that which he had taken.

16–22.] The Lord *forbade all swearing* to His own disciples, ch. v. 34; and by the very same reasoning—because every oath is really and eventually an oath by God—shews these Pharisees the validity and solemnity of every oath. This subterfuge became notorious at Rome. See citation in my Gr. Test.

The reading **dwelt** in ver. 21 is remarkable; God did not then dwell in the Temple, nor had He done so since the Captivity.

23, 24.] It was doubtful, whether Levit. xxvii. 30 applied to every smallest garden herb: but the **Pharisees**, in their over-rigidity in externals, stretched it to this, letting go the heavier, more difficult and more important (see ver. 4) matters of the Law. In the threefold enumeration, our Lord refers to Micah vi. 8 (see also Hosea xii. 6)—where *to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God*, are described as being better than all offerings.

these—these last, are the great points on which your exertions should have been spent—and then, if for the sake of these they be observed, the others should not be neglected. The gold here is probably not the ornamental gold, but the Corban—the sacred treasure. They were fools and blind, not to know and see, that no *inanimate thing can witness an oath*, but they all these things are called in to do so because of *sanctity* belonging to them, of which God is *the primary source*:—the *order* likewise of the *things hallowed* being, in their foolish estimate of them, *reversed*: for the *gold* must be less than the *temple* which

hallows it, and the *gift* than the *altar*—not as if this were of any real consequence, except to shew their folly—for vv. 20–22, *every oath* is really an *oath by God*. But these men were servants only of the temple (“*your house*, ver. 38) and the *altar*, and had forgotten God. “*The straining the gnat* is not a mere proverbial saying. The jews (as do now the Buddists in Ceylon and Hindustan) strained their wine, &c., carefully that they might not violate Levit. xi. 20, 23, 41, 42 (and, it might be added, Levit. xvii. 10–14). The “*strain of a gnat*” in our present auth. vers. for “strain out a gnat of the earlier English vers. seems not to have been a mistake, as sometimes supposed but a deliberate alteration, meaning, “strain [out the wine] at [the occurrence of] a gnat.” The camel is not only *opposed*, as of immense size, but is also joined with the other as being equally clean.

25–28.] This woe is founded not on a literally, but a typically denoted practice of the Pharisees. Our Lord, in the ever-deepening denunciation of His discourse, has now arrived at the delineation of their *whole* character and practices by a parabolic similitude.

are fall of] the straining out of the gnat is a cleansing pertaining to the *outside*, as compared with the *inner composition of the wine itself*, of which the cup is fall: see Rev. xviii. 3. The exterior is not in reality pure when the interior is foul: it is not ‘a clean cup,’ unless both exterior and interior be clean. Observe, the emphasis is on be: “that its exterior also may not appear to be, but really *become*, pure.”

27.] The Jews used once a year (on the fifteenth of the month Adar) *to whitewash the spots where graves were*, that persons might not be liable to uncleanness by passing over them (see Num. xix. 16). This goes to the root of the mischief at once: “your heart is not a temple of the living God, but a grave of pestilent corruption: not a heaven, but a hell. And your religion is but the whitewash—hardly skin-deep.”

29–33.] The guilt resting on these present Pharisees from being the last in a progressive series of generations of such hypocrites and persecutors, forms the matter of the last ‘Woe. The burden of this hypocrisy is, that they, being one with their fathers, treading in their steps, but vainly disavowing their deeds, were, by the very act of building: the sepulchres of the prophets, joined with their prophet-persecuting acts, convicting themselves of continuity with their fathers’ wickedness. See, as clearly setting forth this view, Luke xi. ‘Instead of the penitent confession, “We have sinned, we and our fathers,” this last and worst generation in vain protests against their participation in their fathers’ guilt, which they are meanwhile developing to the utmost, and filling up its measure Cheta vii. 52). Stier. Again notice the emphasis, which is now markedly on **sons**; thus bringing out that relation in all its fulness and consequences.

32.] **Fill ye up also** (as well as they) **the measure** (of iniquity) **of your fathers.**

Ver. 33 repeats almost verbatim the first denunciation of the Baptist—in this, the last discourse of the Lord: thus denoting the unchanged state of these men, on whom the whole preaching of: repentance had now been expended. One weighty difference however there is: then it was, “*who hath warned you to flee?*” the wonder was, *how they believed thought themselves* of escaping—now, how **shall ye escape?** On **serpents**, see Rev. xii. 9.

34.] From the similar place in the former discourse (Luke xi. 49, see notes there) it would appear that the **wherefore** refers to the *whole* last denunciation:—“since ye are bent upon filling up the iniquities of your fathers, in God’s inscrutable purposes ye shall go on rejecting His messengers.” Notice the difference between “*the wisdom of God*” in Luke xi. 49, and I, with its emphasis, here.

These words are nowhere written in Scripture, nor is it necessary to suppose that to be our Lord’s meaning. He speaks this as Head of His Church, of those whom He was about to send: see Acts xiii. 1: 1 Cor. xii. 8: Eph. iii. 5. He cannot, as some think, include *Himself* among those whom He sends—the Jews may have *crucified* many Christian teachers before the destruction of Jerusalem. And Eusebius relates from Hegesippus the crucifixion of Symeon son of Clopas, in the reign of Trajan. The and takes out the “*crucify*,” the special, from the “*kill*,” the general; with, of course, somewhat of emphasis: “*yea, and even crucify*.” The prophets were the Apostles, who, in relation to the Jews, were such—the **wise men**, Stephen and such like, men full of the Holy Ghost—the scribes, Apollos, Paul (who indeed was all of these together), and such. On **scourge** in your **synagogues**, see Acts v. 40; xxii. 19; xxvi. 11.

35.] that, not ‘in such a way that,’ as some: but strictly in order that. **righteous** (or *innocent*) **blood** is a common expression in the O.T. See 2 Kings xxi. 16; xxiv. 4: Jer. xxvi. 15; and more especially Lam. iv. 13, which perhaps our Lord referred to in speaking this.

all the.... blood] Thus in Babylon, Rev. xviii. 24, is found *the blood of all that were slain upon the earth*. Every such signal judgment is the judgment for a series of long-crying crimes—and these judgments do not exhaust God’s anger, Isa. ix. 12, 17, 21. The *murder of Abel* was the *first* in the strife between unrighteousness and holiness, and as these Jews represent, in their conduct both in former times and now, the murderer of the

Who **Zacharias son of Barachias** is has been much disputed. We may conclude with certainty that it cannot be (as Augustine and Greswell suppose) *a future Zacharias*, mentioned by Josephus, as son of Baruch, and slain in the temple just before the destruction of Jerusalem—for our Lord evidently speaks of an event *past*, and never *prophesies* in this manner elsewhere. Origen has preserved a tradition, that *Zacharias father of John the Baptist* was slain by them in the temple; but in the absence of all other authority, this must be suspected as having arisen from the difficulty of the allusion here. Most likely (see Lightfoot in loc., and note on Luke xi. 49) it is *Zacharias the son of Jehoiada*, who was killed there, 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, and of whose blood the Jews had a saying, that it never was washed away till the temple was burnt at the captivity.

son of Barachias does not occur in Luke xi. 51, and perhaps was not uttered by the Lord Himself, but may have been inserted by mistake, as *Zachariah the prophet was son of Barachiah*, see Zech. i. 1.

between the temple and the altar] He was killed in the *priest's court*, where the altar of burnt-offerings was. On ver. 36, see note on ch. xxiv. 34. It is no objection to the interpretation there maintained that the *whole period* of the Jewish course of crime is not filled up by it: the death of Abel can by no explanation be brought within its limits or responsibility and our Lord's saying reaches far deeper than a mere announcement of their responsibility for what *they themselves had done*. The Jews stood in the *central point of God's dealings with men*; and as they were the chosen for the election of grace, so, rejecting God and His messengers, they became, in an especial and awful manner, vessels of wrath.

Our Lord mentions this *last murder*, not as being the *last* even before His own day, but *because it was connected specially with the cry of the dying man*, ‘The Lord look upon it and require it.’ Compare Gen. iv. 10. This death of Zacharias was the *last* in the *arrangement of the Hebrew Canon* of the O.T., though *chronologically* that of Urijah, Jer. xxvi. 23, was later.

37.] These words were before spoken by our Lord, Luke xiii. 34: see notes there, and compare ch. xxiv. 28.

how often would I have gathered must be understood of all the messages of repentance and mercy sent by the prophets, for our Lord's words embrace the whole time comprised in the historic survey of ver. 35, as well as His own ministry. On the similitude, see Deut. xxxii. 11: Ps. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7; lvii. 1; lxi. 4: Isa. xxxi. 5: Mal. iv. 2.

ye would not] See Isa. xxviii. 12; xxx. 15, The tears of our Lord over the perverseness of Jerusalem are witnesses of the *freedom of man's will to resist the grace of God*.

38, 39.] This is our Lord's last and solemn departure from the temple—the *true* “Let us depart hence.”

your house—no more *God's*, but **your house**—said primarily of the temple,—then of Jerusalem,—and then of the whole land in which ye dwell.

Ye shall not see me—He did not shew Himself to all the people after His resurrection, but only to chosen witnesses, Acts x. 41.

till ye shall say] until that day, the subject of all prophecy, when your repentant people shall turn with true and loyal Hosannas and blessings to greet ‘Him whom they have pierced: see Deut. iv. 30, 31: Hosea iii. 4, 5: Zech. xii. 10; xiv. 8–11. Stier well remarks, ‘He who reads not this in the prophets, reads not yet the prophets aright.’

Matthew: Chapter 24

CHAP. XXIV. 1–51.] PROPHECY OF HIS COMING, AND OF THE TIMES OF THE END. Mark xiii. 1–37. Luke xxi. 5–36. Matt. omits the incident of the widow's mite, Mark xii. 41–44. Luke xxi. 1–4,

1, 2.] St. Mark expresses their remarks on the buildings; see note there:—they were probably occasioned by ver. 38 of the last chapter. Josephus writes, “Caesar gave orders to pull down the whole city and the temple.... and all the area of the city was so levelled by the workmen, that a traveller would never believe that it had been inhabited.”

3.] From Mark we learn that it was Peter and James and John and Andrew who asked this question. With regard to the question itself, we must, I think, be careful not to press the clauses of it too much, so as to make them bear separate meanings corresponding to the arrangements of our Lord's discourse. As expressed in the other Evangelists, the question was concerning the time, and the sign, of *these things* happening, viz. the overthrow of the temple and desolation of Judæa, with which, in the then idea of the Apostles, our Lord's coming and the end of the world were connected. Against this mistake He warns them, vv. 6, 14,—Luke ver. 24,—and also in the two first parables in our ch. xxv. For the understanding of this necessarily difficult prophetic discourse, it must be borne in mind that the whole is spoken in the pregnant language of prophecy, in which various fulfillments are involved. (1) The view of the Jewish Church and its fortunes, as *representing the Christian Church and its*

history, is one key to the interpretation of this chapter.

Two parallel interpretations run through the former part as far as ver. 28; the destruction of Jerusalem. and the final judgment being both enwrapped in the words, but the former, in this part of the chapter, predominating. Even in this part, however, we cannot tell how applicable the warnings given may be to the events of the last times, in which apparently Jerusalem is again to play so distinguished a part. From ver. 28, the lesser subject begins to be swallowed up by the greater, and our Lord's *second coming* to be the predominant theme, with however certain hints thrown back as it were at the event which was immediately in question: till, in the latter part of the chapter and the whole of the next, the *second advent*, and, at last, the *final judgment* ensuing on it, are the subjects.

(2) Another weighty matter for the understanding of this prophecy is, that (see Mark xiii. 32) any obscurity or concealment concerning the time of the Lord's second coming, must be attributed to the right cause, which we know from His own mouth to be, that the divine Speaker Himself, in His humiliation, *did not know the day nor the hour*. All that He had heard of the Father, He made known unto His disciples (John xv. 15): but that which the Father kept in His own power (Acts i. 7), He did not in His abased humanity know. He told them the *attendant circumstances* of His coming; He gave them enough to guard them from error in supposing the day to be close at hand, and from carelessness in not expecting it as near. Regarding Scripture prophecy as I do as a *whole*, and the same great process of events to be denoted by it all, it will be but waste labour to be continually at issue, in the notes of this and the succeeding chapter, with those who hold that the *Gospel prophecies* are inconsistent, in their description of the end, with *those after the Ascension*, and those again with *the millennial ones of the Apocalypse*. How untenable this view is, I hope the following notes will shew; but to be continually meeting it, is the office of polemic not of exegetic theology.

4, 5.] Our Lord does not answer the when, but by admonitions not to be deceived. See a question similarly answered, Luke xiii. 23,

24. **For many...]** This was the first danger awaiting them: not of being drawn away from Christ, but of **imagining: that these persons were Himself**. Of such before the destruction of Jerusalem we have no distinct record; doubtless there were such: but (see above) I believe the prophecy and warning to have a further reference to the latter times, in which its complete fulfilment must be looked for. The persons usually cited as fulfilling this (Theudas, Simon, Magus, Barchochab, &c.) are all too early or too late, and not correspondent to the condition, in **My name**, 'with My name as the *ground* of their pretences.' See Greswell on the Parables, v. 380 note. St. Luke gives an addition (ver. 8) to the speech of the *false Christs*, "*and the time is at hand.*"

6-8.] **wars and rumors of wars** there certainly were during this period; but the prophecy must be interpreted rather of those of which the *Hebrew Christians would be most likely to hear* as a cause of terror. Such undoubtedly were the *three threats of war against the Jews* by Caligula, Claudius, and Nero; of the first of which Josephus says, "that it would have brought extermination to the Jewish nation, had it not been for Caligula's death." Luke couples with wars "*commotions*,"—and to this **nation against nation** seems also to point. There were serious disturbances,—(1) at Alexandria, which gave rise to the complaint against and deposition of Flaccus, and Philo's work against him (A. D. 38), in which the Jews as a nation were the especial objects of persecution; (2) at Seleucia about the same time, in which more than 50, 000 Jews were killed; (3) at Jamnia, a city on the coast of Judaea near Joppa. Many other such national tumults are recorded by Josephus. In one place he calls the sedition *a preface be the siege*. **famine**, and **pestilence**, which is coupled to it in Luke, are usual companions. With regard to the *first*, Greswell shews that the famine prophesied of in the Acts (xi. 28) happened in the ninth of Claudius, A.D. 49. It was great at Rome,—and therefore probably Egypt and Africa, on which the Romans depended so much for supplies, were themselves much affected by it. Suetonius of *continual droughts*; and Tacitus of *dearth of crops, and thence famine*, about the same time. There was a famine in Judaea in the reign of Claudius (the true date of which however Mr. Greswell believes to be the third of Nero), mentioned by Josephus. And as to *pestilences*, though their occurrence might, as above, be inferred from the other, we have distinct accounts of a pestilence at Rome (A. D. 65) in Suetonius and Tacitus, which in a single autumn carried off 30, 000 persons at Rome. But such matters as these are not often related by historians, unless of more than usual severity.

earthquakes] The principal *earthquakes* occurring between this prophecy and the destruction of Jerusalem were, (1) a great earthquake' in Crete, A.D. 46 or 47; (2) one at Rome on the day when Nero assumed the manly toga A.D. 51; (8) one at Apamea in Phrygia, mentioned by Tacitus, A.D. 53; (4) one at Laodicea in Phrygia, A.D. 60; (5) one in Campania. Seneca, in the year 'A. D. 58, writes:—'How often have cities of Asia and Achaea fallen with one fatal shock! how many cities have been swallowed up in Syria, how many in Macedonia! How often has Cyprus been wasted by this calamity! How often has Paphos become a ruin! News has often been brought us of the demolition of whole cities at once.'

The prophecy, mentioning in *divers places (place for place)*,—i. e. here and there, each in its particular locality; as we say, "up and down"), does not seem to imply that the earthquakes should be in Judaea or Jerusalem. We have an account of one in Jerusalem, in Josephus, which Mr. Greswell (as above) places about Nov. A.D. 67. On the additions in Luke xxi. 11, see notes there and on this whole passage see the prophecies in 2 Chron. xv. 5-7, and Jer. li. 45, 46.

the beginning of sorrows (literally of birth pangs)] in reference to the *regeneration* (ch. xix, 28), which is to precede the *consummation of this age*. So Paul in Rom. viii. 22, the whole creation... *travaileth together until now*. The death-throes of the Jewish state the ‘regeneration’ of the universal Christian Church, as the death-throes of this world the new heavens and new earth.

9–13.] Then, at this time,—during this period, not ‘after these things have happened.’ These words serve only definitely to fix the time of the indefinite *then*, here and in ver. 10. The *then* in ver. 14 is, from the construction of the sentence, more definite. For kill you, Luke has *some of you shall they cause to be put to death*, viz. the Apostles. This sign was early given. James the brother of John was put to death, A.D. 44. *P eter and Paul* (traditionally) and *J ames the Lord's brother*, before the destruction of Jerusalem: and possibly others.

ye shall be hated] See Acts xxviii. 22. Tacitus says that Nero, for the conflagration of Rome, persecuted the Christians, ‘*a race of men detested for their crimes*;’ also see 1 Pet. ii, 12; iii, 16; iv. 14–16. In chap. x. 22, from which these verses are repeated, we have only “*of all*” (men)—here **nations** is added, giving particularity to the prophecy.

10.] See 2 Tim. iv. 16, and the warnings against apostasy in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The persons spoken of in this verse are *Christians*. Tacitus says, that the first apprehended by Nero confessed, and then a great multitude were apprehended their information, xv. 44. On **offended**, see note, ch. xi, 6. On **hate one another**, compare the deadly hatred borne to St. Paul and his work by the Judaizers. In the Apocryphal works called the Clementines, which follow teaching similar to that of the factions adverse to Paul in the Corinthian Church, he is hinted at under the name “*the enemy*.” (See Stanley, Essays on Apostolic Age, p. 877.) These Judaizing teachers, among others, are meant by the **false prophets**, as also that plentiful crop of heretical teachers which sprang up every where with the good seed of the Gospel when first sown. See especially Acts xx. 30: Gal. i. 7–9; Rom. xvi. 17, 18: Col. ii, 17—end: 1 Tim. i. 6, 7, 20; vi. 3–5, 20, 21: 2 Tim. ii. 18; iii, 6–8: 2 Pet. ii. (and Jude): 1 John ii. 18, 22, 23, 26; iv. 1, 3: 2 John 7: *false apostles*, 2 Cor. xi. 18.

12.] It is against this iniquity especially that James, in his Epistle, and Jude, in more than the outward sense *the brother of James*, were called on to protest,—the mixture of heathen licentiousness with the profession of Christianity. But perhaps we ought to have regard to the *past tense* of the verb in the original, and interpret, ‘*because the iniquity is filled up*,’ on account of the horrible state of morality (parallel to that described by Thucydides, as prevailing in Greece, which had destroyed all mutual confidence), the love and mutual trust of the generality of Christians shall grow cold.

of the many,—thus we have, ch. xxv. 5, “*they all slumbered and slept*.” Even the Church itself is leavened by the distrust of the evil days. See 2 Thess. ii. 3.

18.] The primary meaning of this seems to be, that whosoever remained faithful till the destruction of Jerusalem, should be preserved from it. No Christian, that we know of, perished in the siege or after it: see below. But it has *ulterior* meanings, according to which the end will signify to an individual, the *day of his death* (see Rev. ii. 10),—his martyrdom, as in the case of some of those here addressed,—to the Church, endurance *in the faith to the end of all things*. See Luke xxi. 19, and note.

14] We here again have the *pregnant* meaning of prophecy. The Gospel had been preach rough the whole *Roman world*, and every nation had received its testimony, before the destruction of Jerusalem: see Col. i. 6, 23: 2 Tim. iv. 17. This was necessary not only as regarded the Gentiles, but to give to God’s people the Jews, who were scattered among all these nations, the opportunity of *receiving or rejecting the preaching of Christ*. But in the wider sense, the words imply that the Gospel shall be preached in *all the world, literally taken*, before the great and final end come. *T he apostasy of the latter days, and the universal dispersion of missions*, are the two great signs of the end drawing near.

15. the abomination of desolation] The Greek words are the LXX rendering of the Hebrew of Dan. xii. 11. The similar expression in ch. xi. 31, is rendered in the same manner by the LXX. To what *exactly* the words in Daniel apply, is not clear. Like other prophecies it is probable that they are pregnant with several interpretations, and are not yet entirely fulfilled. They were interpreted of *Antiochus Epiphanes* by the Alexandrine Jews; thus 1 Macc. i. 54 we read “*they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar*.” Josephus refers the prophecy to the *desolation by the Romans*. The principal Commentators have supposed, that *the eagles of the Roman legions* are meant, which were as abomination inasmuch as they were idols worshipped by the soldiers. These, they say, stood *in the holy place*, or a holy place, when the Roman armies encamped round Jerusalem under Cestius Gallus first, A.D. 66, then under Vespasian, A.D. 68, then lastly under Titus, A.D. 70. Of these the first is generally taken as the sign meant. Josephus relates, B.J. ii. 20. 1, that after Cestius was defeated, “many of the principal Jews removed from the city, as from a sinking ship.” But, without denying that this *time* was that of the sign being given, I believe that all such interpretation of its meaning are wholly inapplicable. The error has mainly arisen from supposing that the parallel warning of St. Luke (ver. 20), “When see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then her desolation draweth nigh,” is identical in meaning with our text and that of St. Mark. The two first evangelist, writing for Jews, or as Jews, give the *inner or domestic* sign of the approaching calamity: which was to be seen in *the temple*, and was to be the *abomination*

(always used of something caused by the Jews themselves, see 2 Kings, xxi. 2–15; Ezek. v. 11; vii. 8, 9; viii. 6–16) which should cause the desolation,—the last drop in the cup of iniquity. Luke, writing for Gentiles, gives the *outward state of things* corresponding to this inward sign. That the *Roman eagles cannot be meant*, is apparent: for the sign would thus be *no sign*, the Roman eagles having been seen on holy ground for *many years past*, and at the very moment when these words were uttered. Also holy place must mean *the temple*: see reff.

Now in searching for some event which may have given such alarm to the Christians. Josephus's unconscious admission is important. The party of the Zelots, as we learn, had taken possession of the temple. In the next section he tells us that they chose one Phannius as their high priest, an ignorant and profane fellow, brought out of the field. I own that the above-cited passages strongly incline me to think that if not this very impiety, some similar one, about ora little before this time, was the sign spoken of by the Lord. In its place in Josephus, this very event *seems* to stand a little too late for our purpose (4. D. 67, a year after the investment by Cestius): but the narrative occurs in a description of the atrocities of the Zelote, and *without any fixed date*, and they had been in possession of the temple from the very first. So that this or some similar abomination may have about this time filled up the cup of iniquity and given the sign to the Christians to depart. Whatever it was, it was a *definite, well-marked event*, for the flight was to be immediate,

on one day (see ver. 20), and universal from all parts of Judaea. Putting then St. Luke's expression and the text together, I think that some *internal desecration of, the holy place by the Zelots* coincided with the approach of Cestius, and thus, both from without and within, the Christians were warned to escape. See Luke xxi. 20.

[whoso readeth, let him understand] This I believe to have been an ecclesiastical note, which, like the doxology in ch. vi. 13, has found its way into the text. If the two first Gospels were published before the destruction of Jerusalem, such an admonition would be very intelligible. The words 'may be part of our Lord's discourse directing attention to the prophecy of Daniel (see 2 Tim. ii. 7: Dan. xii. 10); but this is not likely, especially as the reference to Daniel does not occur in Mark, where these words are also found. They cannot well be the words of the Evangelist, inserted to bespeak attention, as this in the three first Gospels is wholly without example.

[16–18.] The Christian Jews are said to have fled to *Pella*, a town described by Josephus as the northernmost boundary of Perea. Eusebius says they were directed thither by a certain prophetic intimation, which however cannot be this; as Pella is *not on the mountains*, but beyond them (but in order to reach it would not they have to fly exactly over [so literally here] the mountains? See note on ch. xviii, 12):—Epiphanius, that they were warned an angel.

17.] A person might run on the flat-roofed houses in Jerusalem from one part of the city to another, and to the city gates. Perhaps however this is not meant, but that he should descend by the outer stairs instead of the inner, which would lose time.

19, 20.] It will be most important that so sudden a flight should not be encumbered, by personal hindrances, or by hindrances of *accompaniment*, see 1 Cor. vii. 26; and that those things which are *out of our power to arrange*, should be propitious,—weather, and freedom from legal prohibition. The words **neither on the sabbath day, are**

peculiar to Matthew, and shew the strong Jewish tint which caused *him alone* to reserve such portions of our Lord's sayings. That they were not said as any *sanction* of observance of the Jewish Sabbath is most certain: but merely as referring to the *positive impediments* which might meet them on that day, the shutting of the gates of cities, &c., and their own scruples about travelling further than the ordinary Sabbath-day's journey (about a mile English); for the Jewish Christians adhered to the law and customary observances till the destruction of Jerusalem.

21, 22.] In ver. 19 there is probably also an allusion to the horrors of the siege, which is here taken up by the for. See Deut. xxviii. 49–57, which was literally fulfilled in the case of Mary of Perea related by Josephus.

Our Lord still has in view the prophecy of Daniel (ch. xii.. 1), and this citation clearly shews the *intermediate* fulfilment, by the destruction of Jerusalem, of that which is et future in its *final* fulfilment: for Daniel is speaking of the end of all things. Then only will these words be accomplished in their full sense: although Josephus (but he only in a figure of rhetoric) has expressed himself in nearly the same language "All calamities from the beginning of time seem to me to shrink to nothing in comparison with those of the Jews.

22.] If God had not in his mercy shortened (by His decree) those days ('*the days of vengeance*', Luke xxi. 22), *the whole nation* (in the ultimate fulfilment, *all flesh*) would have perished; but for the sake of the chosen ones,—the believing,—or those who should believe,—or perhaps the preservation of the chosen race whom God hath not cast off, Rom. xi. 1,—they shall be shortened. It appears that besides *the cutting short in the Divine counsels*, which must be hidden from us, various causes combined to shorten the siege. (1) Herod Agrippa had begun strengthening the walls of Jerusalem in a way which if finished would have rendered them able to resist all human violence, but was stopped by orders from Claudius, A. D 42 or 43, Jos. Antt. xix. 7. 2. (2) The Jews, being divided into factions among themselves, had totally neglected any preparations o stand

a siege (3) The magazines of corn and provision were burnt just before the arrival of Titus; the words of Josephus are remarkable on this: "Within a little all the corn was burnt, which would have lasted them many years of siege." 4) Titus arrived suddenly, and the Jews voluntarily abandoned parts of the fortification (Jewish Wars, vi. 8. 4). (5) Titus himself confessed, "God has fought for us, and He it is who has deprived the Jews of these their fortifications: for what could human hands or engines do against these towers?" Some such providential shortening of the great days of tribulation, and hastening of God's glorious Kingdom, is here promised for the *latter times*.

23–28.] These verses have but a faint reference (though an unmistakeable one) to the time of the siege: their *principal reference* is to the *latter days*. In their first meaning, they would tend to correct the idea of the Christians that the Lord's coming was to be simultaneous with the destruction of Jerusalem: and to guard them against the impostors who led people out into the wilderness (see Acts xxi. 38), or invited them to consult them privately, with the promise of deliverance. In their main view, they will preserve the Church firm in her waiting for Christ, through even the awful troubles of the latter days, unmoved by enthusiasm or superstition, but seeing and looking for Him who is invisible. On the *signs and wonders*, see 2 Thess. ii. 9–12: Deut. xiii. 1–3,

27, 28.] The coming of the Lord in the end, even as that in the t was, shall be a *plain unmistakeable fact*, understood of all;—and like that also, *sudden* and *all-pervading*. But here in the full meaning of the words is only to be found in the final fulfilment of them. The lightning, lighting both ends of heaven at once, seen of all beneath it, can only find its full similitude in His Personal ing, Whom e *every eye shall see*, Rev. i. 7.

28.] The stress is on **wheresoever** and **there**, pointing out the *universality*. In the similar discourse, Luke xvii. 37, before this saying, the disciples ask, 'Where, Lord?' The answer is,—first, *at Jerusalem*: where the corrupting body lies, thither shall the vultures (see below) gather themselves together, coming as they do from far on the scent of prey. Secondly, in its final fulfilment,—*over the whole world*;—for that is the carcase now, and the *eagles* the angels of vengeance. See Deut. xxviii. 49, which is probably here referred to; also Hosea viii. 1: Heb. i. 8. 'The interpretation which makes the *carcase case our Lord, and the eagles the elect*, is quite beside the purpose. Neither is any allusion to the *Roman eagles* to be for a moment thought of. The birds meant by the original word are the *vultures* (*vultur percnopterus*, Linn.), usually reckoned by the ancients as belonging to the eagle kind,

29. Immediately] All the difficulty which this word has been supposed to involve has arisen from confounding the *partial* fulfilment of the prophecy with its *ultimate* one. The important insertion in Luke (xxi. 23, 24) shews us that the *tribulation* includes *wrath upon this people*, which is yet being inflicted: and the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, still going on (see note there): and immediately after that tribulation which shall happen *when the cup of Gentile iniquity is full, and when the Gospel shall have been preached in all the world* for a witness, and rejected by the Gentiles, (in Luke, "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,") shall the coming of the Lord Himself happen. On the indefiniteness of this assigned period in the prophecy, see note on ver. 3. (The expression in Mark is equally indicative of a considerable interval: "In those days, after that tribulation.") The fact of His coming, and its attendant circumstances, being known to Him, but the-exact time unknown,—He speaks *without regard to the interval*, which would be employed in His waiting till all things are put under His feet: see Rev. i. 1; xxii. 6–20. In what follows, *from this verse*, the Lord speaks mainly and directly of *His great second coming*. Traces there are (as e.g. in the literal meaning of ver. 84) of slight and indirect allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem;—as there were in the former part to the great events of which that is a foreshadowing;—but no direct mention. The contents of the rest of the chapter may be set forth as follows: (ver. 29) *signs which shall immediately precede* (ver. 30) *the coming of the Lord to judgment, and (ver. 31) to bring salvation to His elect. The certainty of the event, and its intimate connexion with its premonitory signs* (vv. 32, 33); *the enduracne* (ver. 84) *of the Jewish people till the end—even till Heaven and Earth* (ver. 35) *pass away. But (ver. 36) of the day and hour none knoweth. Its suddenness* (vv. 37–39) *and decisiveness* (vv. 40, 41),—*and exhortation* (vv. 42–44) *to be ready for it. A parable setting forth the blessedness of the watching, and misery of the neglectful servant* (vv. 45—end), and forming a point of transition to the parables in the next chapter.

shall the sun be darkened] The darkening of the material lights of this world is in prophecy as a type of the occurrence of trouble and danger in the fabric of human societies, Isa. v. 30; xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4: Jer. iv. 28: Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8: Amos viii. 9, 10: Micah iii. 6. But the type is not only in the words of the proxy, but also in the events themselves, Such prophecies are to be understood *literally*, and indeed without such understanding would lose their truth and significance. The physical signs shall happen (see Joel ii. 31: Hagg. ii. 6, 21, compared with Heb. xii. 26, 27) as accompaniments and intensifications of the awful state of things which the description typifies. The *Sun* of this world and the church (Mal. iv. 2: Luke i. 78: John i. 9: Eph. v. 14: 2 Pet. i. 19) is the Lord Jesus—the *Light*, is the Knowledge of Him. The *moon*—human knowledge and science, of which it is said (Ps. xxxvi. 9), 'In thy light shall we see light:' reflected from, and drinking the beams of, the Light of Christ. The *stars*—see Dan. viii. 10—are the leaders and teachers of the Church. The Knowledge of God shall be obscured—the Truth nigh put out—worldly wisdom darkened—the Church system demolished, and her teachers cast down. And all this in the midst of the fearful signs here (and in Luke, vv. 25, 26, more at large) recounted: not *setting aside, but accompanying, their literal fulfilment*,

the powers of the heavens] not the stars, just mentioned;—nor *the angels*, spoken of by and by, ver. 31: but most probably the greater heavenly bodies, which rule the day and night, Gen. i. 16, and are there also distinguished from the stars. See notes on 2 Pet. iii. 10–12, where the stars seem to be *included in the elements*. Typically, the influences which rule human society, which make the political weather fair or foul, bright or dark; and encourage the fruits of peace, or inflict the blight and desolation of war.

30.] This then, so emphatically placed and repeated, is a *definite declaration of time*,—not a mere sign of sequence or coincidence, as e.g. in ver. 23:—when these things shall have been somewhere filling men’s hearts with fear,—THEN shall&c. It is quite uncertain what the sign shall be:—plainly, not *the Son of Man Himself*, as some explain it (even Bengel, generally so valuable in his explanations, says, “*He Himself shall be the sign of Himself*,” and quotes Luke ii. 12 as confirming this view; but there the swaddling clothes and the manger were the ‘sign,’ not the Child), nor any *outward marks on His body*, as His wounds; for both these would confuse what the prophecy keeps distinct—the seeing of the *sign of the Son of Man*, and all tribes of the earth mourning, and afterwards seeing the *Son of Man Himself*. This is manifestly *s ome sign in the Heavens*, by which all shall know that the Son of Man is at hand. The *Star of the Wise Men* naturally occurs to our thoughts—but a star would not be a sign which all might read.

On the whole I think no sign completely answers the conditions, but that of *the Cross*:—and accordingly we find the Fathers mostly thus ‘ing the passage. But as our Lord Himself does not answer the question, “*What is the sign of thine appearing?*” we may safely leave the matter.

all the tribes of the earth] See Zech. xii. 10–14, where the mourning is confined to the families of Israel:—here, it is universal: see Rev. i. 7; also vi. 15–17. This coming of the Son of Man is not that spoken of ch. xxv. 31, but that in 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, and Rev. xix. 11 ff.,—*His coming at the commencement of the millennial reign to establish His Kingdom*: see Dan. vii. 13, 14.

The power is the *power of the Kingdom*, not, the host heaven.

31.] *This is not the great Trumpet of the general Resurrection* (1 Cor. xv. 52), except in so far as that may be spoken of as including also the first resurrection: see on this verse the remarkable opening of Ps. l, which is itself a prophecy of these same times.

32, 33, 34.] The English version in ver. 32 is ambiguous, besides being unfaithful. By “of” is evidently meant *from*: but it seems as if it were only *concerning*. “Learn,” says our Lord, “‘from the fig-tree the parable:’ the natural phenomenon which may serve as a key to the meaning.

This coming of the Lord shall be as sure a sign that the Kingdom of Heaven is nigh, as the putting forth of the tender leaves of the fig tree is a sign that summer is nigh. Observe **all these things**,—every one of these things,—this coming of the Son of Man included, which will introduce the millennial Kingdom.

As regards the parable,—there is a reference to the *withered fig-tree which the Lord cursed*: and as that, in its judicial unfruitfulness, emblematised the Jewish people, so here the putting forth of the fig-tree from its state of winter dryness, symbolizes the *future reviviscence* of that race, which the Lord (ver. 34) declares shall not **pass away** till all fulfilled. That this is the true meaning of that verse, must appear, when we recollect that it forms the conclusion of this parable, and is itself joined, by *this generation passing away*, to the verse following. We cannot, in seeking for its ultimate fulfilment, *go back* to the taking of Jerusalem and make the words apply to it.

As this is one of the points on which the rationalizing interpreters lay most stress to shew that the prophecy has *failed*, I have taken pains to shew, in my Gr. Test., that the word here rendered **generation** has the meaning of *a race or family of people*. In all the there cited, the word necessarily that signification: having it is true a more pregnant meaning, implying that the character of one generation *stamps itself upon the race*, as here in this verse also. The continued use of **pass away** (the word is the same in verses 34, 35) should have saved the Commentators from the blunder of imagining that the then living generation was meant, seeing that the prophecy is by the next verse carried on to the end of all things: and that, as matter of fact, the Apostles and ancient Christians *did continue to expect the Lord’s coming, after that generation had passed away*. But, as Stier well remarks, “there are men foolish enough now to say, heaven and earth will never pass away, but the words of Christ pass away in course of time;—of this, however, we wait the proof.” ii. 505.

all these things—*all* the signs hitherto recounted—so that both these words, **and ye** (in ver. 33), have their partial, and their *full* meanings.

it is near—viz. **the end**. On ver. 35 see Ps. cxix. 89: Isa. xl. 8; li. 6: Ps. cii. 26,

36.] **that day**, viz. of heaven and earth away; or, perhaps referring to ver 30 ff. **day and hour**—and how the exact time—as we say, ‘the hour and minute.’ The very important addition to this verse in Mark, and in some ancient MSS. here, **neither the Son**, is indeed included in “*but my Father only*,” but could hardly have been inferred from it, had it not been expressly stated: ch. xx. 23. All attempts to soften or explain away this weighty truth must be resisted: it will not do to say with some Commentators, “He knows it not *as regards us*,” which, however well meant, is a mere evasion:—in the course of humiliation undertaken by the Son, in which He increased in wisdom (Luke ii. 52), learned obedience (Heb. v. 8), uttered desires in prayer (Luke vi. 12, &c.),—*this matter was hidden from Him*: and as I have already remarked, this is carefully to be borne in mind, in explaining the prophecy before us.

37–39.] This comparison also occurs in Luke xvii. 26, 27, with the addition of ‘*the days of Lot*’ to it: see also 2 Pet. ii. 4–10; iii. 5, 6. It is important to notice the confirmation, by His mouth who is Truth itself, of the *historic reality of the flood of Noah*.

The expression *ing* may serve to shew that it is a mistake to imagine that we have in Gen. ix. 20 the account of the first wine and its effects. The security here spoken of is in no wise inconsistent with the anguish and fear prophesied, Luke xxi. 25, 26. They *say*, there is peace, and occupy themselves as if there were: but fear is at their hearts. On the addition in Luke xxi. 34–36, see notes there.

40, 41.] From this point (or perhaps even from ver. 37, as historic resemblance is itself parabolic) the discourse begins to assume a parabolic form, and gradually passes into a series of formal parables in the next chapter.

These verses set forth that, as in the times of Noah, men and women shall be employed in their ordinary work: see Exod. xi. 5: Isa, xlvi. 2. They also shew us that the elect of God will *to the last be mingled in companionship and partnership with the children of this world* (see Mark i. 19, 20). We may notice, that these verses do not refer to the same as vv. 16–18. Then it is a question of *voluntary flight; now of being taken* (by the angels, ver. 81: the ‘*present tense* graphically sets the incident before us; or perhaps describes the rule of proceeding. It is interesting to know that the word “*taken*” is the same verb in the original as “*receive*” in John xiv. 3) or *left*. Nor again do they refer to the great judgment of ch. xxv. 31, for then (ver. 32) *all* shall be summoned: but they refer to the millennial dispensation, and the gathering of the elect to the Lord *then*. The “*women grinding at the mill*” has been abundantly illustrated by travellers, as even now seen in the **East**. See especially The Land and the Book, pp. 526, 7.

42–44.] Our Lord here resumes the tone of direct exhortation with which He commenced To the secure and careless He will come as a thief in the night: to His own, as their Lord. See Obad. 5: Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15: 1 Thess. v. 1–10, where the idea is expanded at length. Compare ver. 7 there with our ver. 49, and on the distinction between those who are of the day, and those who are of the night, see notes there.

45–47.] Our Lord had given this parabolic exhortation before, Luke xii. 42–46. Many of these His last sayings in public are solemn repetitions of, and references to, things already said by Him. That this was the case in the present instance, is almost demonstrable, from the implicit allusion in Luke xii. 36, to the *return from the wedding*, which is here expanded into the parable of ch. xxv. 1 ff. How much more natural ‘that our Lord should have preserved in his parabolic discourses the same leading ideas, and again and again gathered his precepts round them,—than that the Evangelists should have thrown into utter and inconsistent confusion, words which would have been treasured up so carefully by them that heard them;—to say nothing of the promised help of the Spirit to bring to mind all that He had said to them.

Who then is] A question asked *that each one may put it to himself*,—and to signify the high honour of such an one.

faithful and wise] Prudence in a servant can be only the consequence of *faithfulness to his master*. This verse is especially addressed to the Apostles and Ministers of Christ. The give them (their) **meat** (= *portion of meat*, Luke xii. 42) answers to the description of the *workman that need not be ashamed* in 2 Tim. ii. 16. On ver. 47, compare ch. xxv. 21: 1 Tim. iii. 13: Rev. iii. 21; which last two passages answer to the promise here, that *each* faithful servant shall be over *all* his master’s goods. That promotion shall not be like earthly promotion, wherein the eminence of one excludes that of another,—but rather like the diffusion of love, in which, the more each has, the more there is for all.

48–51.] The question is not here asked again, is&c., but the transition made from the good to the bad servant, or even the good to the bad mind of the same servant, by the epithet *evil*.

delayeth] then manifestly, *a long delay is in the mind of the Lord*: see above on ver. 29. Notice that this servant also is one set over the household—one who says *my lord*—and began well—but now begins to, &c.—falls away from his truth and faithfulness;—the sign of which is that he begins (lit. shall have begun) to *lord it over the elect* (1 Pet. v. 3), and to revel with the children of the world. In consequence, though he have not lost his *belief* (“*my lord*”), he shall be placed those who believed not, the hypocrites

51.] The reference is to the punishment of cutting, or sawing asunder: see Dan. ii. 5; iii. 29: Sus. ver. 59: see also Heb. iv. 12; xi. 37. The expression here is perhaps not without a symbolical reference also to that dreadful *sundering of the conscience and practice* which shall be the reflective torment of the condemned:—and by the mingling and confounding of which only is the anomalous life of the wilful sinner made in this world tolerable.

Matthew: Chapter 25

CHAP. XXV. 1–13.] PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS. Peculiar to Matthew.] 1.] *Then—at the period spoken of at the end of the last chapter, viz. the coming of the Lord to His personal reign—not His final coming to judgment.*

ten virgins] The subject of this parable is not, as of the last, the distinction between the faithful and unfaithful **servants**; no outward distinction here exists—all are virgins—all companions of the bride—all furnished with brightly-burning lamps—all, up to a certain time, fully ready to meet the Bridegroom—the difference consists in *some having made a provision* for feeding the lamps in case of delay, and *the others none*—and the moral of the parable is *the blessedness of endurance unto the end*. “The point of the parable consists,” as Calvin remarks, in this, “that it is not enough to have been *once* girt and prepared for duty, unless we endure even to the end.” There is no question here of apostasy, or unfaithfulness—but of the *want of provision* to keep the light bright against the coming of the bridegroom, however delayed.

Ten was a favourite number with the Jews—ten men formed a congregation in a synagogue. In a passage from Rabbi Salomo, cited by Wetsteine he mentions ten lamps or torches as the usual number in marriage processions: see also Luke xix. 13.

to meet the bridegroom] It would appear that these virgins had left their own homes, and were waiting somewhere for the bridegroom to come,—probably at the house of the bride; for the object of the marriage procession was to *fetch the bride to the bridegroom's house*. Meyer however supposes that in this case the wedding was to be *held* in the bride's house, on account of the thing signified—the coming of the Lord to His Church;—but it is better to take the ordinary custom, and interpret accordingly, where we can. In both the wedding parables (see ch. xxii.) the *bride* does not appear for she, being the Church, is in fact the aggregate of the guests in the one case, and of the companions in the other. We may perhaps say that she is here, in the strict interpretation, the Jewish Church, and these ten virgins Gentile congregations accompanying her. This **went forth** is *not their final going out* in ver. 6, for only half of them did so,—but *their leaving their own homes*: compare **took**, in vv. 3, 4. The interpretation is—these are souls come out from the world into the Church, and there waiting for the coming of the Lord—not hypocrites, but *faithful souls, bearing their lamps* (**their own lamps**; so, literally: compare 1 Thess. iv. 4)—the inner spiritual life fed with the oil of God's Spirit (see Zech. iv. 2–12: Acts x. 38: Heb. i. 9). All views of this parable which represent the foolish virgins as having only a *dead faith*, only the lamp without the light, the body without the spirit, &c., are *quite beside the purpose*;—the lamps (see ver. 8) were *all burning* at first, and for a certain time.

Whether the *equal partition* of wise and foolish have any deep meaning we cannot say; it *may* be so.

3, 4.] These were not torches, nor wicks fastened on staves, as some have supposed, but properly *lamps*: and the oil vessels (which is most important to the parable) were *separate from the lamps*. The lamps being the hearts lit with the flame of heavenly love and patience, supplied with the oil of the Spirit,—now comes in the difference between the wise and foolish:—the one *made no provision for the supply* of this—the others *did*. How so? The wise ones *gave all diligence to make their calling and election sure* (2 Pet. i. 10 and 5–8), making their bodies, souls, and spirits (*their vessels*, 2 Cor. iv. 7) a means of supplying spiritual food for the light within, by seeking, in the appointed means of grace, more and more of God's Holy Spirit. The others *did not this*—but trusting that the light, once burning, would ever burn, made no provision for the strengthening of the inner man by watchfulness and prayer.

5–7] delayed: compare ch. xxiv. 48, where the Greek verb rendered *delayeth* is the same. The same English rendering ought to have been kept here. But the thought of the foolish virgins is very different from that of the wicked servant: his—‘there will be plenty of time, my Lord tarrieth;’—theirs, ‘surely He will soon be here, there is no need of a store of oil.’ This may serve to shew how altogether diverse is the ground of the two parables.

they all slumbered and slept] I believe no more is meant here than that all, being weak by nature, gave way to drowsiness: as indeed the wakefulness of the holiest Christian, compared with what it should be, is a sort of slumber:—but, the while, how much difference was there between them! Some understand this verse of sleep in death. But, not to mention that this will not fit the machinery of the parable (see below on ver. 8), it would assume (**they all**) that none of the faithful would be living on earth when the Lord comes.

a cry made] See Isa. lxii. 5–7: and the porter's duty, Mark xiii. 34. This warning cry is *before* the coming: see ver. 10. The exact rendering is *present*, graphically setting the reality before us: **there ariseth a cry**.

all] All now seem alike—all wanted their lamps trimmed—but for the neglectful, there is not wherewith. It is not enough to have burnt, but to be burning, when He comes. Raise the wick as they will, what avails it if the oil is spent?

trimmed] “by pouring on fresh oil, and removing the fungi about the wick: for the latter purpose a sharp-pointed wire was attached to the lamp, which is still seen in the bronze lamps found in sepulchres.” Webst. and Wilk.

8, 9.] are going out;—not as A.V.—‘are gone out.’ and there is deep truth in this: the lamps of the foolish virgins are *not extinguished altogether*.

lest there be not enough] See Ps. xlix. 7: Rom. xiv. 12. No man can have more of this provision than will supply his own wants.

go ye rather] This is not said in mockery, as some suppose: but in earnest.

them that sell] These are the ordinary dispensers of the means of grace—*ultimately* of course God Himself, who alone can give his Spirit. The counsel was good, and well followed—but the time was past. Observe that those who sell are a *particular class* of persons—no mean argument for a *set and appointed ministry*; and moreover for a *paid ministry*. If they *sell*, they *receive* for the thing sold: compare our Lord’s saying, Luke x. 7. This *selling* bears no analogy with the crime of Simon Magus in Acts viii.: compare our Lord’s other saying, Matt. x. 8.

10–12.] We are *not told that they could not buy*—that the shops were shut—but simply that it was *too late—for that time*. For it is *not the final coming of the Lord to judgment, when the day of grace will be past*, that is spoken of,—except in so far as it is hinted at in the background, and in the individual application of the parable (virtually, not actually) coincides, to each man, with the day of his death. *This feast is the marriage supper* of Rev. xix. 7–9 (see also ib. xxi. 2); *after which* these improvident ones gone to buy their oil shall be *judged in common with the rest of the dead*, ibid. xx. 12, 13.

Observe here, **I know you not** is very different, as the whole circumstances are different, from “*I never knew you*,” in ch. vii. 23, where the “*Depart from me*” binds it to our ver. 41, and to the time of the *final judgment*, spoken of in that parable.

[See the note at the end of the chapter.)

14–30.] PARABLE OF THE TALENTS. Peculiar to Matthew. The similar parable contained in Luke xix. 11–27 is altogether distinct, and uttered on a different occasion: see notes there.

14.] The ellipsis is rightly supplied in the A.V., **For [the kingdom of heaven is] as a man**, &c. We have this parable and the preceding one alluded to in very few words by Mark xiii. 34–36. In it we have the active side of the Christian life, and its danger, set before us, as in the last the contemplative side. There, the foolish virgins failed, *from thinking their part too easy*—here the wicked servant fails, *from thinking his too hard*. The parable is still concerned with *Christians* (his own servants), and *not the world at large*. We must remember the relation of master and slave, in order to understand his delivering to them his property, and punishing them for not fructifying with it.

15.] In Luke each *receives the same*, but the *profit made by each is different*: see notes there. Here, in fact, they *did each receive the same*, for they received *according to their ability*—their character and powers. There is no Pelagianism in this, for each man’s powers are themselves the gift of God.

16–18.] The increase gained by each of the two faithful servants was *the full amount of their talents*:—of each will be required as much as has been given. The *third servant here* is not to be confounded with the *wicked servant* in ch. xxiv. 48. This one is *not actively an ill-doer*, but a *hider* of the money entrusted to him—one who brings no profit: see on ver. 24.

19–23.] After a long time] Here again, as well as in the *delay* of ver. 5 and ch. xxiv. 48, we have an intimation that the interval would be *no short one*. This proceeding is *not*, strictly speaking, *the last judgment*, but still *the same as that in the former parable; the beginning of judgment at the house of God*—the judgment of the *millennial advent*. This to the servants of Christ (*his own servants*, ver. 14), is *their* final judgment—but not that of the rest of the world. We may observe that this great *account* differs from the coming of the bridegroom, inasmuch as this is altogether concerned with a course of action past—that with a present state of preparation. This holds, in the individual application, of *the account after the resurrection*; that, at the utmost (and not in the direct sense of the parable even so much), of being ready for his summons at death.

20.] The faithful servant does not take the praise to himself—**thou deliveredst unto me** is his confession—and **beside them** the enabling cause of his gain;—‘without Me, can do nothing,’ John xv. 5. This is plainer in Luke (xix. 16), “*Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*” See 1 Cor. xv. 10:—and on the joy and alacrity of these faithful servants in the day of reckoning, 1 Thess.

ii. 19: 2 Cor. i. 14: Phil. iv. 1.

21.] See the corresponding sentence in Luke xix. 17, and note. The joy here is not a *feast*, as sometimes interpreted, but that joy spoken of Heb. xii. 2, and Isa. liii. 11—that joy of the Lord arising from the completion of His work and labour of love, of which the first Sabbatical rest of the Creator was typical—Gen. i. 31; ii. 2,—and of which His faithful ones shall in the end **partake:** see Heb. iv. 3–11; Rev. iii. 21.

Notice the identity of the praise and portion him who a been faithful in less, with those of the *first*. The words are, as has been well observed, “not, ‘good and successful servant,’ but ‘good and faithful servant:’” and faithfulness does not depend on *amount*.

24, 25.] This sets forth the excuse which men are perpetually making of human infirmity and inability to keep God’s commands, when they never apply to that grace which might enable them to do so—an excuse, as here, self-convicting, and false at heart.

reaping where thou hast not sown] The connexion of thought in this our Lord’s *last* parable, with His *first* (ch. xiii. 3–9), is remarkable. He looks for fruit where He has sown—*this is truth:* but not beyond the power of the soil by Him enabled—*this is man’s lie*, to encourage himself in idleness.

I was afraid] See Gen. iii. 10. But that pretended fear, and this insolent speech, are *inconsistent*, and betray the falsehood of his answer.

thou hast that is thine] This is also false—it was not so—for there was *his lord’s time*,—and *his own labour, which was his lord’s—to be accounted for.*

26, 27.] St. Luke prefixes “*out of thine own mouth will I judge thee,*”—viz. ‘because, knowing the relation between us, that of absolute power on my part over thee,—if thou hadst really thought me such an hard master, **thou oughtest&c.**, in order to avoid utter ruin. But this was *not* thy real thought—thou wert **wicked and slothful.**’

thou knewost, &c. is not concessive, but hypothetical;—God is *not really* such a Master.

the exchangers, in Luke (xix. 23) “*the bank*” (exchange).

There was a saying very current among the early Fathers, “*Be ye worthy exchangers,*” which some of them seem to attribute to the Lord, some to one of the Apostles. It is supposed by some to be taken from this place, and it is just possible it may have been: but it more likely was traditional, or from some apocryphal gospel. Suicer discusses the question, and inclines to think that it was a way of expressing the general moral of the two parables in Matt. and Luke.

But, in the *interpretation*, who are these **exchangers?** The explanation (Olsh., and adopted by Trench, Parables, p. 247) of their being those *stronger characters* who may lead the more timid to the useful employments of gifts which they have not energy to use, is objectionable (1) as not answering to the *character addressed*—he was not timid, but false and slothful:—and (2) nor to the *facts of the case:* for it is impossible to employ the grace given to one through *another’s* means, without working one’s self.

I rather take it to mean, ‘If thou hadst really been afraid, &c., slothful as thou art, thou mightest at least, without trouble to thyself, have provided that I should have not been defrauded of the interest of my money—but now thou art both slothful and wicked, in having done me this injustice.’ Observe there would have been no praise due to the servant—but “*that which is mine*” would not have lost its *increase*. The *machinery of religious and charitable societies in our day* is very much in the place of the *exchangers*. Let the subscribers to them take heed that they be not in the degraded case of this servant, even if his excuse had been genuine.

28–31.] This command is answered in Luke xix. 25, by a remonstrance from those addressed, which the Master overrules by stating the great law of His kingdom. On ch. xiii. 12, we have explained this as applied to the system of *teaching by parables*. Here it is predicated of the whole Christian life. It is the case even in nature: a limb used is strengthened; disused, becomes weak. The ference of the talent is not a matter of justice between man and man, but is done in illustration of this law, and in virtue of that sovereign power by which God does what He will with his own: see Rom. xi. 29, and note there. In the **outer darkness** there is again an allusion to the marriage supper of the Lamb, from which the useless servant being excluded, gnashes his teeth with remorse without: see ch. xxii. 13.

31–46.] THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF AIL THE Nations. Peculiar to Matthew. In the two former parables we have seen the difference between, and judgment of, *Christians*—in their inward readiness for their Lord, and their outward diligence in

profiting by his gifts. And *both these had reference to that first resurrection and millennial Kingdom*, the reality of which is proved by the passages of Scripture cited in the notes above, and during which *all Christians* shall be judged. We now come to the great and universal judgment at the end of this period, also prophesied of distinctly in order in Rev. xx. 11–15—in which *all the dead*, small and great, shall stand before God. This last great judgment answers to the judgment on Jerusalem, *after* the Christians had escaped from it: to the gathering of **the eagles** (ministers of vengeance) **to the carcase**. Notice the precision of the words in ver. 31, **when (ever)**—this setting forth the indefiniteness of the time—the **but** the distinction from the two parables foregoing; and **then**, to mark a precise time when all this shall take place—a *day of judgment*.

Compare, for the better understanding of the distinction and connexion of these ‘two comings’ of the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, and 2 Thess. i. 7–10.

This description is not a parable, though there are in it parabolic passages, eg. **as a shepherd&c.**: and for that very reason, that which is illustrated by those likenesses is *not itself parabolic*. It will heighten our estimation of the wonderful sublimity of this description, when we recollect that it was spoken by the Lord *only three days before his sufferings*.

31. in his glory] This expression, repeated again at the end of the verse, is quite distinct from *with power and great glory* ch. xxiv. 30: see Rev. xx. 11. This *His glory* is that also of all his saints, with whom He shall be accompanied: see Jude ver. 14. In this his coming *they are with the angels*, and *as the angels*: see Rev. xix. 14 (compare ver. 8): Zech. xiv. 5.

32.] The expression **all the nations** implies **all the nations of the world**, as distinguished from the *elect already gathered to Him*, just as the Gentiles were by that name distinguished from his chosen people the Jews. Among these are “*the other sheep which He has, not of this fold*,” John x. 16.

he shall separate] See Ezek. xxxiv. 17. **The sheep** are those referred to in Rom. ii. 7, 10; **the goats** in ib. vv. 8, 9, where this same *judgment according to works* is spoken of.

34.] THE KING—here for the first and only time does the Lord give Himself this name: see Rev. xix. 16: Rom. xiv. 9.

Come] Whatever of good these persons had done, was all *from Him* from whom cometh every good gift—and the *fruit of his Spirit*. And this Spirit is only purchased for man by the work of the Son, in whom the Father is well pleased: and to whom all judgment is committed. And thus *they are the blessed of the Father*, and those for whom this kingdom is prepared. It is not to the purpose to say that those **blessed of...** must be the elect of God in the *stricter sense (the Father)*—and that, because the Kingdom has been prepared for them from the foundation of the world. For evidently this would, in the divine omniscience, be true of every single man who shall come to salvation, whether belonging to those who shall be found worthy to share the first resurrection or not. The Scripture assures us of *two resurrections*: the *first, of the dead in Christ*, to meet Him and reign with Him, and hold (1 Cor. vi. 2) judgment over the world: the *second, of all the dead*, to be judged according to their works. And to what purpose would be a judgment, if *all were to be condemned?* And if any escape condemnation, to them might the words of this verse be used: so that this objection to the interpretation does not apply.

Election to life is the universal doctrine of Scripture; but *not the reprobation of the wicked*: see below, on ver. 41. On **from the foundation of the world**, see John xvii. 24: 1 Pet. i. 20.

35. took me in] the idea of the word is, ‘numbered me among your own circle.’

37–40.] The answer of these righteous appears to me to shew plainly that they are *not to be understood as being the covenanted servants of Christ*. Such an answer it would be impossible for *them* to make, who had done all distinctly *with reference to Christ*, and for his sake, and with his declaration of ch. x. 40–42 before them. Such a supposition would remove all reality, as indeed it has generally done, from our Lord’s description. See the remarkable difference in the answer of the faithful servants, vv. 20, 22. *The saints are already in His glory*—judging the world with Him (1 Cor. vi. 2)—accounted as parts of, representatives of, Himself (ver. 40)—in this judgment *they are not the judged* (John v. 24: 1 Cor. xi. 31). But *these* who *are the judged*, *know not* that all their deeds of love have been done *to and for Christ*—they are overwhelmed with the sight of the grace which has been working in and for them, and the glory which is now their blessed portion. And notice, that it is not the *works, as such*, but the *love* which prompted them—that love which *was their faith*,—which felt its way, though in darkness, to Him who is Love—which is commended.

40. my brethren] Not necessarily the saints with Him in glory—though primarily those—but also any of the great family of man. Many of those here judged may never have had an opportunity of doing these things to the saints of Christ properly so called.

In this is fulfilled the covenant of God to Abraham, “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth (so in LXX) be blessed.” Gen. xxii. 18.

41–43.] It is very important to observe the distinction between the blessing, ver. 34, and the curse here. ‘Blessed—*of my Father:*’—but not ‘cursed of my Father.’ because all man’s salvation is of God—all his condemnation *from himself.* ‘The Kingdom, *prepared for you:*’ but ‘the fire, which has been prepared for *the devil and his angels*’ [greater definiteness could not be given than by the words in the original: that particular fire, that eternal fire, created for a special purpose]—not, for *you:* because *there is election to life*—but there is *no reprobation to death: a book of Life—but no book of Death;* no hell *for man*—because the blood of Jesus hath purchased life *for all:* but they who will *serve the devil, must share with him in the end.*

The *repetition* of all these particulars shews how exact even for every individual the judgment will be. Stier excellently remarks, that the *curse* shews the *termination of the High Priesthood of Christ,* in which office He only intercedes and blesses. Henceforth He is King and Lord—his enemies being now for ever put under his feet.

44, 45.] See note on ver. 37. The sublimity of this description surpasses all imagination—Christ, as the Son of Man, the Shepherd, the King, the Judge—as the centre and end of all human love, bringing out and rewarding his latent grace in those who have lived in love—everlastingly punishing those who have quenched it in an unloving and selfish life—and in the accomplishment of his mediatorial office, causing, even from out of the iniquities of a rebellious world, his sovereign mercy to rejoice against judgment.

46.] See John v. 28, 29; and as taking up the prophetic history at this point, Rev. xxi. 1–8. Observe, the *same epithet* is used in the original for **punishment** and **life**—which are here *contraries*—for the *life* here spoken of is not bare *existence*, which would have *annihilation* for its opposite; but *blessedness* and *reward*, to which *punishment* and *misery* are antagonist terms. As regards the interpretation of this chapter, the coincidence of these portions of Scripture prophecy with the process of the great things in Rev. xx. and xxi. is never to be overlooked, and should be our guide to their explanation, however distrustful we may be of its certainty. Those who set this coincidence aside, and interpret each portion by itself, without connexion with the rest, are clearly wrong. The only alternative view seems to be that which regards this as the judgment at the time of Israel’s deliverance, previous to the Millennium. This has been urged on me lately by a very able correspondent: but I cannot see how it agrees with the great features of the description as pointed out above.

Matthew: Chapter 26

CHAP. XXVI. 1, 2.] FINAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS SUFFERINGS, NOW CLOSE AT HAND. Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 1. The public office of our Lord as a *Teacher* having been now fulfilled, His *priestly office* begins to be entered upon. He had not completed *all* his discourses, for He delivered, after this, those contained in John xiv.—xvii.—but *not in public;* only to the inner circle of his disciples. From this point commences THE NARRATIVE OF HIS PASSION.

2. after two days] This gives no certainty as to the time when the words were said: we do not know whether the current day was included or otherwise. But thus much of importance we learn from them: that the delivery of our Lord to be crucified, and the taking place of the Passover, *strictly coincided.* The solemn mention of them in this connexion is equivalent to a declaration from Himself, if it were needed, of the identity, both of time and meaning, of the two sacrifices; and serves as the fixed point in the difficult chronological arrangement of the history of the Passion. The latter clause, **and the Son of man...,** depends on **ye know as well as** the former. Our Lord had doubtless before joined these two events together in His announcements to his disciples. To separate this clause from the former, seems to me to do violence to the construction. It would require *and then the Son...*

3–5.] CONSPIRACY OF THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES. Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 2. This assembling has no connexion with what has just been related, but follows rather on the end of ch. xxiii.

who was called Caiaphas is in Josephus, “*Joseph, who is also Caiaphas.*” Valerius Gratus, Procurator of Judæa, had appointed him instead of Simon ben Kamith. He continued through the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, and was displaced by the proconsul Vitellius, A.D. 37. See note on Luke iii. 2, and chronological table in introduction to Acts.

who was called does not mean who was ‘surnamed,’ but (see ver. 14) implies that *some name* is to follow, which is more than, or different from, the real one of the person.

Not during the feast] This expression must be taken as meaning the whole period of the feast—the seven days. On the *feast-day* (A. V.), i.e. the day on which the passover was sacrificed, they could not lay hold of and slay any one, as it was a day of sabbatical obligation (Exod. xii. 16). See note on ver. 17.

6–13.] THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY. Mark xiv. 3–9. John xii. 1–8. On Luke vii. 36–50, see note there. This history of the anointing of our Lord is here inserted *out of its chronological place.* It occurred *six days before the Passover*, John xii. 1. It

perhaps can hardly be said that in its position *here*, it accounts in any degree for the subsequent application of Judas to the Sanhedrin: (vv. 14–16), since his name is not even mentioned in it: but I can hardly doubt that it originally was placed where it here stands by one who was aware of its connexion with that application. The paragraphs in the beginning of this chapter come in regular sequence, thus: Jesus announces his approaching Passion: the chief priests, &c. meet and plot His capture, but *not during the feast: but when Jesus was in Bethany, &c.* occasion was given for an offer to be made to them, which led to its being effected, after all, during the feast. On the rebuke given to Judas at this time having led to his putting into effect his intention of betraying our Lord, see note on John xii. 4, The trace of what I believe to have been the original reason of the anointing being inserted in this place, is still further lost in St. Mark, who instead of **when Jesus was...** has “*and being*”...just as if the narrative were continued; and at the end, instead of **our them...Judas...went...** has “*and Judas...went*”...as if there were no connexion between the two. It certainly cannot be said of St. Matthew, that he relates the anointing as *taking place two days before the Passover*: of St. Mark it *might* be said. It may be observed that St. Luke relates nothing of our Lord’s visits to Bethany.

6. Simon the leper] Not at this time a leper, or he could not be at his house receiving guests. It is at least *possible*, that he may have been healed by our Lord. Who he was, is wholly uncertain. From Martha serving (John xii. 2), it would appear as if she were at home in the house (Luke x. 88 sqq.); and that Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat need not necessarily imply that he was a *guest* properly so called. He had been probably (see John xii. 9) absent with Jesus at Ephraim, and on this account, and naturally for other reasons, would be an object of interest, and one of the sitters at table.

7. an alabaster box] It was the usual cruse or pot for ointment, with a long narrow neck, and sealed at the top. It was thought that the ointment kept best in these cruses. On the nature of the ointment, see note on “*spikenard*,” Mark xiv. 3.

his head] His *feet*, according to John xii. 3. See Luke vii. 88, and note there.

8. his disciples] *Judas alone* is mentioned, John xii. 4. It may have been that some were found ready to second his remark, but that John, from his peculiar position at the table,—if, as is probable, the same as in John xiii. 23,—may not have observed it. If so, the independent origin of the two accounts is even more strikingly shewn.

waste] Bengel remarks, that the word (literally, *perdition*) is the same as that by which Judas himself is called. John xvii. 12.

9. for much] 800 denarii (John),—even more than that (Mark). On the singular relation which these three accounts bear to one another, see notes on Mark.

10.] It was not only ‘a good work,’ but a noble act of love, which should be spoken of in all the churches to the end of time. On ver. 11, see notes on Mark, where it is more fully expressed.

12.] I can hardly think that our Lord would have said this, unless there had been in Mary’s mind a distinct reference to His burial, in doing the act. All the company surely knew well that His death, and that by crucifixion, was near at hand: can we suppose one who so closely observed his words as Mary, not to have been possessed with the thought of that which was about to happen? The “*she is come beforehand to anoint*” of Mark (xiv. 8), and the “*against the day of my burying hath she kept this*” of John (xii. 7), point even more strongly to her intention.

13.] The only case in which our Lord has made such a promise. We cannot but be struck with the majesty of this prophetic announcement: introduced with the peculiar and weighty **verily I say unto you**,—conveying, by implication, the whole mystery of the **gospel** which should go forth from His Death as its source,—looking forward to the end of time, when it have been preached in the whole world,—and specifying the fact that this deed should be recorded wherever it is preached. We may notice (1) that this announcement is a distinct prophetic recognition by our Lord of the existence of *written records*, in which the deed should be related; for in no other conceivable way could the universality of mention be brought about: (2) that we have here (if indeed we needed it) a convincing argument against that view of our three first Gospels which supposes them to have been compiled from an original document; for if there had been such a document, it must have contained this narrative, and no one using such a Gospel could have failed to insert this narrative, accompanied by such a promise, in his own work,—which St. Luke has not done: (3) that the same consideration is equally decisive against St. Luke having used, or even seen, our present Gospels of Matthew and Mark. (4) As regards the practical use of the announcement, we see that though the honourable mention of a noble deed is thereby recognized by our Lord as a legitimate source of joy to us, yet by the very nature of the case all regard to such mention as a *motive* is excluded. The motive was *love alone*.

14–16.] COMPACT OF JUDAS WITH THE CHIEF PRIESTS TO BETRAY HIM. Mark xiv. 10, 11. Luke xxii. 3–6. (See also John xiii. 2.) *When* this took place, does not appear. In all probability, immediately after the conclusion of our Lord’s discourses, and therefore coincidently with the meeting of the Sanhedrim in ver. 3. As these verses bring before us the first overt act of Judas’s treachery, I will give here what appears to me the true estimate of his character and motives. In the main, my view agrees with that given by Neander. I believe that Judas at first became attached to our Lord with mach the same view

as the other Apostles. He appears to have been a man with a practical talent for this world's business, which gave occasion to his being appointed the Treasurer, or Bursar, of the company (John xii. 6; xiii. 29). But the self-seeking, sensuous element, which his character had in common with that of the other Apostles, was deeper rooted in him; and the spirit and love of Christ gained no such influence over him as over the others, who were more disposed to the reception of divine things. In proportion as he found our Lord's progress disappoint his greedy anticipations, did his attachment to Him give place to coldness and aversion. The exhibition of miracles alone could not keep him faithful, when once the deeper appreciation of the Lord's divine Person failed. We find by implication a remarkable example of this in John vi. 60–66, 70, 71, where the denunciation of the one unfaithful among the Twelve seems to point to the (then) state of his mind, as already beginning to be scandalized at Christ. Add to this, that latterly the increasing clearness of the Lord's announcements of His approaching passion and death, while they gradually opened the eyes of the other Apostles to some terrible event to come, without shaking their attachment to Him, was calculated to involve in more bitter disappointment and disgust one so disposed to Him as Judas was.

The actually exciting causes of the deed of treachery at this particular time may have been many. The reproof administered at Bethany (on the Saturday evening probably),—disappointment at seeing the triumphal entry followed, not by the adhesion, but by the more bitter enmity of the Jewish authorities,—the denunciations of our Lord in ch. xxii. xxiii. rendering the breach irreparable,—and perhaps His last announcement in ver. 2, making it certain that His death would soon take place, and sharpening the eagerness of the traitor to profit by it:—all these may have influenced him to apply to the chief priests as he did. With to *his motive* in general, I cannot think that he had any design but that of *sordid gain, to be achieved by the darkest treachery*. See further on this the note on ch. xxvii. 3.

15.] The verb rendered *covenanted...for*, may mean either **weighed out**, or **appointed**. That the money was *paid* to Judas (ch. xxvii. 8) is no decisive argument for the former meaning; for it may have been paid on the delivery of Jesus to the Sanhedrin. The “*covenanted*” of St. Luke and “*promised*” of St. Mark would lead us to prefer the other.

thirty pieces of silver] Thirty shekels, the price of the life of a servant, Exod. xxi. 32. Between three and four pounds of our money. St. Matthew is the only Evangelist who mentions the sum. De Wette and others have supposed that the accurate mention of the *thirty pieces of silver* has arisen from the prophecy of Zechariah (xi. 12), which St. Matthew clearly has in view. The others have simply “*money*.” It is just possible that the thirty pieces may have merely *earnest-money*: but a difficulty attends the supposition; if so, Judas would have been entitled to the *whole* on our Lord being delivered up to the Sanhedrin (for this was all he undertook to do); whereas we find (ch. xxvii. 8) that, after our Lord's condemnation, Judas brought only the thirty pieces back, and nothing more. See note there.

17–19.] PREPARATION FOR CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER. Mark xiv. 12–16. Luke xxii. 7–18. The whole narrative which follows is extremely difficult to arrange and account for chronologically. Our Evangelist is the least circumstantial, and, as will I think appear, the least exact in detail of the three. St. Mark partially fills up the outline;—but the account of St. Luke is the most detailed, and I believe the most exact. It is to be noticed that the narrative which St. Paul gives, 1 Cor. xi. 23–25, of the institution of the Lord's Supper, and which he states he ‘*received from the Lord*,’ coincides almost verbatim with that given by St. Luke. But while we say this, it must not be forgotten that over all three narratives extends the great difficulty of explaining the **first day of unleavened bread** (Matt., Mark), or “*the day of unleavened bread*” (Luke), and of reconciling the impression undeniably conveyed by them, that the Lord and his disciples *ate the usual Passover*, with the narrative of St. John, which not only does not sanction, but I believe absolutely excludes such a supposition. I shall give, in as short a compass as I can, the various solutions which have been attempted, and the objections to them; fairly confessing that none of them satisfy me, and that at present I have none of my own. I will (1) state the *grounds of the difficulty itself*. The day alluded to in all four histories as that of the supper, which is unquestionably one and identical, is Thursday, the 13th of Nisan. Now the day of the Passover being slain and eaten was the 14th of Nisan (Exod. xii. 6, 18; Lev. xxiii. 5; Numb. ix. 8; xxviii. 16; Ezek. xlvi. 21), *between the evenings* (so literally in Heb.), which was interpreted by the generality of the Jews to mean the interval between the first westering of the sun (3 p.m.) and his setting,—but by the Karaites and Samaritans that between sunset and darkness:—in either case, however, *the day* was the same. The feast of unleavened bread began at *the very time of eating the Passover* (Exod. xii. 18), so that the *first day of the feast of unleavened bread was the 15th* (Numb. xxviii. 17). All this with the narrative of St. John, where (xiii. 1) the last supper takes place *before the feast the Passover*—where the disciples think (ib. ver. 29) that Judas had been directed to buy the things *which they had need of against the feast*—where the Jews (xviii. 28) would not enter into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, *but that they might eat the Passover* (see note on John xviii. 28)—where at the exhibition of our Lord by Pilate (on the Friday at noon) it was (xix. 14) *the preparation of the Passover*—and where it could be said (xix. 31) *for that Sabbath day was an high day*,—being, as it was, a *double Sabbath*,—the coincidence of the first day of unleavened bread, which was sabbatically hallowed (Exod. xii. 16), with an actual sabbath. But as plainly, it *does not agree* with the view of the three other Evangelists, who not only relate the meal on the evening of the 13th of Nisan to have been a Passover, but manifestly regard it as the *ordinary legal* time of eating it: “*on the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover*” (Mark xiv. 12), “*when the Passover must be killed*” (Luke xxii. 7), and in our Gospel by implication, in the use of the **Passover**, &c., without any qualifying remark.

The solutions which have been proposed are the following: (1) that the Passover which our Lord and his disciples ate, was not

the ordinary, but an *anticipatory* one, seeing that He himself was about to be sacrificed as the true Passover at the legal time. To this it may be objected, that such an anticipation would have been wholly unprecedented and irregular, in a matter most strictly laid down by the law; and that in the three Gospels there is no allusion to it, but rather every thing (see above) to render it improbable. (2) That our Lord and his disciples ate the Passover, but at the time observed by *a certain portion of the Jews*, while He himself was sacrificed at the time *generally* observed. This solution is objectionable, as wanting any historical testimony whereon to ground it, being in fact a pure assumption. Besides, it is clearly inconsistent with Mark xiv. 12: Luke xxii. 7, cited above. A similar objection lies against (3) the notion that *our Lord* ate the Passover at the strictly legal, *the Jews* at an inaccurate and illegal time. (4) Our Lord ate only a *commemorative* Passover, such as the Jews now celebrate, and not a sacrificial Passover (Grotius). But this is refuted by the absence of any mention of a commemorative Passover *before the destruction of Jerusalem*; besides its inconsistency with the above-cited passages. (5) Our Lord *did not eat the Passover at all*. But this is plainly not a *solution* of the difficulty, but a setting aside of one of the differing accounts: for the three Gospels manifestly give the impression that He *did eat it*. (6) The solution offered by Chrysostom, on our ver. 58, is at least ingenious. The Council, he says, did not eat their Passover at the proper time, but “*on another day, and broke the law, because of their eagerness about this execution...they chose even to neglect the Passover, that they might fulfil their murderous desire.*” This had been suggested before in a scholium of Eusebius. But St. John’s habit of noticing and explaining all such exceptional circumstances, makes it very improbable. I may state, as some solutions have been sent me by correspondents, that I have seen nothing besides the above, which justifies any extended notice.

I will conclude this note by offering a few hints which, though not pointing to any particular solution, ought I think to enter into the consideration of the question. (a) That, on the evening of the 13th (i. e. the beginning of the 14th) of Nisan, the Lord *ate a meal with his disciples*, at which the announcement that one of them should betray Him was made: after which He went into the garden of Gethsemane, and was betrayed (Matt., Mark, Luke, John);— (b) That, in *some sense or other*, this meal was *regarded as the eating of the Passover* (Matt., Mark, Luke). (The same may be inferred even from John; for some of the disciples must have gone into the praetorium, and have heard the conversation between our Lord and Pilate [John xviii. 33–38]: and as they were equally bound with the other Jews to eat the Passover, would equally with them have been incapacitated from so doing by having incurred defilement, *had they not eaten theirs previously*. It would appear too, from Joseph of Arimathea *going to Pilate during the preparation* [Mark xv. 42, 43], that *he also had eaten his passover*.) (c) That it was *not the ordinary passover of the Jews*: for (Exod. xii. 22) when at was eaten, none might go out of the house until morning; whereas, not only did Judas go out during the meal (John xiii. 29), but our Lord and the disciples went out when the meal was finished. Also when Judas went out, it was understood that he was gone to *buy*, which could not have been the case, had it been the night of eating the Passover, which in all years was sabbatically hallowed. (d) St. John, who omits all mention of the Paschal nature of this meal, also omits all mention of the distribution of the symbolic bread and wine. The latter act was, strictly speaking, anticipatory: the Body was not yet broken, nor the Blood shed (but see note on ver. 26, end). Is it possible that the words in Luke xxii. 15, 16 may have been meant by our Lord as an express declaration of the anticipatory nature of that Passover meal likewise? May they mean, ‘I have been most anxious to eat this Paschal meal with you to-night (before I suffer), for I shall not eat it to-morrow,—I shall not eat of it any more with you?’ May a hint to the same effect be intended in ‘my time is at hand’ (ver. 18), as accounting for the time of making ready—may the present tense itself (*I will keep* is literally *I keep*) have the same reference?

I may remark that the whole of the narrative of St. John, as compared with the others, satisfies me that *he can never have seen their accounts*. It is inconceivable, that one writing for the purpose avowed in John xx. 31, could have found the three accounts as we have them, and have made no more allusion to the discrepancy than the faint (and to all appearance undesigned) ones in ib. ch. xii. 1; xiii. 1, 29; xviii. 28.

17. the first day of...unleavened bread] If this night had been the ordinary time of sacrificing the Passover, the day preceding would not indeed have been strictly the first day of unleavened bread; but there is reason to suppose that it was accounted so. The putting away leaven from the houses was of the work of the day, and the eating of the unleavened bread actually commenced in the evening. Thus Josephus mentions eight days as constituting the feast,—including this day in it.

Where wilt thou] The ‘making ready’ would include the following particulars; the ration of the guest-chamber itself (which however in this case was already done, see Mark xiv. 15 and note);—the lamb already kept up from the 10th (Exod. xii. 3) had to be slain in the fore-court of the temple (2 Chron. xxxv. 5);—the unleavened bread, bitter herbs, &c., prepared;—and the room arranged. This report does not represent the whole that passed: it was *the Lord who sent the two disciples*; and *in reply* this enquiry was made (Luke).

18.] The person spoken of was unknown even by name, as appears from Mark and Luke, where he is to be found by the *turning in of a man with a pitcher of water*. The Lord spoke not from any previous arrangement, as some have thought, but in virtue of His knowledge, and command of circumstances. Compare the command ch. xxi. 2f., and that in ch. xvii. 27. In the words to **such a man** here must be involved the additional circumstance mentioned by St. Mark and St. Luke, but perhaps unknown to our narrator: see note on Luke xxii. 10, where the fullest account is found.

The term **the Master**, common to the three accounts, does not imply that the man was *a disciple of our Lord*. It was the common practice during the feast for persons to receive strangers into their houses gratuitously, for the purpose of eating the Passover: and in this description of Himself in addressing a stranger, our Lord has a deep meaning, as (perhaps, but see note) in *the Lord* in ch. xxi. 3,— ‘Our Master and thine says.’ It is His form of ‘pressing’ for the service of the King of this earth, the things that are therein.

My time is not ‘the *time of the feast*,’ but **my own time**, i.e. for suffering: see John vii. 8, and often. There is no reason for supposing from this expression that the man addressed was aware of its meaning. The bearers of the message were; and the words, to the receiver of it, bore with them a weighty reason of their own, which, with such a title as the Master prefixed, he was bound to respect. For these words we are indebted to St. Matthew’s narrative,

20–25.] JESUS, CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER, ANNOUNCES HIS BETRAYER. Mark xiv. 17–21. John xiii. 21 ff. Our Lord and the Twelve were a full Paschal company; *ten* persons was the ordinary and minimum number. Here come in (1) *the expression of our Lord’s desire to eat this Passover before His suffering*, Luke xxii. 15, 16; (2) *the division of the first cup*, ib. vv. 17, 18; (3) *the washing of the disciples’ feet*, John xiii. 1–20 (? see note, John xiii. 22). I mention these, not that I have any desire to reduce the four accounts to a harmonized narrative, for that I believe to be impossible, and the attempt wholly unprofitable; but because they are *additional* circumstances, placed by their narrators at this period of the feast. I shall similarly notice all such additional matter, but without any idea of harmonizing the apparent discrepancies of the four (as appears to me) entirely distinct and independent reports.

21.] This announcement is common to Matt., Mark, and John. In the part of the events of the supper *which relates to Judas*, St. Luke is deficient, giving no further report of them than vv. 21–23. The whole minute detail is given by St. John, who bore a considerable part in it.

22.] In the accounts of St. Luke and St. John, this enquiry is made “*among themselves looking one on another*.” The real enquiry *from the Lord was made by John himself, owing to a sign from Peter*. This part of John’s narrative stands in the highest position for accuracy of detail, and the facts related in it are evidently the ground of the other accounts.

23.] These first words represent the *answer of our Lord to John’s question* (John xiii. 26). The latter (ver. 24 *were not said now*, but (Luke, vv. 21, 22) *formed part of the previous announcement in our ver. 21*.

25.] I cannot understand these words (which are peculiar to our Gospel) otherwise than as an imperfect report of what really happened, viz. that the Lord *dipped the sop, and gave it to Judas*, thereby answering the general doubt, in which the traitor had impudently presumed to feign a share. If the question **Is it I?** before, represented **looked on one another doubting**, and was our narrator’s impression of what was in reality not a *spoken* but a *signified* question,—why now also should not this question and answer represent that Judas took part in that doubt, and was, *not by word of mouth, but by a decisive sign*, of which our author was not aware, declared to be the traitor? *Both* cannot have happened;—for John xiii. 28) *no one knew* (not even John, see note there) *why Judas went out*; whereas if he had been openly (and it is out of the question to suppose a *private communication* between our Lord and him) declared to be the traitor, reason enough would have been furnished for his immediately leaving the chamber. (Still, consult the note on Luke, vv. 24–30, where I have left room for modifying this view.) I am aware that this explanation will give offence to those who believe that every part of each account may be tessellated into one consistent and complete whole. Stier handles the above supposition very roughly, and speaks of its upholders in no measured terms. Valuable as are the researches of this Commentator into the inner sense of the Lord’s words, and ready as I am to acknowledge continual obligation to him, I cannot but think that in the whole interpretation of this part of the Gospel-history, he and his school have fallen into the error of a too minute and letter-serving exposition. In their anxiety to retain *every portion of every account* in its strict literal sense, they are obliged to commit many inconsistencies. A striking instance of this is also furnished in Mr. Birk’s Horse Evangelicae, p. 411: where in treating of this difficulty he says, “If we suppose St. Matthew to express the *substantial meaning* of our Lord’s reply, *rather than its precise words*, the two accounts are easily reconciled. The question of Judas might concur with St. John’s private enquiry, and the *same sign which revealed the traitor to the beloved disciple, would be an affirmative reply to himself, equivalent to the words in the Gospel*—‘Thou hast said.’” Very true, and nearly what I have maintained above: but the literal harmonizers seem to be quite blind to the fact, that this principle of interpretation, which *they use when it suits them*, is the very one against which they so vehemently protest when others use it, and for the use of which they call them such hard names. On **Thou hast said**, see below, ver 64, note.

26–29.] INSTITUTION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER. Mark xiv. 22–25. Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 23–25. We may remark on this important point of our narrative, (1) That it was demonstrably our Lord’s intention to *found an ordinance* for those who should believe on Him; (2) that this ordinance had some *analogy with that which He and the Apostles were then celebrating*. The *first* of these assertions depends on the express word of the Apostle Paul; who in giving directions for the due celebration of the rite of the Lord’s Supper, states in relation to it that he had *received from the Lord* the account of its institution, which he then gives. He who can set this aside, must set aside with it all apostolic testimony whatever. The *second* is shewn by the fact, that what now took place was *during the celebration of the Passover*: that the same Paul states that

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; thus identifying the Body broken, and Blood shed, of which the bread and wine here are symbolic, with the Paschal feast. (3) That the key to the right understanding of what took place must be found in our Lord's discourse after the feeding of the five thousand in John vi., since He there, and there only besides at this place, speaks of His flesh and blood, in the connexion found here. (4) It is impossible to assign to this event its precise place in the meal. St. Luke inserts it before the announcement of the treason of Judas: St. Matt. and St. Mark after it. It is doubtful whether the accounts found in the Talmud and elsewhere of the ceremonies in the Paschal feast are to be depended on:—they are exceedingly complicated. Thus much seems clear,—that our Lord blessed and passed round two cups, one before, the other after the supper,—and that He distributed the unleavened cake during the meal. More than this is conjecture. The dipping of the hand in the dish, and dipping and giving the sop, may also possibly correspond to parts of the Jewish ceremonial.

26.] as they were eating, during the meal,—as distinguished from the distribution of the cup, which was *after* it.

The definite article is before **bread** in the original, but no especial stress must be laid on it; it would be *the bread which lay before Him*: see below. The bread would be *unleavened*, as the day was (see Exod. xii. 8).

blessed it, and gave thanks, amount to the same in practice. The looking up to heaven, and giving thanks was a virtual ‘blessing’ of the meal or the bread. It was customary in the Paschal meal for the Master, in breaking the bread, to *give thanks* for the fruit of the earth. But our Lord did more than this: He gave thanks, as Grotius observes, not only for the old creation, but for the new also, for the redemption of mankind, regarded as now accomplished. From this *giving of thanks for, and blessing*, the offering, the Holy Communion has been from the earliest times also called **eucharist** (*eucharistia*, giving of thanks).

brake it] It was a round cake of unleavened bread, which the Lord broke and divided: signifying thereby both the breaking of His body on the Cross, and the participation in the benefits of his death by all His. Hence the act of communion was known by the name **the breaking of bread**, Acts ii. 42. See 1 Cor. x. 16, also Isa. lviii. 7: Lam. iv. 4.

Take, eat] Our Gospel alone has both words. “*Eat*” is spurious in Mark: both words, in 1 Cor. xi. 24. Here, they are undoubted: and seem to shew us (see note on Luke, ver. 17) that the Lord *did not Himself partake of the bread or wine*. It is thought by some however that He did: e.g. Chrysostom, “*He Himself drank His own Blood.*” But the analogy of the whole, as well as these words, and “*Drink ye all of it*” below, leads us to a different conclusion. *Our Lord’s non-participation is however no rule for the administrator of the rite* in after times. Although in one sense he *represents Christ*, blessing, breaking, and distributing; in another, he is *one of the disciples*, examining himself, confessing, partaking. Throughout all Church ministrations this double capacity must be borne in mind. Olshausen maintains the opposite view, and holds that the minister cannot unite in himself the two characters. But setting the inner verity of the matter for a moment aside, how, if so, should an unassisted minister ever communicate?

this is my body] this, which I now offer to you, this *bread*. The form of expression is important, not being *this bread*, or *this wine*, but *this*, in both cases, or *this cup*, not the bread or wine itself, but the *thing* in each case;—*precluding all idea of a substantial change*.

is] On this much-controverted word *itself* no stress is to be laid. In the original tongue in which probably our Lord spoke, *it would not be expressed*: and as it now stands, it is merely the *logical copula* between the subject, *this*, and the predicate, *my Body*. The connexion of these two will require deeper consideration. First we may observe, as above of the subject, so here of the predicate, that it is not “*My flesh*” (although that very expression is didactically used in its general sense in John vi. 51, as applying to the bread), but **My Body**. The *body* is made up of flesh and blood; and although analogically the bread may represent one and the wine the other, the assertion here is not to be analogically taken merely: *this which I give you, (is) my Body*. Under *this* is the mystery of my Body: the assertion has a *literal*, and has also a *spiritual* or *symbolic* meaning. And it is the *literal* meaning which gives to the spiritual and *symbolic* meaning its fitness and fulness. In the *literal* meaning then, *this (is) my Body*, we have BREAD, ‘the staff of life,’ identified with THE BODY OF THE LORD: not *that particular bread* with *that particular flesh* which at that moment constituted the Body before them, nor *any particular bread* with the *present Body of the Lord in heaven: but this, the food of man, with my body*. This is strikingly set forth in John vi. 51. Now the mystery of the Lord’s Body is, that *in and by it is all created being upheld: in Him all things consist*, Col. i. 17; *in Him was life*, John i. 4. And thus *generally, and in the widest sense*, is the Body of the Lord *the sustenance and upholding of all living*. Our very bodies are *dependent upon his*, and unless by his Body standing pure and accepted before the Father *could not exist nor be nourished*. So that to all living things, in this largest sense, *to live, is Christ*. And all our nourishment and means of upholding are Christ. In this sense *his Body is the Life of the world*. Thus the fitness of the symbol for the thing now to be signified is shewn, not merely by analogy, but by the deep verities of Redemption. And this general and lower sense, underlying, as it does, all the spiritual and higher senses in John vi., brings us to the *symbolic* meaning, which the Lord now first and expressly attaches to this sacramental bread.

Rising into the higher region of spiritual things,—*in and by the same Body of the Lord*, standing before the Father in accepted

righteousness, is all *spiritual being upheld*, but by the *inward and spiritual process of feeding upon Him by faith*: of making that Body our own, causing it to pass into and nourish our souls, even as the substance of the bread into and nourishes our bodies. Of this *feeding upon Christ in the spirit* by faith, is the sacramental bread the *symbol* to us. When the faithful in the Lord's Supper press with their teeth that sustenance, which is, even to the animal life of their bodies, *the Body of Christ*, whereby alone all animated being is upheld,—*they feed in their souls on that Body of righteousness and acceptance, by partaking of which alone the body and soul are nourished unto everlasting life*. And as, in the more general and natural sense, all that nourishes the body is the Body of Christ given for *all*,—so to them, in the *inner spiritual sense*, is the sacramental bread symbolic of that Body given for *them*,—their standing in which, in the adoption of sons, is witnessed by the sending abroad of the Spirit in their hearts. This last leads us to the important addition in Luke and 1 Cor. (but omitted here and in Mark) *which is (being given, Luke,—omitted in 1 Cor.) for you,—this do in remembrance of me*. On these words we may remark (1) that the participle in the original is *present*; and, rendered with reference to the time when it was spoken, would be **which is being given**. The Passion had already begun; in fact the whole life on earth was this giving and breaking, consummated by his death: (2) that the *commemorative* part of the rite here enjoined strictly depends upon the *symbolic* meaning, and that, for its fitness, upon the *literal* meaning. The commemoration is of Him, in so far as He has come down into Time, and enacted the great acts of Redemption on this our world,—and shewn himself to us as living and speaking *Man*, an object of our personal love and affectionate remembrance:—but the other and higher parts of the Sacrament have regard to the *results* of those same acts of Redemption, as they are *eternized* in the counsels of the Father,—as the Lamb is slain *from the foundation of the world* (Rev. xiii. 8).

27. gave it] He gave, not to each, but once for all: in remarkable coincidence with Luke xxii. 17. *take this and divide it amongst yourselves*. This was *after the meal was ended: likewise also the cup after supper*. (Luke and 1 Cor.) As remarked above, it is quite uncertain whether our Lord followed minutely the Jewish practices, and we cannot therefore say whether the cup was one of wine and water mixed. It hardly follows from the expression of ver. 29, of this *fruit of the vine*, that it was of unmixed wine. The word **likewise** (in Luke and 1 Cor.) contains our details of *taking and giving thanks* in it. **Drink ye all of it]** Peculiar to Matthew, preserved however in substance by Mark's “*and they all drank of it.*” The **all** is remarkable, especially with reference to the practice of the Church of Rome, which forbids the cup to the laity. Calvin remarks: “*Why did He simply command them to eat the bread, while of the cup He commanded them all to drink?* It is as if He had intended to anticipate the craft of Satan.” It is on all accounts probable, and this command confirms the probability, that Judas *was present*, and *partook of both parts* of this first communion. The expressions are such throughout as to lead us to suppose that the same persons, *the Twelve*, were present. On the circumstance mentioned John xiii. 30, which has mainly contributed to the other opinion, see note there.

28. for this is my blood of the [new] testament] So St. Mark also, omitting *for* and *new*. In Luke and 1 Cor. there is an important verbal difference. *This cup is the new testament in my blood*. But if we consider the matter closely, the *real* difference is but trifling, if any. Let us recur to the paschal rite. The lamb (*Christ our passover*) being killed, the blood (the blood of the covenant [testament], Exod. xxiv. 8) is sprinkled on the doorposts, and is a sign to the destroying angel to spare the house. The *blood of the covenant* is the blood of the lamb. So also in the new covenant. The blood of the Lamb of God, slain for us, being not only as in the former case, sprinkled on, but actually *partaken spiritually and assimilated* by the faithful soul, is the *blood of the new covenant*; and the sacramental cup, is, signifies, sets forth (1 Cor. xi. 26), this covenant *in His blood*, i.e. consisting in a participation in His blood. With this explanation

let us recur to the words in our text. First it will be observed that there is not here that absolute assertion which “*this is My body*” conveyed. It is not “*this is my blood*” absolutely. Wine, *in general*, does not represent by itself the effects (on the creation) of the blood of Christ; it, like every other nourishment of the body, is nourishment to us *by and in Him*, forasmuch as in Him all things consist:

but there is no peculiar propriety whereby it is to us his Blood alone. But it is *made so by a covenant office* which it holds in his own declaration. Without shedding of blood, was no remission of sins under the old covenant: and *blood* was, throughout, the covenant sign of forgiveness

and acceptance. Now all this blood of sacrifice finds its true reality and fulfilment

in the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins. This is the very promise

of the new covenant, see Heb. viii. 8–13, as distinguished from the old: the *remission of sins*, once for all,—whereas the old had *continual offerings*, which could not do this, Heb. x. 3, 4. And of this remission, the result of the outpouring of the blood of Christ,—*first and most*

generally in bringing all creation into reconciliation

with the Father (see Col. i. 20),—*secondly and individually*, in the application by faith of that blood to the believing soul,—do

the faithful in the Lord's Supper partake.

which is [being] shed for many (for you, Luke)] On the present participle, see above. The situation of the words in Luke is remarkable; for the *cup* is the subject of the sentence, and *the new testament* the predicate. See note there.

many] See note, ch. xx. 28. Compare also Heb. ix. 28.

for the remission of sins] Peculiar to Matthew: see above. The connexion is not "*Drink it... for the remission of sins.*" In the Sacrament, not the forgiveness of sins itself, but the refreshing and confirming *assurance of that state of forgiveness* is conveyed. The disciples (with one exception) were clean *before the institution*: John xiii. 10, 11. St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xi. 25, repeats the *Do this as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of Me*. On the words *as oft as ye drink it*, see note there.

In concluding this note, I will observe that it is not the office of a Commentator to enter the arena of controversy respecting *transubstantiation*, further than by his interpretation his opinions are made apparent. It will be seen how entirely opposed to such a dogma is the view above given of the Sacrament. Once introduce it, and it *utterly destroys both the verity of Christ's Body, and the sacramental nature of the ordinance*. That it has done so, is proved (if further need be) by the *mutilation of the Sacrament*, and disobedience to the divine command, in the Church of Rome. See further notices of this in notes on 1 Cor. x. 16, and on John vi.

29.] This declaration I believe to be distinct from that in Luke xxii. 18. That was spoken over the first cup—this over one of the following. In addition to what has been said on Luke, we may observe, (1) that our Lord *still calls* the sacramental cup *the fruit of the vine*, although by Himself pronounced to be His Blood: (2) that these words *carry on the meaning and continuance* of this eucharistic ordinance, even into the new heavens and new earth. As Thiersch excellently says, "The Lord's Supper points not only to the past, but to the future also. It has not only a commemorative, but also a prophetic meaning. In it we have not only to shew forth the Lord's death, *until He come*, but we have also *to think of the time when He shall come* to celebrate his holy Supper with his own, new, in his Kingdom of Glory. Every celebration of the Lord's Supper is a foretaste and prophetic anticipation of the *great Marriage Supper* which is prepared for the Church at the second appearing of Christ. This import of the Sacrament is declared in the words of the Lord, '*I will not drink henceforth, &c.*' These words ought never to be omitted in any liturgical form of administering the Communion."

30–35.] DECLARATION THAT ALL SHOULD FORSAKE HIM. CONFIDENCE OF PETER. Mark xiv. 26–31. See Luke xxii. 31–38: John xiii. 36–38. Here, accurately speaking perhaps between *singing the hymn* and *going out*, come in the discourses and prayer of our Lord in John xiv. xv. xvi. xvii., spoken (see note on John xiv. 31) without change of place in the supper-chamber.

The hymn was in all probability the last of that which the Jews called the Hallel, or great Hallel, which consisted of Psalms cxv.—cxviii.; the former part (Psalms cxiii. cxiv.) having been sung during the meal. It is unlikely that this took place *after* the solemn prayer in John xvii.

30. went out] St. Luke (ver. 39) adds "*as he was wont*"—namely, every evening since his return to Jerusalem.

31.] All (emphatic) *ye* seems to be used as distinguishing those present from the one, who had me out.

offended] The word is ere used in a pregnant meaning, including what followed,—desertion, and, in one case, denial.

for it is written] This is a very important citation, and has been much misunderstood; *how much*, may appear from Grotius's remark, that Zechariah's words are not directly alluded to: nay, that in them rather is the saying used of some *bad* shepherd. But, on the contrary, if we examine Zech. xi. xii. xiii., we must I think come to the conclusion that the shepherd spoken of in xi. 7–14, who is *rejected and sold*, who is said to have been *pierced* (xii. 10), is also spoken of in ch. xiii. 7. Stier has gone at length into the meaning of the whole prophecy, and especially that of the word 'my fellow,' and shewn that the reference can be to *no other than the Messiah*.

32.] In this announcement our Lord seems to have in mind the remainder of the verse in Zechariah: "and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." As this could not be *cited* in any intelligible connexion with present circumstances, our Lord gives the announcement of its fulfilment, in a promise to *precede* them (a pastoral office, see John x. 4) into Galilee, whither they should naturally return after the feast was over: see ch. xxviii. 7, 10, 16.

33.] Nothing can bear a greater impress of exactitude than this reply. Peter had been before warned (see note on Luke, vv. 31–34); and still remaining in the same spirit of self-confident attachment, now that he is included among the *all*, not specially addressed,—breaks out into this asseveration, which carries completely with it the testimony that it was *not the first*. Men do not bring themselves out so strongly, unless their fidelity has been previously attained.

34.] The very words *in their order* are, I doubt not, reported by St. Mark,— “*This day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.*” The contrast to Peter’s boast, and the climax, is in these words the strongest; and the inference also comes out most clearly, that they likewise were not now said for the first time.

The *first* cock-crowing is at midnight: but inasmuch as *few hear it*,—when the word is used *generally*, we mean the *second* crowing, early in the morning, before dawn. If this view be taken, the cock-crowing and double cock-crowing amount to the same—only the latter is the *more precise* expression. It is most likely that Peter understood this expression as only a *mark of time*, and therefore received it, as when it was spoken before, as merely an expression of distrust on the Lord’s part; it was this solemn and circumstantial repetition of it which afterwards struck upon his mind, when the sign itself was literally fulfilled.

A question has been raised whether *cocks were usually kept* or even allowed in Jerusalem. No such bird is mentioned in the O.T., and the Mischna states that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests every where, kept no fowls, because they scratched up unclean worms. But the Talmud is here not consistent with itself: and Lightfoot brings forward a story which proves it. And there might be many kept by the resident Romans, over whom the Jews had no power.

We must not overlook the spiritual parabolic import of this warning. Peter stands here as a representative of all disciples who deny or forget Christ—and the watchful bird that cries in the night is that warning voice which ‘speaketh once, yea twice,’ to call them to repentance: see Rom. xiii. 11, 12.

35.] This **though I must** again appears to have the precision of a repeated asseveration. St. Mark has the stronger expression “*he spake the more vehemently*,” which even more clearly indicates that the *die with thee* not now first said. The rest said it, but not so earnestly perhaps;—at all events, Peter’s confidence cast theirs into the shade.

36–46.] OUR LORD’S AGONY AT GETHSEMANE. Mark xiv. 32–42. Luke xxii. 39–46. John xviii. 1. The account of the temptation, and of the agony in Gethsemane is peculiar to the three first Evangelists. But it does not therefore follow that there is, in their narratives, any inconsistency with St. John’s setting forth of the Person of Christ. For it must be remembered, that, as we find in *their* accounts frequent manifestations of the *divine nature*, and indications of *future glory*, about, and during this conflict,—so in St. John’s account, which brings out more the divine side of our Lord’s working and speaking, we find frequent allusions to his *human weakness* and *distress of spirit*. For examples of the first, see vv. 13, 24, 29, 32, 53, and the parallels in Mark and Luke; and Luke xxii. 30, 32, 37, 43; of the latter, John xii. 27; xiii. 21; xiv. 30; xvi. 32.

The right understanding of the whole important narration must be acquired by bearing in mind the *reality of the manhood of our Lord, in all its abasement and weakness*:—by following out in Him the analogy which per the characteristics of human suffering—the strength of the resolved spirit, and calm of the resigned will, continually broken in upon by the inward giving way of human feebleness, and limited power of endurance. But as in us, so in the Lord, these seasons of dread and conflict stir not the ruling *will*, alter not the firm resolve. This is most manifest in His *first* prayer—if it be possible—‘if consistent with that work which I have covenanted to do.’ Here is the reserve of the will to suffer—it is never stirred (see below). The conflict however of the Lord differs from ours in this,—that in *us*, the ruling *will* itself is *but* a phase of our *human* will, and may be and is often carried away by the excess of depression and suffering; whereas in *Him* it was the *divine Personality* in which the *higher Will of the covenant was eternally fixed*,—struggling with the flesh now overwhelmed with an horrible dread, and striving to escape away (see the whole of Ps. lv.). Besides that, by that uplifting into a superhuman circle of *Knowledge*, with which the indwelling of the Godhead endowed His humanity, His flesh, with all its capacities and apprehensions, was brought *at once* into immediate and simultaneous contact with every circumstance of horror and pain that awaited Him (John xviii. 4), which is never the case with us. Not only are the objects of dread *gradually* unveiled to our minds, but *hope* is ever suggesting that things may not be so bad as our fears represent them.

Then we must not forget, that as the *flesh* gave way under dread of suffering, so the *human soul* was troubled with all the attendant circumstances of that suffering—betrayal, desertion, shame (see Ps. lv. again, vv. 12–14, 20, 21; xxxviii. 11, 12; lxxxviii. al.). Nor again must we pass over the last and deepest mystery of the Passion—the consideration, that upon the holy and innocent Lamb of God rested the burden of *all* human sin—that to Him, death, as the punishment of *sin*, bore a dark and dreadful meaning, inconceivable by any of us, whose inner will is tainted by the *love of sin*. See on this part of the Redeemer’s agony, Ps. xl. 12; xxxviii. 1–10. See also as a comment on the whole, Heb. v. 7–10, and notes there.

The three accounts do not differ in any important particulars. St. Luke merely gives a general summary of the Lord’s prayers and his sayings

to the disciples, but inserts (see below) two details not found in the others. St. Mark’s account and St. Matthew’s are very nearly related, and have evidently sprung from the same source.

36.] St. Mark alone, besides our account, mentions the name of the place—St. Luke merely calls it “*the place*,” in allusion to

“as wont” before. St. John informs us that it was *a garden*. The name signifies ‘*an oil press*.’ It was at the foot of the Mount of Olives, in the valley of the Kedron, the other side of the brook from the city (John xviii. 1).

while I go and pray] Such is the name which our Lord gives to that which was coming upon Him, in speaking to the Eight who were not to witness it. *All conflict of the holy soul is prayer*: all its struggles are continued communion with God. In Gen. xxii. 5, when Abraham’s faith was to be put to so sore a trial, he says, ‘I and the lad will *go yonder and worship*.’ Our Lord (almost on the same spot) unites in Himself, as the priest and victim, as Stier strikingly remarks, Abraham’s Faith and Isaac’s Patience.

yonder—probably some spot deeper in the garden’s shade. At this time the gorge of the Kedron would be partly in the moonlight, partly shaded by the rocks and buildings of the opposite side.

It may have been from the moonlight into the shade that our Lord retired to pray.

37.] These three—Peter, the foremost in attachment, and profession of it—the two sons of Zebedee, who were to drink of the cup that He drank of—He takes with Him, not only nor principally as *witnesses* of his trial—this indeed, in the full sense, they were not—but as a *consolation* to Him in that dreadful hour—to ‘watch with Him.’ In this too they failed—yet from his returning to them between his times of prayer, it is manifest that, in the abasement of his humanity, He regarded them as some comfort to him. “In great trials we love solitude, but to have friends near.” Bengel.

he began—not merely idiomatic here—**began**, as *He had never done before*.

to be sorrowful] *sore amazed*, Mark.

very heavy] literally, as generally interpreted, *utterly prostrate with grief*.

38.] Our Lord’s whole inmost life must have been one of *continued trouble of spirit*—He was a *man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*—but there was an *extremity of anguish* now, reaching even to the *utmost limit of endurance*, so that it seemed that *more* would be *death itself*. The expression is said to be *proverbial* (see Jonah iv. 9): but we must remember that though with *us men*, who see from below, proverbs are merely bold guesses at truth,—with *Him*, who sees from above, they are *the truth itself*, in its very purest form. So that although when used by *a man*, a proverbial expression is not to be to literal exactitude,—when by *our Lord*, it is, just because it is a proverb, to be searched into and dwelt on all the more.

The expression **my soul**, in this sense, spoken by our Lord, is only found besides in John xii. 27. It is the *human soul*, the seat of the affections and passions, which is troubled with the anguish of the body; and it is distinguished from the **spirit**, the *higher spiritual being*. Our Lord’s soul was crushed down even to death by the weight of that anguish which lay upon Him—and that *literally*—so that He (as regards his humanity) *would have died*, had not strength (*bodily* strength, upholding his human frame) been ministered from on high by an angel (see note on Luke xxii. 43).

watch with me] not *pray with me*, for in that work the Mediator must be *alone*; but (see above) *watch with Me*—just (if we may compare *our* weakness with His) as we derive comfort in the midst of a terrible storm, from knowing that some are awake and with us, even though their presence is no real safeguard.

39.] went a little farther (Matt., Mark): *was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast*, Luke, who in this description is the more precise. The verb, in the original, implies something more than *mere removal* from them—something of the *reluctance* of parting.

The distance would be very small, not above forty or fifty yards. Hence the disciples might well catch the leading words of our Lord’s prayers, before drowsiness overpowered them. Luke has however only *kneeled down*, which is not so full as our account.

prayed] Stier finely remarks: ‘This **was** in truth a different prayer from that which went before, which John has recorded.’ But still in the same spirit, uttered by the same Son of God and Redeemer of men. The *glorifying* (John xvii. 1) begins with suffering, as the previous words, *the hour is come*, might lead us to expect. The ‘power over all flesh’ shews itself first as power of the conflicting and victorious spirit over *his own flesh*, by virtue of which He is ‘one of us.’

St. Mark expresses the *substance* of the prayer, and interprets *cup* by *hour*. St. Luke’s report differs only in verbal expression from St. Matthew’s. In the address, we have here and in Luke **Father**—in Mark *Abba, Father*. In all, and in the prayer itself, there is the deepest feeling and apprehension in the Redeemer’s soul of *his Sonship and the unity of the Father*—the most entire and holy submission to His Will. We must not for a moment think of the Father’s *wrath* abiding on Him as the cause of his suffering. Here is no fear of wrath,—but, in the depth of His human anguish, the very tenderness of filial love.

The variation in Mark and Luke in the substance of the prayer, though slight, is worthy of remark.

if it be possible,—all things are possible with thee,—if thou be willing. All these three find their union in one and the same inward feeling. That in the text expresses, ‘If, within the limits of thy holy will, this may be;’—that in Mark, ‘All things are (absolutely) possible to Thee—Thou canst therefore—but not what I will, but what thou wilt:’—that in Luke, ‘If it be thy will to remove, &c. (Thou canst): but not my will, but thine be done.’ *The very words used* by our Lord, the Holy Spirit has not seen fit to give us; shewing us, even in this solemn instance, the comparative indifference of the *letter*, when we have the inner *spirit*. That our Lord should have uttered *all three* forms of the prayer, is not for a moment to be thought of; and such a view could only spring out of the most petty and unworthy appreciation of the purpose of Scripture narrative.

pass from me] as we should say of a threatening cloud, ‘It has *gone over*.’ But what is the *cup* or *hour*, of which our Lord here prays that it may *pass by*? Certainly, not the mere present feebleness and prostration of the bodily frame: not any mere section of his sufferings—but the *whole*—the betrayal, the trial, the mocking, the scourging, the cross, the grave, and all besides which our thoughts cannot reach. Of this all, His soul, in humble subjection to the higher Will, which was absolutely united and harmonious with the will of the Father, prays that if possible it may pass over. And this prayer *was heard*—see Heb. v. 7 —“*in that he feared*”—on account of His pious resignation to the Father’s will, or *on the ground of* it, so that it prevailed—He was strengthened from Heaven. He did indeed drink the cup to the dregs—but He was *enabled* to do it, and this *strengthening* was the answer to his prayer.

nevertheless not as I will....] The Monothelite heresy, which held *but one will* in the Lord Jesus, is here plainly convicted of error. The distinction is clear, and marked by our Lord Himself. In his *human soul*, He willed to be freed from the dreadful things before Him—but this human will was overruled by the *inner and divine purpose*—the will at unity with the Father’s will.

40.] St. Mark agrees, except in relating the beginning of the address in the *singular*—no doubt accurately—for it was Peter (“Simon, who was no *Peter* on this occasion,” Stier), who had *pledged himself to go with him to prison and death*.

The question is literally **could ye thus not watch...?**—it implies their *utter inability*, as shewn by their present state of slumber, **Are ye so entirely unable, &c.**

one hour need not imply that our Lord had been absent *a whole hour*:—if it is to be taken in any close meaning, it would be that the *whole trial would last* about that time. But most likely it is in allusion to the *time* of our Lord’s *trial*, so often called by that name.

41.] St. Luke gives this command at the beginning and end of the whole; but his account is manifestly only a compendium, and not to be pressed chronologically. The command has respect to the immediate trial which was about to try them, and (for **watch** is a word of *habit*, not merely, as “*arise*” Eph. v. 15, or “*awake to righteousness*” 1 Cor. xv. 34, one of immediate import) also to the *general duty of all disciples in all time*.

enter into temptation is not to *come into* temptation merely, to be *tempted*: this lies not in our own power to avoid, and its happening is rather joy than sorrow to us—see James i. 2, where the word is “*fall into*”—but it implies an **entering into temptation** with the *will*, and *entertaining* of the temptation. Compare “*fall into temptation*” used in *this* sense, 1 Tim. vi. 9.

the spirit...] I cannot doubt that this is said by our in its most general meaning, and that *He himself is included* in it. At that moment He was giving as high and pre-eminent an example of its truth, as the disciples were affording a low and ignoble one. He, in the willingness of the spirit—yielding Himself to the Father’s will to suffer and die, but weighed down by the weakness of the flesh: they having professed, and really *having*, a willing spirit to suffer with Him, but, even in the one hour’s watching, overcome by the burden of drowsiness. Observe it is here **spirit**, not **soul**; and compare ver. 38 and note. To enter further into the depths of this assertion of our Lord would carry us beyond the limits of annotation: but see Stier’s remarks, vi. 237–242.

42.] St. Mark merely says of this second prayer, “*he... spake the same words*.” St. Luke gives it as “*prayed more earnestly*”—and relates in addition, that His sweat was like the fall of drops of blood on the ground: see notes on Luke xxii. 44. At what precise time the angel appeared to Him is uncertain: I should be inclined to think, *after the first prayer*, before He came to His disciples.

The words are not exactly the same: “the Lord knew that the Father always heard Him (John xi. 42); and therefore He understands the continuance of His trial as the answer to His last words, **as Thou wilt.**” Stier. Here therefore the prayer is **If it be not possible.... Thy will be done.** It is spoken in the fulness of self-resignation.

43.] St. Mark adds, and it is a note of accuracy, “neither wist they what to answer him.”

44.] **the same**, viz. as the last. This third prayer is merely indicated in Mark, by “he cometh the third time,” on our Lord’s return.

45, 46.] The clause **Sleep on now, &c.**, has been variously understood. To take it interrogatively (“are ye sleeping” &c.?), does not improve the sense, and makes an unnatural break in the sentence, which proceeds indicatively afterwards. It seems to me that there can be but two ways of interpreting it—and both with an imperative construction. (1) Either it was said *bona fide*,—“Since ye are not able to watch with Me, now ye may sleep on—for my hour is come, and I am about to be taken from you”—which sense however is luded by the “Rise, let us be going” below: or (2) it was said with an understanding of ‘if you can,’ as Bengel; if you hear not Me arousing you, there will speedily come others who *will* arouse you. “Meanwhile, sleep, if ye will.”

behold, the hour is at hand] “it is enough, the hour is come,” Mark. ‘It is enough’—enough of reproof to them for drowsiness—enough of exhortations to watch and pray—that was now coming which would cut all this short. This *first behold* is hardly to be taken literally of the *appearance* a Judas and his band; it merely announces the approach of *the hour*, of which the Lord had so often spoken: but at the utterance of the *second*, it seems that they were *in sight*, and that may be taken literally.

This expression, *into the hands of sinners*, should be noticed, as an echo of the Redeemer’s anguish—it was the contact with *sin*,—and death, the wages of *sin*,—which all through His trial pressed heavily on His soul.

47–56.] BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS. Mark xiv. 48–52. Luke xxii. 47–53. John xviii. 2–11. St. Mark’s account has evidently been derived from the same source originally as St. Matthew’s, but both had gained some important additions before they were finally committed to writing. St. Luke’s is, as before, an abridged narrative, but abounding with new circumstances not related by the others. St. John’s account is at first sight very dissimilar from either; see text above cited, and notes there. It may suffice now to say, that all which St. John, vv. 4–9, relates, must have happened *on the first approach of the band*—and is connected with our “Rise, let us be going.” Some particulars also must have happened, which are omitted by *all*: viz. the rejoicing of the eight apostles (*not* alluded to in Luke, ver. 46, as Greswell supposes), and the preparing *them* for what was about to take place. On the other hand, John gives a hint that something had been passing *in the garden*, by his “went forth,” ver. 4. The two first Evangelists were evidently unaware of any such matter as that related by St. John, for they (Matt. ver. 49: Mark ver. 45) introduce *the Kiss* by a “forthwith.”

47.] Judas is specified as “one of the Twelve,” probably because the appellation, as connected with this part of his history, had become the usual one—thus we have in Luke “he that was called Judas, one of the Twelve”—fuller still. To the reader, this specification is not without meaning, though that meaning may not have been intended.

a great multitude] consisting of (1) a detachment of the Roman cohort which was quartered in the tower of Antonia during the feast in case of an uproar, called **the band**, John vv. 3, 12. (2) the servants of the council, the same as the *captains of the temple*, Luke ver. 52. (3) Servants and others deputed from the high priest to assist, see our ver. 51. (4) Possibly, if the words are to be taken exactly, (Luke ver. 52), some of the chief priests and elders themselves, forward in zeal and enmity. There is nothing improbable in this, seeing that we have these persons mixing among the multitude and stirring them up to demand the crucifixion of Jesus afterwards.

staves] any tumultuary weapons. The intention of the chief priests evidently was to produce an impression to the effect that a seditious plot was to be crushed, and resistance might be expected. John mentions also *lanterns* and *torches*—to search perhaps in the dark parts of the garden, most of which would by this time be in the shade.

48.] **gave them a sign;**—when is not stated. On St. Mark’s addition, “and lead him away safely,” see notes there.

49.] **forthwith**—see above on ver. 47. The *purpose* of the kiss, supposing it to have taken place *after* John vv. 4–8, (and it is surely out of the question to suppose it to have taken place before, contrary to the plain meaning of John ver. 4,) has been doubted. Yet I think on a review of what had happened, it is very intelligible—not perhaps as some have supposed, to shew that Jesus could be approached with safety—but at all events as the *sign agreed on* with the Roman soldiers, who probably did not personally know Him, and who besides would have had their orders from the city, to take Him whom Judas should kiss. Thus the kiss would be necessary in the course of their military duty, as their authorization,—notwithstanding the previous declaration by Jesus of Himself. The word in the original implies, ‘**kissed him eagerly**,’ with ostentation, as a studied and prearranged sign.

50.] In Luke we have “*Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*”—which sense is involved in the text also: that variation shewing perhaps

that one of the accounts is not an eye-witness.

Friend—see ch. xxii. 12 and note. It is more than doubtful whether the words that follow can properly be rendered as a *question*. More likely do they mean, “Friend, there needs not this shew of attachment: I know thine errand,—do thy purpose.” But the command itself is suppressed. On any understanding of the words, it is an appeal to the conscience and heart of Judas, in which sense (see above) it agrees with the words spoken in Luke:—see note there. The fact that at this period our Lord was laid hold of and secured (by hand—not yet *bound*) by the band, is important, as interpreting St. Luke’s account farther on.

51.] The one of them... was Peter;—John ver. 10. Why he was not mentioned, is idle to enquire: one supposition only must be avoided—that there is any *purpose* in the omission. It is absurd to suppose that the mention of his name in a book current only among Christians, many years after the fact, could lead to his apprehension, which did not take place *at the time*, although he was recognized as the striker in the palace of the High Priest, John ver. 26. The real reason of the non-apprehension was that the servant was *healed* by the Lord.

This is the first opposition to ‘Thy will be done.’ St. Luke expresses it, that they *saw what would happen*—and asked, ‘Lord, shall we smite with the sword?’ Then, while the other (for there were but two swords in the company) was waiting for the reply, the rash Peter, in the very spirit of ch. xvi. 22, smote with the sword—the weapon of the flesh:—an outbreak of the natural man no less noticeable than that more-noticed one which followed before morning.

All four Evangelists agree in this account. Luke and John are most exact—the latter giving the name of the slave,—Malchus.

The aim was a deadly one, and Peter narrowly escaped being one “*w ho had committed murder in the insurrection.*” From Luke, ver. 51, we learn that our Lord said “*Suffer ye thus far*” (on the meaning of which see note there), touched the ear, and healed it.

52.) thy sword—not *mine*, nor on my side.

his place = “*the sheath,*” John. The sheath is *the place for the Christian’s sword*—“a sword out of its sheath is not in its place, unless as ministering to the divine anger,” Bengel; see note on Luke xxii. 36. Our Lord does not say ‘*Cast away thy sword;*’ only in His willing self-sacrifice, and in that kingdom which is to be evolved from his work of redemption, is the sword altogether out of place.

for all&c.] Peculiar to Matthew. There is no allusion, as Grotius and some of the ancients thought, to the Jews perishing by the Roman sword: for the very persons who were now taking Him *were Romans*. The saying is *general*—and the stress is on **take**—it was this that Peter was doing—‘taking up the sword’ of his own will; taking that vengeance which belongs to God, into his own hand.

shall perish with the sword is a command; not merely a future, but an *imperative* future; a repetition by the Lord in this solemn moment of Gen. ix. 6. This should be thought of by those well-meaning but shallow persons, who seek to abolish the punishment of death in Christian states.

John adds the words “*the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*” on which see notes there.

53, 54 are peculiar to Matthew.

53.] The Majesty of our Lord, and His Patience, are both shewn here.

twelve—not perhaps so much from the number of the apostles, who were now “*the eleven,*” but from that of the *then* company, viz. the Lord and the eleven.

legions—because they were Roman soldiers who were taking Him. The complement of the legion was about 6000 men. The power implied in **thinkest thou that I cannot**, shews the entire and continued free self-resignation of the Lord throughout—and carries on the same truth as He expressed John x. 18.

54.] how then—considering that this is so, that I voluntarily abstain from invoking such heavenly aid,—**shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be**, if thou in thy rashness usest the help of fleshly weapons?

55.] St. Mark begins this with an *answered*—it was an answer to their *actions*, not to their words. St. Luke, here minutely accurate, informs us that it was *to the chief priests and captains of the temple elders*, that our Lord said this.

In his submission to be reckoned among the transgressors, our Lord yet protests against any suspicion that He could *act* as such.

sat (Matt. only) to indicate complete quiet and freedom from attack.

daily—during the week past, and perhaps at other similar times.

sat teaching is the greatest possible contrast to a thief and robber.

56.] It is doubted whether these words are a continuation of our Lord's speech, or a remark inserted by St. Matthew. The use of "*all this was (is) done*" in this Gospel would lead us to the latter conclusion: but when we reflect that thus our Lord's speech would lose all its completeness, and that St. Mark gives in different words the speech going on to this same purport, we must I think decide for the other view. Besides, if the remark were St. Matthew's, we should expect some particular citation, as is elsewhere his practice: see ch. i. 22; xxi 4. Mark gives it elliptically, "*but (so literally) that the scriptures might be fulfilled.*" The Passion and Death of Christ were especially the fulfilment of the Scriptures. In this they all found their central point. Compare his dying words on the Cross,—*It is finished*,—with thine his assertion. On the addition in Luke, see note there.

Then all] Some of them did not flee far. Peter and John went after Him to the palace of the High Priest; John, ver. 15. On the additional circumstance in Mark, ver. 51, see note there.

57–68.] HEARING BEFORE CAIAPHAS. Mark xiv. 53–65. [Luke xxii. 54, 63–65.] John xviii. 24. Previous to this took place a hearing *before* Annas the *real* High Priest (see note on Luke iii. 2), to whom the Jews took Jesus first;—who enquired of Him about his disciples and his teaching (John vv. 19–23), and then (ver. 24) sent Him bound to Caiaphas. Only John, *who followed*, relates this first hearing. See notes on John vv. 12–24, where this view is maintained. It may be sufficient here just to indicate the essential differences between *that* hearing and *this*. On that occasion no witnesses were required, for it was merely a private unofficial audience. Then the High Priest questioned and our Lord replied: whereas now, under false witness and reproach, He (as before Herod) is silent.

57. Caiaphas the high priest] He was *High Priest of that year*, Annas having been deposed, and since then the High Priests having been frequently changed by the Roman governors.

where the scribes...] Probably they had assembled by a preconcerted design, expecting their prisoner. This was *a meeting* of the Sanhedrim, but not the regular assembly, which condemned him and handed Him over to Pilate. That took place *in the morning*, Luke xxii. 66–71 (where see note).

We have not here the more complete detail of John xviii. 15–19. The **palace** is one and the same great building, in which both Annas and Caiaphas lived. This is evident from a comparison of the narratives of Peter's denial: see below. The circumstance of a fire being lighted and the servants sitting round it, mentioned by the other three Evangelists, is here omitted.

59. false witness] "As they thought, evidence, but in reality, false witness," Euthymius. But is this quite implied? Is it not the intention of the Evangelist to represent that they *sought false witness*, not that they would not take true if they could get it, but that *they knew it was not to be had?*

This hearing is altogether omitted in Luke, and only the indignities following related, vv. 63–65.

60.] found they none, i.e. sufficient for the purpose, or perhaps, consistent with itself. See note on Mark ver. 56.

61.] See ch. xxvii. 40: the *false witness* consisted in giving *that sense to His words*, which it appears by ch. xxvii. 63 they *knew they did not bear*. There is perhaps a trace, in the *different reports* of Matt. and Mark, of the *discrepancy between the witnesses*. There is considerable difference between the words attributed to Him here, and there.

The instance likewise of his zeal *for the honour of the temple*, which had so lately occurred might tend to perplex the evidence produced to the contrary.

62.] Better rendered, **Dost thou not answer what it is which these testify against thee?** i.e. wilt thou give no explanation of the words alleged to have been used by thee? Our Lord was silent; for in answering He must have opened to them the meaning of these his words, which was not the work of this His hour, nor fitting for that audience.

63.] See Levit. v. 1.

I adjure thee, 'I put thee under an oath,' the form of Which follows. The junction of *the Son of God* with *the Christ* must not

be pressed beyond the meaning which Caiaphas probably assigned to it—viz. the title given to the Messiah from the purport of the prophecies respecting Him. It is however a very different thing when our Lord by His answer *affirms this*, and invests the words with their fullest meaning and dignity.

64.] By Thou hast said, more may perhaps be implied than by St. Mark's "*I am: that*" is a simple assertion: this may refer to the convictions and *admissions* of Caiaphas (see John xi. 49). But this is somewhat doubtful. The expression is only used here and in ver. 25: and there does not appear to be any reference in it, as said to Judas, to any previous admission of his.

nevertheless—i. e. '*there shall be a sign of the truth of what I say, over and above this confession of Mine.*'

Henceforth—the glorification of Christ is by Himself said to *begin with his betrayal*, see John xiii. 31: **from this time**—from the accomplishment of this trial now proceeding. In what follows, the whole process of the triumph of the Lord Jesus even till its end is contained. The **shall ye see** is to the council, the representatives

of the chosen people, so soon to be judged by Him to whom all judgment is committed—the **power** in contrast to his present weakness—**sitting**—even as they now sat to judge Him; and the **coming in the clouds of heaven** (see Dan. vii. 37) looke onward to the awful time of the end, when every eye shall see Him.

65.] In Levit. xxi. 10 (see also Levit. x. 6) the High Priest is ordered *not to rend his clothes*; but that appears to apply only to *mourning or the dead*. In 1 Macc. xi. 71, and in Josephus, B.J. ii. 15. 4, we have instances of High Priests rending their clothes. On rending the clothes at hearing blasphemy, see 2 Kings xviii. 37.

66.] This was not a formal condemnation, but only a previous vote or expression of opinion. *That took place in the morning*, see ch. xxvii. 1, and especially Luke xxii. 66–71.

67.] Luke gives these indignities, and in the same place as here, adding, what indeed might have been suspected that it was not the members of the Sanhedrim, but *the men who held Jesus in custody*, who inflicted them on Him.

The word rendered *buffeted* means *to strike with the fist*.

The following verb (**smote him**) is, generally, *to strike a flat blow with the back of the hand*—but also, and probably here, since another set of persons are described as doing it, *to strike with a staff*.

69–75.] OUR LORD IS THRICE DENIED BY PETER. Mark xiv. 66–72. Luke xxii. 56–62. John xviii. 17, 18, 25–27. This narrative furnishes one of the clearest instances of the *entire independency of the four Gospels of one another*. In it, they all differ; and, supposing the denial to have taken place *thrice*, and only *thrice*, cannot be literally harmonized. The following table may serve to shew what the agreements are, and what the differences:—

MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
1st Sitting in the denial. hall without	is charged by a maid servant with having been with Jesus the Galilean. 'I know not what thou sayest.'	Warming himself in the hall below	—& c. as Matt.— goes out into the vestibule —cock crows. 'I know not
			neither understand what thou sayest.'

	He has gone out into the porch—							
another maid sees him.	The same maid (possibly: next page but see note)	line 26)	'This man is of them.'	Another (but a male servant) says	'Thou also art of them.'			
2nd denial. 'This man also was with Jesus of Naz.' He denies with an oath	I do not know the man.'	col. 1	sees him again	He denies again.	Peter said			
	'Surely thou art of them; for thy dialect As Matth. surely betrayeth thou art of thee.' He them: for began to thou art curse and also a to swear: Galilæan.'	After about an hour	another persisted saying	'Truly this man was with Him	for he is a Galilæan.'	'Man I know not what thou sayest.'		
3rd denial. After a little while	the standers-by say							
Immediately the cock crew	and Peter remembered	&c.— and going out he wept bitterly.	A second time the cock crew	and Peter remembered	&c.— and immediately when he thought thereon he speaking the wept.	and the Lord turned and looked on Peter	&c.— and and going out he wept bitterly.	

On this table I would make the following remarks:—that generally,—(1) supposing the four accounts to be *entirely independent of one another*,—we are *not bound to require accordance*, nor would there in all probability be any such accordance, *in the recognitions of Peter by different persons*. These may have been *many on each occasion* of denial, and independent narrators may have fixed on different ones among them. (2) *No reader*, who is not slavishly bound to the inspiration of the *letter*, *will require that the actual words spoken by Peter should in each case be identically reported*. See the admirable remarks of Augustine, cited on ch. viii. 25: and remember, that the *substantive fact of a denial* remains the same, whether *I know not what thou sayest*, *I know him not*, or *I am not*, are reported to have been Peter's answer. (3) I do not see that we are obliged to limit the narrative to *three sentences* from Peter's mouth, each expressing a denial, *and no more*. On *three occasions* during the night he was recognized,—on *three occasions he was a denier* of his Lord: such a statement may well embrace *reiterated expressions of recognition*, and *reiterated and importunate denials*, on *each occasion*. And these remarks being taken into account, I premise that all difficulty

is removed from the synopsis above given: the only resulting inferences being, (a) *that the narratives are genuine truthful accounts of facts underlying them all*: and (b) *that they are, and must be, absolutely and entirely independent of one another*.

For (1) the four accounts of the FIRST denial are remarkably coincident. In *all four*, Peter was in the outer hall, where the fire was made (see on ver. 69): *a maid servant* (Mt. Mk. L.),—*the maid servant who kept the door* (John) taxed him (in *differing words in each*, the comparison of which is very instructive) with being a disciple of Jesus: in all four he denies, again in differing words. I should be disposed to think this first recognition to have been *but one*, and the variations to be owing to the independence of the report. (2) In the narratives of the SECOND denial of our first preliminary remark is well exemplified. The same maid (Mk. possibly: but not necessarily—perhaps, the *maiden in the vestibule or porch*) other *maid* (Mt.), *another (male) servant* (Luke), the *standers-by generally* (John), charged him: again, in differing words. It seems he had retreated from the fire as if going to depart altogether (see note, ver. 69), and so attracted the attention both of the group at the fire and of the portress. It would appear to me that for some reason, John was not so precisely informed of the details of this as of the other denials. The “*going out*” (Mt. Mk.) is a super-added detail, of which the “*standing and warming himself*” (John) does not seem to be possessed. (3) On the THIRD occasion, *the standers-by recognize him as a Galilean* (*simply*, Mk. [txt.], Luke: *by his dialect*, Mt., an interesting additional particular),—and *a kinsman of Malchus* crowns the charge by *identifying him in a way which might have proved most perilous*, had not Peter immediately withdrawn. This third time again, his denials are

differently reported:—but here, which is most interesting, we have in Matt.’ s and Mark’s “*he began to curse and to swear*” a very plain intimation, that he spoke *not one sentence only*, but a *succession of vehement denials*.

It will be seen, that for fair comment on the fourfold testimony, we must not commit the mistake of requiring the recognitions, and the recognizers, in each case, to have been identical in the four. Had they been thus identical, in a case of this kind, the four accounts *must have sprung from a common source*, or have been *corrected to one another*: whereas their present varieties and coincidences are most valuable as indications of *truthful independence*. What I wish to impress on the minds of my readers is, that in narratives which have sprung from such truthful independent accounts, they must be prepared sometimes (as e.g. in the details of the day of the Resurrection) for discrepancies which, *at our distance, we cannot satisfactorily arrange*: now and then we may, as in *this instance*, be able to do so with something like verisimilitude:—in some cases, *not at all*. But whether we can thus arrange them or not, being thoroughly persuaded of the holy truthfulness of the Evangelists, and of the divine guidance under which they wrote, our faith is in no way shaken by such discrepancies. We value them rather, as testimonies to independence: and are sure, that if for one moment we could be put in *complete possession of all the details as they happened*, each account would find its justification, and the reasons of all the variations would appear. And this I firmly believe will one day be the case. (See the narrative of Peter’s denials ably treated in an article in the “Christian Observer” for Feb. 1853.)

69.] “An oriental house is usually built round a quadrangular interior court; into which there is a passage (sometimes arched) through the front part of the house, closed next the street by a heavy folding gate, with a small wicket for single persons, kept by a porter. In the text, the interior court, often paved or flagged, and open to the sky, is the ‘*hall*,’ where the attendants made a fire; and the passage beneath the front of the house from the street to this court, is the *pro-aulion* (‘*porch*,’ Mark xiv. 68), or *pylon* (‘*porch*,’ ver. 71). The place where Jesus stood before the High Priest may have been an open room or place of audience on the ground floor, in the rear or on one side of the court; such rooms open in front, being customary.” Robinson.

70.] I know not what thou sayest is an indirect form of denial, conveying in it absolute ignorance of the circumstances alluded to.

73.] thy speech—Wetstein gives many examples of various provincial dialects of Hebrew. The Galilæans could not pronounce properly the gutturals, and they used “*t*” for “*s*”.

75.] out—viz. from the *porch* where the second and third denial had taken place: the motive being, as Chrysostom gives it, “that he might not be convicted by his tears.”

Matthew: Chapter 27

CHAP. XXVII. 1, 2.] JESUS IS LED AWAY TO PILATE. Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 66 (who probably combines with this morning meeting of the Sanhedrim some things that took place at their early assembly),

xxiii. 1. John xviii. 28. The object of this taking counsel, was **so as** (so literally)

to put him to death,—i. e. to condemn

Him formally to death, and *devise the best means* for the accomplishment of the sentence.

2.] Pontius Pilate the governor, see note on Luke iii. 1;—and on the reason of their taking Him to Pilate, on John xviii. 31. Pilate ordinarily resided at Cæsarea; but during the feast, in Jerusalem.

3–10.] REMORSE AND SUICIDE OF JUDAS. Peculiar to Matthew. This incident does not throw much light on the motives of Judas. One thing we learn for certain—that our Lord’s being condemned, which he inferred from His being handed over to the Roman governor, *worked in him remorse*, and that *suicide was the consequence*. Whether this condemnation was *expected* by him or not, does not *here* appear; nor have we any means of ascertaining, except from the former sayings of our Lord respecting him. I cannot (see note on ch. xxvi. 14) believe that his intent was other than sordid gain, to be achieved by the darkest treachery. To suppose that the condemnation *took him by surprise*, seems to me to be inconsistent with the spirit of his own confession, ver. 4. There **I have betrayed the innocent blood** expresses his *act*—his *accomplished purpose*. The bitter feeling in him now is expressed by **I have sinned**, of which he is vividly and dreadfully conscious, now that the result has been attained. Observe it was **the thirty pieces of silver** which he brought back—clearly *the price* of the Lord’s betrayal,—not *earnest-money* merely;—for by this time, nay when he delivered his Prisoner at the house of Annas, he would have in that case received the *rest*.

5.] in the temple—i. e. in the *holy place*, where the priests only might enter. We must conceive him as speaking to them

without, and throwing the money into the temple.

hanged (or strangled) himself] On the account given Acts i. 18, see note on that place. Another account of the end of Judas was current, which I have cited there.

6.] They said this probably by analogy from Deut. xxiii. 18.

the price (given for shedding) of blood; the wages of a murderer.

7. **the potter's field**] the field of some well-known potter—purchased at so small a price probably from having been rendered useless for tillage by excavations for clay: see note on Acts i. 19.

strangers] not Gentiles, but *stranger Jews* who came up to the feasts.

8.] **The field of blood—Aceldama.** See Acts i. 19.

unto this day] This expression shews that a considerable time had elapsed since the event, before St. Matthew's Gospel was published.

9.] The citation is not from Jeremiah (see ref.), and is probably quoted from memory and precisely; we have similar instances in two places in the apology of Stephen, Acts vii. 4, 16,—and in Mark ii, 26. Various means of evading this have been resorted to, which are not worth recounting. Jer. xviii. 1, 2, or perhaps

Jer. xxxii. 6–12, may have given rise to it: or it may have arisen from a Jewish idea [see Wordsworth here], “*that Zechariah had the spirit of Jeremiah.*” The quotation here is very different from the Septuagint,—and not much more like the Hebrew. I put it to any faithful Christian to say, whether of the two presents

the greater obstacle to his faith, the solution given above, or that given by a commentator of our own day, that the name of one prophet is here substituted for that of another, to teach us not to regard the prophets as the *authors* of their prophecies,

but to trace them to divine Inspiration.

11–14.] HE IS EXAMINED BY PILATE, Mark xv. 2–5. Luke xxiii. 2–5. John xviii. 29–38. Our narrative of the hearing before Pilate is the least circumstantial of the four—having however two remarkable additional particulars, vv. 19 and 24. John is the fullest in giving the words of our Lord. Compare the notes there.

11.] Before this Pilate had come out and demanded the cause of his being delivered up; the Jews not entering the Praetorium.

The primary accusation against Him seems to have been that He said that He was Christ a King. This is presupposed in the enquiry of this verse.

Thou sayest is not to be rendered as a *doubtful* answer—much less with Theophylact, as meaning, ‘*Thou sayest it, not I:*’ but as a *strong affirmative*. See above on ch. xxvi. 64.

12–14.] This part of the narrative occurs only in Mark besides, but is explained by Luke ver 5. The charges were, of *exciting the people* from Galilee to Jerusalem. On the mention of Galilee, Pilate sent Him to Herod, Luke, vv. 6–12.

15–26.] BARABBAS PREFERRED TO HIM. HE IS DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED. Mark xv. 6–15. Luke xxiii. 17–25. John xviii. 39, 40. In the substance of this account the Four are in remarkable agreement. St. John gives merely a compendium, uniting in one these three attempts of Pilate to liberate Jesus, and omitting any definite statement of the fact of Barabbas being liberated, and Jesus delivered to them.

15. at that feast] literally, **feast by feast;** i.e. at every feast. The name Bar-abbas, ‘son of his father,’ was not an uncommon one. It does not appear why this man was *notable*. The murderers in the insurrection in which he was involved were *many* (Mark ver. 7).

17.] In St. John's narrative, the suggestion of liberating Barabbas seems to come from the Jews themselves; but not necessarily so: he may only be giving, as

before, a general report of what passed. The **when they were gathered together** seems to imply that a great crowd had collected outside the Praetorium while the trial was going on.

It is possible that the addition, which is called Christ, which Pilate could hardly have heard from the Jews, may have been familiar to him by his wife's mention of Jesus. See below.

18.] The whole narrative presupposes what this verse and the next distinctly assert, that *Pilate was before acquainted with the acts and character of Jesus.*

19.] The **judgment seat** was in a place called in Hebrew Gabbatha, the Pavement—John xix. 13, where however Pilate is not related to have gone thither, till *after* the scourging and mocking of the soldiers. But he may have sat there when he came out in some of his previous interviews with the Jews.

his wife] It had become the custom in Augustus's time for the governors of Provinces to take their wives with them abroad; under Tiberius, Cæcina attempted to **pass a law** forbidding it, but **was** vehemently opposed (by Drusus among others) and put down. We know nothing more of this woman than is here related. Tradition gives her the name of Procla, or Claudia Procula. In the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, c. 2, we read that Pilate called the Jews and said to them, “*Ye know how that my wife is a worshipper of God, and is rather of your religion than mine. They say unto him, Yea, we know it.*”

that just man is a term which shews that she knew the character for purity and sanctity which Jesus had. In the gospel of Nicodemus, the Jews are made to reply, “*Did we not tell thee that he is a magician? behold, he hath sent a dream-token to thy wife.*”

20.] So St. Mark also. St. Luke and St. John merely give, that they all cried out, &c. The exciting of the crowd seems to have taken place while Pilate was receiving the message from his wife.

21.] **answered**, not necessarily to the incitements of the Sanhedrists which he overheard, but rather to the state of confusion and indecision which prevailed.

22.] They chose crucifixion as the ordinary Roman punishment for sedition, and because of their hate to Jesus.

24.] *The washing of the*

hands, to betoken innocence from bloodguiltiness, is prescribed Deut. xxi. 6–9, and Pilate uses it here as intelligible to the Jews.

25.] blood here has been supposed to mean the *punishment of blood*: but more probably there is a much wider reference—as the *adherence of blood to the hands of a murderer* is an idea not bearing any necessary reference to *punishment*, only to *guilt*.

26.) The custom of scourging before execution was general among the Romans. After the scourging, John xix. 1–16, Pilate made a last attempt to liberate Jesus—which answers to “*I will chastise him and let him go,*” Luke, ver. 16.

delivered him—to the Roman soldiers, whose office the execution would be.

27–30.] JESUS MOCKED BY THE SOLDIERS. Mark xv. 16–19 (omitted in Luke). John xix. 1–3. The assertion “*delivered him to be crucified*” in ver. 26 is not strictly in its place *there*. Before that, the contents of this passage come in, and the last attempt of Pilate to liberate Him. 27. **the common hall**] literally, the **pretorium**. The residence of the Roman governor was the former palace of Herod, in the upper city.

the whole band] The **band** is the **cohort**—the *tenth part of a legion*. The term **the whole** is of course not to be pressed.

unto him—*to make sport with Him*. This happened in the guard-room of the cohort: and the narrative of it we may well believe may have come from the centurion or others (see ver. 54), who were afterwards deeply impressed at the crucifixion.

28.] Possibly the mantle in which He had been sent back from Herod—see note on Luke, ver. 11: or perhaps one of the ordinary soldiers' cloaks.

29.] It does not appear whether the purpose of the crown was to *wound*, or simply *for mockery*—and equally uncertain is it, of what kind of thorns it was composed. The *acanthus*, with its large succulent leaves, is singularly unfit for such a purpose: as is the plant with very long sharp thorns commonly known as *spina Christi*, being a *brittle acacia* (*robinia*),—and the very length of the thorns, which would meet in the middle if it were bent into a wreath, precluding it. Some *flexile* shrub or plant must be understood—possibly some variety of the *cactus* or *prickly pear*. ‘Hasselquist, a Swedish naturalist, supposes a very common Plant, *naba* or *nubka* of the Arabs, with many small and sharp spines; soft, round, and pliant branches; leaves much

resembling ivy, of a very deep green, as if in designed mockery of a victor's wreath.' Travels, 288. 1766 (cited by F.M.).

a reed—for a sceptre.

30.] Here follows the *exhibition of Jesus* Pilate, and his last attempt to release ie John xix. 4–16.

31–34.] HE IS LED TO CRUCIFIXION. Mark xv. 20–23. Luke xxiii. 26–33. John xix. 16, 17. The four accounts are still essentially and remarkably distinct. St. Matthew's and St. Mark's are, *from the same source*, but varied in expression, and in detail; St. Luke's and St. John's stand *each alone*; St. Luke's being the fullest, and giving us the deeply interesting address to the daughters of jerusalem

31.] Peculiar to Matt. and Mark.

led him away] or out, as in Mark. Executions usually took place *without* the camp, see Num. xv. 35, or city, 1 Kings xxi. 13, Acts vii. 58, Heb. xiii. 11–18. Grotius

brings examples to shew that the same was the custom of the Romans.

32.] Previously, Jesus had *bore his own cross*: John, ver. 17. We have no data to ascertain any further particulars about this Simon of Cyrene. The only assumption which we are perhaps justified in making, is that he **was** afterwards known in the Church **as** a convert: see note on Mark, ver. 21. He *was coming from the country*, Mark, ibid.; Luke, ver. 26. Meyer suggests, to account for the selection of one out of the multitude present, that possibly **he was a slave**; the indignity of the service to be rendered Preventing their taking any other person.

33.] Golgotha, a skull: the name is by Jerome, and generally, explained from its being the usual place of executions, and *abounding with skulls*—not however *unburied*, which was not allowed. This last consideration raises an objection to the explanation,—and as the name does not import a *place of skulls*, but a *place of a skull* or simply **a skull** (Luke), many understand it as applying to the *shape* of the hill or rock. But neither does this seem satisfactory, as we have no analogy to guide us, and no such hill or rock is known to have existed. As regards the *situation*, we await some evidence which may decide between the conflicting claims of the commonly-received site of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre, and that upheld by Mr. Ferguson, who holds that the Dome of the Rock, usually known as the Mosque of Omar, is in reality the spot of our Lord's entombment. See his Article "Jerusalem" in Dr. Smith's Biblical Dictionary: and on the other side, Williams's Holy City, and Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, edn. 3, p. 459 ff.

34.] It was customary to give a stupefying drink to criminals on their way to execution: of which our Lord would not partake, having shewn by tasting it, that he was aware of its purpose.

In St. Mark's account it is "*wine mingled with myrrh*"—and though *wine* and *vinegar* might mean the same thing, *myrrh* and *gall* cannot. We may observe here (and if the remark be applied with caution and reverence, it is a most useful one), how St. Matt. often adopts in his narrative *the very words of prophecy*, where one or more of the other Evangelists give the matter of fact detail; see above on ch. xxvi. 15, and compare with this verse, Ps. lxix. 21.

35–38.] HE IS CRUCIFIED, Mark xv, 24–28. Luke xxiii. 32–34, 38. John xix. 18–24. The four accounts are distinct from one another, and independent of any one source in common.

35. they crucified him] The cross was an upright pale or beam, intersected by a transverse one at right angles, generally in the shape of a T. In this case, from the 'title' being placed *over the Head*, the upright beam probably projected above the horizontal one, as usually represented†. To this cross, the criminal, being stripped of his clothes, was fixed by nails driven through the hands and (not always, nor perhaps generally, though certainly not seldom—see note at Luke xxiv. 39) through the feet, separate or united. The body was not *supported by* the nails, but by a piece of wood which passed between the legs. On the rest of the verse, see notes on John. The words omitted in the text as not found in *any of the ancient manuscripts*, are clearly interpolated from John, ver. 24, with just the phrase *which was spoken by the prophet* assimilated to St. Matthew's usual form of citation.

36.] watched him—this was usual, to prevent the friends taking crucified persons down. There were *four* soldiers, John, ver. 23; a centurion and three others.

37.] St. Matthew finishes relating what the soldiers did, and then goes back to the course of the narrative. The 'title' appears to have been *written by Pilate* (see John, ver. 19) and sent to be affixed on the cross. It is not known whether the affixing of this title was customary. In Dio Cassius and others, we read of such a title being hung round the neck of a criminal on his way to execution. On the difference in the four Gospels as to the *words of the inscription itself*, it is hardly worth while to

comment, except to remark, that the advocates for the verbal and literal exactness of each gospel may here find an *undoubted* example of the absurdity of their view, which may serve to guide them in less plain and obvious cases. (See this further noticed in the Introduction.) *A title was written, containing certain words; not four titles, all different, but one, differing probably from all of these four, but certainly from three of them.* Let us bear this in mind, when the narratives of words spoken, or events, differ in a similar manner. Respecting the title, see further on John, vv. 20–22.

38.] Then, i.e. after the crucifixion of Jesus was accomplished. These thieves were led out with Jesus, and crucified, perhaps by the same soldiers, or perhaps, from ver. 36, by another band.

39–44.] HE IS MOCKED ON THE CROSS. Mark xv. 29–32. Luke xxiii. 35–37, 39–43. Our narrative and that of St. Mark are from a common source. St. Luke's is wholly distinct. The whole of these indignities are omitted by St. John. **39. they that passed by]** These words say nothing as to its being a *working-day*, or as to the situation of the spot. A matter of so much public interest would be sure to attract a crowd, among whom we find, ver. 41, the chief priests, scribes, and elders. These passers-by were the multitude going in and out of the city, some coming to see, others returning.

wagging their heads] see Ps. xxii 7. The first reproach refers to ch. xxvi. 61; the second to the same, ver. 64

42.] St. Luke gives, more exactly, the second reproach in this verse *as proceeding from the soldiers.*

43.] This is omitted by St. Mark and St. Luke.

44.] Neither St. Matt. nor St. Mark is in possession of the more particular account given by St. Luke, vv. 39–48, where see notes. For the other incident which happened at this time, see John, vv. 25–27, and notes.

15–50.] SUPERNATURAL DARKNESS. LAST WORDS, AND DEATH OF JESUS. Mark xv. 33–37. Luke xxiii. 44–46. John xix. 28–30. The three accounts are here and there very closely allied; Matthew and Mark almost verbally. Luke only, however, contains the *words which the Lord uttered before He expired*,—omits the incident which takes up our vv. 46–49, and inserts *here* the rendering of the veil. John is *entirely distinct*.

45.] According to Mark, ver. 25,

it was the *third hour* when they crucified Him. If so, He had been on the cross three hours, which in *April* would answer to about the same space of time in our day—i. e. from 9–12 A.M. On the difficulty presented by St. John's declaration ch. xix. 14, see notes there and on Mark.

darkness—this was no *eclipse of the sun*, for it was *full moon* at the time—nor any partial obscuration of the sun such as sometimes takes place before an earthquake—for it is clear that no *earthquake in the ordinary sense of the word* is here intended. Those whose belief leads them to reflect WHO was then suffering, will have no difficulty in accounting for these signs of sympathy in Nature, nor in seeing their applicability. The consent, in the same words, of all three Evangelists, must silence all question as to the universal belief of this darkness as a *fact*; and the early Fathers appeal to the testimony of profane authors for its truth. The omission of it in St. John's Gospel is of no more weight than the numerous other instances of such omission. See Amos viii. 9, 10.

over all the earth] The *same word* in the original is rendered *earth* in Luke, but *land* here and in Mark. This would seem to be pure caprice on the part of our translators; and might mislead. Whether these words are to be taken in all their strictness is doubtful. Of course, over the *whole globe* the darkness would not be supernatural—as it would be night *naturally over half of it*. The question is, are we to understand *t hat part of it over which there was day?* I believe *we are*; but see no strong objection to any limitation, provided the *fact itself*, as happening at Jerusalem, is *distinctly recognized*. This last is *matter of testimony*, and the three Evangelists are *pledged to its truth*: the present words hardly stand on the same ground, not being matter of *testimony* properly so called.

46.] See Ps. xxii. 1, The words are Chaldee, and not Hebrew. Our Lord spoke them in the ordinary dialect, not in that of the sacred text itself. The weightiest question is, *In what sense did He use them?* His inner consciousness of union with God must have been complete and indestructible—but, like His higher and holy will, liable to be obscured by human weakness and pain, which at this time was at its very highest. We must however take care not to ascribe *all his suffering to bodily pain*, however cruel: his *soul was in immediate contact with 'and prospect of death—the wages of sin*, which He had *taken on Him, but never committed*—and the conflict at Gethsemane was renewed. ‘He himself,’ as the Berlenberg Bible remarks (Stier), ‘becomes the expositor of the darkness, and shews what it imports.’ In the words however, ‘*My God*’—there speaks the same union with the divine Will, and abiding in the everlasting covenant purpose, as in those, ‘Not my will, but thine.’

These are the only words on the Cross related by St. Matt. and St. Mark—and they are related by none besides.

47.] This was not said by the *Roman soldiers*, who could know nothing of Elias; nor was it *a misunderstanding* of the Jewish spectators, who must have well understood the import of Eli, nor again was it said in any apprehension, from the supernatural darkness, that Elias *might really come*; but it **was** replied in *intended mockery*, as the contemptuous **This man**,—‘this one among the three,’—clearly indicates.

This is one of the cases where those who advocate an original Hebrew Gospel of Matthew are obliged to suppose that the Greek translator has *retained the original words*, in order to make the reason of the reply clear.

48.] This was on account of the words ‘*I thirst*,’ uttered by our Lord: see John, ver. 28. St. Mark’s account is somewhat different: there *the same person* gives the vinegar and utters the scoff which follows. This is quite intelligible—contempt mingled with pity would doubtless find a type among the bystanders. There is no need for assuming that the *soldiers offering vinegar* in Luke, ver. 37, is the same incident as this. Since then, the bodily state of the Redeemer had greatly changed: and what was then offered in mockery, might well be now asked for in the agony of death, and received when presented. I would not however absolutely deny that St. Luke *may be* giving a less precise detail; and may represent this incident by his ver. 37. The **vinegar** is the *posca*, sour wine, or vinegar and water, the ordinary drink of the Roman soldiers. On the other particulars, see notes on John.

49.] we take our account as the strictly precise one, the *rest*—in mockery—*call upon this person* to desist, and wait for Elias to come and save Him: if that of St. Mark, *the giver of the drink calls wpon the rest* (also in veers) to let this suffice, or to let *him* (the giver) alone, and wait, &c. The former seems more probable.

50.] It has been doubted whether **it is finished** of John (ver. 50), and **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit** of Luke (ver. 46), are to be *identified with this crying out*, or to be taken as *distinct from it*. But a nearer examination of the case will set the doubt at rest. The “*delivered up*” of John (ib.) *implies the speech in Luke*; which accordingly was that uttered in this *loud voice*. “*It is finished*” was said before; see notes on John.

51–56.] SIGNS FOLLOWING HIS DEATH. Mark xv. 38–41. Luke xxiii. 47–49. The three narratives are essentially distinct. That of St. Luke is more general—giving only the *sense* of the centurion’s words—twice using the indefinite “*all*”—and not specifying the women. The whole is omitted by St. John.

51.] The **behold** gives solemnity.

This **was** the *inner veil*, screening off the holy of holies from a holy place, Exod. xxvi. 33: Heb. ix. 2, 3. This circumstance has given rise to much incredulous comment, and that even from men like Schleiermacher. A right and deep view of the O.T. symbolism is required to furnish the key to it; and for this we look in vain among those who *set aside that symbolism entirely*.

That was now accomplished, which was the one and great antitype of all those sacrifices offered in the hole place, *in order to gain*, as on the great day of atonement (for that day may be taken as the representation their intent), *entrance into the holiest place*,—the *typical presence of God*. What those sacrifices (ceremonially) procured for the Jews (the type of God’s universal Church) through their High Priest, was now (really) procured for it men by the sacrifice of Him, who was at once the victim and the High Priest. When the objectors assert that no use is made of this event in the Epistle to the Hebrews, they surely cannot have remembered, or not have deeply considered, Heb. x. 19–21. Besides, suppose it *had* been referred to plainly and by name—what would then have been said? Clearly, that *this mention was a later insertion to justify that reference*. And almost this latter, Strauss, *recognizing the allusion in Heb.*, actually does. Schleiermacher also asks, *how could the event be known*, seeing none but priests could have witnessed it, and they would not be likely to betray it? To say nothing of the *almost certain spread of the rumour*, has he forgotten that (Acts vi. 7) “*a great company of the priests were obedient unto the faith?*” Neander, who gives this last consideration its weight (but only as a possibility, that *some* priests may have become converts, and apparently without reference to the above fact), has an unworthy and shuffling note (L. J.p. 757), ending by quoting two testimonies, one apocryphal, the other rabbinical, from which he concludes that ‘*some* matter of fact lies at the foundation’ of this (according to him) *mythical adjunct*,

the earth did quake—not an ordinary earthquake, but connected with the two next clauses, and finding in them its explanation and justification.

the rocks rent] It would not be right altogether to reject the testimonies of travellers to the fact of extraordinary rents and fissures in the rocks near the spot. Of course those who know no other proof of the historical truth of the event, will not be likely to take this as one; but to us, who are firmly convinced of it, every such trace, provided it be soberly and honest ascertained, is full of interest.

52, 53.] The whole transaction was *supernatural* and *symbolic*: no other interpretation of it will satisfy even ordinary

common sense. Was the earthquake a *mere coincidence*? This not even those assert, who deny all symbolism in the matter. Was it a mere *sign of divine wrath* at what was done—a mere *prodigy*, like those at the death of Cæsar? Surely no Christian believer can think this. Then *what was it?* What but the *opening of the tombs*—the symbolic declaration, that *the Death* which had happened had broken the bands of death for ever? These following clauses, which have no mythical nor apocryphal character, require this explanation to be fully understood. The graves were opened *at the moment of the death* of the Lord; but inasmuch as He is the firstfruits from the dead—*the Resurrection and the Life*—the bodies of the saints in them *did not arise till He rose*, and having appeared to many after his resurrection,—possibly during the forty days,—went up with Him into His glory. Moses and Elias, who were before in glory, were not *from the dead*, properly speaking: see note on ch. xvii. 1.

arose is the *result*—not the *immediate accompaniment*, of the opening of the tombs. It is to prevent this being supposed, that the qualification **after his resurrection** is added.

54.] the earthquake and those that were done is represented by “*that he so gave up the ghost*,” Mark. Does the latter of these look as if compiled from the former? The circumstances of our vv. 51–53, except the rending of the veil, are not in the possession St. Mark, of the minute accuracy of whose account I have no doubt. *His report* is that of *one man*—and that man, more than probably, a *convert*. St. Matthew’s is of *many*, and represents their general impression. St. Luke’s is also *general*.

those things that were done points to the crying out, as indeed does the “so” in Mark:—but see notes there.

was the Son of God—which the Centurion had heard that *He gare Himself out for*, John xix. 7, and our ver.

43. It cannot be doubtful, I think, that he used these words *in the Jewish sense*—and with some idea of that which they implied. When Meyer says that he must have used them in a heathen sense, meaning a *hero or demigod*, we must first be shewn that “*Son of God*” was *ever so used*. I believe St. Luke’s to be a different report: see notes there.

55, 56.] Magdalene from Magdala: see note on ch. xv. 39. She is not to be confounded with Mary who anointed our Lord, John xii. 1, nor with the woman who did the same, Luke vii. 36: see Luke viii. 2.

Mary the mother of James....] The wife of Alphæus or Clopas, John xix. 25: see note on ch. xiii. 55.

Mark adds “*the less*” to distinguish him from the brother of our Lord (probably not from the son of Zebedee).

The mother of the sons of Zebedee (i. e. of James and John: not “*of Zebedee’s children*,” as A.V. curiously renders it)] *Salome*, Mark. Both *omit Mary the mother of Jesus*:—but we must remember, that if we are to take the group as described at this moment, *she was not present*, having been, as I believe (see note on John, ver. 27), **led away** by the beloved Apostle immediately on the speaking of the words, ‘Behold thy mother.’ And if this view be objected to, yet she could not be named here, nor in **Mark**, except separately from these three—for she could not have been well included among those who ministered to Him. There must have been also *another group*, of His *disciples*, within sight;—e. g. Thomas, who said, ‘Except I see in his hands the print of the nails,’ &c., and generally those to whom He afterwards shewed his hands and feet as a proof of His identity.

57–61.) JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA BEGS, AND BURIES THE BODY OF JESUS. Mark xv. 42–47. Luke xxiii. 50–56. John xix. 88–42. The four accounts, agreeing in substance, are remarkably distinct and independent, as will appear by a close comparison of them.

57.] Before sunset, at which time the sabbath, and that an high day, began: see Deut. xxi. 23. The *Roman custom* was for the bodies to remain on the crosses till devoured by birds of prey. On the other hand Josephus says that the Jews were so careful about burying that they took down even those who had been crucified, and buried them before sunset.

came] probably to the *Praetorium*. Meyer supposes, to the *place of execution*: which is possible, and seems supported by “*came and took down*,” John ver. 38, and “*there came also....*” ver. 39, which certainly was to *Golgotha*.

a rich man—he was also a *counsellor*, i.e. one of the Sanhedrim: see Mark, ver. 43: Luke, ver. 51.

Arimathæa] Opinions are divided as to whether this was Rama in Benjamin (see ch. ii. 18), or Rama (Ramathaim) in Ephraim, the birth-place of Samuel. The form of the name is more like the *latter*.

58.] The repetition of **the body** is remarkable, and indicates a common origin, in this verse, with Mark, who after **gave** expresses **the body**, on account of the expression of Pilate’s surprise, and the change of subject between.

59.] John (ver. 39) mentions *the arrival of Nicodemus* with an hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes, in which also the

Body was wrapped. The Three seem not to be in possession of this—nor St. Matthew and St. John of the subsequent design of the women to embalm It. What wonder if, at such a time, one party of disciples should not have been aware of the doings of another? It is possible that the women, who certainly *knew what had been done* with the Body (see ver. 61), may have intended to bestow on it more elaborate care, as whatever was done this night was *hurried*,—see John, vv. 41, 42.

60.] St. Matthew alone relates that it was Joseph's own tomb. St. John, that it was *in a garden*, and *in the place where He was crucified*. All, except St. Mark, notice the *newness* of the tomb. St. John does not mention that it *belonged to Joseph*—but the expression “*in which was never man yet laid*” looks as if he knew more than he has thought it necessary to state. His reason for the Body being laid there is, that *it was near*, and the Preparation rendered haste necessary. But then we may well ask, How should the body of an executed person be laid in a new tomb, without the consent of the owner being first obtained? And who so likely to provide a tomb, as he whose pious care for the Body was so eminent?

All that we can determine respecting the sepulchre from the data here furnished is, (1) That it was not a *natural* cave, but an *artificial excavation* in the rock. (2) That it was cut *downwards*, after the manner of a grave with us, but *horizontally*, or *nearly* so, into the face of the rock—this I conceive to be implied in “*rolled a great stone to the door*,” as also by the use of “*stooping down*,” John xx. 5, 11, and “*went in*,” ib. 5, 6.

(3) That it **was** *in the spot* where the crucifixion took place. Cyril of Jerusalem speaks of “the tomb close by, where He was laid, and the stone which was put on the door, which to this day (about 380 A.D.) lies by the tomb.”

61.] St. Luke mentions more generally *the women who came* “with Him from Galilee; and specifies that they *prepared spices and ointments, and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment*.

62–66.] THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES OBTAIN FROM PILATE A GUARD FOR THE SEPULCHRE. Peculiar to Matthew.

62. the next day] not on that night, but on the next day. A difficulty has been found in its being called the day *after the Preparation*, considering that it was *itself the sabbath*, and the *greatest sabbath in the year*. But I believe the expression to be carefully and purposely used. The chief priests, &c. did not go to Pilate on the sabbath,—but *in the evening, the termination of the sabbath*. Had the Evangelist said “*which is the sabbath*,” the incongruity would at once appear of such an application being made on the sabbath—and he therefore designates the day as the first after that, which, as the day of the Lord's death, the *preparation*, was uppermost in his mind.

The narrative following has been undeservedly impugned, and its historical accuracy given up by even the best of the German Commentators, and by others. The chief difficulties found in it seem to be: (1) How should the chief priests, &c. *know of His having said*, ‘in three days I will rise again,’ when the saying was hid even from His own disciples? The answer to this is easy. The *meaning* of the saying may have been, and **was**, hid from the disciples; but the *fact of its having been said* could be no secret. Not to lay any **stress** on John ii. 19, we have the direct prophecy of Matt. xii. 40—and besides this, there would be a rumour current, through the intercourse of the Apostles with others, that He had been in the habit of so saying. As to the *understanding* of the words, we must remember that *hatred is keener sighted than love*;—that the *raising of Lazarus* would shew, *what sort of a thing rising the dead was to be*;—and that the fulfilment of the Lord's announcement of his *crucifixion* would naturally lead them to look further, to *what more* he had announced. (2) How should the women, who were solicitous about the *removal* of the stone, not have been still more so about its being sealed, and a guard set? The answer to this has been given above—they were not aware of the circumstance, because the was not set till the evening before. There would be no need of the application before the *approach of the third day*—it is only made for a watch **until the third day**, ver. 64—and it is not probable that the circumstance would transpire that night—certainly it seems not to have done so. (3) That Gamaliel was of the council, and if such a thing as this, and its sequel ch. xxviii. 11–15, had really happened, he need not have expressed himself doubtfully, Acts v. 39, but would have been certain that this was from God.

But, first, it does not necessarily follow that *every member* of the Sanhedrim was present and applied to Pilate, or even had they done so, that all bore a part in the act of ch. xxviii. 12. One who, like Joseph, had not consented to their deed before—and we may safely say that there were others such—would naturally withdraw himself from further proceedings against the person of Jesus. On Gamaliel and his Character, see note on Acts, as above. (4) Had this been so, the three other Evangelists would not have passed over so important a testimony to the Resurrection. But surely we cannot argue in this way—for thus every important fact narrated by *one Evangelist alone* must be rejected—e. g. (which stands in much the same relation) the *satisfaction of Thomas*,—and other such narrations. Till we know much more about the circumstances under which, and the scope with which, each

Gospel was compiled, all à priori arguments of this kind are good for nothing.

65.] Ye have—the verb rendered may be either 1), indicative, **Ye have**:—but then the question arises, *What guard had they?* and if they had one, why go to Pilate? Perhaps we must understand some detachment placed at their disposal during the feast

—but there does not seem to be any record of such a practice. That the guards *were under the Sanhedrim* is plain from ch. xxviii. 11, where they make their report, *not to Pilate, but to the chief priests*:—or 2), imperative; which doubtless it may be; see 2 Tim. i. 13 and note; and the sense here on that hypothesis would be, **Take a body of men for a guard.** And to this latter I rather incline: see the note in my Greek Test.

as ye can] literally **as you know how:—in the best manner you can.** There is no irony in the words, as has been supposed. The sealing was by means of a cord or string passing across the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, and fastened at either end to the rock by sealing-clay.

Matthew: Chapter 28

CHAP. XXVIII. 1–10.] JESUS, HAVING RISEN FROM THE DEAD, APPEARS TO THE WOMEN. Mark xvi. 1–8. Luke xxiv. 1–12. John xx. 1–10. The independence and distinctness of the four narratives in this part have never been questioned, and indeed herein lie its principal difficulties. With regard to them, I refer to what I have said in the Introduction, that *supposing us to be acquainted with every thing said and done in its order and exactness, we should doubtless be able to reconcile, or account for, the present forms of the narratives;* but not having this key to the harmonizing of them, all attempts to do so in minute particulars must be full of arbitrary assumptions, and carry no certainty with them. And I may remark, that *of all harmonies, those of the incidents of these chapters are to me the most unsatisfactory.* Giving their compilers all credit for the best intentions, I confess they seem to me to *weaken* instead of strengthening the evidence, which now rests (speaking merely objectively) on the unexceptionable testimony of three independent narrators, and of one, who besides was an eye-witness of much that happened. If we are to compare the four, and ask which is to be taken as most nearly reporting the *exact* words and incidents, on this there can I think be no doubt. On internal as well as external ground, *that of St. John* takes the *highest place:* but not, of course, to the exclusion of those parts of the narrative which *he does not touch.* The *improbability* that the Evangelists had seen one another's accounts, becomes, in *this part* of their Gospels, an *impossibility.* Here and there we discern traces of a common narration as the ground of their reports, as e.g. Matt. v. 5–8: Mark v. 5–8, but even these are very few.

As I have abandoned all idea of harmonizing throughout, I will beg the student to compare carefully the notes on the other Gospels.

1. In the end of the sabbath] There is some little difficulty here, because the end of the sabbath (and of the week) was at *sunset the night before.* It is hardly to be supposed that St. Matthew means the *evening* of the sabbath, though “*dawn*” is used of the day beginning at sunset (Luke xxiii. 54, and note). It is best to interpret a doubtful expression in unison with the other testimonies, and to suppose that here both the *day* and the *breaking of the day* are taken in their *natural*, not their *Jewish* sense.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary] In Mark, *Salome also.* St. John speaks of *Mary Magdalene alone.* See notes there.

to see the sepulchre} It was to *anoint* the Body, for which purposes they had bought, since the end of the Sabbath, ointments and spices, Mark.

In Mark it is *after the rising of the sun;* in John, *while yet dark;* in Luke, *at dim dawn;* the two last agree with our text.

2.] This must not be taken as pluperfect, “*there had been, &c.,*” which would be altogether inconsistent with the text. The words here must mean that the women were *witnesses of the*

earthquake, and that which happened.

It was not *properly* an earthquake, but **was** the sudden opening of the tomb by the descending Angel, as the **for** shews. The *rolling away was* not done naturally, but by **a shock.**

It must not be supposed that the Resurrection of our Lord took place *at this time*, as sometimes imagined, and represented in paintings. It *had taken place before;*—“*He is risen, &c.,*” are the words of the Angel. It was not *for Him*, to whom (see John xx. 19–26) the stone was *no hindrance*, but *for the women and His disciples*, that it was rolled away.

3.] His appearance; not in *shape* (as some would explain it away), but in brightness.

5.] In Mark, *a young man in a white robe was sitting in the tomb on the right hand:* in Luke, *two men in shining raiment* (see Acts i. 10) *appeared to them.* St. John relates, that Mary Magdalene looked into the tomb and saw (but this must have been afterwards) two angels in white sitting one at the head, the other at the feet where the Body had lain. All attempts to *deny* the

angelic appearances, or *ascribe them to later tradition*, are dishonest and absurd. That related in John is as definite as either of the others, and he certainly had it from Mary Magdalene herself.

ye is emphatic, addressed to the women.

6.] **as he said** is further expanded in Luke, vv. 6, 7. See ch. xvi. 21; xvii. 23.

the Lord (only found this once in Matt. as an appellation of Jesus) is emphatic;—‘a glorious appellation,’ Bengel

7.] This appearance in Galilee had been foretold before his death, see ch. xxvi. 32. It is to be observed that St. Matthew records *only this one* appearance to the Apostles, and in Galilee. It appears strange that this should be the entire testimony of St. Matthew: for it seems hardly likely that he would omit those important appearances in Jerusalem when the Apostles were assembled, John xx. 19, 26, or that one which was closed by the Ascension. But perhaps it may be in accord with his evident design of giving the general form and summary of each series of events, rather than their characteristic details. See below on ver. 20.

The **goeth before** here is not to be understood as implying the *journeying* on the part of our Lord Himself. It is cited from His own words, ch. xxvi. 32, and there, as here, merely implies that *He would be there when they arrived*. It has a reference to the collecting of the flock which had been scattered by the smiting of the Shepherd; see John x. 4.

there shall ye see him is determined, by “*there shall they see me*,” below, to be *part of the message to the disciples*: not spoken to the women directly, but certainly indirectly including them. The idea of their being *merely* messengers; to the Apostles, without bearing any share in the promise, is against the spirit of the context: see further in note on ver. 17.

lo, I have told you is to give solemnity to the command. These words are peculiar to Matthew, and are a mark of accuracy.

8.] “*With fear, because of the prodigies; with joy, for the promises,*” Euthym.

9.] Neither St. Mark nor St. Luke recounts, or seems to have been aware of, this appearance. St. Mark even says “*they said nothing to any man: for they were afraid.*” But (see above) it does not therefore follow that the narratives are inconsistent. St. Mark’s account (see note there) is evidently broken off suddenly; and St. Luke’s (see also note there) appears to have been derived from one of those who went to Emmaus, who had evidently but an imperfect knowledge of what happened before they left the city. This being taken into account, we may fairly require that the judgment should be suspended in lack of further means of solving the difficulty.

held him by the feet, partly in fear and as suppliants, for the Lord says, “*fear not*,”—but shewing also the joy with which that fear was mixed (ver. 8)—joy at having recovered Him whom they loved.

10.] **my brethren;** so also to Mary Magdalene, John xx. 17.

The repetition of this injunction by the Lord has been thought to indicate that this is a portion of another narrative inwoven here, and may possibly belong to the same incident as that in ver. 7. But all probability is against this: the passages are distinctly consecutive, and moreover both are in the well-known style of St. Matthew (e. g., “*behold*” in both). There is perhaps more probability that this may be the same appearance as that in John xx. 11–18, on account of “*touch me not*,” there, and “*my brethren*,”—but in our present imperfect state of information, this must remain a *mere* probability.

11–15.] THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES BRIBE THE GUARDS TO GIVE A FALSE ACCOUNT OF THE RESURRECTION. Pecu-liar to Matthew. This was a meeting of the Sanhedrin, but surely hardly an *official* and *open* one; does not the form of the narrative rather imply that it was a secret compact between those (the majority) who were bitterly hostile to Jesus? The circumstance that Joseph had taken no part in their counsel before, leads us to think that others may have withdrawn themselves from the meeting, e.g., Gamaliel, who could hardly have consented to such a measure as this.

14.] not, as in A.V., ‘*come to the ears of the governor*,’ but **be borne witness of before the governor**, come before him officially: i.e. ‘if a stir be made, and you be in trouble about it.’

persuade, viz., by a bribe of money, which, “knowing the covetous character of the man, they were confidently able to promise.” Trench, on the A.V., p. 72.

15.] Justin Martyr says that the Jews sent men far and wide to disseminate this report.

16–20.] APPEARANCE OF THE LORD ON A MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE. This was *after the termination of the feast*,

allowing *two first days of the week*, on which the appeared to the assembled Apostles (John xx. 19, 26), to elapse. It illustrates the fragmentary nature of the materials out of which our narrative is built, that the appointment of this mountain as a place of assembly for the eleven *has not been mentioned*, although the text seems to imply that it has. Stier well remarks (Reden Jesu, vii. 209) that in this verse St. Matthew gives a hint of *some interviews having taken place previously to this* in Galilee. And it is important to bear this in mind, as suggesting, if not the solution, at least the *ground of solution*, of the difficulties of this passage. Ver. 17 seems to present an instance of this fragmentary narrative. The impression given by it is that the majority of the eleven worshipped Him, but some doubted (not, whether they should worship Him; which is absurd, and not implied in the word). This however would hardly be possible, *after the two appearances at Jerusalem* in John xx. We are therefore obliged to conclude that *others were present*. Whether these others were the ‘*500 brethren at once*’ of whom St. Paul speaks 1 Cor. xv. 6, or some other disciples, not appear. Olshausen and Stier suppose, from the previous announcement of this meeting, and the repetition of that announcement by the angel, and by our Lord, that it probably included *all the disciples* of Jesus; at least, all who would from the nature of the case be brought together.

18. came] They appear to have first seen Him at a distance, probably on the top of the mountain. This whole introduction forbids us to suppose that the following words are a mere compendium of what was said on various occasions. Like the opening of ch. v., it carries with it a direct assertion that what follows, was spoken *then, and there*.

All power is given, &c.] The words are a reference to the prophecy in Daniel, which compare. *Given*,—by the Father, in the fulfilment of the Eternal Covenant, in the Unity of the Holy Spirit. *Now first* is this covenant, in its fulness, proclaimed upon earth. The Resurrection was its last seal: the Ascension was the *taking possession* of the Inheritance. But the Inheritance is already won; and the Heir is only remaining on earth for a temporary purpose—the assuring His joint-heirs of the verity of His possession.

All power in heaven and earth: see Eph. i. 20–23; Col. ii. 10; Heb. i. 6; Rom. xiv. 9; Phil. ii. 9–11; 1 Pet. iii. 22.

19.] therefore is not found, or found in varying forms, in many of the ancient authorities. It is probably a gloss, but an excellent one. It is the glorification of the Son by the Father through the Spirit, which is the foundation of the Church of Christ in all the world. And when we baptize into the Name (i. e. into the fulness of the consequence of the objective covenant, and the subjective confession) of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is *this* which forms the ground and cause of our power to do so—that this flesh of man, of which God hath made **all the nations**, is *glorified in the Person of our Redeemer*, through whom we all have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Go.... and make disciples] Demonstrably, this was not understood as spoken to the Apostles *only*, but to all the brethren. Thus we read (Acts viii. 2, 4), “*they were all scattered abroad.... except the Apostles:—they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*” There is peculiar meaning in **make disciples of**. All power is given me—go therefore and... *subdue*? Not so: the purpose of the Lord is to bring men to the *knowledge of the truth*—to work on and in their hearts, and lift them up to be partakers of the Divine Nature. And therefore it is not ‘*subdue*,’ but **make disciples of** (see below).

all the nations again is closely connected with “*all in earth.*”

all the nations] including the Jews. It is absurd to imagine that in these words of the Lord there is implied a *rejection of the Jews*, in direct variance with his commands elsewhere, and also with the world-wide signification of “*in earth*,” above. Besides, the (temporary) rejection of the Jews consists in this, that they are *numbered among all the nations*, and not a peculiar people any longer: and are become, in the providence of God, the subjects of that preaching, of which by original title they ought to have been the promulgators. We find the first preachers of the gospel, so far from excepting the Jews, uniformly bearing their testimony to them *first*. With regard to the difficulty which has been raised on these words,—that if they had been thus spoken by the Lord, the Apostles would never have had any doubt about the admission of the Gentiles into the Church,—I would answer that the Apostles *never had any doubt whatever about admitting* Gentiles,—only whether they should not be *circumcised* *first*. In this command, the prohibition of ch. x. 5 is for ever removed.

baptising them] Both these present participles are the conditions of the imperative preceding. The *making disciples* consists of two the *initiatory*, admissory *rite*, and the *subsequent teaching*. It is much to be that the inadequate rendering, ‘*teach*,’ has in our Bibles clouded the meaning of these important words. It will be observed that in our Lord’s words, as in the Church, the process of ordinary discipleship is *from baptism to instruction*—i. e. is, *admission in infancy to the covenant*, and *growing up into observing all things commanded by Christ*—the exception being, what circumstances rendered so frequent in the early church, *instruction before baptism* in the case of *adults*. On this we may also remark, that baptism, as known to the Jews, included, just as it does in the Acts (ch. xvi. 15, 88), *whole households—wives and children*.

As regards the command itself, no unprejudiced reader can doubt that it regards the *outward rite* of BAPTISM, so well known in this gospel as having been practised by John, and received by the Lord Himself. And thus it was immediately, and has been ever since, understood by the Church. As regards all attempts to explain away this sense, we may say—even setting aside the

testimony furnished by the Acts of the Apostles,—that it is in the highest degree improbable that our Lord should have given, at a time when He was summing up the duties of His Church in such weighty words, a command couched in figurative or ambiguous language—one which He must have known would be interpreted by His disciples, now long accustomed to the rite and its name, otherwise than He intended it.

into the name...] Reference is apparently made to the Baptism of the Lord himself, where the whole Three Persons of the Godhead were in manifestation.

Not the *names*—but **the name**—setting forth the Unity of the Godhead.

into] It is unfortunate again here that our English Bibles do not give us the force of this word. “*In*” should have been **into**, (as in Gal. iii. 27 al.,) both here and in 1 Cor. x. 2, and wherever the expression is used. It imports, not only a *subjective recognition* hereafter by the child of the truth implied in the Name, &c., but an *objective admission* into the covenant of Redemption—a *putting on of Christ*. Baptism is the *contract of espousal* (Eph. v. 26) between Christ and His Church. Our word ‘*in*’ being retained both here and in our formula of Baptism, it should always be remembered that *the Sacramental declaration is contained in this word*; that it answers (as Stier has well observed, vii. 268) to the “*This is my Body*,” in the other Sacrament. On the difference between the *baptism of John* and *Christian baptism*, see notes on ch. iii. 11: Acts xviii. 25; xix. 1–5.

20.] Even in the case of the adult, this teaching must, *in greater part*, follow his baptism; though as we have seen (on ver. 19), in *his* exceptional case, *some of it must go before*. For this teaching is nothing less than the building up of the whole man into the obedience of Christ. In these words, inasmuch as the then living disciples *could not teach all nations*, does the Lord *found the office of Preachers* in His Church, with all that belongs to it,—the duties of the *minister*, the *school-teacher*, the *scripture reader*. This ‘teaching’ is not merely the *preaching* of the gospel—not mere proclamation of the good news—but the whole catechetical office of the Church upon and in the baptized.

and, lo,...] These words imply and set forth the *Ascension*, the manner of which is not related by our Evangelist.

I, in the fullest sense: not the *Divine presence, as distinguished from the Humanity* of Christ. His Humanity is with us likewise. The vine lives in the branches. Stier remarks the contrast be-tween this ‘*I am with you*,’ and the view of Nicodemus (John iii. 2) ‘no man can do these miracles—except *God be with him*.’

with you] mainly, *by the promise of the Father* (Luke xxiv. 49) which *He has poured out on his Church*. But the presence of the Spirit is the effect of the presence of Christ—and the presence of Christ is part of the *gift of all power* above—the effect of the well-pleasing of the Father. So that the mystery of His name *Emmanuel* (with which, as Stier remarks, this Gospel begins and ends) is fulfilled—God is *with us*. And—all the (*appointed*) **days**—for they are numbered by the Father, though by none but Him.

unto the end of the world—that time of which they had heard in so many parables, and about which they had asked, ch. xxiv. 3—literally, **the completion of the state of time**. After that, He will be no more properly speaking *with us*, but we *with Him* (John xvii. 24) where He is.

To understand **with you** only of the Apostles and their (?) successors, is to destroy the whole force of these most weighty words.

The command is to *the UNIVERSAL CHURCH*—to be performed, in the nature of things, by her *ministers* and *teachers*, the manner of which is not here prescribed, but to be learnt in the unfoldings of Providence recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, who by his special ordinance were the founders and first builders of that Church—but whose office, *on that very account, precluded the idea of succession or renewal*.

That St. Matthew does not record the fact or manner of *the Ascension*, is not to be used as a ground for any presumptions regarding the authenticity of the records of it which we possess. The narrative here is *suddenly brought to a termination*: that in John ends with an express declaration of its incompleteness. What reasons there may have been for the omission, either subjective, in the mind of the author of the Gospel, or objective, in the fragmentary character of the apostolic reports which are here put together, it is wholly out of our power, in this age of the world, to determine. As before remarked, the *fact itself* is here and elsewhere in this Gospel (see ch. xxii. 44; xxiv. 30; xxv. 14, 31; xxvi. 64) clearly *implied*.

MARK

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Throughout Mark, the parallel places in Matthew are to be consulted. Where the agreement is verbal, or nearly so, no notes are here appended.

Mark: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1–8.] THE PREACHING AND BAPTISM OF JOHN. Matt. iii. 1–12. Luke iii. 1–17. The object of St. Mark being to relate *the official life and ministry* of our Lord, he begins with His *baptism*; and as a necessary introduction to it, with *the preaching of John the Baptist*.

His account of John's baptism has many phrases in common with both Matthew and Luke; but from the additional prophecy quoted in ver. 2, is certainly *independent and distinct* (see Introduction to the Gospels).

1. beginning] This is probably a title to what follows as Matt. i. 1, and not connected with ver. 4, nor with ver. 2. It is simpler, and gives more majesty to the opening, to put a period at the end of ver. 1, and make the citation from the prophet a new and confirmatory title. **of Jesus Christ]** as its *Author*, or as its Subject, as the context may determine. Here probably it is the latter: and so will mean, **the glad tidings concerning Jesus Christ**.

2, 3.] The citation here is from *two prophets*, Isa. and Mal.; see reff. The fact will not fail to be observed by the careful and honest student of the Gospels. Had the citation from Isaiah stood first, it would have been of no note, as Meyer observes. Consult notes on Matt. xi. 10; iii. 3.

4.] See on Matt. iii. 1. the baptism of repentance, the baptism *symbolic of repentance and forgiveness*—of the death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness. The *former* of these only comes properly into the notion of John's baptism, which did not confer the Holy Spirit, ver. 8.

7.] to stoop down and unloose... the sion is common to Mark, Luke, and John (i. 27). It amounts to the same as *bearing the shoes*—for he who did the last would necessarily be also employed in loosing and taking off the sandal. But the variety is itself indicative of the independence of Matthew and Mark of one another. St. John used the two expressions at different times, and our witnesses have reported both. Stoop down is added by St. Mark, who, as we shall find, is more minute in circumstantial detail than the other Evangelists.

8.] Matthew and Luke add “and fire.”

9–11.] JESUS IS BAPTIZED BY HIM. Matt. iii. 13–17. Luke iii. 21, 22.

9.] From Nasareth is contained here only. The words with which this account is introduced, express indefiniteness as to time. It was (Luke iii. 21) *after all the people were baptized*: see note there. The commencement of this Gospel has no marks of an eye-witness: it is the *compendium of generally current accounts*.

10.] straightway (immediately) is a favourite connecting word with Mark. St. Mark has here taken the oral account, verbatim, and applied it to Jesus, ‘He saw,’ &c.—and him must mean *himself*: otherwise es a understand *John* before saw, and take coming up as *pendent*, which is very improbable. The construction of the sentence is a remarkable testimony of the independence of Mark and Matthew even when parts of the narrative agree verbatim. See note on Matt. iii. 16.

cleft asunder] Peculiar to Mark; and more descriptive than “opened,” Matthew, Luke.

12, 13.] TEMPTATION OF JESUS. Matt. iv. 1–11. Luke iv. 1–18.

12, 13.] drive = lead up Matthew, = lead Luke. It is a more forcible word than either of these to express the mighty and cogent impulse of the Spirit. **Satan: the devil**, Matthew, Luke: see note, Matt. iv. 1. It seems to have been permitted to the evil one to tempt our Lord *during the whole of the 40 days*, and of this we have here, as in Luke an implied assertion. The additional intensity of temptation at the *end* of that period, is expressed in Matthew by the tempter *coming* to Him—becoming visible and audible. Perhaps the *being with the beasts* may point to one form of temptation, viz. that of *terror*, which was practised on Him—but of the *inward trials*, who may speak? There is nothing here to contradict the fast spoken of in Matthew and Luke, as some have maintained. Our Evangelist, Perhaps implies it in the last words of ver. 13. remarkable that those Commentators who are fondest of maintaining that Mark constructed his narrative out of those of Matthew and Luke, are also most keen in pointing out what they call irreconcilable differences between him and them. No apportionment of these

details to the various successive parts of the temptation is given by our Evangelist. They are simply stated to have happened, compendiously.

14, 14.] JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY. Matt. iv. 12–17. Luke iv. 14 15.

14, 15] See notes on Matt. iv. 12. **delivered up** This seems to have been the usual and well-known term for the imprisonment of John.

The time is fulfilled] See Gal. iv. 4. “The end of the old covenant is at hand;.... the Son is born, grown up, anointed (in his baptism), tempted, gone forth, the testimony of his witness is given, and now He witnesses Himself; now begins that last speaking of God, *by His Son*, (Heb. i. 1), which henceforth shall be proclaimed in all the world till the end comes.” Stier.

and believe the gospel] These words are in Mark only. They furnish us an interesting characteristic of the difference between the preaching of John, which was that of repentance—and of our Lord, which was repentance *and faith*. It is not *in Himself as the Saviour* that this faith is *yet* preached: this He did not proclaim till much later in his ministry: but in *the fulfilment of the time and approach of the kingdom of God*.

16–20.] CALLING OF PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, AND JOHN. Matt. iv. 18–22.

Almost verbatim as Matthew. The variations are curious: after Simon, Mark omits *which was called Peter*:—although the name was prophetically given by our Lord before this, in John 1. 48, it perhaps was not *actually* given, till the twelve became a distinct body, see ch. iii. 16.

The “walked by” and the “casting a net into the sea” are noticed by Meyer as belonging to the graphic delineation which this Evangelist loves.

19.] who also, as well as the former pair of brothers. It belongs only to “*in the ship*,” not to the following clause.

20.] with the hired servants is inserted for particularity, and perhaps to *soften* the leaving their father alone. It gives us a view of the station of life of Zebedee and his sons; they were not *poor* fishermen, but had *hired servants*. May we not venture to say that both these accounts came from Peter originally? St. Matthew’s an earlier one, taught (or given in writing perhaps) without any definite idea of making it part of a larger work; but this carefully corrected and rendered accurate, even to the omitting the name *Peter*, which, though generally known, and therefore mentioned in the *oral ac-count*, was perhaps not yet formally given, and must be omitted in the *historical*.

21–28.] HEALING OF A DEMONIAC IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT CAPERNAUM. Luke iv. 31–37.

21.] Not immediately after the preceding. *The calling of the Apostles, the Sermon on the Mount, the healing of the leper, and of the centurion’s servant*, precede the following miracle.

23.] A formula occurring entire at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. vii. 28, and the first clause of it,—and, in substance, the second also,—in the corresponding place to this in Luke iv. 32.

23–28.] This account occurs in Luke iv. 33–37, nearly verbatim: for the variations, see there. It is very important for our Lord’s official life, as shewing that He rejected and forbade all testimony to his Person, *except that which He came on earth to give*. The demons knew Him, but were silenced. (See Matt. viii. 29; ch. v. 7.) It is of course utterly impossible to understand such a testimony as that of the sick person, still less of the *fever or disease*.

of Nasareth] We may ob-serve that this epithet often occurs under strong contrast to His Majesty and glory; as here, and ch. xvi. 6, and Acts ii, 22–24; xxii. 8; and, we may add, John xix. 19.

us, generic: the demons having a common cause. Bengel.

torn him] perhaps more properly, convulsed him. fake adds, that he did not *injure* him at all.

28.] This miracle, which St. Mark and St. Luke relate first of all, is not stated by them to have *been the first*. Compare John ii, 11.

28–34.] HEALING OF SIMON’ S MOTHER-IN-LAW. Matt. viii, 14–17. Luke iv. 38–41. The three accounts, perhaps from a common source (but see notes on Luke), are all identical in substance, but very diverse in detail and words.

31] left her, of the *fever*, is common to all, and-**ministered unto them** (or **him**), but *no more*. The same may be said of vv. 32–34:—the words of ver. 33 are added in our text, shewing the accurate detail of an eyewitness, as also does the minute specification of the house, and of the two accompanying our Lord, in ver. 29. Observe the distinction between the *sick* and the *demoniacs*: compare ch. iii. 15. Observe also **many** in both cases, in connection with the statement that the sun had set. There was not time for *all*. Meyer, who notices this, says also that in some the conditions of healing may have been wanting. But we do not find this obstacle existing on other occasions: compare Matt. iv. 24; xii, 15; xiv. 14: Acts v. 16. On the not permitting the demons to speak, see note above, ver. 25. I should be disposed to ascribe the account to Peter. Simon, Andrew, James, and John occur together again, ch. xiii. 3.

35–38.] JESUS, BEING SOUGHT OUT IN HIS RETIREMENT, PREACHES AND HEALS THROUGHOUT GALILEE. Luke iv. 42, 43, where see note. Our Lord's pre-sent purpose was, not to remain in any one place, but to make the circuit of Galilee; not to work miracles, but to preach.

35.] went out, from the house of Peter and Andrew, ver. 29.

36. they that were with him] Andrew, John, and James, ver. 29.

38.] came I forth = “*was I sent*,” Luke: not “*undertook this journey*.” He had *not yet begun any journey*, and it cannot apply to “*went out*” above, for that was not to any city, nor to preach. The word has its more solemn sense, as in John xvi. 28, though of course not understood *then* by the hearers. To deny this is certainly not safe.

39.] See on Matt. iv. 23: also on Luke iv. 44.

40–45.] CLEANSING OF A LEPER. Matt. viii. 2–4, Luke v. 12–14. The account here is the fullest, and evidently an original one, from an eye-witness. St. Luke mentions (ver. 15) the spreading of the fame of Jesus, without assigning the cause as in our ver. 45. See note on Matthew. It is characteristic of St. Mark, to assign our Lord's being moved with compassion as the reason of His stretching out his hand.

44.] thyself, in the original, has an emphasis: trouble not thyself with talking to others, but go complete *thine own case* by getting thyself formally declared pure.

45. came] literally, **were coming**, which tells us more. Our Lord did not wish to put a stop to the multitudes seeking Him, but only to avoid that kind of concourse which would have beset Him in the *towns*: the seeking to Him for teaching and healing still *went on*, and that from all parts.

Mark: Chapter 2

Chap. II. 1–18.] HEALING OF A PARALYTIC

AT CAPERNAUM. Matt. ix. 2–8, where see notes. Luke v. 17–26.—The three are evidently independent accounts; St. Mark's, as usual, the most precise in de-tails; e.g. ‘*bore of four*’ St. Luke's also bearing marks of an eye-witness (see ver. 19, end); St. Matthew's apparently at second hand.

2.] In this verse we have again the peculiar minute depicting of Mark. A recent learned Commentator believes “these minute notices... to be recorded by the Evangelist with a studied design, lest it should be supposed that, because he incorporates so much which is in St. Matthew's gospel, he was only a copyist: and in order to shew that he did so because he knew from ocular testimony that St. Matthew's narrative was adequate and accurate.” I mention this, to shew to what shifts the advocates of the theory of the “inter-dependence” of the Evangelists are now reduced.

Literally, **So that not even the parts towards the door** (much less the house) **would any longer hold them** (they once sufficed to hold them).

preached] in the original it is in the strict imperfect sense: **He speaking to them the word**, when that which is about to be related happened.

3, 4.] It would appear that Jesus was speaking to the crowd from the upper story of the house, they being assembled in the court, or perhaps (but less probably) in the street. Those who bore the paralytic ascended the stairs which led direct from the street to the flat roof of the house, and let him down through the tiles (Luke). See the extract from Dr. Robinson, describing the Jewish house, in note on Matt. xxvi. 69.

7. **this man thus]** the first word depreciates; the second exaggerates.

8.] The knowledge was *immediate* and *supernatural*, as is most carefully and precisely here signified.

11. I say unto thee] The stress is on thee. The words are *precisely those used*, as so often in Mark,—and denote the turning to the paralytic and addressing him. There may have been something in his state, which required the emphatic address.

18–22.] THE CALLING OF LEVI. FEAST AT HIS HOUSE: QUESTION CONCERNING FASTING Matt. ix. 9–17. Luke v. 27–89. I have discussed the question of the identity of Matthew and Levi in the notes on Matthew. The three accounts are in matter nearly identical, and in diction so minutely and unaccountably varied, as to declare here, as elsewhere, their independence of one another, except in having had some common source from which they have more or less deflected. These re-marks do not apply to the diversity of the names Matthew and Levi, which must be accounted for on other grounds. See as throughout the passage, the notes on Mat-thew.

13.] **again**, see ch. i. 16. On the [son] of Alpheus see notes, Matt. xiii. 55; and x. 1 ff.

15.] The entertainment was certainly in *Levi's* house, not as

some think, in *that of our Lord*, which last is a pure fiction, and is not any where designated in the Gospel accounts. Certainly the call, ver. 17, gives no counte-nance to the view. Our Lord, and those following Him as disciples, were ordinarily entertained where He was invited, which will account for their *following Him*. **there were many, and they followed him**, is peculiar to Mark.

16.] The question was *after the feast*, at which, being in the house of a Publican, they *were not present*.

18.] St. Mark here gives a notice for the information of his readers, as in ch. vii. 3, which places shew that his Gospel was not written for the use of Jews, It appears from this account, which is here the more circumstantial, that the Pharisees and disciples of John asked the question in *the third person*, as of others. In Matthew it is *the disciples of John*, and they join *we and the Pharisees*. In Luke, it is the *Pharisees and Scribes*, and they ask as here.

19.] The repetition in the last clause, *contained neither in Matthew nor Luke*, is inconsistent with the design of an abridger; and sufficiently shews the primary authority of this report, as also in that day, ver. 20. St. Mark especially loves these solemn repetitions: compare ch. ix. 42 ff. It is strange to see such a Commentator as De Wette calling the repetition, *in that day, a proof of carelessness*. It is a touching way, as Meyer well observes, of expressing ‘in that dark day.’

21.] Render, according to the correct reading, which cannot well be explained in the margin, **the filling-up takes away from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent takes place.** See note on Matthew. The addition here of the new confirms the view taken of the parable there. 23–28.] **THE DISCIPLES PLUCK EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH.** Matt. xii. 1–8. Luke vi. 1–6. The same may be said of the three accounts as in the last case, with continually fresh evidence of their entire independence of *one another*.

28. began, as they went, to pluck] literally, **began to make their way, pluck-ing...** is matter of detail and minute depiction. The interpretation of this narrative given by Meyer, I believe to be an entirely mistaken one. He the strict sense of ‘to make a way,’ and insists on the Lae sade by our narrative being, as distinguished from those in Matthew, Luke, that the disciples *made a way for them-selves through the wheat field, by plucking the ears of corn*, further maintaining, that there is no allusion *here* to their having eaten the grains of wheat, as in Matthew, Luke. But (1) the foundation on which all this is built is insecure. The same Greek expression in the LXX does undoubtedly mean ‘*to make one's journey*.’ And (2) as to no allusion being made to their having eaten the corn, how otherwise could the ‘*had need*’ have been common to the disciples and to David. Could it be said that any *necessity* compelled them to clear the path by pulling up the overhanging stalks of corn? How otherwise could the remarkable addition in our narrative, ver. 27, at all bear upon the case? Fritzache’s rendering, ‘*to mark the way by plucking ears and strewing them in it*,’ is still worse.

26. **he]** emphatic,—**Himself**, taking up the cause of his disciples, and not leaving their defence to themselves.

26.] In the days of Abiathar the high priest: i.e. necessarily in the original, **during the high priesthood of Abiathar.** But in 1 Sam. xxi., from which this ac-count is taken, Ahimelech, not Abiathar, is the High Priest. There is however considerable confusion in the names about this part of the history: *Ahimelech himself is called Ahiah*, 1 Sam. xiv. 3; and whereas (1 Sam. xxii. 20) Ahimelech *has a son Abiathar*, in 2 Sam. viii. 17, *Ahimelech is the son of Abiathar*, and in 1 Chron. xviii. 16, *Abimelech*. Amidst this varia-tion, we can hardly undertake to explain the difficulty in the text. In some MSS. the words are omitted; in others they are altered, to give the words strictly the sense ‘In the time of Abiathar the High Priest,’ so that the difficulty might be avoided by understanding the event to have happened in the time of (but not necessarily during the high

priesthood of) Abiathar (who was afterwards) the High Priest. But supposing the reading to be so, what author would in an ordinary narrative think of designating an event thus? Who for instance would speak of the defeat of the Philistines at Ephesdammim, where Goliath fell, as happening *in the time of David the king*? Who would ever understand, ‘*in the time of Elisaus the prophet*, as importing, in matter of fact, any other period than that of the *prophetic course* of Elisha? Yet this is the way in which the difficulties of the Gospels have been attempted to be healed over. With the restoration of the true reading (see my Greek Test.), even this resource fails.

27.] peculiar to Mark, and highly important. The Sabbath was an ordinance *for man*; for man’s rest, both actually and typically, as setting forth the rest which remains for God’s people (Heb. iv. 9). But He who is now speaking has taken on himself *Manhood*, the whole nature of Man: and is *rightful lord* over creation as *granted to man*, and of all that is made for man, and therefore of the *Sabbath*. The whole dispensation of time is created for man, for Christ as He is man, and is in his absolute power. There is a remark-able parallel, in more than the mere mode of expression, in 2 Macc. v. 19: *God did not choose the people for the place’s sake, but the place for the people’s sake*.

28.] also, as well as of His other domains elements of lordship and power.

Mark: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1–6.] HEALING OF THE WITHERED HAND. Matt. xii. 9–14. Luke vi. 6–11. On Matthew’s narrative, see notes on Luke. The two other accounts are cognate, though each has some particulars of its own.

1.] again, see ch. i. 21; “on another Sabbath,” Luke. The synagogue was at Capernaum

2.] St. Luke only adds that it was the *Scribes and Pharisees* who watched Him.

4.] unto them. ‘St. Luke adds “I will ask you one thing:” as his account is the most de-tailed, I refer to the notes there.

5.] being grieved for the hardness of their hearts—peculiar to Mark: the word im-plies *sympathy* with their (spiritually) miserable state of hard-heartedness.

6. Herodians] See notes on Matt. xvi. 6, and xxii. 16. Why the Pharisees and Herodians should now combine, is not apparent. There must have been some reason of which we are not aware, which united these opposite sects in enmity against our Lord.

7–12.] A GENERAL SUMMARY OF OUR LORD’ S HEALING AND CASTING OUT DEVILS BY THE SEA OF GALILEE. Peculiar in this shape to Mark; but probably answering to Matt. xii. 15–21. Luke vi. 17–19. The description of the multitudes, and places whence they came, sets before us, more graphically than any where else in the Gospels, the composition of the audiences to which the Lord spoke, and whom He healed. The repetition of a *great multitude* (ver. 8) is the report of ‘one who saw the numbers from Tyre and Sidon coming and going.

11.] The unclean spirits are here spoken of in the person of those possessed by them, and the two fused together: for as it was impossible that *any but the spirits* could have known that He was the Son of God, so it was the material body of the possessed which fell down before Him, and *their* voice which uttered the cry: see note on Matt. viii. 82. The notion of the semirationalists that the sick identified them-selves with the demons, is at once refuted by the universal agreement of the testimony given on such occasions, *that Jesus was the Son of God*.

13–19.] THE APPOINTMENT OF THE TWELVE, AND ITS PURPOSES. Matt. x. 1–4. Luke vi. 12–16. See Luke, where we learn that He went up *overnight to pray*, and called his disciples to Him when it was day,—and notes on Matthew.

On the mountain see Matt. v. 1.

14.] The literal sense of the word rendered **ordained is made**: i.e. **nominated**,—**set apart**. We have here the most distinct intimation of any, of the *reason* of this appointment.

16.] On the list of the Apostles, see note as Matt. x. 2. The name *Peter*, According to St. Mark, seems to be *now first given*. This, at all events, does not look like the *testimony of Peter*: but perhaps the words are not to be so accurately pressed.

17.] **Boanerges**,—perhaps on account of their *vehement and zealous disposition*, of which we see marks Luke ix. 54: Mark ix. 38; x. 37: see also 2 John 10; but this is uncertain.

20–35.] CHARGES AGAINST JESUS,—OF MADNESS BY HIS RELATIONS,—OF DEMONIACAL POSSESSION

BY THE SCRIBES. HIS REPLIES. Matt. xii. 22–37, 46–60. Luke xi. 14–26; viii. 19–21. Our Lord *had just cast out a deaf and dumb spirit* (see notes on Matthew) in the open air (Matt., ver. 23), and now they retire into the house. The omission of this, wholly inexplicable if St. Mark had had either Matthew or Luke before him, belongs to the fragmentary character of his Gospel. The common accounts of the compilation of this Gospel are most capricious and absurd. In one place, St. Mark omits a discourse—‘*because it was not his purpose to relate discourses;*’ in another he gives a discourse, omitting the occasion which led to it, as here. The *real fact being*, that the sources of St. Mark’s Gospel are generally of the *highest order*, and *most direct*, but the *amount of things contained* very scanty and discontinuous.

20. again] resumed from ch. ii. 2.

21.] Peculiar to Mark.

his friends] *those from his house:* **his relations**, beyond a doubt—for the sense is resumed by then in ver. 31: see reff. **went out** (perhaps from *Nazareth*,—or, answering to John ii. 12, *from Capernaum*), **set out**: see ch. v. 14. They heard of his being#0 beset by crowds: see vv. 7–11.

Our version is right in giving the meaning **He is mad:** for the sense requires it. They had doubtless heard of the accusation of his *having a demon*: which we must suppose not to have first begun after this, but to have been going on throughout this course of miracles.

22.] the scribes which came down from Jerusalem... peculiar to Mark: see note on Matt. ver. 24. Here Matthew has “*the Pharisees*”—Luke “*some of them*,” i.e. “*the people*.”

He hath Beelzebub] This addition is most important. If He was *possessed* by Beelzebub, the *prince of mons*, He would thus have authority over the inferior evil spirits.

23.] he called them unto him is not inconsistent with His *being in an house*—He *called them to Him*, they having been far off. We must remember the *large courts* in the oriental houses. **in parables**, namely, *a kingdom, &c., a house, &c., the strong man, &c.* **How can Satan cast out Satan?]** The *external unity* of Satan and his kingdom is strikingly declared by this simple way of putting the question: see note on Matthew. The expression must not be taken as meaning, Can one devil cast out another? The Satan who casts out and the Satan who is cast out are the same person: compare ver. 26,

26.] but hath an end, peculiar to Mark.

29. guilty of eternal sin] Beza explains *eternal* by ‘*never to be wiped out*.’ It is to the critical treatment of the sacred text that we owe the restoration of such important and deep-reaching expressions as this. It finds its parallel in *ye shall die in your sins*, John viii. 24. Kuinoel’s idea, quoted and adopted by Wordsw., that **sin** means *the punishment of sin*, seems to be entirely unfounded. And as to its being “a Novatian error to assert that sin is eternal” (Wordsw.), it is at all events a legitimate inference from “*hath never forgiveness*” (literally, *remission*). If a sin remains unremitted for ever, what is it but eternal? **30.]** explains the ground and meaning of this awful denunciation of the Lord.

31.] standing without, sent unto him, calling him is one of Mark’s precise details.

32.] And the multitude sat about him is another such.

34.] Matthew here has some remarkable and graphic details also: “**He stretched forth his hand upon his disciples.**”... Both accounts were from eye-witnesses, *the one* noticing the outstretched hand; *the other*, the look cast round. Deeply interesting are such particulars, the more so, as shewing the way in which the records arose, and their united strength derived from their independence and variety.

Mark: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1–9] PARABLE OF THE SOWER. No fixed mark of date. Matt. xiii. 1–9. Luke viii. 4–8. There is the same intermixture of absolute verbal identity and considerable divergence, as we have so often noticed: which is wholly nee licible on the ordinary suppositions. In this case the vehicles of the parable in Matthew and Mark (see Matthew, vv. 1–3; Mark, vv. 1, 2) bear a strong, almost verbal, resemblance. *Such a parable* would be carefully treasured in all the Churches as a subject of catechetical instruction: and, in general, in proportion to the the popular nature of the discourse, is the resemblance stronger in the reports of it.

1. again] see ch. iii 7. The **began is** coincident with the gathering together of the crowd.

2.] Out from among the **many things**, the great mass of His teaching, one parable is selected, which he spoke during it—In his doctrine.

3.] Hearken—this solemn prefatory is peculiar to Mark.

4–8.] Matthew and Mark agree nearly verbally. In ver 7 St. Mark adds **and it yielded no fruit**, and in ver. 8, **that sprang up and increased**.

10–12.] REASON FOR SPEAKING IN PARABLES. Matt. xiii. 10–17. Luke viii. 9, 10.

10.] **they that were about him with the twelve;** “*his disciples*” Luke.

11.] **the mystery;** “*the mysteries*” Matthew and Luke. **them that are without** added here (“*the rest,*” Luke) means *the multitudes*—those out of the circle of his followers. In the Epistles, *all who are not Christians*,—the corresponding meaning for those days,—are designated by it.

12.] We must keep the **that** strictly to its full meaning—**in order that**. When God transacts a matter, it is idle to say that the result is not the purpose. He doeth all things after the counsel of His own will. St Matthew, as usual, quotes a prophecy; St. Mark hardly ever—except at the beginning of his Gospel: St. Luke, very seldom.

13–20.] EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLES OF THE SOWER. In this parable the general question which had been asked ver. 10 with regard to *parables* is tacitly assumed to have had special reference

to the one parable which has been given at length. Or we may understand, that the question of ver. 10 took the form which is given in Matthew: “*Why speakest thou unto them in parables?*” in which case the words must mean, **asked Him concerning parables; or His parables.** The three explanations (see Matt. xiii. 18–23; Luke viii. 9–15) are very nearly related to one another, with however differences enough to make the common hypotheses quite untenable. Matthew and Mark agree nearly verbatim; Matthew however writing throughout in the singular. Mark has some additions, e.g. **the sower soweth the word, ver. 14,—after “the deceitfulness of riches,” ver. 19, and the lusts of other things:—and some varia-tions, e.g. Satan for St. Matthew’s “the wicked one,” and St. Luke’s “the devil.”**

Such matters are *not trifling*, because they shew the *gradual deflection of verbal expression* in different versions of the *same report*,—nor is the *general agreement* of St. Luke’s, which seems to be from a different hearer.

16.] likewise, after the same analogy:—carrying on a like principle of interpretation.

20.] Notice the concluding words of the interpretation exactly reproducing those of the parable, ver. 8, as characteristic. It is remarkable that the same is found in Matthew but in another form and order: one taking the climax, the other the anticlimax. In Luke, the two are varied.

21–25.] Luke viii. 16–18; and for ver. 26, Matt. xiii. 12. **The rest** is mostly contained in other parts of Matthew v. 15; x. 26; vii. 2), where see notes. Here it is spoken with reference to teaching by parables:—that they might take care in from them all the instruction which they were capable of giving:—not, hiding them under a blunted

understanding, nor, when they did understand them, neglecting the teaching of them to others.

24.] more shall be given unto you (see var. readd.), more shall be added, i.e. more *knowledge*: so Euthymius: “with what measure ye measure your attention, with the same shall knowledge be measured to you: i.e. as much attention as you give, so much knowledge shall be served out to you, and not only so much, but even more... In the gospel according to Matthew this is said in another manner, and with another intent.”

26–29.] PARABLE OF THE SEED GROWING WE KNOW NOT HOW. Peculiar to Mark. By Commentators of the Straussian school, it is strangely supposed to be the same as the parable of the tares, *with the tares left out*. If so, a wonderful and most instructive parable has arisen out of the fragments of the other, in which the idea is *a totally different one*. It is, the *growth* of the once-deposited seed by the combination of its own development with the genial power of the earth, all of course under the creative hand of God, but independent of human care and anxiety during this time of growth.

26.] Observe **said**, without *unto them*—implying that He is now proceeding with his teaching to the *people*: compare ver. 33.

a man] Some difficulty has been felt about the interpretation of this *man*, as to whether it is *Christ* or *his ministers*. The

former certainly seems to be excluded by **should sleep**, and **he knoweth not how**, ver. 27; and perhaps the latter by **putteth in the sickle**, ver. 29. But I believe the parable to be one taken simply from human things,—the sower being quite in the background, and the whole stress being on the SEED—its power and its development. The *man* then is just the farmer or husbandman, hardly admitting an *interpretation*, but necessary to the machinery of the parable.

Observe, that in this case it is not *his seed* as in Luke viii. 5,—and the agent is only hinted at in the most general way. If a meaning must be assigned, the best is “human agency” in general.

27.] sleep and rise—i. e. *employs himself otherwise—goes about his ordinary occupations*. The seed sown in the heart is in its growth dependent on other causes than mere human anxiety and watchfulness:—on a mysterious power implanted by God in the seed and the soil combined, the working of which is hidden from human eye.

No trouble of ours can accelerate the growth, or shorten the stages through pass.

It is the mistake of modern Methodism, for instance, to be always working at the seed, *taking it up to see whether it is growing*, instead of leaving it to God’s own good time, and meanwhile diligently doing God’s work elsewhere: see Stier, iii. p. 12. Wesley, to favour his system, strangely explains **sleep and rise night and day**, *exactly contrary* to the meaning of the parable—“that is, it continually in his thoughts.”

29.] he putteth in—i.e. the husbandman, see above. See Joel iii. 18, to which this verse is a reference:—also Rev. xiv. 14, 15, and 1 Pet. i. 23–25.

30–34.] PARABLE OF THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED. Matt. xiii. 31–35. Luke xiii, 18, 19.

30.] This Rabbinical method of questioning before beginning a discourse is also found in Luke, ver. 18,—without however the condescending *plural*, which embraces the disciples, in their work of preaching and teaching,—and indeed gives all teachers an example, to what they may liken the Kingdom of God.

31.] *The repetition of expressions verbatim* in discourses is peculiar to Mark: so in the **earth** here, and **cannot stand** ch. i iii, 24, 25, 26: and see a very solemn instance, ch. ix. 44–48. **32.] and shooteth out great branches** is also peculiar. See notes on Matthew and Luke. **33.] as they were able to hear it, according to their capacity of receiving**:—see note on Matt. xiii. 12.

34.] when they were alone... We have *three* such instances—the *sower*, the *tares*, Matt. xiii. 36 ff., and the *saying concerning defilement*, Matt. xv. 16 ff. To these we may add the *two parables in John*—ch. x. 1–18, which however was *publicly explained*,—and ch. xv. 1–12;—and perhaps Luke xvi. 9; xviii. 6–8.

35–41.] THE STILLING OF THE STORM. Matt. viii. 18, 23–27. Luke viii. 22–25. Mark’s words bind this occurrence by a precise date to the preceding. It took place in *the evening of the day on which the Parables were delivered*: and our ac-count is so rich in additional particulars, as to take the highest rank among the three as to *precision* **36.] even as he was**, i.e. without any preparation or refreshment.

other ships] These were probably some of the multitudes following, who seem to have been a rated from them in the gale.

37.] a storm of wind is also in Luke, whose account is in the main so differently worded.

38.] the pillow, the cushion or seat at the stern, used by our Lord as a pillow.

39.] Peace, be still: these remarkable words are given only here. On the variations in the accounts, see on Matthew, ver. 25.

41.] The **then** expresses the inference from the event which they had witnessed: **Who then is this**, seeing He doeth such things?

Mark: Chapter 5

CHAP. V. 1–20.] HEALING OF A DEMONIAC AT GERGESA. Matt. viii. 28–34, Luke viii. 26–39. The accounts of St. Mark and St. Luke are strictly cognate, and bear traces of having been originally given by two eye-witnesses, or perhaps even by one and the same, and having passed through others who had learnt one or two minute additional particulars. St. Matthew’s account is evidently not from an eye-witness. Some of the most striking circumstances are there omitted. See throughout notes on Matthew, *wherever the narrative is in common*.

4.] The **because** gives the reason, not why *he could not* be bound, but why *the conclusion was come to* that he could not. The **fetters** are shackles for the **feet**, the **chains** for **general use**, without specifying for what of the body.

6.] **afar off** and **ran** are peculiar to Mark.

7.] **I adjure thee by God;** “*I beseech thee*” Luke.

8.] St. Mark generally uses the direct address in the second person: see ver. 12.

For He said] literally, **For He was saying to him, &c.**

9.] **for we are many** has perhaps given rise to the report of *two* demoniacs in Matthew. I cannot see in the above supposition any thing which should invalidate the testimony of the Evangelists. Rather are all such tracings of discrepancies to their source, most interesting and valuable. Nor can I consent for a moment to accept here the very lame solution which supposes; *one of the demoniacs not to be mentioned* by St. Mark and St. Luke: in other words, that the *least circumstantial* account is in possession of an additional particular which gives a new aspect to the *whole*: for the *plural*, used here and in Luke of the *many demons in one man*, is there used of the *two men*, and their separate demons. On **legion** see note, Luke, ver. 30.

10.] **send them away out of the country;** “*command them to go out into the deep*” Luke: see on Matthew, ver. 30.

13.] **about two thousand:**—peculiar to Mark, who gives us usually accurate details of this kind: see ch. vi. 37,—where however John (vi. 7) also mentions the sum.

15, 16.] Omitted by St. Matthew, as also vv. 18–20. The whole of this is full of minute and interesting detail

18.] Euthymius and Theophylact suppose that he feared a fresh incursion of the evil spirits.

19.] There was perhaps *some reason* why this man should be sent to proclaim God’s mercy to his friends. His example may in former times have been prejudicial to them:—see note on Matthew, ver. 32 (I. 4).

20.] **Gadara** (see on Matt. viii. 28) was one of the cities of Decapolis (see also on Matt. iv. 25). “Our Lord, in His humility, ascribed the work to His Father: but the healed man, in his gratitude, attributed it to Christ.” Euthymius. He commands the man to tell this, for He was little known in Perea where it happened, and so would have no consequences to fear, as in Galilee, &c.

21–43.] RAISING OF JAIRUS’ S DAUGHTER, AND HEALING OF A WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD. Matt. ix. 18–26. Luke viii. 41–56. The same remarks apply to these three accounts as to the last. Matthew is even more concise than

there, but more like an eye-witness in his narration (see notes on Matthew and Luke):—Mark the fullest of the three. The name of the ruler of the synagogue is of three syllables, with the accent on the second,—Ja-i-rus.

21. **gathered unto him...]** received him, Luke.

23.] “Notice the affectionate diminutive **little daughter**, peculiar to Mark. **lieth at the point of death** answers to **is even now dead** Matthew.

24.] St. Matthew adds, “*and his disciples.*”

28.] **For she said** (was saying) perhaps need not be pressed to mean that she actually *said* it to some one—*in herself* may be understood. At the same time, the *imperfect* looks very like the minute accuracy of one reporting what had been an habitual saying of the poor woman in her distress.

29.] On these particulars see notes on Luke.

felt in her body, literally, **knew in her body**, elliptic—**knew by feeling in her body**.

32.] Peculiar to Mark, and indicative of an eye-witness.

34.] **and be whole of thy plague:** peculiar to Mark, and inexplicable, except because the Lord *really spoke the words*, as a solemn ratification of the healing which she had as it were surreptitiously obtained: see note on Luke, ver. 48.

36.] Jesus... overheard the message (word that was) **being spoken**: a mark of accuracy which is lost in the A.V.

40.] How capricious, according to modern criticism, must this Evangelist have been, who compiled his narrative out of Matthew and Luke, adding minute particulars—in leaving out here **knowing that she was dead** (Luke), *a detail so essential*, if St. Mark had really been what he is represented. Can testimony be stronger to the untenability of such a view, and the independence of his narration? And yet such abound in every chapter.

41.] I say unto thee is *added in the translation*. The accuracy of St. Mark's reports,—not, as has been strangely suggested, the wish to indicate that our Lord did not use mystic magical language on such occasions,—often gives occasion to the insertion of the *actual Syriac and Aramaic words* spoken by the Lord: see ch. vii. 11, 34; xiv. 36. **Talitha**, in the ordinary dialect of the people, is a word of endearment addressed to a young maiden. So that the words are equivalent to **Rise, my child**. Peculiar to Mark.

The whole account is probably derived from the testimony of Peter, who was present. **For she was of the age of twelve years** is added, as Bengel, to shew that she “returned to the state of body congruous to her age.”

43.] betokens an eyewitness, who relates what passed *within*. St. Matthew says nothing of this, but tells what took place *without*, viz. the spreading abroad of the report. Notice in the last words, that her *further* recovery of strength is left to natural causes.

Mark: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. 1–6.] REJECTION OF JESUS BY HIS COUNTRYMEN AT NAZARETH. Matt. xiii. 54–58, where see notes.

1.] went out from thence, not, *from the house of Jairus*, by the expression his **own country** in the corresponding clause. I may go out of my own house *into a neighbour's*, but I do not say, I go *out of my own house* into Lincolnshire: the two members of such a sentence must correspond:—I go *out of Leicestershire* into Lincolnshire—so, as corresponding to **his own country, from thence** must mean from *that city*, i.e. Capernaum. This against those who try on this misinterpretation to ground a difference between St. Matthew and St. Mark.

3. the carpenter] This expression does not, seem to be used at random,—but to signify that the Lord had *actually worked* at the trade of his reputed father. Justin Martyr says, “*For He wrought, while among men, the ordinary works of a carpenter, to wit, ploughs and yokes.*” But on the other hand, Origen (carelessly?) asserts that nowhere in the Gospels received in the churches is Jesus Himself called a carpenter. **6.] he could there do no...** the want of *ability* spoken of is not *absolute*, but *relative*: “not because He was powerless, but because they were faithless.” Theophylact. The same voice, which could still the tempests, could any where and under any circumstances have commanded diseases to obey; but in most cases of human infirmity, it was our Lord's practice to require *faith* in the recipient of aid: and that being wanting, the help *could not be given*. However, from what follows, we find that *in a few instances it did exist*, and the help was given accordingly.

6.] marvelled—this need not surprise us, nor be construed otherwise than as a literal description of the Lord's mind: in the mystery of his humanity, as He was compassed by human infirmity,—grew in wisdom,—learned obedience,—knew not the day nor the hour (ch. xiii. 32),—so He might *wonder* at the unbelief of His countrymen.

And he went round... see Matt. ix. 35.

7–13.] THE SENDING FORTH OF THE TWELVE. Matt. x. 1–15. Luke ix. 1–5: see also Matt. ix. 36–38, as the introduction to this mission. The variations in the three accounts are trifling, as we might expect in so solemn a discourse delivered to all the twelve. See the notes to Matthew;—and respecting the subsequent difference between Matthew (ver. 16 ff.) and Luke—those on Luke x.

7. by two and two] These *couples* are pointed out in Matthew's list of the Apostles—not however in Mark's, which again shews the total absence of *connecting design* in this Gospel, such as is often assumed.

8.] Striking instances occur in these verses, of the independence of the three reports in their present form. **save a staff only** Mark, **nor yet a staff** Matthew, **neither a staff** Luke. See notes on Matthew, also in the next clause.

13.] anointed with oil—this oil was not *medicinally*, but as a *vehicle of healing power committed to them*;—a symbol of a deeper thing than the oil itself could accomplish. That such anointing has nothing in common with the extreme unction of Romanists, see proved in note on James v. 14, See for instances of such symbolic use of external applications, 2 Kings v. 14: Mark viii. 23: John ix. 6, &c.

14–29.] HEROD HEARS OF IT. BY OCCASION, THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IS RELATED. Matt. xiv. 1–12. Luke ix. 7–9. (The account of John's death is not in Luke.) Our account is, as usual, the fullest of details. See notes on Matthew.

14.] Herod was not king properly, but only *tetrarch*:—see as above. He heard most probably of the *preaching of the twelve*.

15.] (He is) a **prophet as one of the prophets**;—i. e. in their meaning, ‘He is not *The Prophet* for whom all are waiting, but only some prophet like those who have gone before.’ Where did our Evangelist get this remarkable expression, in his *supposed compilation from Matthew and Luke*?

16.] “I (which is emphatic in the original) has the emphasis given by his guilty conscience.” Meyer.

The principal additional particulars in the following account of John's imprisonment and execution are,—ver. 19, that it was *Herodias* who persecuted John, whereas Herod knew his worth and holiness, and listened to him with pleasure, and even complied in many things with his injunctions:—that the maiden went and *asked counsel of her mother* before making the request; and that an executioner, one of the bodyguard was sent to behead John.

18.] said, more than once: it was the burden of to be an John's exhortations to him.

20.] kept him safe, or preserved him; not, as in A.V. *observed him*, or ‘*esteemed him highly*’:—kept him in safety that he should not be killed by Herodias. Whether Herod heard him only at such times as he happened to be at Machaerus, or took him also to his residence at Tiberias, is uncertain.

21.] a convenient day, not, a *festal* day, as Hammond and others interpret it,—but, a day suitable for the of Herodias: which shews that the dance, &c. *had been all previously contrived by her*.

30–44.] FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND. Matt. xiv. 13–21. Luke ix. 10–17. John vi. 1–13. This is one of the very few points of comparison between the *four Gospels* during the ministry of our Lord. And here again I believe St. Mark's report to be an original one, and of the *very highest* authority. Professor Bleek believed that Mark has *used the Gospel of John*—on account of the 200 denarii in our ver. 37 and John, ver. 7: and that he generally compiles his narrative from Matthew and Luke, which has been elsewhere shewed to be utterly untenable. I believe St. Mark's to be an *original full account*; St. Matthew's a compendium of *this same account*, but drawn up independently of St. Mark's:—St. Luke's a compendium of *another ac-count*:—St. John's an *independent narrative of his own as eye-witness*.

30.] Mentioned by Luke, *not* by Matthew.

31–34.] One of the most affecting descriptions in the Gospels, and in this form peculiar to Mark. St. Matthew has a brief compendium of it. Every word and clause is full of the rich recollections of one who saw, and felt the whole. Are we mistaken in tracing the warm heart of him who said, ‘I will go with thee to prison and to death?’

31.] ye yourselves—not others; ‘you alone.’

33. afoot] perhaps better rendered by land.

34.] when he came out, i.e. **had disembarked**, most probably. Meyer would render it, ‘*having come forth from his solitude*’ in Matthew,—and ‘*having disembarked*’ here: but I very much doubt the former. There is nothing in Matthew to imply that He had *reached his place of solitude before* the multitudes came up. John indeed, vv. 3–7, *seems* to imply this; but He may very well have mounted the hill or cliff from the sea before He **saw** the multitudes, and this would be *on his disembarkation*.

35.] See notes on John vi. 3–7, and Matt. xiv. 15–17. The *Passover was near*, which would account for the multitude being on the move.

37.] This verse is to me rather a decisive proof that (see above) Mark had *not seen* John's account; for how could he, having done so, and with his love for accurate detail, have so generalized the particular account of Philip's question? That generalization was *in the account which he used*. and the circumstance was more exactly related by John, as also the following one concerning Andrew. The dividing of the *fishes*, and (ver. 43) the taking up fragments from the *fishes*, are both peculiar and characteristic of Mark: but it would have been most inconsistent with his precision to have omitted “*besides women and children*” in ver. 44, had he had it before him.

45–52.] JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA. Matt. xiv. 22–33. John vi. 16–21. Omitted in Luke. Matthew and Mark are very

nearly related as far as ver. 47. John's account is altogether original, and differing materially in details: see notes there, and on Matthew.

45.] the ship, i.e. the ship in which they had come.

Bethsaida—this certainly seems (against Lightfoot, Wieseler, Thomson, “The Land and the Book,” al.: see Bishop Ellicott’s note, Lectures on Life of our Lord, p. 207) to have been the city of Peter and Andrew, James and John,—on the west side of the lake—and in the same direction as Capernaum, mentioned by John, ver. 17. The miracle just related took place near the other Bethsaida (*Julias*),—Luke ix. 10,

48. and would (was minded) have passed by them] Peculiar to Mark. “A silent note of Inspiration. He was about to pass by them. He intended so to do. But what man could say this? Who knoweth the mind of Christ but the Spirit of God? Compare 1 Cor. ii. 11.” Wordsw. But it may be perhaps doubted whether this is quite a safe or a sober comment. **would** has here but a faint subjective reference, and is well expressed by the English phrase in the text. See on Luke xxiv. 28, for the meaning. Lange well remarks, that this “*would have passed by*” and the “*willingly received him*” of John vi. 21, mutually explain one another.

50.] all saw him, and were troubled: peculiar to Mark. After this follows the history respecting Peter, which might naturally be omitted here if this Gospel were drawn up under his *inspection*—but this is at least doubtful in any general sense.

52.] Peculiar to Mark.

for they understood not] They did not, from the miracle which they had seen, infer the power of the Lord over nature.

53–56.] Matt. xiv. 34–36. The two accounts much alike, but Mark’s the richer in detail: e.g. **and drew to the shore**, ver. 53, and the particulars given in ver. 56.

55.] to carry about implies that they occasionally had wrong information of His being in a place, and had to carry the sick about, following the rumour of his presence

Mark: Chapter 7

CHAP. VII. 1–23.] DISCOURSE CONCERNING EATING WITH UNWASHED HANDS. Matt. xv. 1–20. The two reports differ rather more than usual in their additions to what is common, and are not so frequently in verbal agreement, where the matter is the same.

2.] See ch. ii. 16. A mark of particularity. **that is to say, with unwashen** is supposed by some to be a gloss, explaining **defiled**: but the explanation seems necessary to what follows, especially for Gentile readers.

3.] The word **oft** thus rendered has perplexed all the Commentators. Of the various renderings which have been given of it, two only seem to be admissible: (1) that given in the text, **oft**; and (2) **diligently**, which is adopted by the ancient Syriac version, and seems agreeable to Hebrew usage. Between these two it is not easy to decide.

4.] wash (baptise in original) is variously understood,—of *themselves*, or the *meats bought*. It certainly refers to *themselves*; as it would not be any unusual practice to wash things bought in the market:—but probably not to washing their whole bodies: see below.

brasen vessels] earthen ones, when unclean, were to be *broken*, Lev. xv. 12. These **baptisms** (for such is the word in the original), as applied to **couches** (meaning probably here those *used at meals*), were certainly *not immersions*, but sprinklings or affusions of water.

8.] Not contained in Matthew, but important, as setting forth their *depreciating* of God’s command in comparison with human tradition, before their absolute *violation* of that command in vv. 10, 11.

9.] Full well—ironical—see 2 Cor. xi. 4.

10.] For Moses said = “for God commanded” Matthew.

11.] Corban, an offering without a sacrifice.

12.] See note on Matthew, ver. 5.

13.] A repetition from ver. 8;—common in Mark.

14.] Both St. Matthew and St. Mark notice that our Lord called the multitude to Him, when He uttered this speech, It was especially this, said in the hearing of both the Pharisees and them, that gave offence to the former.

17.] his disciples asked him = “Peter answered and said” Matthew.

19. purging] The participle refers to the **draught** (sewer). There need not be any difficulty in this additional clause: what is stated is *physically* true. The *sewer* is that which, by the removal of the part carried off, purifies the meat; the portion available for nourishment being in its passage converted into chyle, and the remainder being cast out.

21, 22.] The **heart** is the laboratory and the fountain-head of all that is good and bad in the inner life of man.

St. Matthew’s catalogue follows the order of the second table of the decalogue.’ St. Mark’s more copious one varies the order. Compare Rom. i. 29: Eph. iv. 19: Wisd. xiv. 25, 26.

24–30.] THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN. Matt. xv. 21–28. Omitted by St. Luke. A striking instance of the independence of the two narrations. St. Mark, who is much more copious in particulars, *omits* a considerable and important part of the history: this would be most arbitrarily and indeed inexcusably done, if the common account of his having *combined and epitomized* Matthew and Luke is to be taken.

Our Lord’s retirement was to avoid the Pharisees: see notes on Matthew throughout.

24.] from thence is not, *from the land of Gennesaret* (Meyer),—for ch. vi. 55, 56, has completely removed definiteness from the locality;—but refers to the (un-specified) place of the last discourse.

the borders] The place must have been the *neighbourhood of Tyre*

25.] The woman *had been following Him, and His disciples before*, Matthew.

26.] Syro phenician, because there were also **Liby phenicians, Carthaginians.**

27. Let the children...] This important addition in Mark sets forth the whole ground on which the present refusal rested. The Jews were *first* to have the Gospel offered to them, for their acceptance or rejection it was *not yet time* for the Gentiles,

28.] yet... see on Matthew.

30.] These particulars are added here.

laid upon the bed] which the torments occasioned by the evil spirit would not allow her to be before:—*lying peacefully*, as Euthymius says.

31–37.] HEALING OF A DEAF AND DUMB PERSON. Peculiar to Mark. A miracle which serves a most important purpose; that of clearly distinguishing ween the cases of the *possessed* and the merely *diseased* or *deformed*. This man was what we call ‘deaf and dumb;’ the union of which maladies is often brought about by the inability of him who never has heard sounds to utter them plainly:—or, as here apparently, by some accompanying physical infirmity of the organs of speech.

31.] He went first northward (perhaps for the same reason, of privacy, as before) through Sidon, then crossed the Jordan, and so approached the lake on its E. side. On *Decapolis*, see Matt. iv, 25. We have the same journey related Matt. xv. 29; and “*the dumb speaking*” mentioned among the miracles, for which the people glorified the God of Israel.

33. took him aside] No reason that we know can be assigned why our Lord should *take aside* this man, and the blind man, ch. viii. 23; but how many might there be which we do not know,—such as some peculiarity in the *man himself*, or the *persons around*, which influenced His determination.

It is remarkable that the *same medium* of conveying the miraculous cure is used also in ch. viii. 23. By the symbolic use of external means, our Lord signified the healing virtue for afflicted human kind, which resides in and proceeds from Him incarnate in our flesh. He uses either his own touch,—something from Himself,—or the cleansing element to which He so often compares his word.

34.] He looked to heaven *in prayer*: see John xi. 41, 42. He sighed, as grieving over the wreck of the nature which He had made, occasioned by the malice of the devil and the sin of man.

Ephphatha] the same word as that used in Isa. xxxv. 5, “*Then shall the ears of the deaf be unstopped,... and the tongue of the dumb sing.*”

35.] the fetter, or the bond:—the hindrance, whatever it was, which prevented him from speaking plainly before.

36.] See ch. i. 45.

37.] He hath done all things well... So “*God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good,*” Gen. i. 31. This work was properly and worthily compared. with that first one of creation—it was the same Beneficence which prompted, and the same Power that wrought it.

Mark: Chapter 8

CHAP. VIII. 1–10.] FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND. Matt. xv. 32–39. The accounts agree almost verbatim. Mark adds **for divers of them came from far**, ver. 3, and again omits “*besides women and children*,” Matthew, ver. 38.

10.] Matthew mentions *Magadan*, ver. 39. Dalmanutha was probably a village in the neighbourhood,—see note on Matthew, and “*The Land and the Book*,” p. 393;—a striking instance of the independence of Mark: called by the Harmonists “an addition to St. Matthew’s narrative, to shew his independent knowledge of the fact.” What very anomalous writers the Evangelists must have been!

11–13.] REQUEST FOR A SIGN FROM HEAVEN. Matt. xvi. 1–4, who gives the account more at length: without however the graphic and affecting **sighed deeply in His spirit**, ver. 12.

14–21.] WARNING AGAINST THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND OF HEROD. Matt. xvi. 5–12. Our account is fuller and more circumstantial,—relating *that they had but one loaf* in the ships ver. 14; inserting the *additional reproofs* ver. 18, and the reference to the two miracles of feeding more at length, vv. 19–21. St. Mark however omits the *conclusion* in Matthew, that *they then understood that He spake to them of the doctrine, &c.* Possibly this was a conclusion drawn in the mind of the narrator, not altogether identical with that to be drawn from our account here—for the *leaven of Herod* could not be *doctrine (and of the leaven of Herod)*, ver. 15—Mark only), but must be understood of the irreligious lives and fawning worldly practices of the hangerson of the court of Herod.

14.] The subject to the verb **forgot** is *the disciples* unexpressed: see next verse. The **leaven of Herod** here seems to answer to the *leaven of the Sadducees* in Matthew. But we must not infer from this that Herod was a Sadducee. He certainly was a bad and irreligious man, which would be quite enough ground for such a caution. We have a specimen of the morals of his court in the history of John the Baptist’s martyrdom. In the *last not yet*, ver. 21, Meyer sees a new climax, and refers the *not yet* to the moment even after the reminiscence of vv. 18–20. It doubtless be so, and the idea would well accord with the graphic precision of St. Mark.

22–26.] HEALING OF A BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA. Peculiar to Mark. This appears to have been Bethsaida Julias, on the N.E. side of the lake. Compare ver. 13. See however against the idea that there were two Bethsaidas, “*The Land and the Book*,” pp. 373, f.

23.] The leading of this blind man out of the town appears as if it had been from *some local reason*. In ver. 26 we find him forbidden expressly to enter into or tell it *in the town*, and with a repetition of **town**, which looks as if the place had been somehow unworthy of such a work being done there. (This is a serious objection against Meyer’s reason, that the *use of spittle* on both occasions occasioned the same privacy here and in ch. vii 33.) Or we may perhaps find the reason in our Lord’s *immediate departure* to such a distance (ver. 27); and say, that He did not wish multitudes to gather about and follow Him.

when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him... see above on ch. vii. 33.

We cannot say what may have induced our Lord to form this miracle *at twice*—certainly not the reason assigned by Dr. Burton, “that a blind man would not, on suddenly recovering his sight, know one object from another, because he had never seen them before,” and so would require a double miracle;—a second to open the eyes of *his mind also*, to comprehend what he saw. This assumes the man to have been *born blind*, which he was not from ver. 24; for how should he know *how trees appeared?* and besides, the case of the man born blind in John ix. required no such double healing. These things were *in the*

Lord's power, and He them as He pl from present circumstances, or for our instruction.

24.] I see men, for I see them walking«5 trees; i.e. not distinct in individual peculiarity, but **as trees in the hedge-row** flit by the traveller. It is a minute mark of truth, that he describes the appearance of persons as he doubtless had often had occasion to do during the failing of sight which had ended in his blindness. By no possibility can the words convey three different stages of returning vision: "I see men. I see them standing still, and dimly, as trees. I see them walking." For thus the **for** is altogether passed over, and **walking** taken out of its place, and most unnaturally made into a sentence by itself. **25.]** If the marginal reading were adopted, the meaning would be, **He saw plainly** (the work of that instant), **and was thoroughly restored, and** (thenceforward) **saw all things clearly**. But the text is in much uncertainty.

26.] See above in this note,—and the various readings in my Greek Test. The **neither** and **nor** both carry a separate climax with them: he was not even to *go* into the village, no, nor so much as tell it to *any who dwelt in the village*.

27–30.] CONFESSION OF PETER. Matt. xvi. 13–20. Luke ix. 18–21. With the exception of the introduction in Luke, which describes the Lord to have been *alone Praying, and joined by his disciples*,—and the omission of the praise of and promise to Peter by both St. Mark and St. Luke, the three are in exact accordance. On this latter omission no stress must therefore be laid as to the character of *Mark's Gospel*, as has been done.

31–IX. 1.] ANNOUCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH AND RESURRECTION. REBUKE OF PETER. Matt. xvi. 21–28. Luke ix. 22–27. St. Luke omits the rebuke of Peter. St. Mark adds, ver. 32, **he spake that saying openly**: and, in the rebuke of Peter, that the Lord said the words **looking on his disciples**. In vv. 34, 35, the agreement is close, except that St. Luke adds *daily after his cross*, and St. Mark *and the Gospel's after my sake*, ver. 35 [it is perhaps worthy of remark that St. Mark writes **follow me** in ver. 34: possibly from the information of him, to whom it was said, "What is that to thee? **Follow thou me**," John xxi. 22]; and informs us in ver. 34, that our Lord said these words, *having called the multitude with his disciples*. This Meyer calls *a contradiction to Matthew and Luke*,—and thinks it arose from a misunderstanding of St. Luke's "*he said to them all*." Far rather should I say that our account represents every detail to the life, and that the "*to them all*" contains *traces of it*. What wonder that a crowd should here, as every where else, have collected about Him and the disciples?

38.] St. Mark and St. Luke here agree: and St. Matthew, ver. 27, bears traces of this verse, having apparently abridged it in transcribing his report, not to repeat what he had before said, in ch. x. 33.

On **adulterous**, see Matt. xii. 39, and observe the addition, **in this sinful and adulterous generation**, as belonging to the precision and graphic character of our Evangelist's narrative.

Mark: Chapter 9

CH. IX. 1] See on Matthew.

there be some of them that stand here] Remember, our Lord was speaking *to the multitude with his disciples*.

2–13.] THE TRANSFIGURATION. Matt. xvii. 1–13. Luke ix. 28–36. Here again, while St. Matthew and St. Mark's accounts seem to have *one and the same source*, they have deflected from it, and additional particulars have found their way into our text. St. Luke's account is from a *different source*. If we might conjecture, Peter has furnished the accounts in Matthew and Mark:—this latter being *retouched*,—perhaps by himself: while that of Luke may have had another origin. The additional particulars in our text are,—the very graphic and noble description in ver. 3, and the detail in ver. 6.

St. Mark omits "*in whom I am well pleased*," Matthew, ver. 5.

3.] became is of itself a graphic touch, bringing out the glistening of each separate portion of his clothing.

8. no man any more] i.e. **none of those who appeared**, but ('*nay on the contrary*') **Jesus alone**.

9–11.] Two remarkable additions occur in our text;—ver. 10, which indicates *apostolic authority*, and that of *one of the Three*;—and the last clause of ver. 12.

what the rising from the dead should mean does not refer to the *Resurrection generally*, for it was an article of Jewish belief, and connected with the times of the Messiah; but to *His Resurrection as connected with his Death; the whole* was enigmatical to them.

12.] Meyer and others render, and **how is it written of the Son of Man? That he must**, &c, making this last clause the

answer to the question. But not to mention that such a sentence would be without example in our Lord's discourses, the sense given by it is meagre in the extreme. As it stands in the text, it forms a counter-question to that of the Apostles in ver. 11. *They asked Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?* Our Lord answers it by telling them that it is even so; and returns the question by another: **And how is it (also) written of the Son of Man, that he, &c?** Then comes the conclusion in ver. 13 with **But I say unto you**, stating that Elias *has come*, and leaving it therefore to be inferred that the sufferings of the Son of Man were close at hand. Notice how the **it is written of**, twice occurring, binds both together. Just as the first coming of the Son of Man is to suffer and to die, so has the first coming of Elias been as it was written of him; but there is a future coming of Elias to restore all things, and of the Son of Man in glory. See farther in notes on Matthew.

14-29.] HEALING OF A POSSESSED LUNATIC. Matt. xvii, 14-21. Luke ix. 37-42. The account of St. Mark is by far the most copious: and here, which is very rarely the case in the official life of our Lord, the three accounts appear to have been *originally different and independent*. The descent from the mountain was on the day following the transfiguration, Luke, ver. 37,

14.] The scribes were probably boasting over the disciples, and reasoning from their inability to *that of their Master also*.

As Stier remarks, there is hardly such another contrast to be found in the Gospel as this, between the open heaven and the sons of glory on the mount, and the valley of tears with its terrible forms of misery and pain and unbelief. I have already in the notes to Matthew spoken of the noble use made of this contrast in the last and grandest picture of the greatest of painters—the Transfiguration of Raffaele.

15.] The Lord's countenance probably retained traces of the glory on the mount; so strong words **as were greatly amazed** would hardly have been used merely of their surprise at His sudden approach: see Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. *That brightness, however, terrified the people: this attracts them:* see 2 Cor. iii. 7-18.

16.] them (first time), i.e. '*the multitude*,' regarding the Scribes as *a part of the multitude*. *One of the multitude answers.*

17.] unto thee—i. e. *intended* to do so, not being aware of His absence. From Luke, ver. 38, we learn that this was his *only son*.

dumb, i.e. *causing* deafness and dumbness, and fits of epilepsy; see Luke xi. 14.

18.] The words rendered **pineth away** may perhaps mean **becomes dry or stiff**.

19.] O faithless generation, not addressed to *the man*, as unbelieving,—nor to the disciples,—but *generally*, to the race and generation among whom the Lord's ministry was fulfilled. The additional words “*and perverse*” (Matthew, Luke) are probably from Deut. xxxii. 5; see further ib. ver. 20, where “*faithless*” is also expressed by “*children in whom is no faith*.” The question is not asked in a spirit of longing to be gone from them, but of holy impatience of their hardness of heart and unbelief. In this the father, disciples, Scribes, and multitude are equally involved.

“The kingdom of Satan, in small and great, is ever stirred into a fiercer activity by the coming near of the kingdom of Christ. Satan has great wrath, when his time is short” (Trench, Mir. 365). Vv. 21-27 are peculiar to Mark.

21.] The Lord takes occasion to enquire thus of the father, to bring in the trial of his faith.

22.] See Matthew, ver. 15. **if thou canst do any thing**] This bespeaks, if *any* faith, at most but a very ignorant and weak one.

us—the wretched father counts his child's misery his own: thus the Syrophenician woman, Matt. xv. 25, *help me*.

23.] The most probable rendering of the original here is, **Jesus said to him the saying, “If thou canst believe, all things are,”**&c.: a saying which doubtless He often uttered on similar occasions, Some, omitting the **believe**, would set an interrogation after **canst**, and suppose our Lord to be citing the Father's words: “*didst thou say, ‘If thou canst?’—all things are,*”&c. Others, as Dr. Burton, suppose it to mean:—‘Believe what you have expressed by your **if thou canst**,’&c. But both these renderings involve methods of construction and expression not usual in the Gospels. The **if thou canst believe** is a manifest reference to the **if thou canst do any thing** before, and meant to convey a reproof, as the father's answer testifies. The sentence, also, unless I am mistaken, is meant to convey an intimation that the healing was not to be *an answer* to that challenge, so that *the Lord's power* was to be challenged and proved,—but an answer to *faith*, which (of course by laying hold on Him who is Almighty) *can do all things*.

24.] Nothing can be more touching and *living* than this whole most masterly and wonderful narrative. The poor father is drawn out into a sense of the unworthiness of his distrust, and “the little spark of faith which is kindled in his soul reveals to him the

abyssmal depths of unbelief which are there." (Trench, p. 367.) "Thus," remarks Olshausen (B. Comm: i, 534), "does the Redeemer shew himself to the father as a Creator and bringer out of faith first, before He heals his son. In the struggle of his anxiety, the strength of Faith is *born*, by the aid of Christ, in the soul empty of it before."

There is strong analogy in the Lord's treatment of the father here, for the *sponsorial engagement* in infant baptism. The *child* is by its infirmity *incapacitated*; it is therefore *the father's faith* which is tested; and when that is proved, the child is healed. The fact is, that the analogy rests far deeper: viz. on the 'inclusion' of 'the old man' in Adam and the 'new man' in Christ: see Rom. v. 12–21.

25.] This took place at a distance from the crowd, among those who had run forward to meet our Lord, ver. 16.

I charge thee] The personal pronoun is emphatic, as opposed to the want of power on the part of the disciples. This is the only place where we have such a charge as **enter no more into him**,—shewing the excessive malignity and tenacity of this kind (see ver. 29) of spirit. This is also shewn by ver. 26.

27.] See ch. v. 41; also Matt. xvii. 6, 8: Rev. i. 17: Dan. x. 9, 10.

29.] The answer is given more at length in Matthew, ver. 20, and the Lord there distinctly includes the *disciples* in the faithless generation, by telling them "*Because of your unbelief*." The assurance also occurs there, which was repeated Matt. xxi. 21, where see notes.

This kind] That there are *kinds*, more and less malicious, of evil spirits, we find from Matt. xii. 45—and the pertinacity and cruelty of this one shewed him to belong to the worst kind. The Lord's saying here is rather for their *after* guidance, than their present; for *they could not fast while He was with them*, ch. ii.

30–32.] SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. Matt. xvii, 22, 23. Luke ix. 43–45, where see notes, as this account is included in the two others.

33–50.] DISCOURSE RESPECTING THE GREATEST AMONG THEM. Matt. xviii. 1–9. Luke ix. 46–50. Here again the three accounts are *independent*, and differ in some particulars unimportant in them-selves, but very instructive for a right comparison of the three Gospels. First take St. Luke's account.—*The disciples had been disputing:—our Lord knowing the strife of their hearts, took a child, &c.:—then compare St. Mark—our Lord asked them, on coming into a house, what had been the subject of their dispute;—they were silent from shame;—He sat down, delivered his sentence to the twelve,—and then took the child, &c.*—Lastly turn to St. Matthew. There, *the disciples themselves referred the question to our Lord, and He took the child, &c.* Who can forbear seeing in these narratives the unfettered and independent testimony of three witnesses, consistent with one another in the highest form and spirit of truthfulness, but differing in the mere letter? St. Mark's account is again the richest and fullest, and we can hardly doubt that if the *literal exact detail* of fact is in question, we have it here.

33.] Between the coming to Capernaum, and this discourse, happened the *demand of the tribute-money*, Mt. xvii. 20–27.

34.] There is no real difference in the matter in question here (and in Luke), and in Matthew. The kingdom of heaven was looked on as about soon to appear: and their relative rank *now* would be assumed as their relative rank *then*. The difference in the *expression* of this is a mark of independence and authority.

35.] See Matt. xx. 26, and note.

36. taken him in his arms] This particular we learn from Mark.

37.] See Matt. x. 40.

38.] Only found besides in Luke, vv. 49, 50.

Notice the *repetition* of **he followeth not us as** characteristic of Mark. The connexion of this remark with what goes before, is: 'If the receiving any one, even a little child, *in thy Name*, be receiving Thee; were we doing right when we forbade one who used thy Name, but did not follow us?' "Let those observe this," says Bengel, "who bind on spiritual gifts to canonical succession." This man actually did what the very Apostles themselves were specially appointed to do: and our Lord, so far from prohibiting, encourages him; see Num. xi. 26–29.

39.] See 1 Cor. xii. 3. The very success of the miracle will awe him, and prevent him from soon or lightly speaking evil of me.

We must beware of supposing that the application of this saying is to be confined to the *working of a miracle*—ver. 40 shews that it is general—a weighty maxim of Christian toleration and charity, and caution to men how they presume to limit the work of the Spirit of God to any sect, or succession, or outward form of Church; compare Phil. i. 16–18.

40.] This saying is not inconsistent with that in Matt. xii. 30. They do not refer to the same thing. This is said of *outward conformity*—that, of *inward unity of purpose*—two widely differing things. On that saying, see note there. On this, we may say—all those who, notwithstanding outward differences of communion and government, *believe in and preach Jesus Christ*, without bitterly and uncharitably opposing each other, are hereby declared to be *helpers forward of each other's work*. O that all Christians would remember this! Stier (Red. J. iii. 24) strongly deprecates the reading **us** and **our**: “the **us** in the mouth of our Lord here confuses and destroys nearly the whole purport of his weighty saying. For this is the very fault of the disciples, that they laid down outward and visible communion with *them* as the decisive criterion of communion with the Lord: and this very fault the Lord rebukes with his repudiatory *you*.” Still, there is a propriety, a tempering the rebuke with a gracious reminiscence of their unity with Him, and something exceedingly suiting the **belong to Christ** below, in **us** and **our**. In the divided state of the critical evidence, the reading must be ever doubtful.

41.] This verse does not take up the discourse from ver. 37, as some think, but is immediately connected with ver. 40:—‘Even the *smallest service* done in my Name shall not be unrewarded—much more should not so great an one as casting out of devils be prohibited.’

The original has **in the name that**: i. e., **by reason that**, but not without an allusion to **my name**, which furnishes the reason.

ye belong to Christ] The only place in the Gospels where this expression is used. St. Paul it; see reff. and Rom. viii. 9: 1 Cor. iii. 4

42.] See Matt. xviii. 6.

43–48.] These solemn repetitions of former declarations (see Matt. v. 29; xviii. 8, 9) are by no means to be regarded as arbitrary insertions by this or that Evangelist, but as the truth of what was uttered by our Lord.

Vv. 44, 46, 48 are only in Mark; they are cited from Isaiah (see reff.), where the prophecy is of the *carcasses of those who have transgressed against the Lord*. This triple repetition gives sublimity, and leaves no doubt of the discourse having been *verbatim* thus uttered. See note on Matt. v. 22.

49.] In order to understand this difficult verse, it will be necessary first to examine its connexion and composition. (1) What is **for?** It connects it with the solemn assertions in vv. 43–48, **it is better for thee...**, and furnishes a *reason why it is* better for us to cut off and cast away, &c.

every one then is to be taken absolutely: referring back both to the **thee**, and the **their** above—**every sacrifice is** (not opposed to [Meyer], but) *parallel with every one*, and **and** equivalent to **just as**. (2) This being stated, let us now enquire into the symbolic terms used. FIRE, is the *refiner's fire* of Mal. iii. 2, to which indeed there seems to be a reference; the fire of Matt. iii. 11 and Acts ii. 3; of Ezek. xxviii. 14 (see my Hulsean Lectures for 1841, pp 9–12). Fire is the *symbol of the divine purity and presence*:—our God is a *consuming fire*, not only to his foes, but to his people: but in *them*, the fire shall burn up only what is impure and requires purifying out, 1 Cor. iii. 13: 1 Pet. i. 7; iv. 12, 17. This very fire shall be to them as *a preserving salt*, The SALT of the covenant of God (Lev. ii. 18) was to be mixed with *every sacrifice*; and it is with fire that *all men are to be salted*. This fire is the divine purity and judgment in the *covenant*, whose promise is, ‘I will dwell among them.’ And in and among this purifying fire shall the people of God ever walk and rejoice everlasting. Rev. xxi. 23. This is the right understanding of Isa. xxxiii. 14, 15, ‘Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?&c. He that walketh in righteousness,’&c. And thus the connexion with the preceding verses is,—‘it is better for thee to cut off,’&c.—‘for it is part of the salting of thee, the living sacrifice’ (Rom. xii. 1), that every offence and scandal must be burnt out of thee before thou canst enter into life.’ It is perhaps necessary to add that this is simply the explanation of our Lord’s words as they stand, in their symbolism and connexion. When Mr. Elliott objects to it as a ‘fearful comment,’ he has to do with *those words*, not with me. Surely, nothing but the most amazing power of misunderstanding can suppose the explanation inconsistent with such texts as Rom. viii. 1, 34: 1 John ii. 1, 2.

50.] The connexion of this (elsewhere said in other references, Matt. v. 13: Luke xiv. 34) is now plain. If this fire which is to purify and act as a preserving salt to you, have, from the nullity and vapidity of the grace of the covenant in you, *no such power*,—it can only *consume*—the salt has lost its savour—the covenant is void—you will be cast out, as it is elsewhere added, and the fire will be no longer the fire of purification, but of *wrath eternal*.

I will just add that the interpretation of the sacrifice as the *condemned*—and the fire and salt as *eternal fire*,—except in the case of the salt having lost its savour, is *contrary to the whole symbolism of Scripture*, and to the exhortation with which this

verse ends: 'Have this of God—this spirit of adoption—this pledge of the covenant, in yourselves;—and,' with reference to the strife out of which the discourse sprung,— 'have peace with one another.'

Mark: Chapter 10

CHAP. X. 1–12.] REPLY TO THE PHARISEES' QUESTION CONCERNING DIVORCE. Matt. xix. 1–12. See Luke xvii. 11.

1, and the farther side] Our Lord retired, after His discourses to the Jews in John x. and before the raising of Lazarus, to Bethany (John i. 28; x. 40) beyond Jordan, and thence made his last journey to Jerusalem; so that in the strictest sense of the words He did come **into the borders of Judæa and beyond Jordan**. St. Matthew has "*beyond Jordan*" without the copula. Here a large portion of the sayings and doings of Jesus is omitted: compare Matt. xviit. 10; xix. 3; Luke ix. 51–xviii. 15; John vii. 1 ff.

2–9.] See notes on Matthew, with whose account ours is nearly identical. Compare however our vv. 3, 4, 5 with Matthew vv. 7, 8, 9, and we have testimony a the *independence* of the two reports—for such an arbitrary alteration of arrangement is inconceivable.

4.] suffered is emphatic. Moses gave an express injunction.

7.] Our makes Adam's saying His own: in Matthew it is attributed to "*him that made (them) from the beginning.*" The parallel is most instructive.

10–12.] In Matthew this saying forms part of the discourse with the Jews. Here again Mark furnishes us with the *exact circumstantial* account of the matter. On the addition, Matthew vv. 10–12, see notes there.

We may notice, that St. Mark omits St. Matthew's "*for every cause*" in ver. 2,—and his "*except for fornication*" in ver. 11; as also does St. Luke (xvi. 18). The one omission seems to involve the other. The report here gives the enquiry without this particular exception. As a general rule, St. Mark, so accurate in circumstantial details, is less exact than St. Matthew in preserving the order and connexion of the discourses.

12.] This verse corresponds to "*whoso marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery*" in Matthew, ver 9—but it is expressed as if the *woman* were the active party, and put away her husband, which was allowed by Greek and Roman law (see 1 Cor. vii. 13), but not by Jewish (see Deut. xxiv. 1: Jos. Antt. xv. 7. 10). This alteration in the verbal expression may have originated in the source whence Mark's report was drawn.

13–16.] THE BRINGING OF CHILDREN TO JESUS. Matt. xix. 13–15. Luke xviii. 15–17. The three are nearly identical:—from Matthew, we have the additional reason "*and pray,*" and from Mark, "*he took them up in his arms.*"

13. young children] Not only so, but as in Luke, *infants*: and our Lord was not to *teach* them, but only to touch, and **pray** over them. This simple, seemingly superstitious application of those that brought them (perhaps not the mothers only) the disciples, interrupted in their converse on high and important subjects, despise and reprove.

14.] We can hardly read our Lord's solemn saying, without seeing that it reaches further than the mere then present occasion.

It might one day me a question whether the new Christian covenant of repentance and faith could take in the unconscious infant, as the old covenant did: whether, when Jesus was no longer on earth, little children might be brought to Him, dedicated to his service, and made partakers of his blessing. Nay, in the pride of the human intellect, this question was sure one day to be raised: and our Lord furnishes the Church, by anticipation, with an answer to it for all ages. Not only may the little infants be brought to Him,—but in order for us who are mature to come to Him, we must cast away all that wherein our maturity has caused us to differ from them, and *become LIKE THEM*. Not only is Infant Baptism *justified*, but it is (abstractedly considered;—not as to *preparation* for it, which from the nature of the case is precluded) the NORMAL PATTERN OF ALL BAPTISM; none can enter God's kingdom, except as *an infant*. In adult baptism, the *exceptional case* (see above), we strive to secure that state of simplicity and childlikeness, which in the infant we have ready and undoubted to our hands.

16.] The word may be rendered he **fervently blessed them.**

17–31.] ANSWER TO AN ENQUIRER RESPECTING ETERNAL LIFE, AND DISCOURSE THEREUPON. Matt. xix. 16–30. Luke xviii. 18–30. On the different form of our Lord's answer in Matthew, see notes there. As it here stands, so far from giving any countenance to Socinian error, it is a pointed rebuke of the very view of Christ which they who deny His Divinity

entertain. He was no ‘good Master,’ to be singled out from men on account of His pre-eminence over his kind in virtue and wisdom: God sent us no such Christ as this, nor may any of the sons of men be thus called *good*. He was *one with Him* who only is good, the Son of the Father, come not to teach us merely, but to beget us anew by the divine power which dwells in Him. The low view then, which this applicant takes of Him and his office, He at once rebukes and annuls, as He had done before in the case of Nicodemus: see John iii. 1 ff. and notes.

The dilemma, as regards the Socinians, has been well put (see Stier ii. 283, note):—*either*, “There is none but God: Christ is good: therefore Christ is GOD;”—*or*, “There is none good but God: therefore Christ is not God; therefore Christ IS NOT GOOD.”

With regard to other points the variations in the narratives are trifling, but instructive—“*if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, which?*” (Matthew) = “*thou knowest the commandments*” (Mark and Luke) without any break in the discourse. Similarly, in Matthew, the young (Matthew) ruler (Luke) asks, ver. 20, “*what lack I yet?*” but in Mark and Luke, Jesus says to him (and here with the remarkable addition of “*beholding him, loved him*”) “*one thing thou lackest.*” Such notices as these shew the point at which, not short of which nor beyond which, we may expect the Evangelists to be in accord: viz. in that *inner truthfulness of faithful report* which reflects to us the teaching of the Lord, but does not depend on slavish, literal exactitude; which latter if we require, we overthrow their testimony, and most effectually do the work of our adversaries.

17.] into the way, out of the house, ver. 10, to continue His journey, ver. 32. The *running* and the *kneeling* are both found in the graphic St. Mark only.

19.] St. Mark here takes exactly the commandments of the second table,—**defraud not** standing for the tenth. St. Matthew adds their summary (“*thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*”), omitting (with St. Luke) “*defraud not*” perhaps on account of “*do not steal*” having gone before.

21.] Notice the graphic details again, of *looking on him and loving him*.

take up the cross is added here.

22.] for he had great possessions—so also St. Matthew.

23–31.] Here our ver. 24 is a most important addition; the rest is much alike in the three. In that verse we have all misunderstanding of our Lord’s saying removed, and “the proverb,” as Wesley well observes, “shifted to this ground: ‘It is easier for a camel, &c. than for a rich man *to cast off his trust* in his riches’” Yet the power of divine grace can and does accomplish even this.

24.] Children is remarkable, and a trace of exactitude: see John xxi. 5:—go also looked round about, ver. 23.

26.] This reiterated expression of dismay, *after the explanation* in ver. 24, need not surprise us. The disciples were quite as well aware as we must be, if we deal truly with ourselves, that **they that have riches and they that trust riches** are too nearly commensurate, for the mind to be relieved of much of its dread at the solemn saying which preceded.

28.] Here is an instance of a saying of Peter’s reported, without any distinction indicating that he had a share in the report. See notes on Matthew, for the promise here made to the Apostles.

29, 30.] Here our report is most important. To it and St. Luke we owe **now in this time**, without which the promise might be understood of *a future life only*:—and to it alone we owe the *particularizing of the returns* made, and the words **with persecutions**, which light up the whole passage, and shew that it is the inheritance of the earth *in the higher sense* by the meek which is spoken of;—see 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

Observe *mothers*—nature gives us only one—but love, many (see Rom. xvi, 13). We do not read *fathers*, perhaps because of our high and absorbing relation to our Father in heaven; compare Matt. xxiii. 9. On *and the gospel’s*, Dr. Wordsworth observes, “see above, viii. 35, where this phrase (not found in the other Evangelists, see Matt. xvi. 25; Luke ix. 24) is inserted by St. Mark. Perhaps it made a greater impression upon *his* mind, because he had formerly shrunk from suffering *for the Gospel’s sake*. (See Acts xiii. 13; xv. 38.) St. Mark also alone here inserts our Lord’s words, **with persecutions**, perhaps from a recollection that he had been once affrighted by persecution from doing the work of the Gospel: and desiring to prepare others to encounter trials which for a time had mastered himself.”

Here follows in Matthew the parable of the Labourers in the vineyard, ch. xx. 1–16.

32–34.] FULLER DECLARATION OF HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH. Matt. xx. 17–19. Luke xviii. 31–84, [The remarkable particulars of ver. 32 are only found here.]

This was (see Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 22) the *third* declaration of His sufferings which the Lord had made to the disciples, and it was His *going before them*, accompanied most probably by something remarkable in his gait and manner—a boldness and determination perhaps, an eagerness, denoted in Luke xii. 50, which struck them with astonishment and fear.

“Though very little is said in the Gospels concerning our Lord’s external appearance and deportment, there are frequent indications of its *effects on others*. We do not see His glory in itself,—it could not be described,—but we read the reflection of it in them. See Matt. ix. 9, the call of St. Matthew: Matt. xxi. 12, the purging of the temple: Mark ix. 15, the feeling and behaviour of the crowd towards Him after the Transfiguration. The climax is at the betrayal, John xviii. 6, when, after His utterance of those words—‘I am he,’—the soldiers start back, and fall to the ground.” Dr. Wordsworth.

32.] began, anew: He again opened this subject.

33.] The circumstances of the passion are brought out in all three Evangelists with great particularity. The ‘delivery to the Gentiles’ is common to them all.

34.] spit upon him, Mark and Luke:—**crucify him**, *Matthew only*, which is remarkable, as being the first intimation, in plain terms, of the death He should die. The *taking up the cross*, so often alluded to, might have had now for them a deep meaning—but see Luke ver. 34. The **they** in ver. 34 means the *Gentiles*.

35–45.] AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE: OUR LORD’S REPLY. Matt. xx. 20–28, where see notes throughout, and especially on the difference in our ver. 35. The two accounts of the discourse are almost verbatim the same, and that they came from one source is very apparent. Even here, however, slight deviations occur, which are unaccountable, if the one had actually before him the writing of the other. Besides, we have the whole additional particulars of the baptism, with which He was to be baptized: see note on Matthew.

38.] Observe the present tenses, **drink of**, and **am baptised with**. They may mean that the Lord had already the cup of His suffering at His lips; was already, so to speak, sprinkled with the first drops of spray of His baptism of blood: or they may be merely official: “*that I am to drink of, and to be baptized with.*”

42.] they which are accounted to rule,—who have the title of rulers: literally, **they which seem to rule**, or, **think that they rule**. It is not, ‘those who rule,’ which *God alone* does.

46–52.] HEALING OF BLIND BARTIMÆUS ON DEPARTURE FROM JERICHO. Matt. xx. 29–34. Luke xviii. 35–43. On the three accounts referring to one and the same miracle, see on Matthew. I will only add here, that a similar difference of number between Matthew and Mark is found in the miracle in the neighbourhood of Gergesa, ch. v. 2.

46.] Bar-timæus means, the son of Timæus,—so *Bar tholomew*, ch. iii. 18, *Bar jesus*, Acts xiii. 6.

48.] See on Matthew vv. 20, 31.

50.] Signs of an eye-witness, which make us again believe, that *here* we have the *literally exact* account of what took place.

51.] Rabboni, i.e. **Master**, or **My Master**, see John xx. 16. It was said to be a more respectful form than *Rabbi* merely.

52.] In Matthew only, Jesus *touches* him. The account here and in Luke seems to correspond more closely with the wonderful strength of his faith. Our Lord healed *by a word* in such cases, see Matt. viii. 10–13, ch. vii. 29, and other places. St. Luke adds, “*glorifying God*,”—and that *all the people seeing him gave glory to God*; see also Luke xix. 37.

Mark: Chapter 11

CHAP. XI. 1–11.] TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM. Matt. xxi. 1–17. Luke xix. 29–44. John xii. 12–36. On the general sequence of events of this and the following day, see note on Matthew, ver. 1.

1, 2.] As far as ye shall find, the agreement in Matthew, Mark, and Luke is nearly verbal; after that, Mark and Luke only mention the *foal*, and add, **on which never man sat**. Compare with this, Luke xxviii. 53. Our Lord’s birth, triumph, and burial were to be, in this, alike. Meyer observes of this part of the history, ‘A later tradition, sprung from the *sacred destination* of the beast (for beasts never et worked were used for sacred purposes, Num. xix. 2: Deut. xxi. 3: 1 Sam. vi. 7).’ But does it

never strike such annotators, that this very usage would lead not only to the *narrative being so constructed*, but to the *command itself having been so given?*

4.] The report of one of those sent: perhaps of Peter. The word rendered **a place where two ways met**, only means, *a road leading round a place*, and probably imports simply **the street**. Wordsw. interprets it, *'the back way, which led round the house.'* But there does not appear to be any reason for supposing the word "round" to refer to the *house*, rather than to the whole block, or neighbourhood, of houses, round about which the street led. Dean Trench, on the A.V. p. 116, would render it "a way round," "a crooked lane."

8, 9.] On the interesting addition in Luke vv. 37–40, see notes there.

branches] called branches of palm-trees, John, ver. 13: the word signifies not merely branches, but branches cut *for the purpose of being littered to walk on*: and thus *implies the strawing in the way*, which has been unskilfully supplied.

10.] **blessed...David**—is peculiar to Mark, clearly setting forth the idea of the people that the Messiah's Kingdom, the restoration of the *throne of David*, was come.

See the additional particular of the weeping over the city, Luke, vv. 41–44, and notes.

11.] See Matthew, ver. 12, and notes on ver. 1: also on John ii. 13–18.

I am by no means certain that the solution proposed in the notes on Matthew is the right one, but I cannot suggest a better. When St. Mark, as here, relates an occurrence throughout, with such signs of an eye-witness as in ver. 4, it is *very difficult to suppose that he has transposed any thing*; whereas St. Matthew certainly does not speak here so exactly, having transposed the anointing in Bethany: see notes on Matt. xxvi. 2, 6.

12–26.] THE BARREN FIG-TREE. THE CLEANSING OP THE TEMPLE. Matt. xxi. 12–22. Our account here bears strong marks of being that of a beholder and hearer: e.g. **when they had come forth from Bethany,—afar off,—having leaves,—and his disciples heard it.**

The times and order of the events are here more exact than in St. Matthew, who seems to place the withering of 'the tree *immediately after* the word spoken by our Lord.

13. **the time of figs was not yet**] The sentence, which in the original is elliptical (**for the season was not of figs, or for it was not a season of figs**), may be supplied,—**for the season was not (one) of figs**,—or, **for the season was not (that) of figs**, i.e. *not yet the season for figs*. The latter suits the context best. The tree was *precocious*, in being clothed with leaves: and if it had bad on it *winter figs*, which remain on from the autumn, and ripen early the next season, they would have been *ripe at this time*. But there were none—it was a *barren tree*. On the *import* of this miracle, see notes on Matthew.

15–19.] Matt. xxi. 12, 13, where see notes: also Luke xix. 45–48,

16.] This was the *court of the Gentiles*, which was used as a thoroughfare; which desecration our Lord forbade.

any vessel]—e. g. a pail or basket,—used for common life.

17.] **for all the nations**, omitted in Matthew and Luke, but contained in the prophecy:—mentioned by St. Mark as writing for Gentile Christians: but this may be doubted.

18. **all the people was astonished at his doctrine...**] This remark, given by St. Mark and St. Luke, is omitted by St. Matthew: probably because he has given us so much of the *doctrine* itself.

19.] See note on Matthew, ver. 17. On the Monday and Tuesday evenings, our Lord appears to have gone to *Bethany*.

20–26.] The answers are very similar to those in Matthew, but with one important addition here, viz. vv. 25, 26: see Matt. vi. 14, and 1 Tim. ii. 8. The connexion here seems to be, 'Though you should aim at strength of faith,—*yet your faith* should not work in all respects as you have seen me do, in judicial anger condemning the unfruitful and evil; but you *amust forgive*.'

24. **believe that ye have received them**] The past tense is used, because the reception spoken of is the determination in the divine counsels coincident with the request—believe that when you asked, you received, and the fulfilment shall come.

25.] On the matter, compare Matt. vi. 14 f. See also Matt. v. 23 f., where the converse to this is treated of.

27–33.] THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS QUESTIONED. HIS REPLY. Matt. xxi. 23–32. Luke xx. 1–8. Our account and that of St. Matthew are very close in agreement. St. Luke's has (compare ver. 6, “*all the people will stone us*”) few and important additions: see notes on Matthew.

28.] The expression **these things** need not necessarily refer to the cleansing of the temple, as Meyer: but seems, from Luke, to extend over our Lord's whole course of teaching and putting himself forward in public. **32.]** The answer to the question, asked by themselves, is given by the Evangelist.

Mark: Chapter 12

CHAP XII. 1–12] PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO HUSBANDMEN. This parable is, for the most part, identical with that in Matt. xxi. 33–46, and Luke xx. 9–19. The *number* and *treatment* of the servants sent, is enlarged on here; and in ver. 4 there occurs a singular word, which we render, **wounded him in the head**. Some have supposed it means, ‘*they made short work with him*, which is the more usual sense of the word, but not probable here; for they *did not kill him*, but disgracefully used him.

I must not allow any opportunity to pass of directing attention to the *sort* of difference, in similarity, between these three reports,—and observing that no origin of that difference is imaginable, except the *gradual deflection of accounts from a common, or a parallel source*. See notes on Matthew throughout.

9.] he will come, &c., is not the answer of the Pharisees, nor of the people, as the corresponding sentence in Matthew (see note there), but, here and in Luke, a continuation of our Lord's discourse.

After ver. 11 comes in Matt. vv. 43–45.

12.] Meyer makes the **multitude** (“*the people*” in Luke) the subject of **they knew**, but I think quite unnecessarily. The *fear of the people* is increased by the consciousness on the part of the that He had spoken the parable against *them*: they are as men *convicted before the people*.

13–17.] REPLY CONCERNING THE LAWFULNESS OF TRIBUTE TO CÆSAR. Matt. xxii. 15–22. Luke xx. 20–26. The parable of the wedding-garment, Matt. xxii. 1–14, is omitted. The only matters requiring additional remark in these verses are,

13.] by a word signifies the instrument wherewith they would **catch him**: the verb being one taken from the chase. They wished to lay hold on him by some saying of His.

14.] Must we give, or must we not give? the originality of the report is shewn by these words. They wish to drive our Lord to an absolute affirmation or negation.

15.] a denarius (see note on Matt. xx. 2), Mark and Luke, answers to “*the tribute-money*,” Matthew.

17.] they marvelled is in the original in the imperfect tense, and is graphic. This was going on, when the next incident began.

18–27.] REPLY TO THE SADDUCEES CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION. Matt. xxii. 23–33. Luke xx. 27–40. The three reports are very much alike in matter, and now and then coincide almost verbally (Matthew ver. 27, Luke ver. 32. Mark ver. 23 end, Luke ver. 33). The chief additions are found in Luke, vv. 34–36, where see notes, and on Matthew throughout.

23.] when they shall rise does not here mean, ‘*when men* (the dead) *shall rise*,’ but **when they** (the wife and seven brothers) **shall rise**: see on ver. 25.

25.] the **when they shall rise** here is general, not as in ver. 23: see last note.

26. in the history the Bush (so also in Luke)] The words may in the original mean either, ‘*in the chapter* containing the history of God appearing in the Bush,’ or, ‘*when he was at the Bush*.’ The former is the more probable, on account of the construction of the verse in our text. In Luke, if we had his account alone, the other rendering might be admissible, ‘*Moses testified, at the Bush*’: but this will not answer in our text.

28–34.] REPLY CONCERNING THE GREAT COMMANDMENT. Matt. xxii. 34–40, but with differing circumstances. There the question appears as that of one among the Pharisees' adherents, who puts this question, “*tempting him*”—and in

consequence of the Pharisees coming up to the strife, after He had discomfited the Sadducees. I should be disposed to take St. Mark's as the strictly accurate account, seeing that there is nothing in the question which indicates enmity, and our Lord's answer, ver. 34, plainly precludes it. The man, from hearing them disputing, came up, and formed one of the band who gathered together for the purpose of tempting Him. St. Mark's report, which here is wholly unconnected in origin with St. Matthew's, is that of some one who had taken accurate note of the circumstances and character of the man: St. Matthew's is more general, not entering, as this, into individual motives, but classing the question broadly among the various "temptations" of our Lord at this time.

28.] The motive seems to have been, *admiration of our Lord's wise answer*, and a desire to be instructed further by Him.

the first commandment of all;—this was one of the "*strivings about the law*" (Titus iii. 9),—*which was the greatest commandment*. The Scribes had many frivolous enumerations and classifications of the commands of the law.

29f.] St. Mark cites the entire,—St. Matthew only the command itself.

31.] Our Lord adds this second as an application or bringing home of the first.

The first is the *Sun*, so to speak, of the spiritual life:—this the *lesser light*, which reflects the shining of that other. It is *like* to it, inasmuch as both are *laws of love*: both deduced from the great and highest love: both dependent on "I am the Lord thy God," Lev. xix. 18.

Stier sets forth beautifully the strong contrast between the *requirements of these two commands, and the then state of the Jewish Church*: see John vii. 19.

32, 33.] The Scribe shews that he had entered into the true spirit of our Lord's answer; and replies in admiration at its wisdom.

whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, the things to which the outward literal observers paid all their attention.

34. not far...] This man had hold of that principle in which Law and Gospel are one: he stood as it were *at the door* of the Kingdom of God. He only wanted (but the want was indeed a serious one) repentance and faith to be *within it*. The Lord shews us here that even outside His flock, those who can answer **discreetly** (or **intelligently**)—who have knowledge of the *spirit* of the great command of Law and Gospel, are *nearer* to being of his flock, than the *formalists*:—but then, as Bengel adds, "If thou art not far off, come in: otherwise thou hadst better be far off."

And no man...] This is *apparently* out of its place here, as it is *after the question which now follows*, that St. Matthew relates this discomfiture of his adversaries. We must not however conclude too hastily, especially where the minute accuracy of St. Mark is at stake. The question just asked was *the last put to our Lord*, and therefore the notice of its *being the last* comes in fitly here. The enquiry which follows did more than silence their *questioning*; it silenced their *answering* too; both which things St. Matthew combines as the result of this day, in his ver. 46.

35–37.] THE PHARISEES BAFFLED BY A QUESTION CONCERNING CHRIST AND DAVID. Matt. xxii. 41–46. Luke xx. 41–44. The reports are apparently independent of any common original, and hardly agree verbally in the citation from the LXX. See notes on Matthew.

35.] The whole controversy in the temple is regarded as *one*: hence the new point raised by our Lord is introduced **as a rejoinder**, with **answered**.

36.] Observe in the Holy Ghost, "*in the Spirit*," Matthew,—"*in the book of Psalms*," Luke: a coincidence not to be passed over.

37.] whence, i.e. *from whence shall we seek an explanation for what follows?*

And the common people (literally the great multitude) **heard him gladly** is peculiar to Mark.

38–40.] DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES. Luke xx. 45–47. These verses, nearly verbatim the same in the two Evangelists, and derived from a common report, are an abridgment of the discourse which occupies the greater part of Matt. xxiii.—with the additions of **love to go in long clothing**, and ver. 40, see on Matthew, where these words are spurious. The words **in his doctrine** seem to imply that St. Mark *understood it as a compendium*.

They *devoured widows' houses*, by attaching them to themselves, and so persuading them to minister to them of their substance. A trace of this practice (but there out of gratitude and love) on the part of the Jewish women, is found in Luke viii.

2, 3. What words can better describe the corrupt practices of the so-called priesthood of Rome, than these of our Lord? The **pretense was**, to make their sanctity appear to these women, and so win their favour.

40.] greater—because they have joined thieving with hypocrisy.

41–44.] THE WIDOW' S MITES. Luke xxi. 1–4: probably from a common origin.

41. the treasury] This is usually understood of *thirteen chests*, which stood in the court of the women, into which were thrown contributions for the temple, or the tribute (of Matt. xvii. 24). But it is hardly likely that *they* would be called *the treasury*, and we hear of a *building* by this name in Josephus. Lucke believes *some part the court of the women* to be intended, perhaps a chamber in connexion with these chests.

Our Lord had at this time *taken his leave of the temple*, and was going out of it—between Matt. xxiii. end and xxiv.

42.) mites, the smallest Jewish coin: St. Mark adds *which make a farthing*, for his Roman readers:—the *mite* = 1 of an as = 1/40,—or, after the weight of the as was diminished, 1/2; of a *denarius*. Two, Bengel remarks, are noticed: she might have kept back *one*.

43.] more, in God's reckoning; more, for *her own stewardship* of the goods entrusted to her care.

Mark: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII.] JESUS PROPHESIES OF HIS COMING, AND OF THE TIMES OF THE END. Matt. xxiv. Luke xxi. 5–36. The accounts are apparently distinct, and each contains some fragments which have escaped the others. On the *matter* of the prophecy, I have fully commented in Matthew, where see notes: also those on Luke.

1.] what great stones.—Josephus says, “the stones of the building were 40 cubits in size.” And again, “for 6 days together the strongest of all the battering engines played on the wall and produced no effect: the size and jointing of the stones was too strong for it, and for all the others.”

3.] Peter and James and John and Andrew are “*his disciples*” in Matthew, and “*some*” in Luke.

4.] these things implies that they viewed the destruction of the temple as part of a great series of events, which had now by frequent prophecy become familiar to them. ‘*These things about which thou so often speakest.*’

5.] began to say—with this *begins* our Lord's full explanation on the matter. See reff.

8. there shall be... there shall be] By these repetitions majesty is given to the discourse.

the beginnings;—i. e. but the beginnings—the *mere* beginnings.

9.] ye has the emphasis—let *your* care be...

11.] St. Mark has vv. 10, 11 peculiar to himself. St. Luke (vv. 14, 15) has something very like them—St. Matthew nothing: but they occur Matt. x. 19, where see note.

12.] This is expressed by “*then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another;*” Matthew, ver. 10.

13.] hath endured, viz. in the confession implied by **for my name's sake** preceding.

14.] where it ought not—see note on Matthew, ver. 15. This is a less definite description of the place than we find there.

18.] St. Matthew adds, “*nor on the sabbath day.*” St. Mark wrote mostly for Gentile readers, and thus perhaps was not likely to report this.

19, 20.] the creation which God created... and the elect's sake, whom be hath chosen, peculiarities of St. Mark's style in reporting our Lord's discourses, for greater solemnity. John xvii. 26, John v. 16, cited strangely by Mr. Elliott to disprove this, are no cases in point. In both those, the expression is necessary to the sense: here, and usually in St. Mark, it is merely idiomatic.

24.] The opening word is more than the simple ‘*but*:’ and is best rendered by **howbeit** or **nevertheless**: as if it were, “though I have forewarned you of all things, yet some of those shall be so terrible as to astound even the best prepared among you.”

in those days, after that tribution—then *those days* come *after* that tribulation: see note on Matthew, ver. 29.

Our Evangelist omits the mourning of the tribes of the earth, and the seeing the sign of the Son of Man.

27.] from the uttermost part of the earth, from the extremity of the visible plane of the earth, shall the collecting begin: and shall proceed to the **uttermost part of heaven**, to the point where the sky touches that mate the other side.

28.] her, emphatic, when *her* branch... conveying an *a fortiori* in the application. If in so humble an example as the fig-tree you discern the nearness of a season, much rather should you in these sure and awful signs discern the approach of the end.

30.] this generation—see on Matthew, ver. 34.

32.] This is one of those things which the Father hath *put in his own power*; Acts i. 7, and with which *the Son*, in his mediatorial office, is not acquainted: see on Matthew. We must not deal unfaithfully with a plain and solemn assertion of our (and what can be more so than **nor even the Son**, in which by the **nor even** He is *not below* but *above* the angels?) by such evasions as “He does not know it so as to **reveal** it to us,” or as Aug., “He did not so know it as then to indicate it to the disciples.” Of such a sense there is not a hint in the context: nay, it is altogether alien from it. The account given by the orthodox Lutherans, as represented by Meyer, that our Lord knew this by *possession*, but not by *use*, is right enough, if at the same time it is carefully remembered, that it was this possession of which He emptied Himself when He became man for us, and which it belongs to the very essence of His mediatorial kingdom to hold in subjection to the Father.

33–37.] Peculiar to Mark, and containing the condensed matter of Matthew, vv. 43–47, and perhaps an allusion to the parable of the talents in Matt. xxv.

The **porter** is the **door-porter**, whose office it would be to look out for approaching travellers,—answering especially to the ministers of the word, who are (Ezek. xxxiii.) *watchmen* to God’s church.

Mark: Chapter 14

CHAP. XIV. 1, 2.] CONSPIRACY OF THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES AGAINST JESUS. Matt. xxvi. 1–5. Luke xxii. 1, 2. The account of the events preceding the passion in our Gospel takes a middle rank between those of St. Matthew and St. Luke. It contains very few words which are not to be found in one or other of them; but at the same time the variations from both are so frequent and irregular, as in my opinion wholly to preclude the idea that St. Mark had ever seen either. The minute analysis of any passage in the three will, I think, convince an unprejudiced examiner of this.

On the chronological difficulties which beset this part of the Gospel history, see note on Matt. xxvi. 17.

1. the passover, and [feast of] unleavened bread classed together, because the time of eating the Passover was actually the commencement of the feast of unleavened bread. The announcement by our Lord of his approaching death (Matt. xxvi. 2) is omitted by St. Mark and St. Luke.

3–9.] THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY. Matt. xxvi. 6–13. John xii. 1–8. (On Luke vii. 36–50, see note there.) The whole narrative has remarkable points of similarity with that of St. John,—and has been used as one of the indications that St. Mark *had knowledge of and used* the Gospel of St. John. My own view leads me to a different conclusion.

I have already remarked (note on Matt. xxvi. 3), that while St. Matthew seems to have preserved trace of the parenthetic nature of this narrative, such trace altogether fails in our account. It proceeds as if continuous.

3. spikenard] The original, literally rendered, is as Bishop Jeremy Taylor has it in his Life of Christ, §15, “hard pistick.” But it is quite uncertain what this epithet “pistick” means. The discussion may be seen in my Greek Testament. Here I can only state that the two possible explanations are (1) *genuine, unadulterated*; and (2) *liquid, or drinkable*. There clearly appears to have been a certain sort of ointment which they *drank*: see citations as above. The word is nowhere found in the classics, only here and in the parallel place in St. John, and some later writers.

brake the box can hardly mean only having broken the resin with which the cork was sealed. In ch v. 4, John xix, 36, Rev. ii. 27, the word is of *breaking*, properly so called: and I see no objection to supposing that the box (i. e. of course the narrow

neck of it) was crushed in the hand, and the ointment thus poured over His head. The feet would then (John xii. 3) be anointed with what remained on the hands of Mary, or in the broken vase (see note on Luke vii. 38).

4, 5. some] See notes on Matthew. The **three hundred denarii** is common to our narrative and that of St. John.

6.] Let her alone, also common to John, but *as addressed to Judas*.

7.] The agreement verbatim here of Matthew and John, whereas our narrative inserts the additional clause **and whosoever ye will ye may do them good**, is decisive against the idea that St. Mark compiled his account from the other two. In these words there appears to be a reproach conveyed to Judas, and Perhaps an allusion to the *office of giving to the poor* being *his*

8.] We have here again a striking addition peculiar to Mark. **She hath done what she could**: as similar praise to that given to the widow, ch. xii. 44—“*she cast in all that she had*.” We have also the expression **she hath by anticipation anointed**, shewing, as I have observed on Matthew, that it is one of *prospective* love, grounded on the deepest apprehension of the reality of our Lord’s announcement of His approaching death.

9.] See notes on Matthew ver. 13.

10, 11.] COMPACT OF JUDAS WITH THE CHIEF PRIESTS TO BETRAY HIM. Matt. xxvi. 14–16. Luke xxii. 3–6. The only matters requiring notice are,—the words **when they heard** [it], i.e. ‘*the proposal*,’—and promised, implying, as does the word in Luke, that the money was *not paid now*, either as full wages, or as earnest-money,—but *promised*; and paid (most probably) when the Lord was brought before the Sanhedrim, which was what Judas undertook to do.

12–16.] PREPARATION FOR CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER. Matt. xxvi. 17–19. Luke xxii. 7–13. Our account contains little that is peculiar.

12.] when they killed the passover, like St. Luke’s expression “*when the passover must be killed*,” denotes the ordinary day, when they (i. e. the Jews) sacrificed the Passover;—for that the Lord ate His Passover on that day, and at the usual time, is *the impression conveyed by the testimony the three Evangelists*: see notes on ew ver. 17, and Luke ver. 7.

We may notice that if this Gospel, as traditionally reported, was drawn up under the superintendence of Peter, we could hardly have failed to have the *names of the two disciples* given;—nor again would our narrator have missed (and the omission is an important one) the fact that *the Lord first gave the command*, to go and prepare the Passover—which *St. Luke only* relates.

It becomes a duty to warn students of the sacred word against fanciful interpretations. A respected Commentator of our own day explains the pitcher of water, which led the way to the room where the last Supper was celebrated, to mean “the baptismal grace” which we have “in earthen vessels,” which “leads on to other graces, even to the communion of Christ’s Body and Blood.”

15.] In the midst of a verbal accordance with Luke we have here inserted **prepared**, indicating that the guest-chamber was *already prepared* for the celebration of the Passover, as would indeed be probable at this time in Jerusalem. The disciples had therefore only to get ready *the Passover itself*.

17–21.] JESUS, CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER, ANNOUNCES HIS BETRAYAL BY ONE OF THE TWELVE. Matt. xxvi. 20–25. Luke xxii. 14 (21–23). John xiii. 21 ff. The account of St. Luke (ver. 16) supplies *the important saying of our Lord respecting the fulfilment of the two parts of the Passover feast*—see notes there. After our ver. 17, comes in **the washing of the disciples’ feet by the Lord** as related in John xiii. 1–20.

18.] The words **he that eateth with me** are peculiar to Mark, and, as we have seen before, bear a relation to St. John’s account, where our Lord had just before cited “*he that eateth bread with me*,” &c. ver. 18. They do not *point* out any particular person, but give pathos to the contrast which follows.

20.] This description of the traitor here again does not seem to *designate one* especially, nor to describe an action at that moment proceeding, but, as before, pathetically to describe the near relation of the betrayer to the Betrayed. Now however the relation pointed out is still closer than before—it is that of one dipping in the same dish—one of nearest and most trusted.

22–25.] INSTITUTION OF THE LORD’s SUPPER. Matt. xxvi. 26–29. Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi, 23–25. See notes on Matthew.

26–31.] DECLARATION THAT ALL SHOULD FORSAKE HIM. CONFIDENCE OF PETER. Matt. xxvi. 30–35 (see Luke

xxii, 31–34, and notes there). Our account is almost verbatim the same as that in Matthew, where see notes. The few differences are there commented on.

30.] Notice the climax: **this day**, but not only this—in **this night**, the part of it now present: nor only so, but **before the cock crow twice**, i. e long before the night is over.

31.] **spake the more vehemently**—the original implies, **went on repeating superabundant**

32–42.] OUR LORD’ S AGONY AT GETHSEMANE. Matt. xxvi. 86–46. Luke xxiii. 39–46 (see John xviii. 1). The same remarks apply here also.

33.] Notice the graphic **sore amazed**, and see note on ch. ix. 15 where the same word is used in the original. St Matthew has **to be sorrowful**.

36.] **Abba** is the familiar and endearing appellation for Father. It is an Aramaic form, and after St. Mark’s manner inserted as ‘Ephphatha,’ ch. vii. 34,—‘Talitha cumi,’ ch. v. 41.

Father is not given as the interpretation of **Abba**, but came to be attached to it in one phrase as a form of address: see the references.

39.] **the same words**, not verbatim, but in substance: see in Matthew.

41.] **it is enough**: viz, your watching with Me. The Lord had no need of it any more, now that the hour had come: not, as some, it is enough *of sleep*: this as Meyer observes, is refuted by the **sleep on now**.

43–52.] BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS. Matt xxvi. 47–56. Luke xxii 47–53.

44. **lead him away safely**] It does not quite appear whether **safely** is to be subjectively taken, ‘*with confidence*;’ or objectively, ‘*in safety*.’ Some suppose that it has an ironical meaning—q. d. ‘He will know how to rescue himself—take care that you keep Him safe.’ This of course depends on the view taken of the whole character and purpose of Judas on which see notes at Matt. xxvi. 14 and xxvii. 3.

45.] **Rabbi** appears to have been the usual form in which Judas addressed our Lord: see Matt. xxvi. 25. But we must not conclude from this with Bengel, that he never seems to have called Him *Lord*: see Matt. vii. 21, 22.

51.] It is impossible to determine, and therefore idle to enquire, *who this was*. Epiphanius, in recounting the traditional austerities of James the brother of the Lord, says, “that he never wore a second inner garment, but strictly used one wrapper of linen only, as it says in the Gospel, The young man fled and left the linen cloth with which he was girt.” Chrysostom and others supposed it to have been St. John: and there have been other conjectures. It seems to have been some attached disciple of the Lord (probably well known to the readers of Mark), who had gone to his nightly rest, and had been aroused by the intelligence. The *disciples* were not laid hold of:—this perhaps was throwing some obstacle in the way of the removal of Jesus: or he may have been laid hold of merely in wantonness, from his unusual garb.

53–65.] HEARING BEFORE CAIAPHAS Matt. xxvi. 57–68. [Luke xxii. 54, 63–65] John xviii. 24, See throughout notes on Matthew.

53.] **high priest**—*Caiaphas, de facto*, and in the view of our narrator:—so Matthew and Luke: but Jesus was *first* taken before *Annas*, who was *de jure* the high priest: see John xviii. 12–23.

56.] **their witness agreed not together**—literally, **their testimonies were not equal**, i.e. consistent with one another. It was necessary that two witnesses should agree. Deut. xvii. 6.

57.] **certain,—two**: see Matthew.

58.] **We and I** are emphatic. The allusion is probably to Dan. ii. 34.

59.] Perhaps the inconsistency of these testimonies may be traced in the different reports here and in Matthew.

50,—‘*in asserting this*’—i. e. they varied in the terms in which it was expressed.

60.] On the most probable punctuation and construction, see note on Matthew, ver. 62.

61.] the Blessed: in Hebrew, the ordinary Name for God. “This is the only lace in the N.T. where the well-known Name constantly used by the Rabbis is thus absolutely given.” Meyer.

62.] The “*henceforth*” of Matthew, and “*from this time*” of Luke are here omitted.

63.] his clothes, literally, **his tunics**—not his *priestly robe*, which was worn only in the temple, and when officiating: see on Matthew, ver. 65.

The plural perhaps is due to the wearing of two inner garments by persons of note.

65.] began—when

the sentence was pronounced. The **some** appear to be members of the Sanhedrim: the *servants* follow.

Prophesy] St. Matthew and St. Luke explain this: ‘Prophesy, who smote thee?’

66–72.] OUR LORD IS THRICE DENIED BY PETER. Matt. xxvi. 69–75. Luke xxii. 56–62. John xviii. 17, 18, 25–27. See the comparative table, and notes, on Matthew.

66.] beneath, because the house was built round the **court**, and the rooms looked down into it. See note on Matt. xxvi. 69.

68.] Peter’s reply is an union of two separate answers, which form the 1st and 2nd in Matthew.

69.] the maid—in Matthew “*another maid*,” in Luke “*another*,” but masculine. Meyer does not appear to be justified in asserting that this is necessarily the same maid as before: it might be only *the maid* in waiting in the *porch*: see note on Matthew.

70.] a little after is expressed in Luke by “*about the space of one hour after*”

for... also] for, in addition to all that has been hitherto said....

72.] when he thought thereon—no entirely satisfactory meaning has yet been given for the original word thus rendered. Referring to my Greek Testament for the discussion, I may sum it up by stating that the sense in the text, though not elsewhere found, seems to suit both the word and the context better than any other that has been suggested.

Mark: Chapter 15

CHAP. XV. 1–5.] JESUS IS LED AWAY TO PILATE, AND EXAMINED BY HIM. Matt. xxvii, 1, 2, 11–14, Luke xxiii. 1–5. John xviii. 28–38. Our account is very nearly related to that in Matthew: see notes there.

1.] the whole council is a touch of accuracy. From ch. xiv. 53 we know that all were assembled. Lightfoot quotes from Maimonides a precept which declares that of the Sanhedrim of 71 members it is not necessary for business that all be present: but when *all* were specially summoned, attendance was compulsory.

6–15.] BARABBAS PREFERRED TO HIM. HE IS DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED. Matt. xxii. 15–26. Luke xxiii. 17–25. John xviii. 39, 40. Our account is nearly cognate to, but distinct from that of St. Matthew, where see notes. The principal points of distinction will be noticed.

7.] The circumstance that Barabbas was *one of a set* of murderers, shewn by the **them that had made**, and the *plural who* (see margin), is peculiar to our narrative, and shews that it is not compiled from Matthew and Luke.

8.] This is also peculiar to Mark—in Matthew it is Pilate who first offers them the choice—in Luke they cry out, but it is “*away with this man, &c.*” ver. 18.

coming up probably implies the *rising of the crowd* in excitement—or perhaps their *coming up towards the palace*, as “*when they were gathered together*” in Matthew.

9.] Here our account differs from Matthew and agrees with John, ver. 39.

10.] He knew is the *imperfect* tense: **He was aware, He perceived**, His apprehension of it was concurrent with the action going on.

12.] whom ye call the King of the Jews is “*Jesus, which is called Christ*” in Matthew. Neither of these expressions can well have been copied from the other.

13.] again only refers to “*cried out;*” see ver. 8, where this is implied in “*began to desire.*”—they had not cried out *this* before.

16–19.] JESUS MOCKED BY THE SOLDIERS. Matt. xxvii. 27–30 (omitted in Luke). John xix. 1–8. See notes on Matthew.
16.] hall, the court or guard room, but *open*, see note on Matt. xxvi. 69.

17.] purple, in Greek, is vaguely used, to signify different shades of red, and is especially convertible with “*scarlet*” as St. Matthew.

20–23.] HE IS LED TO CRUCIFIXION. Matt. xxvii. 31–34. Luke xxiii. 26–33. John xix. 16, 17. See notes on these.

21. Alexander and Rufus] It is quite uncertain whether Alexander be identical with either of the persons of that name mentioned Acts xix. 33, 1 Tim. i. 20, 2 Tim. iv. 14, or whether those, or any two of them, it one and the same person. There is a Rufus saluted Rom. xvi. 13. The words **coming out of the country** determine nothing as to its being a working day or otherwise, any more than “*that passed by*” Matthew, ver. 39: nothing is said as to the *distance* from whence he came.

22.] the place Golgotha—or perhaps the place of *Golgotha*, as the word Golgotha would then answer to a skull in the interpretation; St. Luke has “*the place which is called a skull.*”

23.] wine mingled with myrrh is “*vinegar mingled with gall*” in Matthew, which see. Literally, **they were giving**, i.e. **they offered**.

24–28.] HE IS CRUCIFIED. Matt. xxvii. 35–38. Luke xxiii. 33, 34, 88. John xix. 18–24.

25. the third hour] This date is in agreement with the subsequent account, ver. 33, and its parallel in Matthew and Luke, but, as now standing unexplained, *inconsistent with John*, xix. 14, where it is said to have been about the sixth hour at the time of the exhibition of our Lord by Pilate. I own I see no satisfactory way of reconciling these accounts, unless there has been (see note on John) some very early erratum in our copies, or unless it can be shewn *from other grounds than the difficulty before us*, that John’s *reckoning of time* differs from that employed in the other Evangelists. The difficulty is of a kind in no way affecting the authenticity of the narrative, nor the truthfulness of each Evangelist; but requires some solution to the furnishing of which we are not competent. It is preposterous to imagine that two *such accounts as these* of the proceedings of *so eventful a day* should differ by *three whole hours* in their apportionment of its occurrences. So that it may fairly be presumed, that *some different method of calculation* has given rise to the present discrepancy. Meanwhile the chronology of our *text*,—as being carried on through the day, and as allowing time both for the trial, and the events of the crucifixion,—is that which will I believe be generally concurred in. All the other solutions (so called) of the difficulty are not worth relating.

29–32.] HE IS MOCKED ON THE CROSS. Matt. xxvii. 39–44. Luke xxiii. 35–37, 39–43. (John xix. 25–27.) Our narrative, derived&common source with that of Matthew, omits the scriptural allusion, “*He trusted in God,*” &c. Matthew, ver. 43.

32. And they that were crucified with him] See notes on Luke.

33–37.] SUPERNATURAL DARKNESS. LAST WORDS, AND DEATH OF JESUS. Matt. xxvii. 45–60. Luke xxiii. 44–46. John xix. 28–30. Our account is nearly verbally the same with Matthew.

34.] Eloi, the Syro-chaldaic form, answering to “*Eli*” in Matthew. Meyer argues that the words in Matthew must have been those actually spoken by our Lord, owing to the taunt, that He *called for Elias*. The last word is pronounced Sabáchtháni, not Sabachtháni.

36.] On the difference in Matthew, see notes there.

38–41.] SIGNS FOLLOWING HIS DEATH. Matt. xxvii. 51–56. Luke xxiii. 45, 47–49. Omitted by John. See notes on Matthew.

39.] which stood over against him—a minute mark of accuracy, so com-mon in Mark.

so-so majestically, as Theophylact. There was something in the manner of this last cry so unusual and superhuman, that the

Centurion (see on Matthew) was convinced that He must have been *that Person*, whom He was accused as having declared Himself to be.

40, 41.] the less—literally, **the little**—either in age, or in stature, so distinguished, hardly, at the time of this Gospel being written, from James the son of Zebedee, but more probably from James the brother of the Lord, the bishop of Jerusalem: see Introduction to Epistle of James. This Mary is the wife of Alpheus or Clopas; see John xix. 25.

Salome is called in Matthew, “*the mother of the sons of Zebedee*.” our Evangelist mentions that they had accompanied Him to Jerusalem;—and we may observe a curious variation of the wording, in “*followed Him when He was in Galilee*,” and “*followed Jesus from Galilee*”—the former rendering necessary the additional clause, “*which came up with Him*,” &c.

42–47.] JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA BEGS, AND BURIES, THE BODY OF JESUS. Matt. xxvii. 57–61. Luke xxiii. 50–56. John xix. 38–42. For all notes on the substance of the common narrative, see Matthew.

42. the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath] The Friday afternoon (the preparation—Parascevé, “the name by which Friday is now generally known in Asia and Greece.” Wordsw.) before *sunset*, at which time the Sabbath would begin, and the taking down, &c. *would be unlawful*. The three Evangelists do not imply that this “preparation” had any thing *especial* in it, as St. John does, ver. 31.

43.] honourable—probably in its later sense of noble, i.e. in *station*. But Meyer supposes it rather to refer to some-thing noble in the character or appearance of Joseph.

counsellor, 2 member of the Sanhedrim;—see Luke, ver. 51.

waited for the kingdom of God is common to Mark and Luke.

went in boldly] Characteristic of St. Mark’s narrative. On the change of mind produced in Joseph and in Nicodemus by the crucifixion, see note, John xix. 39.

44.] There is no inconsistency, or but a very trifling one, with the order in John, ver. 31, *to break their legs and take them down*. The circumstances related there *had taken place*, but no *report of them had been made* to Pilate. And the Body of the Lord had not been taken down, for some reason which does not appear, but which we can easily guess:—if Joseph had declared to the soldiers his intention of begging the Body, nay, had immediately gone (perhaps with them) to Pilate for that purpose,—and **went in boldly** looks like a sudden and unannounced application,—they would have left the Body for him to take down.

marvelled if he were already dead—he wondered at the fact thus announced to him of His death having already taken place.

45. gave] The passage cited from Cicero to shew that it was customary to give money on such occasions, is not to the point; “*the parents were obliged to purchase with money a speedy death*,” is not said of the body *after death*, but of a fee given to the officer for shortening the torments of the executed.

46. bought] Therefore it was *not the first day of unleavened bread*, which was one of *sabbatical sanctity*; as indeed the whole of this narrative shews, but such expressions as this more strikingly.

in a sepulchre] It is not said, but *implied*, both here and in Luke and John, that the tomb was *his own*—for how should he place the Body there otherwise? The *newness* of the tomb is not mentioned here, but by the other three Evangelists.

47.] Mary of Joses—understand *mother*; see ver. 40. That the same person is *so called* here, and **Mary of James** in the next verse, points to a *difference of origin* in the two accounts here, of the *Crucifixion* and *Resurrection*.

The mother of the Lord had in all probability previously departed: see notes on Matt. xxvii. 56 and John xix. 27.

St. Luke generalizes, and says, *the women who came with Him from Galilee*.

Some have understood by **Mary of Joses** or **Jose** or **Joseph** (for all are read here in the MSS.), the *wife* or *daughter* of Joseph of Arimathea—some, the *mother of the Lord*: but both unnecessarily, and without proof.

Mark: Chapter 16

CHAP. XVI. 1–8.] THE WOMEN, COMING TO THE SEPULCHRE, ARE APPRISED OF HIS RESURRECTION. Matt. xxviii. 1–10. Luke xxiv. 1–12. John xx. 1–10. On the general difficulties of this portion of the Gospels, and my view respecting them, see notes on Matthew.

1. when the sabbath was past] It was strictly *when the Sabbath was ended*, i.e. at sunset, that they bought the spices. St. Luke xxiii. 55, places it on the evening *before* the Sabbath; a slight but valuable discrepancy, as shewing the independence of the accounts. To suppose *two parties* of women (Greswell) or to take **bought** as *pluperfect* (as the A.V.) is equally arbitrary and unwarranted.

anoint him] This had not been done as yet. Nicodemus (John xix. 40) had only wrapped the Body hurriedly in the spices with the linen clothes.

2. when the sun was risen] This does not agree with Matthew, “*as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week*”—Luke, “*at early (or deep) dawn;*” or John, “*w hen it was yet dark:*”—nor indeed with “*very early in the morning*” of our narrative itself. If the sun was up, it would be between 6 and 7 o’ clock; which in the East especially, where even public business was transacted *very early*, could not be so called. Even Greswell virtually acknowledges a difficulty here.

3, 4.] It had been rolled away by an angel, Matthew.

for it *was very great* is stated as a reason why *they could see that it was rolled away on looking up*, possibly at some distance. This explanation is according to St. Mark’s manner of describing minute circumstantial incidents; but to refer this clause

back as the *reason why* they questioned who should remove the stone, is not only harsh, but inconsistent with the usage of this Gospel.

5.] In Matthew—an angel, sitting on the stone which he had rolled away. Here he is described as *he appeared*, and we are left to infer *what* he was. In Luke,—*two angels* appeared to them in the tomb. The incident to which these accounts point, must be distinct from that related John xx. 11, which was *after Mary Magdalene returned from the city*. It is not worth while to detail the attempts which have been made to reconcile these various reports of the incident: they present curious examples of the ingenuity, and (probably unconscious) disingenuousness, of the Harmonists. I may mention that Greswell supposes the angels in Matthew and Mark to be distinct, and accounts for **were affrighted** in our text thus: ‘After seeing one angel *without* already, they were probably less prepared than before to see another so soon after *within*.’

6.] From the **come** of St. Matthew, I should be inclined to think that his is the strictly accurate account. This word implies that the angel accompanied the women into the tomb: and if so, an imperfect narrative like that in the text might easily describe his whole appearance as taking place within.

7.] But breaks off the discourse and turns to a new matter—**But now rather** do ye...

and Peter] It is hardly perhaps likely that the *denial of Peter* was the ground of this message, though it is difficult not to connect the two in the mind. The mention of him here is probably merely official—as the ‘first among equals’ We cannot say that others of the Apostles may not have denied their Master besides Peter.

It must not be concluded from this that we have a trace of Peter’s hand in the narrative.

8.] The idea of our narrative here is, that the women *fled in terror* from the sepulchre, and *did not deliver the message at the time*,—for they were afraid. All attempts to reconcile this with the other Gospels are futile. It is a manifest evidence that our narrative is here suddenly broken off, and (perhaps?) that no more information about the women was in the possession of its author. The subsequent verses are quite disconnected from this; and contain the substance of their writer’s information respecting the other appearances of the Lord.

9–20.] APPEARANCES OF JESUS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION: HIS ASCENSION. An addition to the narrative of a compendious and supplementary character, bearing traces of *another hand* from that which has shaped the diction and construction of the rest of the Gospel.

The reasons for and against this inference will be found in the various readings in my Greek Testament, and in the course of this note; and a general statement of them at the end of it. I may here state, for the English reader, that the passage is omitted,—or marked as suspicious, as variously given,—or asserted not to occur in the correct copies,—in many of our oldest authorities. It is quoted as early as Irenæus, in the 2nd century: but Jerome in the 3rd says that nearly “*all the Greek MSS. by his time did not contain it*. The legitimate inference is, that it was placed as a completion of the Gospel soon after the apostolic period,—the Gospel itself having been, for some reason unknown to us, eh incomplete.

9.] the first day of the week is remarkable as occurring so soon after the mention of it, ver. 2 (see Luke xviii. 12).

out of whom he had cast...] This notice, coming so late, *after the mention of Mary Magdalene in ver. 1*, is remarkable. The instances quoted by De Wette to shew that the unexpected introduction of notices contained in the other Gospels is in St. Mark's manner, do not seem to me to apply here.

This verse agrees with John xx. 1 ff, but is unconnected with the former narrative in this chapter.

10. went and...] This idiom, *never used by St. Mark, is three times contained in this passage* (vv. 12, 15).

them that had been with him, though found in the Acts (xx. 18), *never occurs in the Gospels*: nor does the word "disciples" in this passage.

11.] See John xx. 18: Luke xxiv. 11.

had been seen of (by) her is a construction only found here in N.T., and the word here used for "seen" (which occurs again ver. 14) is not used by Mark.

believed not (disbelieved) is only used in ver. 16 and Luke xxiv. 11, 41, throughout the Gospels.

12.] After that is *not found in Mark*, though many opportunities occurred for using it. This verse epitomizes the events on the journey to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 13–35.

was manifested... as they **walked**, though in *general* accord with St. Luke's narrative, is not accurate in detail. It was not *as they walked*, but *as they sat at meat* that he was manifested to them.

in another form—a slight difference from Luke xxiv. 15, 16, which relates the reason why they did not know Him to be, that *their eyes were holden*, his being *is his usual form* being declared by **Jesus himself**: but see notes there.

13.] they also—as Mary Magdalene had done before.

the residue—supply, of those that had been with Him.

neither believed they them—not consistent with Luke xxiv. 33, 34. Here again the Harmonists have used every kind of distortion of the plain meaning of words to reconcile the two accounts; assuming that some believed and some doubted, that they first doubted and then believed; or, according to Bengel, first believed and then doubted.

14.] The following narrative, evidently intended by its author to represent what took place *at one and the same time*, joins together in one at least *four* appearances of the Lord: (1) that related in this verse and Luke xxiv. 36–49; (2) that on the mountain in Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 16–20), when the words in ver. 15 were spoken; (3) some unrecorded appearance when the rest of these words (vv. 16–18) were spoken,—unless we consider the whole to have been said on the mountain in Galilee; and (4) the appearance which terminated with the Ascension.

The latter part of this ver. 14 appears to be an epitome of what our Lord said to them on several occasions—see Luke xxiv. 25, 38; John xx. 27; Matt. xxviii. 17.

15. all the world] "*all the nations*," Matt. xxviii. 19: see note there.

preach the Gospel, without the addition of "*of the kingdom*" (Matthew) or "*of God*" (Mark i. 14 only, Luke), is in *St. Mark's manner* (see ch xiii, 10; xiv. 9). It only once occurs in Matthew, viz. xxvi. 13.

the whole creation] Not to *men* only, although men only can hear the *preaching* of the Gospel; *all creation* is redeemed by Christ—see Col. i. 15, 23; Rom. viii. 19–23. "Men, primarily, ver. 16: the rest of the creatures secondarily. As wide as the curse extends, reaches the blessing. The creation by the Son, is the foundation of redemption and of the kingdom." Bengel.

This word **creation**, or creature, appears never in the N.T. to be used of *mankind alone*. Bengel's "*the rest of the creatures in the second place*" may be illustrated in the blessings which Christianity confers on the inferior creatures and the face of the earth by bringing civilization in its wake. By these words *the missionary office is bound upon the Church through all ages, till every part of the earth shall have been evangelized*.

16.] These past participles must be noticed, as carrying on the thought to a time beyond the *work of the preacher*: when **saved** and **damned** shall take place; and reserving the division of mankind into these two classes, till that day.

On **baptized**, see note on Matt. xxviii. 19.

There is no “*and is not baptized*” in the second clause here. Unbelief—by which is meant the rejection of the Gospel in heart and life, not weakness or doubt as in ver. 14—shall condemn a man, whether *baptized* or *unbaptized*. And, conversely, it follows that our Lord does not set forth here the *absolute*, but only the *general* necessity of Baptism to salvation; as the Church of England also teaches. But that general necessity extends to all to whom Baptism is *accessible*; and it was well said “*not the privation, but the contempt of Baptism, condemns.*”

These words cannot be taken, as those in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, as setting forth the order in which faith and baptism must always come; *belief* and *disbelief* are in this verse the great leading subjects, and **believeth** must on that account stand first. On **he that believeth... shall be saved**, compare Acts xvi. 31. This is a solemn declaration of the doctrine of ‘salvation by faith,’ from the Lord Himself; but such a faith as is expanded, Matt. xxviii. 20, into teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; which is its *proper fruits*.

shall be damned, i.e. in the most solemn sense: for the *sin of unbelief*:—for those are now spoken of who *hear* the Gospel preached, and *reject* it.

17.] This promise is *generally* made, without limitation to the first ages of the Church. *Should occasion arise for its fulfilment*, there can be no doubt that it will be made good in our own or any other time. But we must remember that **signs** are not needed where Christianity is *professed*: nor by missionaries who are backed by the influence of powerful Christian nations. There are credible testimonies of miraculous powers having been exercised in the Church considerably after the Apostles’ time

shall cast out devils] The Lord Himself has declared how weighty a sign this was, Matt. xii. 28. For fulfilments of the promise, see Acts v. 16; viii. 7; xvi. 18.

shall speak with new tongues] See 1 Cor. xiv. 22: Acts ii. 4 al. On the gift of tongues, see notes at those places.

18.] shall take up serpents—see Acts xxviii. 3–5.

if they drink&c] We have no instance of this given in the Acts: but later, there are several stories which, if to be relied on, furnish examples of its fulfilment. Eusebius says that “a wonderful thing was related of Justus, who was surnamed Barsabas,—that he drank deadly poison and felt no evil, through the grace of the Lord.”

on the sick] “*to lay hands on*” is in *Mark’s manner*; see ch. viii. 25; x. 16. There is no mention of the anointing with oil here, as in James v. 14.

19.] The connecting particle, rendered **so then,—the Lord,—and the Lord Jesus**, which some MSS. read here, are alike *foreign to the diction of Mark*, speaking of the Lord: we have *the Lord* in the message (common to all three Gospels) ch. xi. 3—but that manifestly is no example.

after the Lord had spoken can only in fairness mean, ‘*when He had spoken these words.*’ All endeavours of the Harmonists to include in them “*not only these words, but all that He spake*” (Euthymius) will have no weight with an honest reader, who looks to the *evident sense of his author alone*, and disregards other considerations. That other words were spoken, we know; but that *this author intended us to infer that*, surely is not deducible from the text, and is too often allowed in such cases to creep fallaciously in as an inference. We never shall read or comment on Scripture with full profit, till all such subterfuges are abandoned, and the Gospel evidence treated in the clear light of intelligent and honest faith. We have an example of this last in Theophylact’s exposition, “*when He had thus spoken.*”

was received up] I should hardly say that the author of this fragment necessarily implies an ascension’ *from the place* where they were then assembled. The whole of these two verses is of a compendious character, and **as sat on the right hand of God** must be understood as setting forth a fact not comprehended in the cycle of the writer’s observation, but certain in the belief of all Christians, so this may very well speak of the *fact* as happening, not necessarily then and there, but (see remarks above) *after these words were spoken*; provided always that these words are recognized as *the last* in the view and information of our Evangelist. I say this not with any harmonistic view, but because the words themselves seem to require it. (See on the Ascension, notes on Luke xxiv. 51 ff)

20.] went forth—not, from the chamber where they were assembled—which would not answer to **preached every where**, but would require some immediate action of that very to correspond to it (see Matt. xii. 14);—but used in the more solemn sense

of Rom. x. 18 (cited from Ps. xviii. 4 LXX). “*their sound is gone forth into all lands:*” see reff.

every where] No inference can be drawn from this word as to the date of the fragment. In Acts ix. 82 Peter is said to have “*passed throughout all (quarters)...*”—the expression being only *a general one*, indicating their performance, in their time and d>, of our Lord’s words, into all the world

the Lord, i.e. Jesus: see Matt. xxviii. 20: Heb. ii. 3, 4, which last passage some have absurdly supposed, to have been seen and used by our Evangelist. The two words rendered following (here and in ver. 17) are compound verbs, and *both foreign to the diction of St. Mark*, often as he uses the simple verb.

A few concluding remarks may be added respecting vv. 9–20. (1) For the external evidence, see as above. As to its *genuineness as a work of the Evangelist Mark*, (2) internal evidence is, I think, *very weighty against St. Mark’s being the author*. No less than *twenty-one words and expressions occur in it* (and some of them several times), which are *never elsewhere used by St. Mark*,—whose adherence, to his own peculiar phrases is remarkable. (3) The inference therefore seems to me to be, that *i t is an authentic fragment, placed as a completion of the Gospel in very early times*: by whom written, must course remain wholly uncertain; but coming to us with very weighty sanction, and having strong claims on our reception and reverence.

LUKE

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Luke: Chapter 1

CHAP I. 1-4.] PREFACE ADDRESSED TO THEOPHILUS. The style of this preface is purer Greek than the contents of the Gospel, and also more labored and formal. This may be accounted for, partly because it is the composition of the Evangelist himself, and not translated from Hebrew sources like much of the rest, and partly because prefaces, especially when also dedicatory, are usually in a rounded and artificial style.

1. many] Much depends on the meaning of this word, as guiding, or modifying, our opinion on the relation and sources of our Gospel histories. (1) That *the writers of our present Gospels exclusively* cannot be meant, is evident; since, even *supposing St. Luke to have seen all three Gospels*, one (that of St. John) was wholly, and another (that of St. Matthew) was in greater the production of an *eye-witness and minister of the word*, which would leave only one for the **many**. (2) Apocryphal Gospels *exclusively* cannot be meant: for they would not be '*narrations concerning matters fully believed among us*,' nor '*delivered by eye-witnesses and ministers of the word*,' a great part of their contents being *excluded* by this very author from his own **narration**. (3) A combination of these two *may* be intended—e. g. of the later sort, *the Gospel according to the Hebrews*,—of the former, *that according to St. Mark*, but then also how shall we make out the **many**? Our present apocryphal Gospels arose far later than any likely date which can be assigned to St. Luke's Gospel see Introduction to Luke. (4) I believe the only probable interpretation of the words to be, that many persons, in charge of Churches, or otherwise induced, drew up, here and there, statements (*narratives*) of the *testimony of eye-witnesses and ministers of the word* (see below), so far as they themselves had been able to collect them. (I do not believe that either the Gospel of St. Matthew or that of St. Mark *is to be reckoned* among these; or if they are, that St. Luke had seen or used them.) That such narratives should not have come down to us, is no matter of surprise: for (1) they would be absorbed by the more complete and sanctioned accounts of our present Evangelists; and (2) Church tradition has preserved very few fragments of authentic information of the apostolic age. It is probable that in almost every Church where an eye-witness preached, his testimony would be taken down, and framed into some narrative, more or less complete, of the life and sayings of the Lord. This does not necessarily imply the insufficiency of such narrations, as some have imagined. The fact of that failure is indeed implied in St. Luke's description of his own work—but that, more because *it possessed completeness* (whereas they were fragmentary) than from any difference in kind.

to set forth in order] more Properly, **to draw up, to arrange**.

a declaration] **a setting forth:** and so if in relation to *things past*, **a narration—history**.

surely believed] According to some, this word means *fulfilled*. But the A.V. has the more likely rendering. Meyer would render it, '*which have found their completion among us*,' i.e. 'us of the apostolic times;' meaning '*Theophilus and himself*,' &c.

among us, i.e. **us Christians**, you and me, and all members of the Church of Christ so also the **unto us** in ver. 2.

2.] The Apostles, delivered these matters *orally* to the Churches in their teaching (see below on ver. 4), and others drew up accounts from that catechetical instruction. It appears from this, that St. Luke *was not aware of any narration drawn up by an eye-witness or minister of the word*. Their account of these matters was a *tradition, from which the narrations were drawn up*. *He cannot therefore have seen* (or, having seen, not recognized as such, which is highly improbable) *the Gospel of St. Matthew*. Compare 1 John i. 1-3.

from the beginning] Not, '*from the very beginning*,' i.e. the birth of the Lord, &c., but from the *official beginning*: see Acts i. 21 f. It differs from **from the very first** below.

eyewitnesses most probably stands alone: but it may well be taken with **of the word** (see below).

ministers, i.e. ministering servants—but in connection with **from the beginning**.

of the word—not, '*the personal word*' (i. e. Christ: so Orig., Athanasius, Cyril, Euthym.) which would be altogether alien from St. Luke's usage (see on Heb. iv. 12): but, **the word**, '*the word preached*:'—we have the expression "*the ministry (but there diaconia) of the word*" in Acts vi. 4.

3. it seemed good to me also] St. Luke by this classes himself with these *many*, and shews that he intended no disparagement

nor blame to them, and was going to construct his own history from similar sources. The words which follow imply however a conscious superiority of his own qualification for the work. There is here no *expressed claim* to inspiration, but at the same time no *disclaimer* of it.

having traced down] by research, and so become accurately acquainted with.

from the very first—i. e. as in ver. 5;—as distinguished from those who only wrote of the *official* life of the Lord, or only fragments perhaps of that. **in order]** i.e. **consecutively**. By this word we must not understand St. Luke to lay claim to any *especial chronological accuracy in writing*;—which indeed is not found in his Gospel. He *traced* the events in order as they happened: but he may *have arranged* them as other considerations led him.

most excellent Theophilus] It is wholly unknown who this person was. The name was a very common one. The conjectures about him are endless, and entirely without value. It appears by the title given him, that he was a person of dignity, and of course, from ver. 4, he was a convert to Christianity.

The idea of the name being not a proper, but a *feigned one*, designating ‘those who loved God’ (found as early as Epiphanius, and adopted again recently), is far-fetched and improbable.

4. instructed] Theophilus had then been orally instructed in the narratives which form the subject of this Gospel: and St. Luke’s intention in writing it is, that he might have a *more accurate knowledge of these histories*. The word means literally, **catechized**, ‘catechetically taught.’

those sayings] not as in A.V., to be rendered ‘things:’ *neither the Greek nor the corresponding Hebrew word ever has this meaning*, as is commonly but erroneously supposed. In all the commonly-cited examples of this, ‘*things expressed in words*’ are meant: here **the histories,—accounts**.

5–25.] ANNOUNCEMENT BY GABRIEL OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN. Peculiar to Luke. The style in the original now totally alters and becomes Hebraistic, signifying that the following is translated or compiled an Aramaic oral narration, or perhaps (from the very distinct character of these two first chapters) *document*.

5. of the course of Abia (Abijah)] This was the *eighth* of the *four-and-twenty courses* of the priests (see ref. 1 Chron.). These courses kept their names and order, though not their descent, after the captivity. The courses were of a *week’s* duration each.

Elisabeth] This is the Septuagint rendering, Exod. vi. 23, of Elisheba, the wife of Aaron: signifying, *God (is my) oath*: i.e. a swearer by,—worshipper of, God. John was thus of priestly descent by both parents.

9.] This was the *most honorable office* which was allotted among the priests each day, and the same person could not serve it more than once.

the temple] the holy place: see Heb. ix. 1–6, and Exod. xxx. 7.

An account of John Hyrcanus the high priest having a vision at the time of offering incense is given in Josephus: see the extract in my Greek Testament. There also we are told that the people were outside (in the courts of the men and women):—their prayers were offered *while the incense was burnt*, as the *smoke was symbolical* of the ascent of prayer, Rev. viii. 3, 4.

It appears, from the allotment having been just mentioned, to have been the *morning* incense burning. Theophylact and others understand the whole as describing the entry into the Holy of holies on the great day of Atonement, Levit. xvi. But this is manifestly an error: for it would necessitate Zacharias having been *high priest*, which he never was; and in this case there would have been no casting of lots.

11.] the *altar of incense*, Exod. xxx. 1, must not be confounded with the *large altar of burnt-offering*: that stood *outside the holy place*, in the court of the priests. It was during the sacrifice on the great altar that the daily burning of the incense took place: one of the two priests, whose lot it was to offer incense, brought fire from off the altar of burnt-offering to the altar of incense, and then left the other priest there alone, who, on a signal from the priest presiding at the sacrifice, kindled the incense: see Exod. xl. 5, 26.

This is no *vision*, but an actual *angelic appearance*. The right is the *favorable side*: see Matt. xxv. 83. “We must understand the right as regarded the officiating priest, who stood with his face to the altar. It would thus be on the N. side of the holy place, where the table of shew bread stood, whereas on the S. side was the golden candlestick,” Bleek.

13.] He had then *prayed for a son*—but as appears below, long since—for he now had ceased to look for an answer to his

prayer. Many Commentators have thought his prayer was for the salvation of Israel by the appearance of the Messiah: but the former view appears more probable.

John—i. e. *God is favorable*: we have it under the form of Johanan, 2 Kings xxv. 23; 1 Chron. iii. 24; 2 Chron. xxviii. 12.

14.] The words of the original here may be rendered two ways, either **there shall be to thee**, i.e. **thou shalt have**, as A.V.: or, **he shall be to thee... joy and gladness**.

15. in the sight of the Lord] signifying the spiritual nature of his office and influence.

The priests were similarly prohibited to drink strong drink; and the Nazarites even more rigidly.

strong drink] the word is *sikera*—‘*any liquor not made from grapes*.’

Wyclif renders, ‘*he schal not drynke wyne ne sidir*.’

he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost is a *contrast to*, and a reason for, the not drinking wine nor strong drink: compare Eph. v. 18.

Olshausen and Meyer think that (comparing ver. 44) the meaning is, the Holy Spirit should in some wonderful manner act on the child even *before* his birth. But this is not necessary,—nay, would it not rather be in this case “*in his mother’s womb....?*” The **from** seems to fix the prior limit of the in-dwelling of the Spirit, *at his birth*.

16.] The work of John was one of preparation and turning men’s hearts towards God. For full notes on his office, see on Matt. xi. It may suffice here to repeat, that it was a *concentration of the spirit of the law*, whose office it was to *convince of sin*: and that he eminently represented the law and the prophets in their work of preparing the way for Christ.

17.] before him—i. e. “*the Lord their God*,” manifest in the flesh. De Wette denies this interpretation, as contrary to all analogy: and yet himself explains the expression by saying that what the Messiah does, is in Scripture *ascribed to God as its doer* (similarly Meyer). But *why?* because Messiah is GOD WITH US. This expression is besides used (see Zech. xiv. 5) in places where the undoubted and sole reference is to the Messiah.

in the spirit and power] As a type of partial fulfillment, of the personal coming of Elias in the latter days (see note on Matt. xi. 13, 14). Bleek remarks that it was not in the wonder working agency of Elias that John was like him, for ‘John did no miracle,’ but in the power of his uttered persuasion.

to turn....] The first member only of the sentence corresponds with Malachi. The angel gives the exposition of the second member,—which stands in the LXX, “*and the heart of a man towards his neighbor*” (in A.V. “*and the heart of the children to their fathers*”):—for of course that must be understood in the better sense, of the prevailing, and the bad becoming like them.

18.] The birth of John, involving *human generation*, but *prophetically announced*, and *supernatural*, answers to the birth of Isaac in the O.T. But Abraham’s faith was a strong contrast to the unbelief of Zacharias: see Rom. iv. 19.

an old man] The *Levites* (see Num. iv. 3; viii. 24, 25) became superannuated at the age of *fifty*: but it appears, by extracts from the Rabbinical writings given by Lightfoot, that this was not the case with the priests.

19. Gabriel] meaning, *Man of God*: see Dan. viii. 16; ix. 21, also Tobit xii. 15.

The *names* of the angels, say the Rabbis, came up with Israel from Babylon. We first read of both Michael and Gabriel in the book of Daniel. But we are not therefore to suppose that they were borrowed from any heathen system, as Strauss and the rationalists have done; the fact being, that the persons and order of the angels were known long before, and their *names* formed matter of subsequent revelation to Daniel. See Josh. v. 13–16.

that stand in the presence of God] one of the chief angels near the throne of God. They are *seven* in Tobit, as above.

20.] We must not consider this dumbness *solely* as a punishment; it was also a *sign*, as Zacharias had required. It is impossible for us to say what the degree of unbelief in Zacharias was, and therefore we can be no judges as to his being deserving of the punishment (against Strauss and the rationalists).

and not able to speak] This is not a *repetition*, but an *explanation of the ground* and reason of his silence.

until day that these shall be performed] ‘What day? that of the birth and the giving of the name,’ Euthymius.

21.] It was customary for the priest at the time of prayer not to remain long in the holy place, for fear the people who were without might imagine that any vengeance had been inflicted on him for some informality;—as he was considered the *representative* of the people.

22.] They knew, by some excitement, visible in his manner. It was not his office to *pronounce the benediction*, but that of the other incensing priest; so that his ‘not being able to speak,’ must mean, *in answer to the enquiries* which his unusual appearance prompted. This answer he gave by a sign: and the question was also by signs; for (see ver. 62) he was *deaf*, as well as dumb, which indeed is the strict meaning of the word used in the original.

23. as soon as....] The week during which his course was on duty. Mr. Greswell, by much elaborate calculation, has made it probable, but only as one out of several alternatives, that this week was Tisri 18–25, i.e. September 20—October 6, of the *sixth year before the Christian era*.

A deaf and dumb person, we thus see, was not precluded from some of the priest ministrations.

24, 25.] hid herself—either, *to avoid defilement*: see Judges xiii. 13, 14,—to *hide her pregnancy* from her neighbors till it was certain and apparent,—or, from the precaution which the first months of pregnancy require.

Kuinoel suggests, that the reason may have been, that she might devote herself more uninterruptedly to exercises of devotion and thankfulness, and that this is expressed by the words following.

my reproach] of barrenness: see reff.

26–38.] ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SAME

ANGEL OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

26.] in the sixth month—referring to the “*five months*” in ver. 24.

Nazareth] In this particular the information of our Evangelist appears to be fuller than that of St. Matthew, who seems not to be aware of any residence at Nazareth previous to the birth of our Lord: but see note on Matt. ii. 22.

27.] of the house of David refers to Joseph in this place, who (see Matt. i.) was of the direct lineage of David. That *Mary was so*, is nowhere *expressed* in the Gospels, but seems to be implied in ver. 32, and has been the general belief of Christians. The Son of David was to be the fruit of *his body* (Ps. cxxxii. 11); which He would not be, unless His virgin mother was of the house of David. notes on the genealogy in ch. iii. Still, we must remember the absolute oneness in the marriage relation, which might occasion that Mary herself should be reckoned as being in very deed that which her husband was. Perhaps this has been hardly enough taken into account.

28.] highly favored, not “*full of grace*,” as the Vulgate:—the above is the meaning of the original word in the only other place where it occurs in the N.T., viz. Eph. Eph. i. 6 (“*made us accepted*” A.V.). It corresponds to “*thou hast found favor with God*,” ver. 30.

32. his father David] This announcement makes it almost certain (still see note above) that *Mary also* was house of David. No astonishment is expressed by her at this part of the statement and yet, from the nature of her question, it is clear that *she did not explain it supposing Joseph to be the destined of her child*. See 2 Sam. vii. 13: Ps. lxxxix, 3, 4: Isa. ix. 7: Jer. xxxiii. 15.

34, 35.] This question differs from that raised by Zacharias above. It is merely an enquiry after the *manner in which* so wonderful a thing should take place; not, *how shall I know this?*—it *takes for granted that it shall be*, and only asks, *How?*

The Holy Ghost—the creative Spirit of God, of whom it is said, Gen. i. 2, that He “*moved upon the face of the waters*.” But as the world was not created by *the Holy Ghost*, but by *the Son*, so also the Lord was not begotten by *the Holy Ghost*, but by *the Father*; and that, *before the worlds*. “No more is here to be attributed to the Spirit, than what is necessary to cause the Virgin to perform the actions of a mother..... As Christ was made of the substance of the Virgin, so He **was not made of the substance of the Holy Ghost**, Whose essence *cannot at all be made*. And because the Holy Ghost did not beget Him by any communication of His essence, therefore He is not the Father of Him, though He were conceived by Him.” (Pearson on the Creed, p. 165, 166.)

shall overshadow thee] The figure is perhaps from a *bird* (as Grotius: see Ps. xci. 4), or from a *cloud*: see Mark ix. 7.

holy thing] Some render *that which shall be born* (of thee) *shall be called holy, the Son of God.* But it is more simple to take it as A.V., **that holy thing,&c.** **36. thy kinswoman]** What *What* relation, nowhere appears in Scripture; and traditions are not worth recounting. But we must take the word in the narrower sense, not in the wider reference of Rom. ix. 3. Elisabeth was *of the tribe of Levi:* but this need not hinder connexion by marriage with other tribes. Aaron himself married into Judah, Exod. vi. 23. We find in Judges xvii. 7 a young man of the family of Judah who was a Levite. Philo says, "Moses ordered the high priest to marry not only a virgin, but one of priestly descent... but the other priests were permitted to marry other than the daughters of priests." **38.]** Her own faithful and humble assent is here given to the divine announcement which been made to her. I believe that her conception of the Lord is to be dated *from the utterance of these words.* So Euthymius, and similarly Irenæus, Tertullian, Athanasius, Maldonatus, Grotius. Lightfoot, holding a different opinion, says, "*I own, that it is the general opinion, that the Virgin conceived at Nazareth, in the instant when the Angel spoke with her.*" She was no unconscious vessel of the divine will, but (see ver. 45), in humility and faith, a fellow-worker with the purpose of the Father; and therefore *her own unity with that purpose was required*, and 1s here recorded.

39–56.] VISITATION OF ELISABETH BY MARY

39.] The situation of Elisabeth was not before this known to Mary; and on the intelligence of it from the angel, she arose and went to congratulate her kinswoman.

But before this the events related in Matt. i. 18–25 had happened.

Mary being betrothed to Joseph, had no communications with him, except through the bridesmaids; who, on the first indications of her pregnancy, represented it to him. This would not take longer time than the expression might include—possibly three or four weeks. Then happened Matt. i. 19, 20; and immediately Joseph took her home. As a betrothed virgin she could not travel: but now immediately, and perhaps for the very reason of the circumstances under which Joseph had taken her home, she visits Elisabeth—remaining with her about three months, ver. 56. So that we have, five months, during which Elisabeth hid herself, together with the sixth month, during which takes place the Annunciation, the discovery of Mary's pregnancy, her taking home by Joseph, together with three months visit of Mary, making up together nine months, nearly her full time: see ver. 57.

The words rendered **a city of Juda** may possibly mean "*the city of Juttah,*" which (Josh. xxi. 16) was given, together with Hebron (in the hill country of Judæa: ib. ver. 11), and other neighbouring cities, to the children of Aaron the priest.

But it may also mean '*a city of Juda;*' and this is perhaps more likely, as no place of residence is mentioned for Zacharias in ver. 23,—and one would hardly be introduced so abruptly here.

It is *not Jerusalem;* for that would hardly have been described as in the *hill country;* and from vv. 23, 65, the Evangelist clearly indicates some other place than Jerusalem as the residence of the parents of John.

41.] The salutation uttered by Elisabeth is certainly implied to have been *an inspiration of the Holy Spirit.* No intimation had been made to her of the situation of Mary. The movement of the babe in her womb (possibly for the first time) was part of the effect of the same spiritual influence. The *known* mysterious effects of sympathy in such cases, at least lead us to believe that there may be corresponding effects where the causes are of a kind *beyond our common experience.*

'*The salutation of Mary*' might be taken to mean the Annunciation: better therefore as in margin, **Mary's salutation.**

42.] The word rendered Blessed has a double meaning: that of *blessed,—from above—blessed among women, i.e. beyond other women;* and *praised,—from below—i. e. called blessed by women.* The former is the best rendering: and then **among women** will be the Hebrew superlative, as in Jer. xl ix. 15, and Song of Sol. i. 8.

43.] The word **Lord**, as applied to the unborn babe, can no otherwise be explained than as uttered in the spirit of prophecy, and expressing *the divine nature* of our Lord: see especially Ps. cx. 1, from which Bleek thinks the expression is adopted.

45.] The words may be rendered either as in A.V. (so also the Vulgate Erasmus, Beza, Meyer), **blessed is she that believed, for&c.**—or as in margin of A.V., **blessed is she that believed that there shall be.** The last is maintained by Bengel and De Wette, and supported by Acts xxvii. 25. I much prefer the former rendering, as agreeable likewise to the analogy of Scripture, where *faith, in the recipient* of the divine purposes, is so often represented as a *co-ordinate cause* of the fulfillment of those purposes. Lightfoot well suggests, that there may have been present to the mind of Elisabeth the *unbelief of her husband*, as contrasted with Mary's faith.

46–55.] Compare throughout the song of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1–10.

As connected with the defense of the hymns contained in these two chapters, we may observe, *taking the very lowest ground*, that there is nothing improbable, as matter of fact, in holy persons, full of the thoughts which run through the O.T. prophecies, breaking out into such songs of praise as these, which are grounded on and almost expressed in the words of Scripture. The Christian believer however will take a *higher view than this*, and attribute to the mother of our Lord that same inspiration of the Holy Spirit which filled Elisabeth (ver. 41) and Zacharias (ver. 67).

46.] My soul... My spirit the *whole inner being*: see on 1 Thess. v. 23.

my Savior] not merely ‘*Deliverer from degradation, as a daughter of David*’—but, in a higher sense, **author of that salvation which God’s people expected:** among whom the Holy Virgin reckons herself. Only sinners need a Savior.

48.] regarded i.e. *looked upon*. Bleek remarks, that “*look upon my son*” in Luke ix. 38, is “*have mercy on my son*” in Matt. xvii. 15.

low estate, or condition,

not *humility*; the noun is an *objective* one.

Ver. 55 is not rendered in the A.V. according to the construction; from Ps. xcvi. 3 it will be seen that **in remembrance of his mercy to Abraham** are to be joined together, and therefore **as he spake to our fathers** will be parenthetical. See Micah vii. 20.

57–79.] Birth and naming of John the Baptist.

59.] they were calling—wished to call: the imperfect tense is here in its strict meaning, as in Matt. viii. 24. The names of children were given at circumcision, because, at the institution of that rite, the names of Abram and Sarai were changed to Abraham and Sarah,—Gen. xvii. 5, 15.

60.] There is no reason for supposing, with some Commentators, that *Elisabeth* had had the name supernaturally intimated to her. She must necessarily have learnt it,—in the course of communication by writing, from her husband.

62.] The natural inference (see on ver. 22) from this verse is, that Zacharias was *deaf as tell as dumb*; nor do I think that the objectors have succeeded in invalidating this inference. There could have been no reason for *beckoning*, had Zacharias been able to hear articulate words.

63. a writing table] A tablet smeared with wax, on which they wrote with a *style*, or sharp iron point.

they marveled all] This also confirms the view that Zacharias was deaf. There would be nothing wonderful in his *acceding to his wife’s suggestion*, if he had *known it*: the *coincidence*, apparently without this knowledge, was the matter of wonder.

64.] For now first had the angel’s words, “*thou shalt call his name John*,” ver. 13, received their fulfillment.

66. For also...] A remark inserted by the Evangelist himself, not a further saying of the speakers in the verse before, as Kuinoel and others maintain. The **for** refers back to the question just asked, ‘And they might well enquire thus, for’ &c.

68–79.] This Hymn of thanksgiving appears to have been uttered at the time of the circumcision of the child (in which case the matters related in vv. 65, 66 are parenthetical and anticipatory)—and, as the Magnificat, under the immediate influence of inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It is entirely *Hebrew* in its cast and idioms, and might be rendered in that language almost word for word. It serves, besides its own immediate interest to every Christian, to show to us the *exact religious view* under which John was educated by his father.

69.] an horn—a metaphor from horned beasts, who are weak and defenseless without, but formidable with their horns. There does not seem to be any allusion to the *horns of the altar*—the mere notion of a *refuge* is never connected with the Messiah’s Kingdom.

74, 75.] The attempts to remove the Jewish worship by Antiochus Epiphanes and by the Romans, had been most calamitous to the people.

This **in holiness and righteousness** sufficiently refutes the idea of some, that the whole subject of this song is the temporal

theocratic greatness of the Messiah.

76.] It is not *necessary* to interpret **the Lord** of the Messiah: it may be said of God, whose people (ver. 77) Israel was. But the believing Christian will find it far more natural thus to apply it, especially in connection with Matt. i. 21.

77.] in remission, the element in which the former blessing was to be conferred. The *remission of sin* is the first opening for the **knowledge of salvation:** sec ch. iii. 7.

78. dayspring] *The springing up, or, the East,* is in Jer. xxiii. 5, Zech. iii. 9, vi. 12, the LXX rendering for the Hebrew word for a *branch* or *sprout*—and thus, ‘*that which springs up or rises,*’ as *Light*:—which, from the clauses following, seems to be the meaning here.

from on high may be taken with **dayspring**, as in A.V.:—or perhaps with the verb **to give light**. But however taken, the expression is not quite easy to understand. The word had come apparently to be a name for the Messiah: thus in Zech. iii. 9 (LXX, see above), behold a man, his name is “*the springing up,*” or “*the East*” (the A.V. has *the branch*): and then figures arising from the meaning of the word itself, became mixed with that which was said of Him. The dayspring does not come *from on high*, but from beneath the horizon; but the Messiah *does*. Again, *to give light, &c.* of the next verse belongs to the dayspring, and only figuratively to the Messiah.

79.] Care must be taken on the one hand not to degrade the expressions of this song of praise into mere anticipations of temporal prosperity, nor, on the other, to find in it (except in so far as they are involved in the inner and deeper sense of the words, unknown save to the Spirit who prompted them) the minute doctrinal distinctions of the writings of St. Paul. It is the expression of the aspirations and hopes of a pious Jew, waiting for the salvation of the Lord, finding that salvation brought near, and uttering his thankfulness in Old Testament language, with which he was familiar, and at the same time under prophetic influence of the Holy Spirit.

That such a song should be *inconsistent* with dogmatic truth, is *impossible*: that it should unfold it minutely, is in the highest degree *improbable*.

80.] A very similar conclusion to those in ch. ii. 40, 52, and denoting probably the termination of that record or document of the birth of the Baptist, which the Evangelist has hitherto been translating, or perhaps transcribing already translated.

That this first chapter is such a separate document, appears from its very distinct style. Whether it had been preserved in the holy family, or how otherwise obtained by St. Luke, no trace now appears. It has a certain relation to, and at the same time is distinguished from, the narration of the next chapter. The Old Testament spirit is stronger here, and the very phraseology more in unison with Hebrew usage.

in the deserts] The *hill country* of Judaea was very near this wilderness, and from the character of John’s official life afterwards, it is probable that in youth he would be given to solitude and abstemiousness. It cannot be supposed that the *Essenes*, dwelling in those parts, had any, or only the most general kind of influence over him, as their views were wholly different from his.

his shewing] i.e. the opening of his official life: the same word is used of the *appointment* of the seventy in ch. x. 1.

Luke: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1-20.] BIRTH OF CHRIST. ITS ANNOUNCEMENT AND CELEBRATION BY THE HOSTS OF HEAVEN.

1, 2.] We go back again now to the birth of John, or shortly after it.

In annotating on these verses, I will first state the difficulty in which they appear to be involved,—then the remarkable way in which a solution has recently been found.

The assertion in these verses is *this—that a decree went forth, &c., and that this enrolment first took place when Cyrenius (Quirinus) was governor of Syria.* It would then appear, either that *this very enrolment took place under Quirinus,*

—or that *the first* did so, and this was subsequent to it. Now *both of these senses* till recently seemed to be *inadmissible*. For Quirinus was not known to have been governor of Syria till the year of Rome 758, after the banishment of Archelaus, and the addition of his territory to the province of Syria. And the birth of our Lord occurred *at least eight years before this*, previous to

Herod's death, and when *Sentius Saturninus was governor of Syria*. But it has been made highly probable, by A.W. Zumpt of Berlin, that Quirinus was TWICE governor of Syria. The substance of his researches is given at length in the note in my Greek Testament. The result of it is, that Zumpt fixes the time of his *first governorship* at from B.C. 4 to B.C. 1. It is true this does not quite remove our difficulty. But it brings it within such narrow limits, that any slight error in calculation, or even the latitude allowed by the words **was first made** might well cover it. I may mention it as remarkable, that Justin Martyr (Century 2) three times distinctly asserts that *our Lord was born under Quirinus*, and *appeals to the register then made*, as if from it the fact might, if necessary, be confirmed.

We conclude then, that an assessment or enrolment of names with a view to ascertain the population of the empire, *was commanded and put in force at this time*. It was unaccompanied (probably) by any payment of money. We know that Augustus drew up an account or *summary of the whole empire*, which took many years to arrange and complete, and of which the enrolment of the inhabitants of the provinces would naturally form a part. Of the data for this compilation, the enrolment in our text might be one.

That *Judea was not a Roman province at this time*, is no objection to our text; for the compilation of Augustus contained the "kingdoms" of the Roman empire, as well as the provinces.

3-5.] There is a mixture here of Roman and Jewish customs, which is not at all improbable, considering the circumstances. In the Roman census, men, women, and children were all obliged to go and be enrolled. But then this census was made at their *dwelling-place*, not at that of their *extraction*. The latter practice springs from the Jewish genealogical habits, and its adoption in this case *speaks strongly for the accuracy of the chronology*. If this enrolment, was by order of Augustus, and for the whole empire, it of course would be made so as to include *all*, after the Roman manner: but inasmuch as it was made *under the Jewish king Herod*, it was done *after the Jewish manner*, in taking this account of each *at his own place of extraction*.

Mary being apparently *herself sprung from the lineage of David* (see ch. i. 32), might on this account go to Bethlehem, being, as some suppose, an heiress; but this does not seem to be the Evangelist's meaning, but that, after the Roman manner, she *accompanied her husband*.

No stress must be laid on **espoused**, as if she were *only* the *betrothed* wife of Joseph at this time;—she had been taken to his house before this: the history in our text happening during the time indicated by Matt. i. 25.

7.] Now that "*first-born*" has disappeared: from the text of St. Matthew (i. 25), it must be here remarked, that although the term may undoubtedly be used of an *only* child, such use is necessarily always connected with the expectation of others to follow, and can

no longer have place when the whole course of events is before the writer and no others *have followed*. The combination of this consideration with the fact, that *brethren of our Lord* are brought forward in this Gospel in close connexion with His *mother*, makes it as certain as an implied fact can be, that those brethren were the children of Mary herself.

Ancient tradition states the birthplace of our Lord to have been a *cave*: and this tradition is nowise inconsistent with our text—for caves are used in most rocky countries as stables.

the inn] i.e. a public place of reception for travelers; not '*a room* in a private house.' Of what sort this inn was, does not appear. It probably differs from that mentioned in ch. x. 34, in not being kept by an host: see note there.

8.] Mr. Greswell has made it highly probable that our Lord was born on the evening of (i. e. which *began*) the 5th of April, the 10th of the Jewish Nisan: on which same day of April, and the 14th of Nisan, He suffered thirty-three years after. Before this time there would be abundance of grass in the pastures—the spring rains being over: but much after it, and till after the autumnal equinox again, the pastures would be comparatively bare: see note on John vi. 10.

9.] the glory of the Lord—the brightness of God's presence—the *Shechinah* (see reff.) which also accompanied His angels when they appeared to men. It is agreeable at least to the analogy of the divine dealings, to suppose that these shepherds, like Symeon, were *waiting for the consolation of Israel*.

10, 11] to all THE people,—i. e. the Jewish people. To them was the first message of joy, before the bursting in of the Gentiles—just as here the one angel gives the prefatory announcement, before the multitude of the heavenly host burst in with their proclamation of 'peace on earth.'

Christ the Lord] This is the only place where these words come together. In ch. xxiii. 2 we have "*Christ a King*," and in Acts ii. 36 "*Lord and King*." (In Col. iii. 24 we have, in a somewhat different meaning [said to servants], "*ye serve the Lord Christ*.") And I see no way of understanding this **Lord**, but as corresponding to the Hebrew JEHOVAH.

12.] Olshausen hazards a conjecture, that the stable or cave may possibly have *belonged* to these shepherds. But I think the words **even unto**, or **as far as** to Bethlehem, ver. 15, do not look as if Bethlehem were their *home*. It seems clear that *the spot* was somehow known to them by the angel's description.

Not "*the babe*," as A.V.;—the angel, in giving the sign, generalizes the term: they were to know the truth of his words, by finding **a child** wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

14.] It has been disputed whether **Glory to** means **There is**, or **Let there be, glory to God**. But there can be no doubt *that the sense of both these is included. among men of good pleasure*] This reading is found in the greater part of the ancient authorities and Fathers, including the Alexandrine, Vatican, and Sinaitic MSS. It does not mean, as the Roman Catholic interpreters generally explain it, "*men of good will*,"— "*those that like it*," which would be untenable in Greek as well as in theology. The only admissible rendering is, '*Among men of God's good pleasure*,' i.e. among the elect people of God.

19.] *kept, in her memory.*

words, viz. those spoken by the shepherds.

21.] HIS CIRCUMCISION. The Lord was made like unto His brethren (Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15) in all weakness and bodily infirmity, from which legal uncleannesses arose. The body which He took on Him, though not a body of sin, was mortal, subject to the consequence of sin,—in the likeness of sinful flesh: but incorruptible by the indwelling of The Godhead (1 Pet. iii. 18). In the fulfillment therefore of His great work of redemption, He became subject to legal rites and purifications—not that they were absolutely *necessary* for *Him*, but were included in those things which were becoming for Him, in his humiliation and ‘making perfect:’ and in His lifting up of that human nature, *for which* all these things were *absolutely necessary* (Gen. xvii. 14), into the Godhead.

22–38.] THE PURIFICATION IN THE TEMPLE. SYMEON AND ANNA RECOGNIZE AND PROPHESY OF HIM.

22.] See Lev. xii. 1–8, where however *the child* is not, as here, expressly included in the purification. The reading **his** is remarkable, and hardly likely to have been a correction: “*her*,” adopted by the A.V., is almost without authority, and is a manifest correction.

Bengel denies that either the Lord or His mother wanted purification; and mentions that

some render **their** ‘*of the Jews*,’ but does not approve of it (John ii. 6 is certainly no case in point). See the last note, on the necessity of purification for *both*.

23.] God had taken the *tribe of Levi instead of the firstborn that openeth the womb*, Num. iii. 12, and required only the excess in number of the firstborn over the Levites to be redeemed (ib. vv. 44–51). This arrangement appears afterwards to have been superseded by a general command to redeem *all the firstborn* at five shekels of the sanctuary (Num. xviii. 15, 16).

24.] The offering (ref. Lev.) was, *a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a pigeon for a sin-offering*: but if the parties were too poor to bring a lamb, then *two pigeons*. But we are not hereby justified in assuming *extreme poverty* to have been the condition of our Lord’s family. This nowhere appears Gospel history.

25.] It appears that this Symeon might have been Symeon the son of Hillel,—and father of Gamaliel, mentioned in Acts v. 34 ff. But we have no means of ascertaining this.

the consolation of Israel] See Acts xxviii. 20. Vol. I. It was a common form of adjuration among the Jews, “*So may I see consolation, if&c.*” referring to Isa. xl. 1. On the general expectation of deliverance at this time see on Matt. ii. 1 ff.

26.] Of the nature of this intimation, nothing is said. Symeon was the subject of an especial indwelling and leading of the Holy Ghost, analogous to that higher form of the spiritual life expressed in the earliest days by *walking with God*—and according to which God’s saints have often been directed and informed in an extraordinary manner by His Holy Spirit. In the power of this intimation, and in the spirit of prophecy consequent on it, he came into the Temple on this occasion.

29.] lettest thou depart, not *from life*, or *out of the earth*,—but as being **thy servant**, he thinks of his death as the termination of, and so dismissal from, *his servitude*.

32.] See Isa. xlix. 6. The general term of the last verse,—**all the peoples** (so literally), is here divided into two, the Gentiles, and Israel.

33. his father] his father) In ver. 48 we have Joseph again called by this name. *Our Lord*

Himself would not speak of him thus, see ver. 49; but in the simplicity of the narrative we may read **his parents**, and such expressions, without any danger of forgetting the momentous history of the Conception and Nativity.

34.] fall, as a stone of stumbling and rock of offense (see references), at which they should fall through unbelief.

rising again,—or, rising up—in the sense of ch. i. 52—*by faith and holiness*; or, the **fall and rising up** may refer to *the same persons*; as it is said by our Lord, ‘He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.’ I prefer this last, interpretation, as cohering best with the next verse: see note on it.

35.] This prophecy I do not believe to have its chief reference to the *deep sorrows* of the mother of our Lord *on beholding His sufferings*, much less to her *future death by martyrdom*; least of all to the Crucifixion, which by shedding the blood of her Son, would also pierce her heart and drain it of its life-blood and make it childless. None of these interpretations satisfy us: for the words stand in a totally different connexion and one far worthier of the honor of that holy woman, and of the spiritual character of Symeon’s prophecy: that prophecy is, of the struggle of many in Israel through repentance to faith in this Saviour; among which number even *His mother herself was to be included*. The sharp pangs of sorrow for sin must pierce her heart *also* (cf. esp. Acts ii. 37); and the general end follows; *that reasonings out of many hearts may be revealed*; that they who receive the Lord Jesus may be manifest, and they who reject Him: see John ix. 39. We may find moreover, in the traces of her connexion with our Lord in the Evangelic history, the piercing and dividing of her soul, and in the last notice of her in Acts i., the triumph of her faith after the Ascension.

37. fastings and prayers] Not merely in the ordinary hours of prayer, at nine, and three, or the ordinary fasts on Monday and Thursday, but in an ascetic-devotional method of life.

night is said to be put first, because fasts were reckoned from one evening to another. Is it not rather because the greater solemnity and emphasis rests on the religious exercise by night?

38.] It was possibly at the hour of prayer; as she spoke of Him to numbers, who would at such a time be flocking to the temple.

39, 40.] RETURN TO NAZARETH.

39.] Certainly the obvious inference from this verse is, that Joseph and Mary returned from Jerusalem to Nazareth direct. But it is only an *inference*, and not the assertion of the text. This part of the Gospel History is one where the Harmonists, by their arbitrary reconcilements of the two Evangelistic accounts, have given great advantage to the enemies the

faith. *As the two accounts now stand*, it is wholly impossible to suggest any satisfactory method of *uniting them*; every one who has attempted it has, in some part or other of his hypothesis, violated probability and common sense. But, on the other hand, it is equally impossible definitely to say, that they *could not* be reconciled by *a thorough knowledge of the facts themselves*; and such an assertion, whenever made, shews great ignorance of the origin and course of oral narration. How many things will a relator say, being unaware of certain important circumstances outside his narrative, *which seem to preclude* those circumstances? How often will points of time be apparently brought close together in such a narration,—between which, events most weighty to the history have occurred? The *only* inference these two accounts, which is *inevitable*, is, that they are *wholly independent* of one another. If St. Luke had seen the Gospel of St. Matthew, or vice versa, then the variations are *utterly inexplicable*; and the greatest absurdities of all are involved in the writings of those who *assume this*, and *then proceed to harmonize*. Of the dwelling at Nazareth before the Nativity, of the circumstances which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, of the Presentation in the temple, St. Matthew’s account knows nothing; of the visit of the Magi, the murder of the Innocents, the flight to Egypt, St. Luke’s is unaware. In all the main circumstances of the Conception and Nativity *they agree, or are easily and naturally reconciled* (see further in note on John vii. 42).

40.] grew—in body.—waxed strong, in spirit: the addition of these words to the text was a correct gloss. “The body advances in stature, and the soul in wisdom... the divine nature revealed its own wisdom in proportion to the measure of the bodily growth,” Cyril.

becoming filled: see ver. 52 and note there.

41–52.] VISIT TO THE TEMPLE AT THE PASSOVER The history of this incident serves for an example of the wisdom wherewith the Child was becoming filled. “The Evangelist next shows that what he has said is true,” Cyril.

41.] See Exod. xxiii. 14–17. *Women*, according to the maxims of the school of Hillel, were bound to go up once in the year—to the Passover.

42.] At the age of twelve, a boy was called by the Jews ‘son of the law,’ and first incurred legal obligation. At that time, then, commences the *second step* (see note on ver. 52) of the life of the Lord, the time when the *things becoming* for Him began; his course of blameless legal obedience (see note on ver. 21) in his own person and by his own will. Now first (ver. 49) appear those higher consciousnesses to have found expression, which unfolded within Him, till the fall time of his public ministry arrived. It cannot be inferred from this narrative, that it was the *first time* the holy Child had accompanied them to the Passover.

43.] the days, seven days, Exod. xii. 15, 17.

44.] the company forming the *caravan*, or band of travelers;—all who came from the same district traveling together for security and company.

The interpretation that ‘*they went a day’s journey, seeking him*,’ is simply absurd: for they would have turned back sooner: a few minutes might have sufficed for the search. It was *not till they laid up for the night* that they missed him, as at that time they would naturally expect his return to their own tent. Olshausen remarks, that being accustomed to His thoughtfulness and obedience, they were free from anxiety, till they discovered He really was not in the company.

45. seeking him everywhere] as they went back, all the way.

46.] Some interpret the *three days*, of their *one day’s journey out, one back, and one in Jerusalem*: but they were more likely *three days spent in search in Jerusalem*; or, at all events, reckoned from their discovery of His not being with them.

in the temple] In one of the *rooms attached to the temple*, where the Rabbis taught their schools.

No stress must be laid on **in the midst**; it is only **among**. Nor must it be supposed from **asking them questions** that our Lord was acting the part of a *master*. It was the custom in the Jewish schools for the *scholars to ask questions of their teachers*; and a great part of the Rabbinical books consists of the answers of the Rabbis to such questions.

48–50.] The salient point of this narrative appears to lie in **thy father** contrasted with **my Father**. This was the first time that those wonderful words of self-consciousness had been heard from the holy Child—when He began to be “a son of the law,” He first calls HIM His Father, Who gave Him the work to do on earth, of perfectly keeping that Law.

Every word of these verses is of the first importance to modern combatants for sound doctrine. Let the adversaries answer us,—why should his *mother* here have spoken, and not Joseph, unless there were some more than usual reason for her being put forward rather than his reputed father? Again, let the mythical school of Strauss give us a reason, why an incident altogether (*in their view*) so derogatory to the character of the subject of it, should have been inserted, if the myths arose out of an *exaggerated estimate of the dignity of that character?*

thy father] Then up to this time Joseph had been so called by the holy Child Himself: but from this time, *never*. Such words are not chance; had Mary said “we,” the strong contrast with what follows could not have been brought out.

How is it that ye sought me?] i.e.... what (reason) is there, that... This is no *reproachful* question. It is asked in all the simplicity and boldness of holy childhood... ‘did ye not know?’... it appeared as if that conviction, the expression of which now first breaks forth from HIM, must have been a matter known to them before.

I must] This is that **must**, so often used by our Lord of His *appointed and undertaken course*. Analogous to this first utterance of His conviction, is the dawn, amongst *ourselves*, of the *principle of duty* in the youthful and well-trained spirit about this same age,—this ‘earning time’ of human progress: see below on ver. 52.

among my Father’s matters] primarily, **in the house of my Father;** but we must not exclude the wider sense, which embraces all *places and employments of my Father’s*. The employment in which he was found, *learning the word of God*, would natural, be one of these.

they understood not] Both Joseph and His mother knew *in some sense*, *Who He was*: but were not prepared to hear *so direct an appeal* to God as His Father: understood not the deeper sense of these wonderful words. Still (ver. 51) they appear to have awakened in the mind of His mother a remembrance of “*He shall be called the Son of God*,” ch. i. 35. And probably, as Stier remarks, the unfolding of His childhood had been so gradual and natural, that even they had not been forcibly reminded by any strong individual notes, of that which He was, and which now shewed itself.

It is a remarkable instance of the blindness of the rationalistic Commentators to the richness and depth of Scripture narrative, that they hold this **understood not** to be altogether inconceivable, as coming after the angelic announcement to Mary. Can they suppose that she *understood* that announcement itself? The right interpretation is, *they understood not the deeper sense*: see ch. xviii. 34.

51.] The high consciousness which had manifested itself in ver. 49 did not interfere with His self-humiliation, nor render Him independent of His parents. This voluntary subjection probably showed itself in working at his reputed father's trade: see Mark vi. 2 and note.

From this time we have *no more mention of Joseph*: the next we hear is of *His mother and brethren* (John ii. 12): whence it is inferred that, between this time and the commencement of our Lord's public life, *Joseph died*.

and his mother kept...] These words tend to confirm the common belief that these opening chapters, or at least *this* narrative, may have been derived from the testimony of *the mother of the Lord herself*. She *kept* them, as in wonderful coincidence with the remarkable circumstances of His birth, and its announcement, and His presentation in the temple, and the offerings of the Magi; but in what way, or by what one great revelation, all these things were to be gathered in one, did not yet appear, but was doubtless manifested to her afterwards: see Acts i. 14; ii. 1.

52.] The Greek word rendered *stature* means not only that (as in ch. xix. 3), but **age** (see Matt. vi. 27, where the word is the same, and note), which comprehends the other.

During these eighteen mysterious years we may, by the light of what is here revealed, view the holy Child advancing onward to that fulness of wisdom and divine approval which was indicated at His Baptism, by "**in thee I am well pleased.**" We are apt to forget, that it was *during this time* that *much of the great work of the second Adam was done*. The growing up through infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, from grace to grace, holiness to holiness, in subjection, self-denial, and love, *without one polluting touch of sin*,—this it was which, consummated by the three years of active ministry, by the Passion, and by the Cross, constituted "*the obedience of one man*," by which many were made righteous. We must fully appreciate the words of this verse, in order to think rightly of Christ. He had emptied Himself of His glory: His infancy and childhood were no mere *pretense*, but the Divine Personality was in Him carried through these states of weakness and inexperience, and gathered round itself the ordinary accessions and experiences of the sons of men. All the time, the consciousness of his mission on earth was ripening; '*the things heard of the Father*' (John xv. 15) were continually imparted to Him; the Spirit, which was not given by measure to Him, was abiding more and more upon Him; till the day when He was fully ripe for his official manifestation,—that He might be offered to his own, to receive or reject Him,—and then the Spirit led Him up to commence his conflict with the enemy. As yet, He was in favor with man also: the world had not yet begun to hate Him; but we cannot tell how soon this feeling towards Him was changed, for He alleges John vii. 7), "Me the world hateth, because I testify of it that its deeds are evil;" and we can hardly conceive such testimony, in the years of gathering vigor and zeal, long withheld. The incident of ch. iv. 28, 29 can scarcely have arisen *only* from the anger of the moment.

Luke: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1–22.] PREACHING AND BAPTISM OF JOHN. DIVINE TESTIMONY TO JESUS AT HIS BAPTISM. Matt. iii. 1–17. Mark i. 4–11.

1.] These dates are consistent with the *accurate tracing down* which St. Luke predicates of himself, ch. i. 3. In Matt. iii. 1 we have the same events indicated as to time by only "*In those days*." The fifteenth year of the *sole principate* of Tiberius began Aug. 19, in the year of Rome 781, and reckoning backwards thirty years from that time (see ver. 23), we should have the birth of our Lord in 751, or about then; for "*about thirty*" will admit of some latitude. But Herod the Great died in the beginning of the year 750, and our Lord's birth must be fixed *some months at least before* the death of Herod. If then it be placed in 749, He would have been at least thirty-two at the time of His baptism, seeing that it took some time after the beginning of John's ministry. This difficulty has led to the supposition that this fifteenth year is not to be dated from the *sole*, but from the *associated* principate of Tiberius, which commenced most probably at the end of 764. According to this, the fifteenth of Tiberius will begin at the end of 779—and our Lord's birth would be 749 or 750: which will agree with the death of Herod. This latter explanation has usually been adopted. Our present æra was fixed by Dionysius Exiguus, in the sixth century, and places the birth of our Lord in 754. It may be doubted, however, whether in all these reckonings more accuracy has not been sought than the Gospel narrative warrants any expectation of our finding. The "*about thirty*" is a wide expression, and might cover any age from thirty (see note on ver. 23) to thirty-two or thirty-three.

See on Matt. ii. 2, where it appears probable from astronomical considerations, that our Lord was born as early as U.C. 747.

Pontius Pilate....] Pilate was only *Procurator* of Judæa: the word **governor** being used promiscuously of the leading officers of the Roman government. PONTIUS PILATE was the sixth procurator from the deposition of Archelaus, and came to Judæa about the year of Rome 779. He held the province ten years, and was sent to Rome to answer for his conduct by Vitellius, prefect of Syria, in 789, the year of the death of Tiberius. See chronological table in the Introduction to the Acts.

Herod] See note on Matt. xiv. 1. HEROD ANTIPAS became tetrarch of Galilee after the death of his father Herod, in the year of Rome 750, and continued till he was deposed in 792. **Philip]** Son of Herod the Great by Cleopatra, a woman of Jerusalem. He was brought up at Rome, and after his father's death in 750, was made tetrarch of Batanza, Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, Panias, Auranitis (Batanaea and Auranitis make up Ituræa), and continued till his death in 786 or 787. He built Cæsarea Philippi. He was by far the best of Herod's sons, and ruled his portion mildly and well. He must not be confounded with *his half-brother Philip*, whose wife Herodias Herod Antipas seduced. This latter was disinherited by his father, and lived in privacy. See note on Matt. xiv. 1.

Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene] ABILENE, the district round Abila, a town eighteen miles north of Damascus, now, according to Pococke, Nebi Abel. It must not be confounded with Abila in Decapolis. Josephus mentions it as among the districts which Claudius gave to king Agrippa I. under the name of *Abila of Lysanias*, and in another place as *the Kingdom called that of Lysanias*. See farther in note in my Greek Testament. It seems to have been a district patrimonially in possession of rulers bearing this name.

2.] ANNAS (*Ananus*, Josephus) the high priest, was deposed by Valerius Gratus (in the year of Rome 779), and after several changes, Joseph or Caiaphas, his son-in-law (John xviii. 13), was made high priest. It would appear from this verse (and the use of the singular—see margin)—renders the inference more stringent. Compare also St. Luke's own phrase, Acts iv. 6) that Annas, as *ex-high priest*, and possibly retaining in the view of the Jews the *legitimate high priesthood*, was *counted still as having the office*: he certainly (John xviii. 13) *exercised the power*,—and had influence enough to procure the actual high priesthood for *five of his sons*, after his own deposition, Jos. Antt. xx. 9. 1.

A substitute, or deputy to the high priest (called by the Talmudists *Sagan*), appears to have been usual,—see 2 Kings xxv. 18; and Annas would thus be able to evade the Roman appointment, and keep the authority.

the word of God came...] See John i. 33.

3–6.] Matt. iii. 1. Mark i. 4, where see note on **the baptism of repentance**.

5, 6.] are peculiar to Luke. They are nearly verbatim from the LXX in the Alexandrine copy.

7–9.] Matthew, vv. 7–10. John's speech is verbatim as Matthew, except that **fruits** is singular, and “*think not*” in Matthew is not in Luke. This indicates a common origin of this portion, which however is still thus slightly deflected; and let it be borne in mind that the slighter the deflection, the more striking the independence of the Evangelists.

8. begin not to say] He cuts off even the *attempt* to excuse themselves.

10–14.] Peculiar to Luke.

10.] Olshausen refers to the answer to a similar question under the N.T. dispensation, Acts ii. 87. See also Acts xvi. 30; xxii. 10. Deeds of justice and charity are the very first fruits of repentance; see Micah vi. 8.

12.] publicans, see on Matt. v. 46.

14.] soldiers—properly, men on march: not this need not be pressed, only that they were soldiers serving in an army. Who these were, we have no means of determining. Certainly not soldiers of the army which Herod Antipas sent against Aretas, his father-in-law:—see notes on Matt. xiv. 1 ff.

neither accuse any falsely] The way in which *soldiers* would be likely to act the part of informers, would be by laying vexatious charges of disaffection against persons.

15–17.] Ver. 15 is peculiar to Luke, but is equivalent to John i. 19–25.

in expectation,—i. e. that John would declare himself.

16, 17.] Matt. iii, 11, 12. Mark i. 7, 8. John i. 26, 27. The four accounts are cognate, but vary in expression and arrangement: ver. 17 is nearly verbatim as Matthew.

[latchet] the lace, or thong with which the sandal was fastened.

18–20.] Luke only: containing the corroboration of the account in Mark vi. 20 of John's boldness in rebuking Herod, with this slight variation, that whereas in Mark Herod heard him gladly, and did many things in consequence, here the rebuke for general profligacy seems to have contributed to his imprisonment. These accounts however, though perfectly distinct, are by no means inconsistent. The same rebukes which stung Herod's conscience and aided the desire to imprison John, might work on that conscience, and cause the wish to hear more from the man of God. Vv. 19, 20 are *in anticipation* of what follows; which is in St. Luke's manner; see ch. i. 80.

21, 22.] Matt. iii, 13–17. Mark i. 9–11. St. Luke's account is much more concise than usual, and wholly independent of the others; see note on Mark i. 10: we have here however three additional particulars—1. that *all the people had been baptised before* the Lord's baptism: 2. that He *was praying* at the time of the descent of the Spirit: 8. that the Spirit appeared *in a bodily form*. On (3), see note at Matt. iii. 16,§2.

23–38.] GENEALOGY OF OUR LORD. Peculiar to Luke.

28.] Jesus was about thirty years old when He began (His ministry): not, as A.V. 'began to be about,' &c., which is ungrammatical. This is the interpretation of Origen, Euthymius, and the best commentators. See Acts. i. 1.

This **about thirty** admits of considerable latitude, but only in one direction; viz. *over* thirty years. He could not well be *under*, seeing that this was the appointed age for the commencement of public service of God by the Levites; see reference to Numbers.

If no other proof were in existence of the *total independence of the present Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke*, their *genealogies* would furnish what I conceive to be an undeniable one. Is it possible that either of these Evangelists could have set down his genealogy *with that of the other before him*? Would no remark have been made on their many, and (*on such a supposition*) unaccountable variations? It is quite beside the purpose of the present Commentary to attempt to reconcile the two. It has never yet been accomplished; and every endeavour to do it has violated either ingenuousness or common sense. I shall, as in similar cases, only indicate the landmarks which may serve to guide us to all that is possible for us to discover concerning them. (1) The two genealogies are *both the line of Joseph, and not of Mary*. Whether Mary were an heiress or not, Luke's words here preclude the idea of the genealogy being *hers*; for the descent of the Lord is transferred putatively to Joseph by the **as was supposed**, before the genealogy begins; and it would be unnatural to that the reckoning, which began the real mother, would, after such Transference, pass back through *her* to *her* father again, as it must do, if the genealogy be *hers*.

The attempts of many to make it appear that the genealogy is that of Mary, reading '**the son (as supposed of Jos eph, but in reality) of Heli, &c.' are, as Meyer has shewn, quite unsuccessful;**' see Dr. Mill's vindication of the Genealogies, p. 180 ff., for the history of this opinion. (2) **St. Luke appears** to have taken this genealogy entire from some authority before him, in which the expression **Son of God**, as applied to Christ, **was** made good by tracing it up, **as here**, through a regular ascent of Progenitors till we come to Adam, who was, but here again inexactly, the son of God. This seems much more probable than that St. Luke should, for his Gentile readers, have gone up to the origin of the human race instead of to Abraham. I cannot imagine any such purpose *definitely present* in the mind of the Evangelist. This view is confirmed by the entirely insulated situation of the genealogies here, between ver. 23 and ch. iv. 1. (3) The Points of divergence between the genealogies are,—in Matthew the father of Joseph is Jacob—in Luke, Heli; this gives rise to different lists (except two common names, Zorobabel and Salathiel) up to David, where the accounts coincide again, and remain identical up to Abraham, where Matthew ceases. (4) Here, as elsewhere, I believe that the accounts might be reconciled, or at all events good reason might be assigned for their differing, if we were in possession of data on which to proceed; but here, as elsewhere, *we are not*. For who shall reproduce the endless combinations of elements of confusion, which might creep into a genealogy of this kind? St. Matthew's, we know, is squared so as to form three groups of fourteens, *by the omission of several generations*; how can we tell that some similar step, unknown to us, may not have been taken with the one before us? It was common among the Jews for the same man to bear different names; how do we know how often this may occur among the immediate progenitors of Joseph? The marriage of a brother with a brother's wife to raise up seed (which then might be accounted to either husband) was common; how do we know how often this may have contributed to produce variations in the terms of a genealogy?

With all these elements of confusion, it is quite as presumptuous to pronounce the genealogies discrepant, as it is over-curious and uncritical to attempt to reconcile them. It may suffice us that they are inserted in the Gospels as authentic documents, and both of them merely to clear the Davidical descent of the putative father of the Lord. HIS OWN *real* Davidical descent does not depend on either of them, but must be *solely derived through his mother*. See much interesting investigation of the various solutions and traditions, in Dr. Mill's tract referred to above: and in Lord A. Hervey's work on the Genealogies of our Lord.

27.] of Salathiel... of Neri: in Matt. i. 12, “*Jeconias* begat Salathiel.”

81.] Nathan: see 2 Sam. v. 14: 1 Chron. iii. 5: Zech. xii. 12.

36. Cainam] This name does not exist in our present Hebrew text, but in the LXX, Gen. x. 24; xi. 12, 13, and furnishes a curious instance of one of two things—either (1) the corruption of our present Hebrew text in these chronological passages; or (2) the incorrectness of the LXX, and notwithstanding that, the high reputation which it had obtained in so short a time. Lightfoot holds the latter

alternative: but I own I think the former more probable. See on the whole question of the appearance of this second Cainam (n) among the ancestors of our Lord, Lord A. Hervey’s work above cited, ch. viii., in which, with much research and acuteness, he has endeavoured to shew that the name was probably interpolated here, and got from hence into the LXX. Certainly it appears not to have existed in the earliest copies of that version.

Luke: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1–13.] TEMPTATION OF JESUS. Matt. iv. 1–11. Mark i. 12, 13. Ver. 1 is peculiar to Luke, and very important. Our Lord was now full of the Holy Ghost, and in that fulness He is led up to combat with the enemy. He has arrived at the fulness of the stature of perfect man, outwardly and spiritually. And as when His Church was inaugurated by the descent of the Spirit in His falness, so now, the first and fittest weapon for the combat is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” The discourse of Peter in Acts ii., like our Lord’s here, is grounded in the testimony of the Scripture.

The accounts of St. Matthew and St. Luke (St. Mark’s is principally a compendium) are distinct; see notes on Matthew and Mark.

2.] The literal rendering of the present text will be: **Jesus.. was led by (in, in the power of) the Spirit in the wilderness, being tempted** (i. e. because he was tempted) **during forty days the devil.** So that St. Luke, as also St. Mark, implies that the temptation continued *the whole forty days*. he did eat nothing testifies to the strictness in which the term ‘fasted’ must be taken.

3.] this stone, pointing to Some particular stone—**command that it become a loaf** (so literally)

4.] The citation is given in full by St. Matthew.

5.] There can be little doubt that the order in **Matthew**, in which this temptation is placed *last*, is to be adhered to in our expositions of the Temptation. No definite notes of succession are given in our text, but they *are* by Matthew: see notes there. Some suppose that the inversion has been made as suiting better the requirements of probability: it seeming; more natural that our Lord should be first taken to the mountain and then to Jerusalem, than the converse.

6.] Satan is set forth to us in Scripture as *the prince, or god of this world*,—by our Lord Himself, John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11:—by St. Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 4 (Eph. vi. 12). On **the signification of this temptation, see notes on Matthew.**

8.] If the words “*Get thee behind me, Satan*” had been here, as in A.V., St. Luke could hardly have left the record as it stands: this being the first direct recognition by our Lord of His foe, after which, and in obedience to which command, he departs from Him.

10.] to keep thee is wanting in Matthew. The LXX, following the Hebrew, adds “*in all thy ways.*”

13.] for a season: see on Matthew, ver. 11, and note on ch. xxii. 53.

14–82.] CIRCUIT OF GALILEE. TEACHING, AND REJECTION, AT NAZARETH. Peculiar to Luke in this form: but see Matt. iv, 12–25; xiii. 53–58, and the parallel place in Mark, and note below.

14.] in the power of that full anointing **of the Spirit** for His holy office, which He had received at His baptism: and also implying that this power was used by Him in doing mighty works.

Here the chronological order of St. Luke’s history begins to be confused, and the first evident marks occur indefiniteness in arrangement, which I believe characterizes this Gospel. And in observing this, I would once for all premise, (1) that I have no bias for finding such chronological inaccuracy, and have only done so where no fair and honest means will solve the difficulty; (2) that where internal evidence appears to me to decide this to be the case, I have taken the only way open to a

Commentator who would act uprightly by the Scriptures, and fairly acknowledged and met the difficulty; (8) that so far from considering the testimony of the Evangelists to be weakened by such inaccuracies, I am convinced that it becomes only so much the stronger (see Introduction to the Gospels).

These remarks have been occasioned by the relation of this account, vv. 14–30, to the Gospels of Matthew and John. Our verses 14 and 15 embrace the narrative of Matthew in ch. iv. 12–25. But after that comes an event which belongs to a later period of our Lord's ministry. A fair comparison of our vv. 16–24 with Matt. xiii. 53–58, Mark vi. 1–6, entered on without bias, and conducted solely from the **narratives** themselves, surely can hardly fail to convince us of their identity. (1) That *two such visits should have happened, is of itself not impossible*; though (with the sole exception of Jerusalem for obvious reasons) our Lord did not ordinarily revisit the places where He had been rejected as in our vv. 28, 29. (2) That He should have been thus treated at His first visit, and then *marvelled at their unbelief* on His second, is *utterly impossible*. (3) That the same question should have been asked on both occasions, and answered by our Lord with the same proverbial expression, is in the highest degree improbable. (4) Besides, this narrative itself bears *internal* marks of belonging to a later period. The **whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum** must refer to *more than one* miracle done there: indeed the whole form of the sentence points to the plain fact, that our Lord

had been residing long in Capernaum. Compare too its introduction here without any notification, with its description as **a city of Galilee** in ver. 31, and the separateness of the two pieces will be apparent: see further remarks in the notes below.

Here however is omitted an important cycle of our Lord's sayings and doings, both in Galilee and Jerusalem; viz. that contained in John i. 29—iv. 54 included. This will be shewn by comparing Matt. iv. 12, where it is stated that our Lord's return to Galilee was *after the casting of John into prison*, with John iii. 24, where, on occasion of the Lord and the disciples baptizing in Judæa, it is said, John was *not yet cast into prison*: see note on Matt. iv. 12.

a fame] The report, namely, of His miracles in Capernaum, wrought *in the power of the Spirit*, and possibly of what He had done and taught at Jerusalem at the feast.

15.] Olshausen well remarks that this verse, containing a general undefined notice of our Lord's synagogue teaching, quite takes from what follows any chrono-logical character. Indeed we find throughout the early part of this Gospel the same fragmentary stamp. Compare "*on the sabbath days*," ver. 31—"*as the people pressed on him*," ch. v. 1—"*when he was in a certain city*," ch. v. 12—"*on a certain day*," ch. v. 17; viii. 22—"*on another sabbath*," ch. vi. 6—"*in these days*," ch. vi. 12, &c. &c.

16.] where he had been brought up is expressed by "*in thy country*," ver. 23: see John iv. 44 and note.

as his custom was refers to the *whole* of what He did—it is not merely that he had been in the habit of *attending* the synagogues, but of *teaching* in them: see ver. 15. It was apparently the first time He had ever so taught in the synagogue at Nazareth.

stood up for to read] The *rising up* was probably to shew His wish to *explain*

the Scripture; for so the word rendered "*read*" imports. Ezra is called *a reader* of the divine law, Joseph. Antt. xi. 5. 1. The ordinary **way was**, for the ruler of the synagogue to call upon persons of any learning or note to read and explain. That the demand of the Lord was so readily complied with, is sufficiently accounted for by vv. 14, 15. See reff.

17.] It is doubtful whether the Rabbinical cycle of Sabbath readings, or lessons from law and prophets, were as yet in use: but some regular plan was adopted; and according to that plan, after the reading of the law, which always preceded, the portion from the prophets came to be read (see Acts xiii. 15), which, for that sabbath, fell in the prophet Isaiah. The roll containing that book (probably, that alone) was given to the Lord. But it does not appear that He **read any part** of the lesson for the day; but when He had unrolled the scroll, **found** (the fortuitous, i.e. *providential*, finding is the most likely interpretation, not the searching, for and finding) the passage which follows.

No inference can be drawn as to the *time of the year* from this narrative: partly on account of the uncertainty above mentioned, and partly because it is not quite clear whether the roll contained only Isaiah, or other books also.

18–20.] The quotation agrees mainly with the LXX:—the words to **set at liberty them that are bruised** are inserted from the LXX of Isa. lviii. 6. The meaning of this prophetic citation may be better seen, when we remember that it stands in the middle of the third great division of the book of Isaiah (ch. xl ix.—lxvi.), that, viz., which comprises the prophecies of the Person, office, sufferings, triumph, and Church of the Messiah; and thus by implication wee the *fulfilment of all that went before*, in Him who then addressed them. **18. The Spirit of the Lord]** See Isa. xi. 2; xl ii. 1. **deliverance to the captives]** See ch. xiii. 12, 16.

recovering of sight to the blind] See John ix. 39. The Hebrew words thus rendered by the LXX, signify, ‘*to those who are bound, the opening of prison:*’ so that we have here the LXX and literal rendering both included, and the latter expressed in the LXX words of Isa. lviii. 6.

19. the acceptable year of the Lord] See Levit. xxv. 8–17, where in ver. 10 we find that liberty was proclaimed to all in the land in the year of jubilee. No countenance is given by this expression to the extraordinary inference from it of some of the Fathers (Clement of Alexandria, Origen), that the Lord’s public ministry lasted *only a year, and something over*. Compare John ii. 13; vi. 4; xiii. 1.

20. sat down] It was the custom in the synagogues to *stand* while reading the law, *sit down* to explain it. Our Lord on other occasions taught *sitting*, e.g. Matt. v. 1; Mark iv. 1; xiii. 3. **The minister was** the officer whose duty it was to keep the **sacred books**.

21.] he began to say,—implying that the following words are merely the substance of a more expanded discourse, which our Lord uttered to that effect: see another occasion in Matt. xi. 4, 5, where the same truth was declared by a series of gracious acts of mercy.

fulfilled in your ears, viz. by My proclaiming it, and My course of ministry.

22.] bare him witness: i.e. bare witness to him (that It was so), The **words of grace** must be the discourse of which ver. 21 is a compendium. **they said**, viz. the “*all*” mentioned above, not merely some of them. While acknowledging the truth of what He said, and the power with which He said it, they wondered, and were jealous of Him, as being the son of Joseph—asking “*Whence hath this man these things?*” see Mark vi. 2–4. Between this verse and the next, the taking offence at Him is implied, for that is in a tone of reproof.

23.] heal thyself—not, ‘*raise thyself from thy obscure station,*’ but, **exert thy powers of healing in thine own country**, as presently interpreted; the Physician being represented as an inhabitant of Nazareth, and **thyself** including His own citizens in it. Stier remarks, that the reproach was *repeated under the Cross*. Then, with a strictly individual application. On the miracles previously wrought in Capernaum, see note on ver. 14. That in John iv, 47–53 was one such.

24.] See John iv. 44 and note. **And (or, but) he said]** A formula usual with St. Luke; and indicating, if I mistake not, the passing to a different source of information, or at least a break in the record, if from the same source.

25.] Our Lord brings forward instances where the two greatest prophets in Israel were *not directed to act in accordance with the proverb*, ‘Physician,

heal thyself:’ but their miraculous powers exerted on those who were strangers to God’s inheritance.

three years and six months] So also in James v. 17;—but in 1 Kings xviii. 1 we find that it was in *the third year* that the Lord commanded Elijah to shew himself to Ahab, for He would send rain on the earth. But it does not appear from what time this third year is reckoned,—or at what time of the year, with reference to the usual former and latter rains, the drought caused by Elijah’s prayer began [it apparently had begun some time before the prophet was sent to be miraculously sustained, as this very fact implies failure of the ordinary means of sustenance]; and thus, without forming any further hypothesis, we have latitude enough given for the three and a half years, which seems to have been the exact time. This period is one often recurring in Jewish record and in prophecy: see Daniel vii. 25; xii. 7: Rev. xi. 2, 3; xii. 6, 14; xiii. 5. Lightfoot produces more instances from the Rabbinical writers. “The period of *three years and a half*, = 42 months or 1260 days, had an ominous sound in the ears of an Israelite, being the time of this famine, and of the duration of the desolation of the temple under Antiochus.” Wordsw.

26.] Sarepta, now Sūrafend,—a large village, inland, halfway between Tyre and Sidon:—the ancient city seems to have been on the coast. **27.]** Stier remarks, that these two examples have a close parallelism with those of the Syro-Phœnician woman (Mark vii. 26) and the ruler’s son at Capernaum (John iv. 46).

28–30.] The same sort of rage possessed the Jews, Acts xxii. 22, on a similar truth being announced to them. This whole occurrence, whenever it happened in our Lord’s ministry, was but a foreshadowing of His treatment afterwards from the nation of the Jews—a foretaste of “*He came unto his own, and his own received him not*” (John i. 11). The modern Nazareth is at a distance of about two English miles from what is called the Mount of Precipitation; nor is it built literally on the *brow* of that mount or hill. But (1) neither does the narrative preclude a considerable distance having been traversed, during which they had our Lord in their custody, and were hurrying with him to the edge of the ravine; nor (2) is it at all necessary to suppose the city built on the *brow*, but only on the mountain, or range of hills, of which the *brow* forms a part—which it is.

Our Lord's passing through the midst of them is *evidently miraculous*: the circumstances were different from those in John viii. 60, where the expression is "*He hid himself and went out of the temple:*" see note there. Here, the Nazarenes had Him actually *in their custody*.

31 f.] **Mark i. 21, 22.** The view maintained with regard to the foregoing occurrence in the preceding notes, of course precludes the notion that it **was** the *reason of our Lord's change of habitation to Capernaum*. In fact that change, as remarked on ver. 14, had been made *some time before*: and it is hardly possible that such an expression as "*He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up,*" should be used, if He still resided there. The words **a city of Galilee** come in unnaturally after the mention of Capernaum in ver. 23, and evidently shew

that *this* was originally intended to be the first mention of the place.

What may have been the reason of the change of abode is quite uncertain. It seems to have included the whole family, except the sisters, who may have been married at Nazareth,—see note on John ii. 12, and Matt. iv. 18. **came down**,—see also John ii. 12,—because Nazareth lay high, and Capernaum on the sea of Galilee.

38-37.] HEALING OF A DÆMONIAC IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT CAPERNAUM. **Mark i, 23-28**, where see notes. The two accounts are very closely cognate—being the same narrative, only slightly deflected; not more, certainly, than might have arisen from oral repetition by *two* persons, at some interval of time, of what they had received *in the same words*.

35.] hurt him not is here only. St. Mark's expression, rendered "*torn*," may mean '*having convulsed him*'—and our text, '*without doing him bodily injury.*'

38-41.] HEALING OF SIMON' S WIFE' S MOTHER, AND MANY OTHERS. Matt. viii. 14-17. **Mark i. 29-34.** Our account has only a slight additional detail, which is interesting however as giving another side of an eye-witness's evidence—it is, **he stood over her**. Now this is implied in laying hold of her hand, **as she was** in bed; which particulars are both mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark:—this being one of those many cases where the alteration of the one expression into the other is utterly inconceivable.

38. a great fever] An epithet used by St. Luke, *as a physician*; for, as Galen observes, physicians divided fevers into *great* and *small*. Bleek doubts this, and understands it only of the intensity of the fever.

40.] he laid his hands on every one of them, is a detail peculiar to Luke, and I believe indicating the same as above: as also the **crying out and saying**, implied in the other Evangelists, but not expressed.

42-44.] JESUS, BEING SOUGHT OUT IN HIS RETIREMENT, PREACHES THROUGHOUT JUDÆA. **Mark i, 35-39.** The dissimilitude in wording of these two accounts is one of the most striking instances in the Gospels, of variety found in the same narration. While the matter related (with one remarkable exception, see below) is nearly identical, the only words common to the **two are into a desert (or solitary, the word is the same) place**.

42.] the multitudes are "*Simon and they that were with him*" in Mark. The great number of sick which were brought to the Lord on the evening before, and this morning, is accounted for by some from His departure having been fixed on and known beforehand; but it is perhaps more simple to view it us the natural result of the effect of the healing of the dæmoniac in the synagogue, on the popular mind.

44.] See Matt. iv. 23-25 and notes.

This verse is a formal close to this section of the narrative, and chronologically separates it from what follows.

The reading Judæa wust, on any intelligible critical principles, be adopted. So far, however, being plain, I confess that all attempts to explain the fact seem to me futile. The three Evangelists relate no ministry in Judæa, with this single exception. And our narrative is thus brought into the most startling discrepancy with that of St. Mark, in which unquestionably the same portion of the sacred history is related. Still, these are considerations which must not weigh in the least degree with the critic. It is his province simply to track out what *is* the sacred text, not what, in his own feeble and partial judgment, it *ought to have been*.

Luke: Chapter 5

CHAP. V. 1-11.] THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES. CALL OF PETER AND THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE. The

question at once meets us, whether this account, in its form here peculiar to Luke, is identical in its subject-matter with Matt. iv. 18–22, and Mark i. 16–20. With regard to this, we may notice the following particulars. (1) Some suppose this to be the first meeting of our Lord with Simon Peter. But it must be, I think, the inference of most readers, that *a previous and close relation had subsisted between them before*. Peter calls Him **Master and Lord**: evidently (ver. 5, end) expects a miracle; and follows Him, his partners, without any present express command so to do.

Still all this might be, and yet the account might be identical with the others, For our Lord had known Peter before this, John i. 41 ff., and, in all probability, as one of His disciples. And although there is here no express command to follow, yet the words in ver. 10 may be, and are probably intended to be, equivalent to one. (2) That the Evangelist evidently intends this as the first apostolic calling of Peter and his companions. The expressions in ver. 11 could not otherwise have been used. (8) That there is yet the supposition, that the accounts in **Matthew and Mark** may be a shorter way of recounting this by

persons who were not aware of these circumstances. But then such a supposition will not consist with that high of authority in those accounts, which I believe them to have: see note on Matk. (4) It seems to me that the truth of the matter is nearly this: —that this event is *distinct from, and happened at a later than*, the calling in **Matthew and Mark**; but that the four **Apostles**, when our Lord was at Capernaum, followed their occupation as fishermen. There is every thing to shew, in our account, that the calling had previously taken place; and the closing of it by the expression in ver. 11 merely indicates, what there can be no difficulty in seeing even without it, that our present account is an imperfect one, written by one who found thus much recorded, an knowing it to be part of the history of the calling of the Apostles, appended to it the fact of their leaving all and following the Lord. As to the repetition of the assurance in ver. 10, I see no more in it than this which appears also from other passages in the Gospels, that the Apostles, as such were not called or ordained *at any special moment, or by any one word of power alone*; but that in their **case**, as well as ours, there **was** line upon line, precept upon precept: and that what was said generally to all four on the former occasion, by words only, **was** repeated to Peter on this, not only in **words**, but by a miracle. Does his fear, as expressed in ver. 8, besides the reason assigned, indicate *some previous slowness, or relaxation of his usually earnest attachment*, of which he now becomes deeply ashamed? (5) It is also to be noticed that there is no chronological index to this narrative connecting it with what precedes or follows. It cannot well (see ver. 8) have taken place *after* the healing of Peter's wife's mother; and (ver. 1) must have been after the crowd had now become accustomed to hear the Lord teach. (6) Also, that there is no mention of *Andrew* here, as in ver. 10 there surely would have been, if he had been present. (7) It will be seen how wholly irreconcilable either of the suppositions is with the idea that St. Luke *used* the Gospel of St. Matthew, or that of St. Mark, in compiling his own.

2.] **were washing their nets**—indicating that their labour for that time was finished: see ver. 5.

4.] **Launch out is**, in the original, singular, as addressed to Peter alone, who was the steersman of his ship; **let down** is plural, as addressed to the fishermen in the ship collectively. So below also, **I will let down**, of the director,—**when they had this done**, of the doers,—of the act.

5.] **all the night**,—the ordinary time of fishing:—see John xxi. 3.

6.] **were bursting, i.e. had begun to burst.**

7.] They *beckoned*, on account of the distance; or perhaps for the r **eason given by**

Euthymius, not being able to **speak** from their amazement and fear.

8.] **Depart from me, i.e. from my ship.** The speech is in exact keeping with the quick discernment, and expression of feeling, of Peter's character. Similar sayings are found Exod. xx. 18, 19; Judg. xiii. 22; 1 Kings xvii. 18; Isa. vi. 5; Dan. x. 17.

This sense of unworthiness and self-loathing is ever the effect, in the depths of a heart not utterly hardened, of the Divine Power and presence. “Below this, is the utterly profane state, in which there is no contrast, no contradiction felt, between the holy and the unholy, between God and man. Above it, is the state of grace, in which the contradiction is felt, between the deep gulf perceived, which divides between sinful man and an holy God,—yet it is felt that this gulf is bridged over,—that it is possible for the two to meet,—that in One, who is sharer with both, they have already been brought together.” Trench on the Miracles. The same writer remarks of the miracle itself, “Christ here appears as the *ideal man*, the second Adam of the eighth Psalm; ‘Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; thou hast put all things under His feet.... the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas’ (vv. 6, 8).”

10.] **thou shalt be a catcher of men:**—compare, and indeed throughout this miracle, the striking parallel, and yet contrast, in John xxi.—with its injunction, ‘*Feed my lambs*,’ ‘*Shepherd My sheep*,’ given to the same Peter; its net which *did not burst*: and the minute and beautiful appropriateness of each will be seen: this, at, or near, the commencement of the apostolic course; that, at how different, and how fitting a time!

12–16.] HEALING OF A LEPER. Matt. viii. 2–4. Mark i. 40–45. In Matthew placed immediately after the Sermon on the Mount: in Mark and here, without any note of time. See notes on Matthew.

12.] fall of leprosy (a touch of medical accuracy from the beloved physician) implies the soreness of the disease.

15.] The reason of this is stated in Mark,

ver. 45, to be the disobedience of the leper to the Lord's command.

16.] and praying is peculiar to Luke, as often: see ch. iii. 21; vi. 12; ix. 18; xi. 1.

This verse breaks off the sequence of the narrative.

17–26.] HEALING OF A PARALYTIC. Matt. ix. 2–8. Mark ii. 1–12. This miracle is introduced by the indefinite words, **and it came to pass on a certain day.** In Matt. viii. 5—ix. 1, a series of incidents are interposed. Our Lord there appears to have returned from the country of the Gadarenes and the miracle on the dæmoniac there, to '*His own city*,' i.e. Capernaum. The order in **Mark** is the same as here, and his narrative contains the only decisive note of sequence (ch. iv. 35), which determines his order and that in the text to have been the actual one, and the events in Matt. viii. to be related out of their order.

17.] out of every town: not to be pressed: **as we say, from all parts.**

the power of the Lord] Does this mean *the power of God*—or *the power of the Lord*, i.e. Jesus? **Meyer** remarks that **St. Luke uses the Lord** frequently for Jesus, but **always** with the Greek definite article: so in ch. vii. 13; x. 1; xi. 39; xii. 42, al. fr.:—but the same word without the article, for the *Most High*; so here; and in ch. i. 11, 38, 58, 66; ii. 9; iv. 19; whence we conclude that the meaning is, **the power of God** (working in the Lord Jesus) **was in the direction of His healing**: i.e. wrought so that He exercised the powers of healing: and then a case follows.

18.] Borne of four, Mark.

19.] This description is that of an eye-witness.

20.] On their faith see note on Matthew,

ver. 2; **also on are forgiven.**

26.] strange things—literally, *things beyond our expectation*. Compare the close of the accounts in Matthew and Mark.

27–39.] CALLING OF LEVI. QUESTION RESPECTING FASTING. Matt. ix. 9–17. Mark ii. 13–22. For all common matter,—the discussion of the identity of Matthew and Levi, &c.—see notes on Matthew and Mark. I here only notice what is peculiar to Luke.

27.] not merely 'He saw,' but **He looked on,—He ob-served.**

28.] left all: not merely, '*left his books and implements*,' but the expression is generally used, and imports not so much a present objective relinquishment, as the mind with which he rose to follow.

29.] This fact is only expressly mentioned here—but may be directly inferred from **Mark**, and remotely from Matthew. See on Matthew, ver. 10.

33.] On the difference in the persons who ask this question, see on Matthew and Mark.

and make prayers: see ch. xi. 1. These prayers must be understood in connexion with an ascetic form of life, not as only the usual prayers of devout men.

34.] I have remarked on the striking contrast between **make to fast and they shall (or, will) fast, on Matthew,** ver. 15.

36.] The latter part of this verse is peculiar, and is to be understood as in the margin, '*if he does, he both will rend the new garment*' (by taking out of it the piece), '*and the piece from the new garment will not agree with the old*' In Matthew and

Mark the mischief done is differently expressed. Our text is very significant, and represents to us the spoiling of both systems by an attempt to engraft the new upon the old:-the *new* loses its completeness: the *old*, its consistency.

39.] This peculiar and important addition at once stamps our report with the very highest character for accuracy. Its apparent difficulty has perhaps caused its omission from some of our ancient authorities. It contains the *conclusion of the discourse*, and the *final answer* to the question in ver. 33, which is not given in Matthew and Mark. The *persons who had drunk the old wine are the Jews*, who had long been habituated to the old system;—the new is the new wine (see on Matthew) of the *grace and freedom of the Gospel*: and our Lord asserts that this new wine was not *palatable* to the Jews, who said the **old is better** (or, **good**). Observe that there is *no objective comparison whatever* here between the old and new wine; the whole stress is on **desireth** and **for he saith**, and the import of **better is subjective**:—*in the view of him who utters it*. And even if we were to assume such an objective comparison, it makes no difficulty. In time, the *new wine* will become *older*;—the man will become habituated to its taste, and the wine itself mellowed: and the comparison between the wines is not then which is the *older*, but which is intrinsically the *better*.

Stier observes, that the saying is a lesson for ardent and enthusiastic converts not to be disappointed, if they cannot at once instil their spirit into others about them.

Luke: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. 1–5.] THE DISCIPLES PLUCK EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH. Matt. xii. 1–8. Mark ii. 23–28. Between the discourse just related here and in Mark, and this incident, Matthew interposes *the raising of Jairus's daughter, the healing Of the two blind and one dumb, the mission of the twelve, and the message of John*. I need not insist on these obvious proofs of independence in the construction of our Gospels.

On the question of the arrangements, see on Matthew.

1. **second... after the first**] The word thus rendered presents much difficulty. None of the interpretations have any certainty, as the word is found nowhere else, and can be only judged of by analogy. See the discussion in the notes in m Greek Testament.

rubbing them in their hands is a detail peculiar to Luke: rubbing them and blowing away the chaff.

2.] In Matthew and Mark, the Pharisees address our Lord, ‘Why do Thy disciples,’ &c.?

3.] **Have ye not so much as this?** i.e. ‘Are ye so utterly ignorant of the spirit of Scripture?’ See Mark xii. 10, where the same expression occurs. In one of our ancient authorities, the Cambridge MS., the following is the form of ver. 5: **On the same day he beheld a certain man working on the sabbath, and said unto him, O man, if thou knowest what thou art doing, blessed art thou: but if thou knowest not, accursed, and a transgressor of the law.** This remarkable substitution seems to be an interpolation, but hardly an invention of a later time. Its form and contents speak for its originality, and, I am disposed to believe, its authenticity.

6–11.] HEALING OF THE WITHERED HAND. Matt. xii. 9–14 Mark iii. 1–6. See on Matthew.

6.] The circumstances related in ch. xiv. 1–6 are very similar to these; and there St. Luke has inserted the question of Matthew, vv. 11, 12. I should be disposed to think that St. Mark and St. Luke have preserved the exact narrative here. St. Matthew, as we see, describes the *watching* of the Pharisees (**their thoughts**, or reasonings, ver. 8) as *words actually spoken*, and relates that *they* asked the question: which certainly arises from an imperfect report of what took place, the question itself being verbatim that which our Lord asked on that other occasion, Luke xiv. 3, and followed by a similar appeal about an animal. There can hardly be a doubt that in St. Matthew’s narrative the two occurrences are blended: and this may have taken place from the very circumstance of the question about an animal having been asked on both occasions; St. Luke omitting it here, because he reports it there—St. Matthew joining to it the question asked there, because he was not aware of another similar incident.

right hand is a mark of accuracy, and from an eye-witness.

9.] After the question, St. Mark adds “*But they held their peace*”—as they did after the question just referred to in ch. xx. 3, because they were in a dilemma, and either answer would have convicted them.

10.) St. Mark adds “*with anger, being grieved at*

the hardness of their hearts"—one of the most striking and graphic descriptions in the Gospels. It was thus that He bare (see Matt. viii. 17), even while, on earth, our sins and infirmities. *Their* hearts were hardened,—but *He* grieved for it.

11. foolishness] It does not appear that this word can ever mean, as in A.V. 'madness,' or as some explain it, rage of a senseless kind. The proper meaning, 'senselessness,' 'wicked folly,' must be kept to.

communed—viz. the Pharisees and Herodians: Mark, ver. 6, where see note.

12–19.] CALLING AND NAMES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES. Peculiar (in this form) to Luke: see Matt. xii. 15–21; Mark iii. 13–19. We may observe, that St. Matthew does not relate the *choosing* of the Apostles, but only takes occasion to give a list of them on their being sent out, ch. x. 1 ff.; and that St. Mark and St. Luke agree in the time of their being chosen, placing it immediately after the healing on the sabbath,—but with no very definite note of time.

12.] in these days is vague in date, and may belong to any part of the period of our Lord's ministry now before us. I believe it to be a form of acknowledgment on the part of the Evangelist, that *he did not determine exactly into what part of this period to bring the incident so introduced*. Indeed the whole of this paragraph is of a supplementary and indefinite character, serving more as a preface to the discourse which follows, than as this and the cognate, though independent, account of Mark.

went out—viz. from Capernaum.

the mountain—see on Matt. v. 1.

to pray—see note on ch. v. 16.

and continued all night in his prayer to God] This is the right rendering. The fancy that by the words rendered "*in his prayer to God*" is meant in a house of prayer, is quite baseless.

13. he led unto him his disciples] expressed in Mark, "*He calleth to him whom he would*"—i. e. *He summoned to Him a certain larger number, out of whom He selected Twelve*. We are not to suppose that this selection was now first made out of a miscellaneous number—but now first formally announced; the Apostles, or most of them, had had each their special individual calling to be, in a peculiar manner, followers of the Lord, before this.

he named] not at a previous, or subsequent period; *but at this time*.

14.] On the catalogue, see notes on Matt. X. 1 ff.

16.] Judas of James—usually, and I believe rightly, rendered Jude the *brother* of James: see Introduction to Jude. On the question *who this James was*, see on Matt. x. 3, and xiii. 55.

17.] Having descended from the mountain, He stood on a level place—i. e. *possibly*, as has been suggested by some, *on a flat ledge or shelf on the side of the mountain*, but more naturally below the mountain: see on Matt. v. 1. Whether St. Luke could thus have written *with the Gospel of St. Matthew before him*, I leave the reader to judge: premising, that is, the identity of the two discourses.

19.] St. Luke uses the same expression, of power going forth from our Lord, in ch. viii. 46.

20–49.] SERMON ON THE MOUNT (?) Peculiar (in this form) to Luke, answering to Matt. v.—vii. On the whole question of the identity or diversity of the two discourses, see on Matt. v. 1. In Matthew I cannot doubt that we have *the whole discourse much as it was spoken*; the connexion is intimate throughout; the arrangement wonderfully consistent and admirable. Here, on the other hand, the discourse is only reported in fragments—there is a wide gap between vv. 26 and 27, and there are many omissions in other parts; besides which, sayings of our Lord, belonging apparently to other occasions, are inserted; see vv. 39, 40, 45. At the same time we must remember, that such central sayings would probably be frequently uttered by Him, and might very likely form part of this discourse originally. His teaching was not studious of novelty like that of men, but speaking with authority as He did, He would doubtless utter again and again the same weighty sentences when occasion occurred. Hence may have arisen much of the difference of arrangement observable in the report—because sayings known to have been uttered together at one time, might be thrown together with sayings spoken at another, with some one common link perhaps connecting the two groups. **20. on his disciples]** The discourse was spoken to the disciples generally,—to the Twelve particularly,—to the people prospectively; and its subject, both here and in Matthew, is, *the state and duties of a disciple of Christ*.

ye poor] To suppose that St. Luke's report of this discourse refers *only to this world's* poverty, &c.—and the blessings to anticipated *outward* prosperity in the Messiah's Kingdom, is surely quite a misapprehension. Comparing these expressions with other passages in St. Luke himself, we must have concluded, *even without St. Matthew's re-port*, that they bore a *spiritual* sense; see ch. xvi. 11, where he speaks of '*the true riches*,' and ch. xii. 21, where we have **rich towards God**. And who would apply such an interpretation to our ver. 21?

See on each of these beatitudes the corresponding notes in Matthew.

the kingdom of God] "*the kingdom of heaven*," Matthew, but it does not thence follow that "*heaven*" is the same as "*God*," but the two are different ways of designating the same kingdom—the one by its situation—*in heaven*, where its *polity* is (*Jerusalem which is above*, Gal. iv. 26), the other by *Him*, whose it is.

22.] Separate and cast out must not be understood of Jewish

excommunication only, but of all kinds of expulsion from society.

your name:—either your collective name as *Christians*,—to which St. Peter seems to refer, 1 Pet. iv. 14–16;—or, your individual name.

23.] in that day, not in the most solemn sense of the words (eee Matt. vii. 22), but **in the day when men shall do thus to you.**

24.] Of course I cannot assent to any such view as that taken by Meyer and others, that these 'woes' are inserted, from later tradition; in other words, *were never spoken by our Lord at all*:—either we must suppose that they ought to follow Matt. v. 12, which is from the context most improbable,—or that they and perhaps the four preceding beatitudes with them, were on some occasion spoken by our Lord in this exact form, and so have been here placed in that form.

26.] Not said to the *rich*, but to the *disciples*. The very warning conveyed **false prophets** shews this, and should have prevented the blunder from being made. The mention of "*prophets*" and "*false prophets*" has reference to the disciples' office as the salt of the earth. The address in ver. 27 is not (Meyer) a turning of the discourse to His own disciples, but **I say unto you which hear** is equivalent to "*But I say unto you*," which introduces the same command Matt. iv. 44,—and **that hear** serves the purpose of the **I—to you who now hear me**. The discourse being in an abridged form, the strong antithesis could not be brought out.

28.] See Matt. v. 39 ff.

31.) Matt. vii-12; but here it seems somewhat out of connexion, for the sense of vv. 29, 30, has been **resist not evil**, whereas this precept refers to the duty of man to man, injury being out of the question.

32.] This verse again belongs to ver. 28, not to ver. 31; see Matt. v. 46 ff. 33 ff.)**thank** corresponds

to "reward," Matthew (see note on Matt. v. 12).

35. hoping for nothing] The original word is a difficult one. Three renderings of it have been given—(1) the ordinary one, as in the text, *not expecting any payment from them*: so Euthymius and others. This meaning of the word is unexampled, though agreeing with the context. (2) '*causing no one to despair*,' i.e. refusing no one; so the ancient Syriac version renders it. (3) '*not despairing*,' i.e. '*without anxiety about the result*.' This last sense of the word is best supported by examples. But as it is a word only once occurring in the New Testament, perhaps the force of the context should prevail, and the ordinary interpretation be adopted, as there is nothing in analogy to forbid the meaning.

sons of the Highest] Meyer maintains that this must mean 'sons of God' in the sense of partakers of the glory of the Messiah's Kingdom, but without reference to the state of believers in this life, which last he says is according to the usage of St. Paul, not of the three first Evangelists. But surely this is sufficiently answered by your Father in the next verse, where the actual present sonship to our heavenly Father is a reason why we should imitate Him.

36.] merciful—equivalent to "*perfect*," Matt. v. 48, which last is the larger description, comprehending in it charity and mercy; see note there.

37.] Matt. vii. 1, 2. The saying is much enriched and expanded here; perhaps it was so uttered by our Lord on some other occasion; for the connexion is very strict in Matthew, and would hardly bear this expansion of what is not in that place the leading idea.

38.] The similitude is taken from a very full measure of some dry thing, such as corn. That no *liquid* is intended by running over, as Bengel supposes, is evident—for the three present participles all apply to the **same good measure**, and form a climax.

shall they give] The subject of this verb answers to the unexpressed agents of it **shall be measured again**; such agents being indefinite, and the meaning thereby rendered solemn and emphatic; see on ch. xii. 20. If we are to find a nom., it should be the *Angels*, who are in this matter the ministers of the divine purposes.

This saying is found with a totally different import Mark iv. 24; one of the many instances how the Lord turned about, so to speak, the Light of Truth contained in His declarations, so as to shine upon different departments of life and thought.

39.] From this verse to the end is in the closest connexion, and it is impossible that it should consist of sayings thrown together and uttered at different times.

The connexion with what went before is not so evident, indeed the **spake a parable unto them seems to shew a break**. The parabolic saying, implying the unfitness of an uncharitable and unjustly condemning leader (the Lord was speaking **primarily to His Apostles**) to perform his office, leads to the assertion [ver. 40] that no Christian ought to assume in this respect an office of judging which *his Master never assumed*; but rather will every well-instructed Christian strive to be humble as his Master was. Then follows the reproof of vv. 41–43; and vv. 44, 45 and 46–49 shew us, expanded in different images, what *the beam in the eye* is, to which our first efforts must be directed.

Can the blind lead the blind?

See this in quite another connexion, Matt. xv. 14, where Peter answers, “*Declare unto us this parable*”—meaning apparently *the last uttered words*, which the Lord however explains not specifically, but by entering into the whole matter. I believe this *parable* to have been one of the usual and familiar sayings of our Lord.

40.] See above. **perfect**, i.e. **fully instructed—perfect**, in the sense of ‘well-conditioned,’ knowing what is his duty, and consistently endeavouring to do it.

41.] Some have imagined a break in the sense here, and a return to Matt. vii. 3 f.;—but the whole is in the strictest connexion; see above.

43.] The corrupt fruit answers to the “*beam in the eye.*” if thy *life is evil*, it is in the vain to pretend to *teach others*.

45.] Again, the closest connexion of sense and argument; nor, as some say, is this verse put here because of the similarity of the preceding verses to Matt. xii. 33 reminding the compiler of ver. 35 there. Do these expositors suppose that our Lord *only once spoke each of these central sayings and with only one reference?*?

46–48.] The connexion goes on here also—and our Lord descends into the closest personal searching of the life and heart, and gives His judicial declaration of the end of the hypocrite, whether teacher or private Christian;—see notes on Matthew.

48.] **digged, and went deep**—not merely as in A.V., “*digged deep*,” but, as Bengel observes, the description grows as it proceeds: he dug, and deepened as he dug: was not content with one digging, but kept going deeper.

Luke: Chapter 7

CHAP. VII. 1–10.] HEALING OF THE CENTURION’ S SERVANT. Matt. viii. 5–13. In Matthew also placed after the Sermon on the Mount, but with the healing of the leper in our ch. 5. 12 ff. interposed. Our narrative is fuller than that in Matthew in the beginning of the miracle, not so full at the end. See notes on Matthew.

3.] Elders—not elders of the *synagogue* (who in Luke are *rulers of the synagogue*, “*archisynagogi*,” Acts xiii. 15), but of the *people*.

5.] **himself, i.e. at his own expense.**

7.] **wherefore**, on account of his unworthiness; which unworthiness itself may be connected with the fact, that entering his house would entail ceremonial uncleanness till the evening. St. Matthew does not express this clause, having the narrative in a form which precludes it. See notes there.

The **neither** brings into emphasis, not “*myself*,” as distinguished from others, but the whole following clause; “neither did I adopt *that* course.”

9.] After this there is an important addition in Matthew on the adoption of the Gentiles, and rejection of Israel who shewed no such faith.

10.] Here Matthew simply states the fact of the healing, apparently not knowing of any having been sent.

11–16.] RAISING OF A DEAD MAN AT NAIN. Peculiar to Luke. NAIN occurs no where else in the Bible. It was a town of Galilee not far from Capernaum, a few miles to the south of Mount Tabor, ‘on the northern slope of the ragged and barren ridge of Little Hermon,’ Stanley. A poor village has been found in this situation with ruins of old buildings. See Robinson, iii. 226. See Stanley’s description, Sinai and Palestine, p. 357, edn. 3.

This is one of the three greatest recorded miracles of our Lord: of which it has been observed, that He raised one (Jairus’s daughter) when *just dead*,—one *on the way to burial*,—and one (Lazarus) *who had been buried four days*.

12. **being carried out.**] The Jews ordinarily buried outside the gates of their cities. The kings however of the house of David were buried in the city of David; and it was a denunciation on Jehoiakim that he should be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn forth and cast *beyond the gates* of Jerusalem. Jer. xxii. 19. “One entrance alone Nain could have had; that which opens on the rough hill-side in its downward slope to the plain. It must have been in this steep descent,” &c. Stanley, as above.

14.] The **bier** was an *open coffin*. There was something in the manner of our Lord which caused the bearers to stand still. We need not suppose any miraculous influence over them.

All three raisings from the dead are wrought with words of power,—‘Damsel, arise,—‘Young man, arise,—‘Lazarus, come forth.’ Trench quotes an eloquent passage from Massillon’s sermons (*Miracles*, p. 241),—‘Elie ressuscite des morts, c’ est vrai; mais il est obligé de se coucher plusieurs fois sur le corps de l’ enfant qu’ il ressuscite: il souffle, il se rétrécit, il s’ agite: on voit bien qu’ il invoque une puissance étrangère; qu’ il rappelle de l’ empire de la mort une Tae qui n’ est pas soumise à sa voix: et qu’ il n’est lui-même le maître de la mort et de la vie. Jésus-Christ ressuscite les morts comme il fait les actions les plus communes: il parle en mattre&ceux-qui dorment d’ un sommeil éternel: et l’ on sent bien qu’ il est le Dieu des morts comme des vivants,—jamais plus tranquille que lorsqu’ il opère les plus grandes choses.’

15. **he delivered him to his mother**] Doubtless there was a deeper reason than the mere consoling of the widow, (of whom there were many in Israel now as before-time,) that influenced our Lord to work this miracle. Olshausen remarks, “A reference in this miracle to the *raised man himself* is by no means excluded. Man, as a conscious being, can never be a *mere means* to an end, which would here be the case, if we suppose the consolation of the mother to have been the only object for which the young man **was raised.**” He goes on to say that the hidden intent was probably the spiritual awakening of the youth; which would impart a deeper meaning to **delivered him to his mother**, and make her joy to be a true and abiding one.

16.] **fear**, the natural result of witnessing a direct exhibition of divine power: compare ch. v. 8.

a great prophet] For they had only been the *greatest of prophets* who had before raised the dead,—Elijah and Elisha; and *the Prophet* who was to come was doubtless in their minds.

18–35.] MESSAGE OF ENQUIRY FROM THE BAPTIST: OUR LORD’ S ANSWER, AND DISCOURSE TO THE MULTITUDES THEREON. Matt. xi. 2–19. The incident there holds a different place, coming after the sending out of the Twelve in ch. x.;—but neither there nor here is it marked by any definite note of time.

18.] **all these things** here may extend very wide: so may “*the works of Christ*” in Matthew. On the common parts, see notes on Matthew, where I have discussed at length the probable reason of the enquiry.

21.] This fact follows by inference from Matthew, ver. 4: for they could not tell John “*what they saw*,” unless our Lord were employed in works of healing at the time. Observe that St. Luke, himself a physician, distinguishes between the *diseased* and the *possessed*.

22 f.] Nearly verbatim as Mat-thew. The expression **the dead are raised** does not necessarily imply that more than one such miracle had taken place: the plural is generic, signifying that some of the class fell under that which is predicated of them.

24–28.] See Matthew.

29, 30.] It has been imagined that these words are a continuation of our Lord’s discourse, but surely they would thus be most

unnatural. They are evidently a parenthetical insertion of the Evangelist, expressive not of what had taken place during John's baptism, but of the present effect of our Lord's discourse on the then assembled multitude. Their whole diction and form is *historical*, not belonging to discourse. See likewise a grammatical objection to this rendering in my Greek Test.

31–35.] See on Matthew, vv. 16–19.

36–50.] ANOINTING OF JESUS' FEET BY A PENITENT WOMAN. Peculiar to Luke. It is hardly possible to imagine that this history can relate to the same incident as that detailed Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3; John xii. 3: although such an opinion has been entertained from the earliest times. Origen mentions and controverts it. It has been held in modern times by Grotius, Schleiermacher, Ewald, and Hug: and recently by Bleek. But the *only particular common to the two* (unless indeed we account the *name of the host* to be such, which is hardly worth recounting), is *the anointing itself*; and even that is not strictly the same. The *character of the woman*,—the *description of the host*,—the *sayings uttered*,—the *time*,—all are different. And if the probability of this occurring twice is to be questioned, we may fairly say, that an action of this kind, which had been once commended by our Lord, was *very likely to have been repeated*, and especially at such a time as 'six days before the last Passover,' and by one anointing Him for His burial.

I may add, that there is not the least reason for supposing the woman in this incident to have been Mary Magdalene. The introduction of her *as a new person* so soon after (ch. viii. 2), and what is there stated of her, make the notion exceedingly improbable.

36.] The exact time and place are indeterminate—the occasion of St. Luke's inserting the history here may have been the **friend of publicans and sinners** in ver. 34. Wieseler places it *at Nain*, which certainly is the last *city* that has been named: but it is more natural to suppose **in the city** to refer only to **the house** before—the city where the house was. Meyer thinks that the definite article points out Capernaum. The position of the words **in the city** in the amended text requires a different rendering from 'a woman in the city which was a sinner.' We must either render, 'which was a sinner in the city,' i.e. known as such in the place by public repute,—carrying on a sinful occupation in the place,—or (2) regard **which was in the city** as parenthetic, 'a woman which was in the city, a sinner.' The latter seems preferable.

37.] **a sinner**, in the sense usually understood—a *prostitute*: but, by the context, *penitent*.

was is not however to be rendered as if it were "*had been*." She *was*, even up to this time (see ver. 39), a prostitute—and this was the first manifestation of her penitence. "What wonder that such should fly to Christ, seeing that they had also come to the baptism of John?" Matt. xxi. 32 (Grotius). It is possible, that the woman may have just heard the closing words of the discourses concerning John, Matt. xi. 28–30; but I would not press this, on account of the obvious want of sequence in this part of our Gospel. The behaviour of the woman certainly implies that she had heard our Lord, and been awakened by His teaching.

an alabaster box: for the word, &c., see Matt. xxvi. 7.

Our Lord would, after the ordinary custom of persons at table, be reclining on a couch, on the left side, turned towards the table, and His feet would be behind Him. She seems to have embraced His feet (see Matt. xxviii. 9), as it was also the Jews' custom to do by way of honour and affection to their Rabbis (see Wetstein on this passage), and kissed them, and in doing so to have shed abundant tears, which, falling on them, she wiped off with her hair. From the form of expression in the original (see in my Greek Test.), it does not appear that this latter was an *intentional* part of her honouring our Lord. It was the tears, implied in the word **weeping**,—**the tears which she shed**,—not '*her tears*,' which would be otherwise expressed. The *ointment* here has a peculiar interest, as being the offering by a penitent of that which had been an accessory in her unhallowed work of sin.

39.] The Pharisee *assumes* that our Lord did not know who, or of what sort, this woman was, and thence doubts His being a prophet (see ver. 16);—the possibility of His is *knowing this and permitting it*, never so much as occurs to him. It was the *touching* by an unclean person, which constituted the defilement. This is all that the Pharisee fixes on: his *offence* is merely technical and ceremonial.

40.] **answering**—perhaps to the disgust manifested in the Pharisee's countenance; for that must have been the ground on which the narrative relates ver. 39. We must not however forget that in similar cases "*Jesus knowing their thoughts*" is inserted (Matt. ix. 4), and doubtless might also have been here.

There is an *inner personal appeal* in the words addressing the Pharisee. The calling by name—the especial **I have somewhat to say unto thee** refer to the *inner thoughts of the heart*, and at once bring the answer **Master, say on**, so different from "*This man, if he were a prophet*."

41.] We must remember that our Lord is here setting forth the matter *primarily* with reference to Simon's subjective view of

himself, and therefore not strictly as regards the actual comparative sinfulness of these two before God. Though however not to be pressed, *the case may have been so*: and, I am inclined to think, *was so*. The clear light of truth in which every word of His was spoken, will hardly allow us to suppose that such an admission would have been made to the Pharisee, if it had not really been so in fact. But see more below.

two debtors] The *debtors* are the prominent persons in the parable—the creditor is necessary indeed to it, but is *in the background*. And this remark is important—for on bearing it carefully in mind the right understanding of the parable depends. The Lord speaks *from the position of the debtors*, and applies to their case the considerations of ordinary gratitude and justice. And in doing so it is to be noticed, that He makes an assumption for the purpose of the parable:—*that sin is proportionate to the sense of sin*, just as a debt is felt to the amount of the debt. The disorganisation of our moral nature, the deadly sedative effect of sin in lulling the conscience, which renders the greatest sinner the least ready for penitence, *does not here come into consideration*; the examples being two persons, *both aware of their debt*. This assumption itself is *absolutely necessary for the parable*: for if forgiveness is to awaken love in proportion to the magnitude of that which is forgiven, *sin* in such a connexion must be the *subjective debt* which is *felt* to exist, not the *objective one*, the magnitude of which we never can know, but God only: see on ver. 47 below.

five hundred... fifty—a very different ratio from the ten thousand talents and the hundred pence (denarii) in Matt. xviii. 21–35, because there it is intended to shew us how insignificant our sins towards one another are in comparison with the offence of us all before

42. when they could not pay, he frankly forgave them both] What depth of meaning there is in these words, if we reflect WHO said them, and by what means this forgiveness was to be wrought! Observe that the **could not pay** is pregnant with more than at first appears:—*how* is this incapacity discovered to the creditor in the parable? *how*, but *by themselves*? Here then is the sense and *confession* of sin; not a bare objective fact, followed by a decree of forgiveness: but the incapacity is an *avowed* one, the forgiveness is a *personal one*,—**them both**.

which of them will love him most?] The difficulty usually found in this question and its answer is not wholly removed in the subjective nature of the parable. For the sense of sin, if wholesome and rational, must bear a proportion, as indeed in this case it did, to the actual sins committed: and then we seem to come to the false conclusion, ‘The more sin, the more love: let us then sin, that we may love the more.’ And I believe this difficulty is to be removed by more accurately considering *what the love is* which is here spoken of. It is an unquestionable fact, if the *deepest penitents* are, in *one kind* of love for Him who has forgiven them, the most devoted;—in that, namely, which consists in personal sacrifice, and proofs of earnest attachment to the blessed Saviour end His cause on earth. But it is no less an unquestionable fact, that *this love* is not the highest form of the spiritual life; that such persons are, by their very course of sin, incapacitated from entering into the length, breadth, and height, and being filled with all the fulness of Christ; that their views are generally narrow, their aims one-sided:—that though *love* be the greatest of the Christian graces, there are various kinds of it; and though the love of the reclaimed profligate may be and is intense of its kind, (and how touching and beautiful its manifestations are, as here!) yet *that kind* is not so high nor complete as the sacrifice of the *whole life*,—the bud, blossom, and fruit,—to His service to whom we were in baptism dedicated. For even on the ground of the parable itself, in that life there is a continually freshened sense of the need, and the assurance, of pardon, ever awaking devoted and earnest love.

In the **I suppose** of Simon, we have, understood, “that is, if feel as they ought.”

44–46.] It would not appear that Simon had been deficient in the ordinary courtesies paid by a host to his guests—for these, though marks of honour *sometimes* paid, were not (even the of the feet, except when coming from a journey) *invariably* paid to guests:—but that he had taken no *particular pains* to shew affection or reverence for his Guest. Respecting water for the feet, see Gen. xviii. 4; Judg. xix. 21. Observe the contrasts here:—**water, tears**,—the blood of the heart, as Augustine calls them:—**thou gavest me no kiss** (on the *face*),—**eagerly kissing my feet**:—**with oil my head**,—**my feet with ointment** (which was more precious).

45. since the time I came in] These words will explain one difficulty in the circumstances of the anointing: how such a woman came into the guest-chamber of such a Pharisee.

She appears by them to have entered *simultaneously with our Lord and His disciples*. Nor do vv. 36, 37 at all preclude this idea:—the words of the original in ver. 37 may mean, ‘having knowledge that He was going to dine,’ &c. If she came in His train, the Pharisee would not exclude her, as He was accustomed to gather such to hear Him: it was the *touching* at which he wondered.

47.] This verse has been found very difficult to fit into the lesson conveyed by the Parable. But I think there need be little difficulty, if we regard it thus. Simon had been offended at the uncleanness of the woman who touched our Lord. He, having given the Pharisee the instruction contained in the parable, and having drawn the contrast the contrast between the woman’s

conduct and his, now assures him, ‘Wherefore, seeing this is so, I say unto thee, she is no longer unclean—her many sins are forgiven: *for* (thou seest that) *she loved much*: her conduct towards Me shews that love, which is a token that her sins are forgiven.’ Thus the clauses are not connected by the causative particle, ‘*because* she loved much; but, as rightly rendered in A.V., **for she loved much**: *for she has shewn that love, of which thou mayest conclude, from what thou hast heard, that it is the effect of a sense of forgiveness.*’ Thus Bengel says, “The remission of sins, not imagined by Simon, is proved by its fruit, ver. 42, which latter is evident and meets the eye, whereas the other is hidden from us”—and Calovius, “Christ was using that kind of proof which is called *à posteriori*.” But there is a deeper consideration in this solution, which the words of the Lord in ver. 48 bring before us. The *sense* of forgiveness of *sin* is not altogether correspondent to the sense of forgiveness of *a debt*. The latter must be altogether past, and a back on, to awaken, gratitude: the former, by no means so. The *expectation*, the *desire*, and *hope* of forgiveness, the *faith* of ver. 50, awoke this love; just as in our Christian life, the love daily awakened by a sense of forgiveness, yet is gathered under and summed up in a general faith and expectation, that ‘in that day’ all will be found to have been forgiven. The *remission* (forgiveness) of *sins*, into which we have baptized, and in which we live, yet waits for that great “*Thy sins are forgiven thee*” which He will then pronounce.

she loved much—viz. in the acts related in vv. 44–46.

Remark that the assertion regarding Simon is not “*few sins* are forgiven,” but “*little is forgiven;*” stamping the subjective character of the part relating to him:—he *felt*, or *cared about*, but *little forgiveness*, and his little love shewed this to be so.

49.] This appears to have been said, not in a hostile, but a reverential spirit. Perhaps the **also** alludes to the miracles wrought in the presence of John’s messengers.

50.—See on ver. 47. The woman’s faith embraced as her own, and awoke her deepest love on account of, that forgiveness, which the Lord now first formally pronounced.

in (lit e rally into) peace: see 1 Sam. i. 17; not only ‘in peace,’ but implying state of mind to which she might now look forward.

Luke: Chapter 8

CHAP. VIII. 1–3.] JESUS MAKES A CIRCUIT, TEACHING AND HEALING, WITH HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES, AND MINISTERING WOMEN. Peculiar to Luke. A general notice of our Lord’s travelling and teaching in Galilee, and of the women, introduced again in ch. xxiii. 55; xxiv. 10, who ministered to Him.

2.] seven devils: see ver. 30.

3.] Prof. Blunt has observed in his Coincidences, that we find a reason here why Herod should say to his *servants* (Matt. xiv. 2), ‘This is John the Baptist,’ &c., viz.—because his *steward’s wife* was a disciple of Jesus, and so there would be frequent mention of Him among the servants in Herod’s court.

This is Herod Antipas.

Joanna is mentioned again ch. xxiv. 10, and again in company with Mary Magdalene and others. Susanna is not again mentioned.

ministered, providing food, and giving other necessary attentions.

unto them, viz. the Lord and His Apostles.

4–15.] PARABLE OF THE SOWER. Matt. xiii. 1–8, 18–23. Mark iv. 1–20. For the parable and its explanation, see notes on Matthew, where I have also noticed the varieties of expression here and in Mark. On the relation of the three accounts to one another, see notes on Mark. Our Lord had retired to Capernaum,—and thither this multitude were flocking together to Him.

4.] The present participle **gathering**, is overlooked by the A.V.: as is also **coming to him**; literally **coming up one after another**. It was the desire of those who had been impressed by His discourses and miracles to be further taught, that brought them together to Him now. He spoke this parable sitting in a boat, and the multitude on the shore.

14.] this life belongs to all three substantives.

15.] It has been said, on Matthew, ver. 23, that all *receptivity* of the seed is from God—and all men have receptivity enough to

make it matter of condemnation to them that they receive it not in earnest, and bring not forth fruit. But there is in this very receptivity a wide difference between men; some being false-hearted, hating the truth, deceiving themselves,—others being earnest and simple-minded, willing to be taught, and humble enough to receive ‘with meekness the engrafted word. It is of these that our Lord here speaks; of this kind was Nathanael, the Israelite indeed in whom was no guile, John i. 48: see also John xviii. 37, “Every one that is of the truth, heareth My voice,” and Trench on the Parables, in loc.

in patience—consistently, through the course of a life spent in duties, and amidst discouragements—“*he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved*,” Matt. xxiv. 13

16–18] Mark iv. 21–25, where see notes. The sayings occur in several parts of Matthew (v. 15; x. 26; xiii. 12), but in other connexions. Euthym. remarks well, “It is likely that Christ spoke such sayings as these at different times.” On the meaning of the separate sayings, see notes on the passages in Matthew. Observe that ver. 18, **how ye hear** is “*what ye hear*” in Mark, and **seemeth to have** is “*hath*” in Mark.

19–21.] THE MOTHER AND BRETHREN OF JESUS SEEK TO SEE HIM. Matt. xii, 46–50. Mark iii. 31–35. The incident is introduced here without any precise note of sequence; not so in St. Matthew, who says, after the discourse in ch. xii., “*while he was yet speaking to the multitudes*”...and St. Mark “*There came then*”...having before stated, ver. 21, that His relations went out to lay hold of Him,—for they said, “He is beside Himself.” We must conclude therefore that *they* have it *in the exact place*, and that St. Luke only inserts it among the events of this series of discourses, as indeed it was, but *without fixing its place*. His account is abridged, and without marks of an eyewitness, which the others have.

23–25.] JESUS, CROSSING THE LAKE, STILL THE STORM. Matt. viii. 18, 23–27. Mark iv. 35–41. The chronology of this occurrence would be wholly uncertain, were it not for the precision of St. Mark, who has introduced it by “*the same day, when the even was come*,” i.e. *on the same day in which the preceding parables were delivered*. How it has come to be misplaced in Matthew, must ever be matter of obscurity. The fact that *it is so*, is no less unquestionable, than the proof that it furnishes of the independence of the two other Evangelists.

22. on one of the days] This serves to shew that St. Luke had no data by which he could fix the following events. If he had seen the Gospel of St. Mark, could this have been so?

23.] came down—from the sky,—or perhaps from the mountain valleys around: see Matt. vii. 27, and note on Acts xxvii. 14.

24.] See notes on Matthew.

25.] In Matthew this reproof comes *before* the stilling of the storm. But our account, and that in Mark, are here evidently exact.

26–39.] HEALING OF A DEMONIAC IN THE LAND OF THE GERAENES. Matt v111. 28–34. Mark v. 1–20, in both which places see notes.

26.] over against Galilee, a more precise description than “*the other side*,” Matthew, or “*the other side of the sea*,” Mark.

27.] out of the city belongs not to **met him** as in A.V., but to **a certain man—a certain man of the city**. The man did not *come* from the city, but from the tombs.

I put to any reader the question, whether it were possible for either St. Mark or St. Luke to have drawn up their account from Matthew, or with Matthew before them, seeing that he mentions *two possessed* throughout? Would no notice be taken of this? then indeed would the Evangelists be but poor witnesses to the truth, if they could consciously allow such a discrepancy to go forth. Of the discrepancy itself, no solution has been proposed which can satisfy any really critical mind. That *one* should have been prominent, and the spokesman, is of course *possible*, but such a hypothesis does not help us one whit. Where *two* healings take place, narrators do not commonly, being fully aware of this, relate in the singular: and this is the phenomenon to be accounted for. It is at least reasonable to assign occurrence in such a case to the more detailed and chronologically inserted accounts of St. Mark and St. Luke.

wore no clothes is to be taken literally. The propensity to go entirely naked is a well-known symptom in certain kinds of raving madness: see Trench, Miracles, p. 167, not.

29.] he was commanding, imperfect tense: in the midst of this ordering, and as a consequence of it, the possessed man cried out, as in the last verse.

brake the bands] The unnatural increase of muscular strength is also observed in cases of raving madness (as indeed also in those of any strong concentration of the will); see Trench as above.

30.] Lightfoot (on Mark v. 9) quotes instances of the use of **legion** (made into a Hebrew word) for a great number, in the Rabbinical writings. The fact of *many demons* having entered into this wretched man, sets before us terribly the utter break up of his personal and rational being. The words will not bear any figurative rendering, but must be taken literally (see ver. 2 of this chap., and ch. xi. 24 ff.); viz. that in the same sense in which other poor creatures were possessed by *one evil spirit* (see note on Matthew), this man, and Mary Magdalene, were possessed by *many*. **31. the abyss]** This word is sometimes used for Hadés in general (Rom. x. 7), but more usually in Scripture for the abode of damned spirits: see reff. This last is certainly meant here—for the request is coordinate with the fear of torment expressed above (see note on ch. xvi. 23). But, as Dr. Wordsworth remarks, we must distinguish between the abyss, the inter-mediate place of torment, and the lake of fire, into which the devil will be cast by Christ at the end: see Rev. xx. 3, 10.

35.] they went out, viz. the people in the town and country; “*the whole city*” Mat-thew; here understood in ver. 34. **at the feet of Jesus]** This particularity denotes an eye-witness. The phrases common to Mark and Luke, e.g. clothed, and **in his right mind**, and **that they that saw it**, denote a common origin of the two narratives, which have however become considerably deflected, as comparison will shew.

38, 39.] See notes on Mark.

40–56.] RAISING OF JAIRUS’ S DAUGHTER, AND THE HEALING OF A WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD. Matt. ix. 1, 18–26. Mark v. 21–43. Onur account is that one of the three which brings out the most important points, and I have therefore selected it for full comment.

40.] received him—i. e. **welcomed Him**; the “*gladly*” of the A.V. is a correct comment, but is more than is in the original text.

for they were all waiting for him: here we have an eye-witness again.

41.] a ruler of the synagogue: “*one of the rulers of the synagogue*,” Mark;—in Matthew only “*a certain ruler*.”

42.] one only daughter, peculiar to Luke, but perhaps implied in The affectionate diminutive of Mark.

lay a dying] In Matthew she is represented as *already dead*. He is not aware of the subsequent message to Jairus, and narrates concisely and generally.

The crowd seems to have followed to see what would happen at Jairus’s house: see ver. 54

43.] St. Mark adds, that she grew nothing better, but rather worse.

44.] Her inner thoughts are given in Mark, ver. 28.

There was doubtless a weakness and error in this woman’s view;—she imagined that healing power flowed as it were magically out of the Lord’s person; and she touched the fringe of his garment as the most *sacred*, as well as the most accessible part: see Matt. xxiii. 5: Num. xv. 37–40. But she *obtained what she desired*. She sought it, though in error, yet *in faith*. And she obtained it, because this faith was known and recognized by the Lord. It is most true objectively, that there did go forth healing power from Him, and from his Apostles (see Mark vi. 56: Luke vi. 19: Acts v. 15; xix. 12), but it is also true that, in ordinary cases, only those were receptive of this whose faith embraced the truth of its existence, and ability to heal them. The error of her view was overborne, and her weakness of apprehension of truth covered, by the strength of her faith. And this is a most encouraging miracle for us to recollect, when we are disposed to think despondingly of the ignorance or superstition of much of the Christian world: that He who accepted this woman for her faith even in error and weakness, may also accept them.

45.] We are not to imagine that our Lord *was ignorant* of the woman, or any of the circumstances. The question is asked to draw out what followed.

See, on the part of Jesus Himself, an undeniable instance of this, in ch. xxiv. 19—and note there. The healing took place *by His will*, and owing to *is recognition of her faith*: see similar questions, Gen. iii. 9, and 2 Kings v. 25.

Peter and they that were with him] A detail contained only here.

On the latter part of this verse many instructive remarks have been made in sermons—see Trench, Mir., p. 192, note (edn. 2)—to the effect that many press round Christ, but few touch Him, only the faithful. Thus Augustine, “Even thus is it now with His body, i.e. His Church. She is touched by the faith of few, thought crowded by the mob of the many.” And Chrysostom, “The believer on the Saviour toucheth Him, but the unbeliever strangleth and vexeth Him.” It is difficult to imagine how the miracle should be, as Dr. Wordsworth calls it, “a solemn warning to all who crowd on Christ;” or how such a forbidding to come to Him should be reconciled with “Come unto Me all...” Rather should we say, seeing it was one of those that thus crowded on Him who obtained grace from Him, that it is a blessed encouragement to us not only to crowd on Him, but even to touch Him: so to crowd on Him as never to be content till we have grasped if it be but His garment for ourselves: not to despise or discourage any of the least of those who “make familiar addresses to Him in (so called) religious hymns,” seeing that thus some of them may touch Him to the healing of their souls. I much fear that if my excellent friend had been keeping order among the multitude on the way to the house of Jairus, this poor woman would never have been allowed to get near to Jesus. But I hope and trust that he and I shall rejoice together one day in His presence amidst a greater crowd, whom no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.

47.] It is not necessary (though perhaps probably), from the **when all denied**, ver. 45, that *the woman* should also have denied with them. She may have hidden herself among the crowd. Our Lord (Mark, ver. 32) looked around to see “*her that had done this thing*”—a wonderful precision of expression, by which His absolute knowledge of the whole matter is set before us.

trembling: and more, “*knowing what was done to her*,” Mark; which is implied here. All this is omitted in Matthew; and if we had only his account, we should certainly *derive the wrong lesson* from the miracle; for there we miss altogether the reproof, and the shame to which the woman is put; and the words of our Lord look like an encomium on her *act itself*. Her confession **before all the people**, is very striking *Himself openly confessed, and not only secretly sought*: that our Christian life is not, as it is sometimes called, merely ‘*a thing between ourselves and God*;’ but a *good confession*, to be witnessed before all.

48.] How lovingly does our Lord re-assure the trembling woman; her faith saved her—not merely in the act of touching, but as now completed by the act of confession;—it saved her *mediately*, as the connecting link between herself and Christ: but the “*power which went out from Him*,” working through that faith, saved her *energetically*, and as the working cause;—“*by grace, through faith*,” Eph. ii. 8.

in peace] See ch. vii. 50 and note.

St. Mark’s addition, “*be whole of thy plague*,” is important, as conveying to her an assurance that the effect which she felt in her body should be permanent; that the healing, about which she might otherwise almost have doubted, openly ratified by the Lord’s own word.

49.] Little marks of accuracy come out in each of the two fuller accounts. Here we have **there cometh one**, which was doubtless the *exact fact*:—in Mark “*there came certain*,”—generally expressed. In Mark again we learn not only that Jesus heard, but that the message was not *reported* to Him, but He *overheard it being said*, which is a minute detail not given here. Nothing could more satisfactorily mark the independent authority of the two narratives.

50.] **and she shall be made whole** is only here.

51.] Our Lord had entered the house, where He found “*a tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly*,” Mark: “*the minstrels and people making a noise*,” Matthew, who were all following Him into the chamber of death. On this *He declared who were to follow Him*, and uttered the words “*Give place*”&c. Matthew.—Then He entered with His three Apostles and the parents. I say this, not for the sake of harmonizing, but to bring out the sequence in our narrative here, which unless we get the right meaning for **suffered no man to go in**, seems disturbed.

53.] The maiden was *actually dead* as plainly appears from the **knowing that sho was dead**. The words, **she is not dead but sleepeth**, are no ground for surmising the contrary: see note on Matthew, ver. 24.

54.] Mark gives the actual Aramaic words uttered by the Lord, “*Talitha cumi*.”

55.] **her spirit came again:** see Judges xv. 19, 1 Kings xvii. 21, in the former of which places death *had not* taken place, but in the latter it *had*; so that no inference adverse to her actual death can be derived from the use of the word.

The command *to give her to eat*, shews that she was restored to actual life with its wants and weaknesses; and in that incipient state of convalescence, which would require nourishment. The testimony of Mark here precludes all idea of a recovery from a mere paroxysm—“*and she walked*.” One who “*lay at the point of death*” at the time of the father’s coming, and then died, so that it could be said of the minstrels and others who had time to assemble, “*knowing that she was dead*,”—could not, supposing that they were mistaken and she was only in a trance, *have risen up and walked*, and been in a situation to take

meat, in so short a time after. Every part of the narrative combines to declare that the death was real, and the miracle a *raising from the dead*, in the strictest sense.

56.] The injunction, however, was not observed; for we read in Matthew, “*the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.*”

Luke: Chapter 9

CHAP. IX. 1–5.] MISSION OF THE TWELVE. Matt. x 5–12. Mark vi. 7–13. Mark’s account agrees nearly exactly with the text. The discourse is given at much greater length in Matthew, where see notes.

7–9.] HEROD ANTIPAS HEARS OF THE FAME OF JESUS THROUGH THE DOINGS OF THE TWELVE. Matt. xiv. 1–12. Mark vi. 14–29. How inexplicable would be the *omission of the death of John the Baptist*, by the Evangelist who has given so particular an account of his ministry, (ch. iii. 1–20), if St. Luke had had before him the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark.

7.] “*by him*,” though not genuine, and an explanatory gloss, points to the right account of the matter. Herod (see Mark) heard the account of the miracles wrought by the Twelve; but even then it was *HIS name* which was spread abroad. These works were done in their Master’s Name, and in popular rumour *passed for His*.

9.] The repetition of “I” (which is emphatic in the original) implies personal concern and alarm at the growing fame of Jesus: see notes on Matthew.

10–17.] RETURN OF THE APOSTLES. JESUS RETIRES TO BETHSAIDA. FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND. Matt. xiv. 13–21. Mark vi. 30–44, John vi. 1–13. Compare the notes on each of these.

10.] He went *in a ship* (Matthew, Mark, John), of which our Evangelist seems not to have been informed; for we should gather from our text that it was *by land*. A great difficulty also attends the mention of Bethsaida here. At first sight, it would appear to be the well-known Bethsaida, on the western bank of the lake, not far from Capernaum. But (1) our Lord was *on this side before*,—see ch. viii. 37; and (2) Mark (vi. 45) relates that *after* the miracle of the loaves He caused His disciples to cross over to Bethsaida. But there were *two places* of this name:—another Bethsaida (Julias) lay at the top of the lake, on the Jordan: see Stanley, p. 381, edn. 3. Now it is very likely that our Lord may have crossed the lake to *this* Bethsaida, and St. Luke, finding that the miracle happened near Bethsaida, and *not being informed of the crossing Of the lake*, may have left the name thus without explanation, as being that of the other Bethsaida. St. Mark gives us the exact account: that the Lord and the disciples, who went *by sea*, were perceived by the multitude who went *by land*, and arrived before Him. How any of these accounts could have been compiled with a knowledge of the others, I cannot imagine.

11.] See note on Mark, ver. 34.

he received them] This word includes what St. Mark tells us of His going forth from His solitude, or perhaps landing from the ship, and seeing a great multitude, and having compassion on them; **he received them**, i.e. did not send them away.

12.] As the Three agree in their account, and St. John differs from them, see the difference discussed in notes there. In *his* account, the enquiry proceeds *from our Lord Himself*, and is addressed to Philip, and answered by Philip and Andrew.

14. by companies of about fifty] St. Mark. gives “*by hundreds and by fifties*” with his usual precision.

Besides these companies, there were the women and children *unarranged*; see on John vi. 10.

16.] On the symbolic import of the miracle, see notes on John vi.

Immediately after this miracle, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John relate the walking on the sea, which, and the whole series of events following as far as Matt. xvi. 12,—the healings in the land of Gennesaret,—the discourse about un-washed hands,—the Syrophoenician woman,—the healing of multitudes by the sea of Galilee,—the feeding of the 4000,—the asking of a sign from Heaven,—and the forgetting to take bread,—are *wholly omitted* by our Evangelist. Supposing him to have had St. Matthew’s gospel before him, how is this to be explained? It is also an important observation, that the omission by St. Luke of the second miracle of feeding is not to be adduced against its historical reality, as some have done, since it is only omitted as *occurring in the midst of a large section, which the accounts gathered by St. Luke did not contain*.

18–27.] CONFESSION OF PETER. FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION. Matt. xvi. 13–28. Mark viii. 27–ix. 1. The Lord had gone into the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi;—see notes on Matthew.

19. that one of the old prophets is risen again] See ver. 8. There is no improbability, nor contradiction to St. John's account that the multitudes sought to make him a king, in our Lord's asking this question. We must remember that such enquiries were not made by Him for *information*, but as means of drawing out the confession of others, as here.

20.] See the important addition, the promise to Peter, in Matthew, vv. 17–19.

22.] As far as slain is nearly verbatim with Mark: the last clause nearly so with Matthew. And yet, according to the Commentators, St. Mark has *compiled his account from St. Matthew and St. Luke*. The *almost* verbal agreement of the three in so solemn and sad an announcement, is what we might expect. Such words would not be easily forgotten.

23.] to them all—” having called the multitude with His disciples,” Mark. There is no allusion to what He had said to *Peter* in this all.

25.] himself is “*his life*” in Matthew, Mark:—**his life**, in the highest sense.

26.] After words St. Mark adds “*in this adulterous and sinful generation.*” ‘The Glory is threefold: (1) *His own*, which He has to and for Himself as the exalted Messiah: (2) *the glory of God*, which accompanies Him as coming down from God’s Throne: (3) *the glory of the angels*, who surround Him with their brightness.’ Meyer.

27.] See note on Matthew, ver. 28.

28–36.] THE TRANSFIGURATION. Matt. xvii. 1–8. Mark ix. 2–8. I have commented on the relation of the three accounts in the notes on Mark, and on the Transfiguration itself in those on Matthew, which treat also of the additional particulars found here.

28.] about an eight days is “*after six days*” in Matthew and Mark, the one reckoning being *exclusive*, the other *inclusive*.

to pray] See on ch. v. 16. This Gospel alone gives us the purpose of the Lord in going up, and His employment when the glorious change came over Him.

31.] This decease is expressed in the original by the word **exodus**, *going forth*, which could be no other than His *death*.

which he should accomplish, literally, **fulfil**,—by divine appointment.

32.] Not ‘*when they were awake*,’ as A.V., which is not the sense of the word,—but **having kept awake** through the whole. The word seems to be expressly used here to shew that it was *not merely a vision*, seen in sleep.

33.] as they departed, i.e. while they were departing:—the words were said with a desire to hinder their departure.

not knowing what he said—from fear and astonishment—”*for they were sore afraid*,” Mark.

34.] There is no difference in the accounts, as has been imagined: the **as they departed...**, ver. 33, is only an additional particular, and the rest is exactly in accordance. Notice however the remarkable word **chosen** of the correct text: and compare the references,—in which places *only* in the New Testament the term is applied to the Son of God. Compare also Ps. lxxxix. 3. 19: Isa. xlivi. 10 (cited in Matt. xii. 18).

36.] St. Luke gives the *result* of our Lord’s command to them: the *command itself* is related in Matthew ver. 9, and Mark ver. 9.

37–42.] HEALING OF A POSSESSED PERSON. Matt. xvii. 14–21. Mark ix. 14–29. The narrative in Mark is by far the most copious and I have there commented at length on it.

37. the next day] The transfiguration probably took place *at night*,—see on Matt. xvii. 1,—and this was in the morning. St. Luke omits the whole discourse concerning Elias (Matthew and Mark, vv. 9–13).

38.] he is mine only child is peculiar to Luke.

43–45.] OUR LORD’ S SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DEATH. Matt. xvii. 22, 23. Mark ix. 30–32.

43, 44.] all—the multitude—in contrast with “*your ears*” of ver. 44.

these sayings, not, as some, ‘*the foregoing discourses and wonders*:’—that would give no sense,—for the disciples were thinking exclusively of those already: nor strictly ‘*what I am about to tell you*,’ so that **these sayings** should be identical in meaning with “*this saying*” below, ver. 45: but **these sayings**, of which this was now *the second*;—‘these intimations which I make to you from time to time respecting My sufferings and death.’ The *Resurrection*, expressly mentioned in the others, is omitted here.

45.] The sense here is not to be evaded by forcing it, as A.V., to mean ‘*so that they did not....*’, but to be literally rendered, **that they might not**, as in Matt. i. 22 al. It was the *divine purpose*, that they should not at present be aware of the full signification of these words.

46–50.] JESUS REBUKES THE DISCIPLES FOR THEIR EMULATION AND EXCLUSIVENESS. Matt. xviii. 1–5. Mark ix. 33–40. The most detailed account is in Mark, where I have discussed the differences in the three narratives.

46.] There is not the least occasion to confine the word **reasoning** to the sense of an inward doubt and questioning in the heart of each; indeed I will venture to say that no interpreter would have thought of doing so, had not the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark, by mentioning an outward expression of this thought, offered a temptation to *discover a discrepancy*. Had our narrative stood by itself, we should have understood it, as I do now, of a dispute which had taken place or was taking place, and which, though not actually spoken out before the Lord, was yet open to His discerning eye, so that not only the words, but the disputing of their thoughts, was known to Him.

48.] The discourse as here related has the closest connexion and harmony. The dispute had been, who (among the Twelve) should be greatest,—i. e. greatest *in the kingdom of heaven*: for other greatness is not to be thought of,—the minds of the disciples being always on this, as just about to appear; and our Lord reminds them, that no such precedence is to be thought of among those sent in His name; for that even a little child, if thus sent, is clothed with His dignity; and if there be any distinction among such, it is this, that he who is like that child, humblest and least, i.e. nearest to the spirit of his Lord, *he is the greatest*.

49, 50.] On the connexion of this answer with the preceding, see on Mark. It is even more strikingly brought out here. Our Lord had declared the *absolute equality* of all sent in His name—and that if there were any difference, it was to be made by a *deeper self-renouncing*. Then arises the thought in the mind of the ardent son of Zebedee, of the *exclusive and peculiar dignity* of those who were thus sent, the *apostles*: and he relates what they had done, as a proof of his fully appreciating this exclusive dignity. The link to what has preceded, is in the words **in thy name...** See the rest in Mark.

51.—CHAP. XIX. 28.] INCIDENTS DURING THE LORD’s LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. We now enter upon a long and most important portion of our Gospel, peculiar *in this form*, and most of it *entirely* peculiar to St. Luke. At ch. xviii. 15 he again joins the narrative of St. Matthew and St. Mark, within a few verses of where he parted from them.

Respecting this portion, I will observe, without entangling myself in the harmonistic maze into which most of the interpreters have ventured, (1) that the whole of it is to be understood here as belonging to our Lord’s *last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem*; see below on ver. 51. (2) that evidently *that journey* was *not a direct one* (see ch. x. 1; xiii, 22, 31; xvii. 11; xviii. 31, and notes), either in *time*, or in the *road chosen*. (3) that in each of the two other Gospels there is a journey placed at this very time, described Matt. xix. 1, “*He departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judea beyond Jordan*,” and Mark x. 1, “*He arose from thence, and cometh into the borders of Judea by the farther side of Jordan*,”—which, in their narrative also, is *the last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem*. (4) that in John x. 22, we find our Lord at Jerusalem, at the feast of Dedication, in the winter (about the end of December), without however any hint as to *how or whence* He came there. (5) that the whole time between that feast and His Passion is spent thus:—After the attempt to stone Him, John x. 31, He retired to Bethany *beyond Jordan* (see John i. 28, corrected text); was summoned thence by the message from Martha and Mary to Bethany near Jerusalem, where He raised Lazarus;—again retired to Ephraim, somewhere beyond Jericho, on the borders of the desert;—six days before the passover came to Bethany, and the anointing took place, &c.; this whole time being *three months* and a few days. (6) I believe then that we have obtained a *fixed critical point* in all the four Gospels for the last journey from Galilee, after which He never returned (in the flesh) thither again. And this last journey was *to the feast of Dedication*, or at all events brought Him in time for that feast (for it does not look like a journey specially *to a feast*) at Jerusalem. It was between the feast of tabernacles in John vii. 2, to which He went up privately (ib. ver. 10), and the occasion when we find Him in Solomon’s porch, John x. 22. (7) The three first Evangelists relate nothing of the being in Jerusalem at the feast of dedication, or *indeed at all, except at the last passover*. We therefore find in them nothing of the retirements to Bethany (*beyond Jordan*) and Ephraim; but the removal of our Lord from Galilee to the confines of Judæa through the parts beyond Jordan is *described as uninterrupted*. (8) We are now I believe in a situation to appreciate the view with which our Evangelist inserts this portion. He takes this journey, beginning its narrative at the very same place where the others do, as comprehending—as indeed in strict historical fact it did—the last solemn farewell to Galilee (ch. x. 13–15), the final resolve of our Lord to go up to Jerusalem (ix. 51), and,—which in its wider sense it did,—all the records which he possessed of

miracles and discourses between this time and the triumphal entry. (9) As to arranging or harmonizing the separate incidents contained in this portion, as the Evangelist himself has completely by his connecting words in many places *disclaimed* it (see ch. ix. 57; x. 1, 25, 38; xi. 1, 14; xii. 1; xiii. 1, 10, 22; xiv. 1, 25; xv. 1; xvii. 1, 5, 11, 20; xviii. 1, 9),—I do not suppose that we, at this distance of time, shall succeed in doing so. The separate difficulties will be treated of as they occur.

51.] The verb is not *past*, as A.V.—not, **when the time (days) was come (accomplished)**, but **as the days were being accomplished**: i.e. approaching their accomplishment.

his receiving up can have but one meaning; see Mark xvi. 19: Acts i. 2; ii. 22: 1 Tim. iii. 16: in all which places the verb belonging to this substantive is used in the original: **his assumption**, i.e. ascension into heaven.

He himself resumes the *subject*, not without some emphasis implying his own voluntary action.

set his face is a Hebrew way of speaking, implying determinate fixed purpose; see Isa. 1. 7, the sense of which, as prophetic of the Messiah going to his sufferings, seems to be referred to in this expression.

52.] messengers, who have been assumed without reason to have been James and John.

Samaritans] On the enmity of the Jews and Samaritans, see note, John iv. 9. The publicity now courted by our Lord is in remarkable contrast to His former avoidance of notice, and is a feature of the *close of His ministry*, giving rise to the accusation of ch. xxiii. 5.

to make ready for him must mean something more, surely, than to provide board and lodging; there is a solemnity about the sentence which forbids that supposition. It must have been to announce the coming of Jesus as the Messiah, which He did not conceal in Samaria as in Judæa and Galilee, see John iv. 26; and the refusal of the Samaritans must have been grounded on the jealousy excited by the preference shewn for the Jewish rites and metropolis. *They expected that the Messiah would have confirmed their anti-Jewish rites and Gerizim temple, instead of going up solemnly to Jerusalem, and thereby condemning them.*

54.] The disciples whom He named ‘sons of thunder,’ Mark iii. 17. They *saw* some insult of manner, or actual refusal to allow the Lord to enter their village. That a collision of this kind did take place, is plain from the last verse, and implied from the occasion alluded to by the two Apostles, where the fire was invoked in the presence of the offending persons. *It happened also in Samaria.*

fire, not *lightning*, but *fire*, as in the passage alluded to, and in 1 Kings xviii. 38.

It is exceedingly difficult (see margin) to determine the true reading in this passage, which seems to have been more than usually tampered with, or wrongly written. In this great uncertainty, I have thought the candid way is to let my edited text reflect such uncertainty, and I have therefore printed these latter debateable words in the same type as the text, and have annotated on them.

55.] Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of] Besides the *mistaken* ways of explaining these words of our Lord (e. g. ‘*Do not see what a [bad] spirit you are shewing?*’) there are two senses which they *may* bear. (1) Affirmative, as in A.V.—“Ye think ye are influenced by the same spirit as once influenced Elias... but ye are in error. Ye have indeed a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; the offspring of human partiality, not of divine inspiration,” Grotius; or (2) interrogative—‘*Know ye not what manner of spirit ye, belong to (are of)?*’ the spirit meant being the Holy Spirit. ‘The Spirit in Elias was a fiery and judicial spirit, as befitted the times and the character of God’s dealings then; but the Spirit in Me and mine is of a different kind—a spirit of love and forgiveness,’

The latter of these is perhaps better suited to the context; but the former is more according to the usage of the expression **Ye know (not)** in the gospels: see note in my Greek Testament. I have therefore punctuated according to the former sense: which, indeed, seems more naturally followed by the **for** of the clause following.

it is very interesting to remember that this same John came down to Samaria (Acts viii. 14–17) with Peter, to confer the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Samaritan believers.

57–62.] St. Matthew (viii. 19–22) relates the contents of vv. 57–60, but at a totally different period of our Lord’s ministry, viz. His crossing the lake to go to Gerasa. It is quite impossible to decide which Evangelist has placed the incidents in their proper chronological place. When we once begin to speculate on such things, it is easy to find a fitness, on whichever side of the argument we range ourselves. Only (see notes on Matthew) we must not adopt the wretched subterfuge of the harmonists, and maintain that the two events took place *twice, each time consecutively, and each time with the same reply from our Lord.*

57, 58.] See notes on Matthew.

59. Follow me] This command is *implied* in Matthew, where the reply is, as here, “*Lord, suffer me first*”... which words could hardly be spoken without a reference in the “*first*” to it.

60.] go thou and preach (literally, disseminate, go about announcing) **the kingdom of God** is peculiar to Luke, and shews the independence of his source of information. Am I wrong in supposing also, that it connects this incident with the sending out of the Seventy, which follows immediately afterwards?

61, 62.] Peculiar to Luke. The answer of our Lord again seems to refer to the sending out into the harvest (ch. x. 2), for which the present Seventy were as it were the ploughmen, first breaking up the ground. The saying itself is to be explained simply from agricultural operations—for he who has his hand on the plough, guiding it, must look on the furrow which his share is making—if he look behind, his work will be marred.

serviceable, not ‘*fit*,’ but **well adapted**, ‘the right sort of workman.’ The sense is more immediately applicable to the *ministry* of the Gospel of Christ, which will least of all things bear a divided service and backward looks,—but of course affects also every private Christian, inasmuch as he too has a work to do—ground to break, and a harvest to reap.

Luke: Chapter 10

CHAP. X. 1-16.] MISSION OF THE SEVENTY. It is well that St. Luke has given us also the sending of *the Twelve*:—or we should have had some of the Commentators asserting that this was *the same* mission. The discourse addressed to the Seventy is in substance the same as that to the Twelve, as the similarity of their errand would lead us to suppose it would be. But there is this weighty difference. The discourse in Matt. x. in its three great divisions (see notes there), speaks plainly of an office founded, and a ministry appointed, which was to involve a work, and embrace consequences, *co-extensive*, both in space and duration, *with the world*. Here we have *no such prospective view* unfolded. The whole discourse is confined to the *first division* there (vv. 1-15), and relates entirely to *present duties*.

Their sending out was not to prove and strengthen their own faith,—but to prepare the way for this solemn journey of the Lord, the object of which was the announcement of the near approach of the kingdom of God,—and the termination of it, the last events at Jerusalem. Their mission being thus temporary, and expiring with their return, it is not to be wondered at that we *hear nothing of them in the Acts*. This last is surely an absurd objection to bring against the historic truth of their mission, seeing that the Acts are written by *this same Evangelist*, and the omission is therefore an argument *for*, and not against, that truth.

The words should not be rendered, as in A.V., ‘*other seventy also*,’ but as in margin, **others also, seventy in number**, see ch. xxiii. 32. The **others** may refer, either to the Twelve, ch. ix. 1, or perhaps, from the similarity of their mission, to the *messengers* in ch. ix. 52. But perhaps the first is more probably, from the similarity of the discourses.

The number of seventy might perhaps have reference to the *seventy elders* of Israel, Exod. xxiv. 1; Numb. xi. 16:—all sorts of fanciful analogies have been found out and insisted on (and moreover forced into the text), which are not worth recounting.

2.] See Matt. ix. 37 and notes.

3, 4.] The time was now one of greater danger than at the mission of the Twelve; therefore ver. 3 is bound immediately up with their *present sending*, whereas in Matt. x. 16 it regards a time yet distant in the future; also one requiring greater haste,—which accounts for the addition, **salute no man by the way**. These reasons also account for *merely the healing the sick* being enjoined, ver. 9.

6.] the son of peace: i.e. persons receptive of your message of peace;—see reff.

7-12.] See on Matt. x. 11-15. The particular directions here are different.

7.] in the (that) house itself (see ver. 5, where it was last spoken of, the *inhabitants* having been since mentioned) **remain**. Beware of rendering it *in the same house*, as A.V., which the original will not admit.

9.] The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you is a later announcement than generally, “*the kingdom of God is at hand*,” Matt. x. 7.

13.] In these words, which our Lord had uttered before (Matt. xi. 21 ff.), He takes His solemn farewell of the cities where the greatest number of His miracles had been done, and discourses uttered: they being awful examples of **that city** just described.

16.] See Matt. x. 40 and notes.

17-24.] RETURN OF THE SEVENTY. As in ch. ix. 6-10, St. Luke attaches the return of the Seventy very closely to their mission. They probably were not many days absent. They say nothing of the reception of their message,—or it is not brought out in the Gospel, as not immediately belonging to the great central object of narration; they rejoice that more power seems to be granted to them than even His words promised, seeing that He commissioned them only to heal the sick, not to cast out devils, as He did the Apostles, ch. ix. 1. That this was a ground of joy not to be *prominently brought forward*, is the purport of our Lord's answer; the whole of which as far as ver. 24 inclusive is in the strictest connexion, and full of most weighty and deep truth.

17.] The fact that it was **in thy name** is perhaps too much lost sight of in the words **unto us** here—the disciples rejoice in their own endowment, and the source of it is put into the background.

18.] We may understand these words in two ways: (1) we may say, that in this brief speech our Lord sums up *by anticipation*, as so often in the discourses in John, the whole great conflict with and defeat of the power of evil, from the first, even till accomplished by His own victory. The words, **I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven**, refer to the original fall of Satan, when he lost his place as an angel of light, not keeping his first estate; which fall however had been proceeding ever since step by step, and shall do so, till all things be put under the feet of Jesus, who was made lower than the angels. And this **I beheld** belongs to the period before the foundation of the world when He abode in the bosom of the Father. He is to be (see ver. 22) the great Victor over the Adversary, and this victory when Satan fell from heaven. At the same time it may be doubted whether it is not (2) grammatically more correct, to refer the imperfect tense, **I beheld, was beholding**, to the time just past,—to the Lord's prophetic sight at the time of the ministering of the Seventy. If this view be correct, the words do not refer to any "*triumph just gained*," but to the Lord's glorious anticipations of final triumph, felt during the exercise of power by His servants.

as lightning] Not the suddenness only of the fall, but the brightness of the fallen Angel is thus set forth. The description is not figurative, but literal; i. e., as far as divine words can be said to be literal, being accommodated to our sensuous conceptions. See on this verse, Isa. xiv. 9-15, to which the words have a reference; and Rev. xii. 7-12.

19.] Our Lord here,—including all the evil and poison in nature in the **power of the enemy**,—from the power given Him over that enemy, asserts the gift to them, extended afterwards to all believers (Mark xvi. 18), of authority to ‘bruise the head of the serpent’ (Gen. iii. 15). There is an evident allusion to Ps. xci. 13.

20.] The connexion is—‘seeing that the power Which I grant to you is so large, arising from my victory over the enemy,—make not one particular department of it your cause of joy, nor indeed the *mere subjection of evil to you at all*—but this,—the positive and infinite side of God's mercy and goodness to you, that He hath placed you among His redeemed ones.’

the spirits is something different from **the devils (daemons)** in those words above, and denotes a wider range of influence—*influence over spirit for good*—whereby the “*spiritual things of wickedness*” (so literally in Eph. vi. 12) are subjected to the believers in Christ.

written in heaven is an expression in various forms frequent in Scripture, and is opposed to “*written in earth*,” Jer. xvii. 13, said of the rebellious. But no immutable predestination is asserted by it;—in the very first place where it occurs, Exod. xxxii. 32, 33, the contrary is implied:—see Ps. lxix. 28; Isa. iv. 3; Dan. xii. 1; Phil. iv. 3; Heb. xii. 23; Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xx. 12, 15. The words **your names** seem to be a reference to **in thy name** above, which perhaps was with them a *medium of self-praise*, as so often with Christians, Our Lord says, ‘the true cause of joy for you is, not the power shewn forth by or in you *in My Name*, but that you, *your names*, are in the book of life’—as testified by the *Spirit* which “*beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God*,” Rom. viii. 16. And this brings us to ver. 21, where our Lord rejoices in the revelation of these things even to the babes of the earth by the will and pleasure of the Father:—*these things*—not, the power over the enemy—but all that is implied in **written in heaven**.

This, which is the true cause of joy to the believer, causes even the Saviour Himself to triumph, anticipating Isa. liii. 11.

21.] The words **the holy**, before **spirit**, cannot well be excluded from the text; the expression as thus standing, is alone in the New Testament, but is agreeable to the analogy of Scripture: compare Rom. i. 4; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 18: see also Rom. xiv. 17: 1 Thess. i. 6.

The ascription of praise, and the verses following, are here *in the very closest connexion*, and it is perfectly unimaginable that

they should have been inserted in this place arbitrarily. The same has been said of their occurrence in Matt. xi. 25; and, from no love of harmonizing or escaping difficulties, but from a deep feeling of the inner spirit of both discourses, I am convinced that our Lord did utter, *on the two separate occasions*, these weighty words; and I find in them a most instructive instance of the way in which such central sayings were repeated by Him. It was not a *rejoicing* before (in Matthew), but *only a confession*: compare the whole discourse and notes. That the introductory words **in that hour**, or “*at that time*,” may have been introduced from one passage into the other, and perhaps by some one who imagined them the same, I would willingly grant, if needful; not that, in the presence of such truths, such a trifle is worth mention, but that the shallow school of modern critics *do mention*, and *rest upon* such. On vv. 21, 22, see notes on Matt. xi. 25–27, observing here the gradual narrowing of the circle to which our Lord addresses himself, ver. 22 (margin),—then ver. 23 the same, with **privately** added.

23.] This verse should not be marked off from ver. 22 by a new paragraph, as is done in the A.V.: much less, as in the Gospel for the 13th Sunday after Trinity, joined with what follows: except perhaps that the lesson taught us by its occurring there is an appropriate one, as shewing us how the *grace of Christian love*, which is the subject of the following parable, fulfils and abounds over, legal obedience. It is in connexion with the preceding, and comes as the conclusion after the thanksgiving in ver. 21. A similar saying of our Lord occurs Matt. xiii. 16, 17, but uttered altogether on a different occasion and in a different connexion.

24. prophets and kings] David united both these, also Solomon. There may be an especial reference to the affecting last words of David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1–5, which certainly are a prophecy of the Redeemer, and in which he says, ver. 5, “This is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow:”—see also Gen. xl ix. 18.

25–37.] QUESTION OF A LAWYER: THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN. Peculiar to Luke. As Stier remarks, it is well that St. Luke has related the other incident respecting an enquiry of the same kind, for the critics would be sure to have maintained that this incident was another report of Matt. xix. 16. Such clear cases as this should certainly teach us caution, in cases where *no such proof is given* of the independence of the different narratives: and should shew us that both questions addressed to our Lord, and answers from Him, were, as matter of fact, repeated.

See however a case to which this remark does not apply, ch. ix. 57 ff.

25.] No immediate sequence from ver. 24 is implied.

lawyer, a kind of scribe—“*a doctor of the law*,” ch. v. 17—whose especial office it was to teach the law, see Tit. iii. 13; “*one of the scribes*,” Mark xii. 28. There is no reason to suppose that the lawyer had any hostile intention towards Jesus,—rather perhaps a self-righteous spirit (see ver. 29), which wanted to see what this Teacher could inform *him, who knew so much already*. Thus it was a *tempting* or trying of Jesus, though not to *entangle* Him: for whatever had been the answer, this could hardly have followed.

what shall I do?] He doubtless expects to hear of *some great deed*; but our Lord refers him back to the Law of which he is a teacher.

26. how readest thou? A common rabbinical formula for eliciting a text of Scripture.

how? i.e. to what purport; so that the answer should contain a summary of his reading in the Law.

27.] The first part of this, together with Deut. xi. 13 ff., the Jews had written on their phylacteries, and recited night and morning: but not the second; so that the idea that Jesus *pointed* to the phylactery of the lawyer, will not hold.

Meyer thinks the man answered thus, because he had before heard our Lord cite these in connexion, and with an especial view to asking the question “*who is my neighbour?*” It may have been so;—but I should rather believe the same spirit with which he began, to have carried him on to this second question. The words **willing to justify Himself** seem to imply this; but see below.

29.] Meyer explains this: The questioner, having been by our Lord’s enquiry, “*how readest thou?*” himself thrown into the position of the answerer, yet, “*willing to justify himself*,” wishing to carry out the purpose with which he asked at first, and to cover what otherwise would be his shame at being answered by so simple a reply, and that his own,—asks, “*who is my neighbour?*”—I may observe that we need not take the whole of this explanation, but may well suppose that “*to justify himself*” may mean, ‘to get himself out of the difficulty:’ viz. by throwing on Jesus the definition of *one’s neighbour*, which was very narrowly and technically interpreted among the Jews, excluding Samaritans and Gentiles.

30.] answering, literally, taking him up,—implies that the question was made an occasion of *saying more than the mere answer*.

went down, both because Jerusalem was higher, and because ‘*to go up*’ is the usual phrase for journeying towards a metropolis.

from Jerusalem to Jericho, about 150 stadia (i. e. about 18 miles 6 furlongs) distant. The road through a wilderness (Josh. xvi. 1) which was notorious for the robberies committed there. “Arabs,... which race, given to habits of plunder, to this day infests the borders of Palestine, and lies in wait for travellers from Jerusalem to Jericho, as our Lord relates in the Gospel.” Jerome, Commentary on Jer. iii. 2. The same Father, who lived for many years in the neighbourhood, mentions that a part of the road was so infamous for murders, as to be called the red or bloody way, and that in his time there was a fort there garrisoned by Roman soldiers, to protect travellers.

fell among: i.e. they surrounded him.

stripped him, not merely of his clothing, but of all he had;—“*despoiled him*,” as the Vulgate renders it.

31.] Many priests journeyed this way, for Jericho was a priestly city; this man is perhaps represented as having been up to Jerusalem in the order of his course, and returning.

The Law and Prophets enjoined the act of mercy which this priest refused; see Exod. xxiii. 4, 5: Deut. xxii. 1–4; Isa. lviii. 7, not, it is true, *literally*,—and therefore he neglected it. He did not even go up to him to examine him, but passed by on the opposite side of the road.

32.] The Levite, the inferior minister of the law, did even worse; when he was at the place, he came and saw him;—came near, and then passed, as the other.

33–35.] The Samaritans were *entirely, not half*, Gentiles.

Why our Lord mentions the name here, see below.

had compassion] This was *the great difference* between the Samaritan and the others;—the actions which follow are but the expansion of this compassion.

oil and wine] These were usual remedies for wounds in the East; Galen, cited by Wetstein, prescribes thus for a wound in the head. “*Rub down the tenderest leaves of the olive,—pour in oil and red wine, and make a plaster:*”—see also Isa. i. 6.

on his own beast, thereby denying himself the use of it.

This is the only place where *an inn*, as we understand the word, *a house for reception of travellers kept by a host*, as distinguished from an empty caravan-serai, is mentioned. The Rabbinical writers frequently speak of such, but under a name adopted from this Greek word. Bleek remarks that this serves to shew, that there *were* such inns in, that neighbourhood, though certainly they were not frequent.

two denarii] Some see in this, *two days' wages*. See note on Matt. xx. 2.

36.] It will be observed that our Lord not only elicits the answer from the questioner himself, but that it comes in *an inverted form*. The lawyer had asked, *to whom* he was to understand himself obliged to fulfil the duties of neighbourhood? but the answer has for its subject *one who fulfilled them to another*. The reason of this is to be found,—partly in the relation of neighbourhood being *mutual*, so that if this man is my neighbour, I am his also;—but chiefly in the intention of our Lord to bring out a strong contrast, by putting the hated and despised Samaritan in the *active* place, and thus to reflect back the **likewise** more pointedly. “Observe, that the **was neighbour**; is literally **became neighbour**. The neighbour Jews became strangers, the stranger Samaritan became neighbour, to the wounded traveller. It is not place, but love, which makes neighbourhood.” Wordsworth.

37.] The lawyer does not answer—‘The Samaritan:’ he avoids this; but he cannot avoid it in conviction and matter of fact.

do thou likewise, i.e. ‘count all men thy neighbours, and love them as thyself.’

The student accustomed to look at all below the surface of Scripture, will not miss the meaning which lies behind this parable, and which—while disclaiming all fanciful allegorizing of the text—I do not hesitate to say that our Lord Himself had in view when He uttered it. All acts of charity and mercy done here below, are but fragments and derivatives of *that one great act of mercy which* the Saviour came on earth to perform. And as He took on Him the nature of us all, being ‘not ashamed to call us

brethren,' counting us all His kindred,—so it is but natural that in holding up a mirror (for such is a parable) of the truth in this matter of duty, we should see in it not only the present and prominent group, but also Himself and His act of mercy behind. And thus we shall not (in spite of the scoffs which are sure to beset such an interpretation, from the superficial school of critics) give up the interpretation of the Fathers and other divines, who see in this poor traveller, going from the heavenly to the accursed city (Joab. vi. 26: 1 Kings xvi. 34),—*the race of man, the Adam who fell*;—in the robbers and murderers, *him who was a murderer the beginning* (John viii. 44);—in the treatment of the traveller, the deep wounds and despoilment which we have inherited from the fall;—in the priest and the Levite passing by, the in-efficacy of the law and sacrifice to heal and clothe us: Gal. iii. 21 (Trench remarks that the Church, by joining the passage Gal. iii. 16–23 as Epistle, with this Parable as Gospel for the 13th Sunday after Trinity, has stamped this interpretation with her approval):—in the good Samaritan, Him of whom it was lately said, “Say we not well that *thou art a Samaritan*, and hast a devil?” (John viii. 48)—who came to *bind up the broken-hearted*, to give them the *oil of joy for mourning* (Isa. lxi. 1 ff.);—who *for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich*: who, though now gone from us, has left with us precious gifts, and charged His ministers to feed His lambs, promising them, when the chief Shepherd shall appear, a crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Pet. v. 2, 4). Further perhaps it is well not to go;—or, if we do, only in our own private meditations, where, if we have the great clue to such interpretations, *knowledge of Christ for ourselves*, and a *sound mind* under the guidance of His Spirit,—we shall not go far wrong. But minutely to allegorize, is to bring the sound spiritual interpretation into disrepute, and throw stumbling-blocks in the way of many, who might otherwise arrive at it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

one thing] Perhaps we should not express the two words more definitely, for fear of narrowing the wide sense in which are spoken. I can hardly doubt that our Lord, in the *first and most obvious* meaning indicated that simpler preparation would have been all that was needful, but the **many** leads to the **one**, and that to the **good part**, the “*one*” being the middle term of comparison between the *natural*

“*many*” and the *spiritual “good part.”* So that the whole will imply—only *within* the circle of Christ’s disciples, those who act from love (mistaken or otherwise) to Him—much as John vi. 27,—and will set before us the bread which perisheth on one hand, and that which endureth to everlasting life on the other. The **good portion** is the *one thing* which is needful—see John vi. 53,—the *feeding on the bread of life by faith*; which faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the *word of Christ*, which Mary was now receiving into her soul, and which (John vi. 54) shall never be taken away, but result in ever-lasting life.

The two types of character have ever been found in the Church; both, caring for Him, and for love to Him doing what they do: but the one busy and restless, anxious, and stirring; the other quiet and humble, content to sit at His feet and learn. We see here which of the two He praises. But on the other hand we must not derive any argument hence against an active Christian life of doing good: *this is*, in fact, to sit at His feet and learn—to take His yoke on us, and learn of Him. It is the bustling about the

many things of which there is no need, which is blamed; not the working out the fruits of the Spirit, which are needful, being parts themselves of the *good part*.

Luke: Chapter 11

CHAP. XI. 1–13.] JESUS TEACHES THE DISCIPLES TO PRAY. The locality and time of the following incident are alike indefinite. The only limits are those of the great journey which is the subject of this section. There is no reason for supposing this to be the *only occasion* on which the Lord delivered this prayer to His disciples. In the Sermon on the Mount, it stands in close connexion with what goes before;—and here also. In so weighty a summary of His teaching as that was, He was not likely, when speaking of prayer, to omit it;—when asked by His disciples to teach them to pray, He was not likely to depart from the form once given them. Such are ordinary probabilities, antecedent to every question affecting the two Gospels: and those critics who throw aside all such, are *far more prejudiced* in reality, than those who allow them full weight. “The peculiar and abridged form in Luke,” says Meyer, “is a proof that the apostolic Church did not use the Lord’s prayer as a form” Rather, we may say, a proof of the fidelity with which our Evangelist reproduced his original not correcting them, as others after him did, to suit the forms most probably in use. If the apostolic Church did not use the Lord’s Prayer as a form, —*when did its use begin*, which we find in every known Liturgy?

1.] as John also.... of this fact we know nothing beyond the allusion here.

2.] When ye pray say.... more definite than “*after this manner pray ye....*” in Matthew. On the prayer itself, see notes on Matt. vi. 9–13. The clauses printed in brackets in the text could hardly by any possibility have been *omitted* by any, had they ever formed a part of it. The shorter form, found in the Vatican, the most ancient of all our MSS., and in the recently published Sinaiitic MS., was the original one: then the copyists inserted the clauses which were not found here, taking them from St. Matthew. That this, and not the converse process, must have been the one followed, is evident to any one who considers the matter. Stier’s argument, that our text has not been conformed to Matthew, because the doxology has never been inserted here, seems to me to tend in quite another direction: the doxology was inserted *there*, because *that was form in general liturgical use, and not here, because this form was never used liturgically.* **3.] literally.... for that day’s need, or, for that day.**

4.] for we also.... expressed here more strongly than in Matthew, as the plea for the exercise of the divine forgiveness to us,—‘*for it is our own practice also to forgive:*’ but notice the difference—there is no **sin** in this second case, between man and man, only the ordinary business word of this world.

5.] Now follows a parable on continuing instant in prayer, of the same nature as that in ch. xviii. 2. ff. In both parables, the argument is that called à fortiori; ‘if *selfish man* can be won by prayer and importunity to give, and *unjust man* to do right, much more certainly shall the *bountiful* Lord bestow, and the *righteous* Lord do justice,’ Trench; who further remarks, that here intercessory prayer is the subject of the parable; there, *personal*. And, that we must remember that all reluctance on the part of God to answer our prayers is not real, but *apparent* only, and arises from deeper reasons working for our good: whereas the reluctance in these two parables is *real*, arising from selfishness and contempt of justice.

6. in his journey] In the East it was and is the custom to travel late at night, for coolness sake.

Why **three** loaves does not appear. I forbear to give the allegorical interpretations of the number, which abound: the significance of the *thing asked for*, see below on ver. 13.

7.] We have an interesting fragment of domestic life here given us. The door is ‘barred,’ not only ‘shut;’ there is the trouble of unbarring it: the *father* and *children* are in bed (observe how in all the parables which place the Father, or the Husband, before us, the *Mother*, or the *Bride*, *does not appear*); and he cannot (i. e. will not, *cannot* from being overcome by reluctance) rise and give to him.

8.] The word is too mildly rendered in the A.V. by ‘*importunity*.’ It should be, as in margin, **shamelessness**. It is presupposed here that the postulant goes on knocking and asking.

9.] What follows is in the closest connexion, and will not bear the idea that it is transferred here merely as being appropriate. The **asking, seeking, knocking**, all answer to the *features of the parable*.

10.] declares to us not merely a result observable here among men, (in which sense it is *not universally true*), but a *great law of our Father’s spiritual Kingdom*: a clause out of the eternal Covenant, which cannot be changed.

11–13.] Our Lord sets forth the certainty of our obtaining the Holy Spirit, (*the unspeakable gift*, in which all other *good gifts*

are included,) from our Father, by another ‘à fortiori’ argument, drawn from the love of earthly parents, so far less careful and tenderly wise than He is over His children.

For the rest, see notes on Matt. vii. 7 ff. The *egg* and *scorpion* are added here. The *serpent* and *scorpion* are the *positively mischievous*: the samples, ch. x. 19, of the “*power of the enemy*”—the *stone*, that which is simply *unfit for food*. So that God’s answers to our prayers consist of neither useless nor mischievous things, but of His best gift—His Holy Spirit—in all the various and fitting manifestations of His guidance, and consolation, and teaching, in our lives. This is (because this takes of and imparts to us by leading us continually to Him who is) the “*bread*” of the parable;—the “*father of the family*” is the **Father from Heaven**, with whom however the night is as the day, who never slumbers nor sleeps. It has been noticed how by the hungry traveller coming to the man, may be imported, in the depth of the parable, the awakening in a man’s own soul (which is so precious to him) of that hunger which he has nothing to satisfy, and which none but God can satisfy. The reader may, as in the foregoing parable, follow out this clue for himself (provided it be done soberly) with much interest and profit.

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

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

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

15. some of them] No inference can here be drawn that these persons were not Pharisees (as Greswell has done), and consequently that the charge proceeded from a different quarter.

16.] This is not mentioned *here* by St. Matthew, but further on in the discourse, ver. 38. No distinction can be drawn, as Greswell has done, for the purpose of maintaining that the two incidents were distinct, between “*a sign*” and “*a sign heaven*:” for (1) our Lord answers the demand in both places by *the same reply*, the sign of Jonas; see also Matt. xvi 1–4; and (2) the ordinary Jewish idea attached to *a sign* would imply *from heaven*: see notes on Matt. xvi. 1.

17.] knowing their thoughts: so Matthew also, ver. 25.

20.] with the finger of God] “*by the Spirit of God*,” Matthew. No distinction can be established, as Greswell attempts. The one expression explains the other. What was done (Hebraistically speaking) by the *finger* of God, was done by the Spirit of God. We have much greater variations than this in sayings demonstrably the same.

21.] This parabolic sentence is in close connexion with many prophetic sayings, Isa. xl. 10 marg., liii. 12, and most pointedly Isa. xlix. 24, 25. It will be remembered that the Baptist called the Lord by this name, a stronger, or one who is mightier—placing after it, it is true, “*than I*,” but still using it as indicative of the Almighty of the Son of God, rather than in comparison with himself.

The strong man is the adversary, Satan; his palace this present world,—John xii. 81; xiv. 80; xvi. 11. His goods or tools, or spoils—are the *sons of men*,—2 Tim. ii, 26; 1 John v. 19 (margin). With these he is clothed and armed, or rather with their *evil capacities*, which he furnishes and brightens for his use: with this *whole armour of the devil*, compare by way of contrast, the

“whole armour of God,” Eph. vi. 11–20. Without these arms and tools he would be powerless: the evil one must have evil men—something receptive of evil—to work upon. But these the Stronger than he takes from him, and divides his spoils, Isa. lii. 12. He *divides his spoils*—turns to His own use and that of His followers all that good which the enemy had corrupted into evil.

The Stronger had already come into the strong man’s house—the the *Saviour*, into the world—and was robbing him of his captives, and making them into His own disciples—e. g. Mary Magdalene and others: but the work was not fully completed yet, till the Lord, by and in His death, overcame him that had the power of death, i.e. the devil. And that His great victory is still proceeding;—He is still taking from him one and another,—rescuing the sons of men by the power of His Gospel, till the end, when He shall (Rev. xx. 1 ff) bind him in the abyss; and though he be loosed for the final conflict by His sufferance, shall cast him overthrown into the lake of fire forever. Rev. xx. 14.

23.] See on Matthew, ver. 80.

24—26.] See on Matt. xii. 43.

27, 28.] This little but most instructive incident, here interposed, serves to shew the originality of St. Luke’s account, and that, whatever its *position* may be, it is *itself* of the highest authority. The woman apparently was influenced by nothing but common-place and unintelligent wonder at the sayings and doings of Jesus:—and she broke out, with true womanly feeling, into a blessing of the mother who bare such a wonderful Teacher. Such seems to be the account of the incident itself.

Our Lord’s reply is indeed wonderful:—

(1) In *reproof*. He corrects in her the unapprehensiveness of His word, which had caused her to go no further into the meaning of it than this ordinary eulogy imported,—and gives her an admonition how to profit better by it in the future.

(2) In *humility*. He disclaims all this kind of admiration, for his *humanity*: and says not ‘my word,’ but the word of God, which is in fact the same, but takes the view off from Him in His abasement, unto the Father who sent Him.

(3) In *truth*. He does not deny the honour hereby pronounced upon His mother, but beautifully turns it to its true side—viz. that which was given her long since—blessed is she that believed, ch. i. 45. Her blessedness consisted not so much in being His mother, as in her lowly and faithful observance of the word of the Lord spoken to her; see ch. ii. 19, 51. Nor again does He deny that to have borne Him was an honour—yes, rather:—‘yes, indeed, but.’

(4) In *prophetic discernment*. It will be seen that this answer cuts at the root of all worship of Mary, and shews us in what the true honour of that holy woman consisted,—in *faith* and *obedience*. As the mother of the Lord, she represents our human race, unto whom a child is born, a son is given; no *individual* exclusive honour is due to her, any more than to Cornelius, who was singled out from the Gentile world, and honoured by an angelic message relative to the divine purposes:—if she were, as there is every reason to conclude she was, a believer in her Son, *the Son of man*, she *bore Christ* in a far higher and more blessed sense than by being His mother in His humanity. And this honour may all believers in Him partake of with her; therefore the Lord says not “she that heareth...” but they that hear. The last and boldest perversion of these words of our Lord by Father Newman, viz., that He thus does but still further exalt her honour, in that, besides being His mother, she heard His word and kept it, need only be mentioned, to show the follies to which able men are abandoned, who once desert truth and simplicity.

29.] This is now in answer to those who sought of Him a sign from Heaven. When the multitude were gathering...perhaps in expectation, as He paused in His discourse, that the sign was now about to be shewn:—see notes on Matthew for the main subject.

Here we have one part of the sign of Jonas brought out, which is not touched on in Matthew, viz. his *preaching after his resurrection* to the Ninevites, announcing—for that would necessarily be involved in that preaching—the wonderful judgment of God in bringing him there,—and thus *making his own deliverance*, that he might *preach to them, a sign to that people*; which sign (ver. 32) they received, and repented;—but more than Jonas, a greater sign by far, this generation shall reject.

32.] Not ‘*a greater than Jonas*,’ or ‘*than Solomon*:’ but Jonah here is used as equivalent to *the sign of Jonah*,—so that more applies to Him who *is the sign* to this generation:—a sign, greater, both in its *actuality*, its *significance*, and its *consequences*. The *order*, here, seems to be for the sake of climax;—for the undervaluing and not appreciating His *wisdom*, will not lie so heavy on them in the judgment, as the *rejection of His preaching of repentance*.

33–36.] Our Lord goes on to speak of His teaching and miracles, which this generation despised, and demanded a sign from heaven in preference; He tells them that they will not see the significance of them, because they shut the eyes of their understanding, which should be the light of the soul;—this is set before them in a parable concerning the light of the body,

which is the outward eye. The sentences are repeated from the Sermon on the Mount, see Matt. v. 15; vi. 22 f. (where see notes on all that is common), and ch. viii. 16; but, as has been shewn, the truth shines from a different side of them here.

33.] a secret place—more properly, a crypt, or covered passage.

36.] It has been said of this verse by a very able expositor (De Wette) that it is “tautological: the second member contains the same assertion as the first.”—Let us examine this. ‘When thine eye is single (ver. 34),—i. e. simple,—straight and single-seeing,—thy whole body will be light.’ Then (ver. 36),—‘if this be so,—if thy whole body be light, having no part dark,—then it shall all be light as when a lamp with its brightness illuminates thee.’ Of what is our Lord speaking? Of *His teaching*, as apprehended by the simple, single-seeing soul. If then the soul be so,—having no part darkened by prejudice or selfish lusts, and approach thus to His teaching, it shall be wholly illuminated by it, as by the candle of the Lord, searching its inward parts. So this saying, which, even as it stands, is not tautological,—for the second clause expresses the further result and waxing onward of the shining light, arising from the singleness of the eye,—becomes, in its spiritual significance, a weighty declaration of truth, answering to ch. viii. 16:—see also John viii. 12.

37–54.] DISCOURSE AGAINST THE PHARISEES. There can be no antecedent improbability in the supposition that our Lord spoke on various occasions, and with various incidental references, the component parts of that great anti-pharisaic discourse contained in Matt. xxiii. *That was spoken* in the temple, during the last week of His ministry; it formed the *solemn close of His public teaching*,—and at the end of it He departed out of the temple to return no more. I do not think it possible to suppose any part of that discourse in Matthew to be related otherwise than in its true place; all probability is against such an idea,—and so is the character of the reports of discourses in that Gospel, in general so strictly coherent and exact. There is then but one supposition left, unless we suppose St. Luke to have put together at random a number of fragments, and to have inserted them here, *creating as occasion for them* (for it amounts to this), which is equally inconceivable. And that is, that our Lord *spoke at this meal*, the occasion being the wonder of the Pharisee at His not washing before sitting down to meat, *parts of that discourse*, with which He afterwards solemnly closed His public ministry. See throughout, notes on Matt. xxiii.

37. to dine] This meal, as also that in John xxi. 12, 15, was not what we now understand by *dinner*, an afternoon meal, but the first meal of the day, the breakfast or dejeuner in the prime of the morning. We may retain **dine** (indeed we have no other fitting word) provided we remember this.

38.] The expression of this wonder is not stated, but it is probable that it found expression in some open way. Our Lord would hardly have so suddenly begun, **ye Pharisees**, unless something had been *said*, to which by assent they were parties. See His proceeding when *nothing was said*,—ch. vii. 39, 40.

washed] literally **baptized**. This use of the word shews that it *did not imply necessarily immersion of the whole body*;—for it was only the hands which the Pharisees washed before meat.

39.] There is not the least improbability or incongruity in our Lord’s having thus spoken *as a guest at a meal* (as some of the German Commentators maintain);—His solemn work of reproof and teaching was never suspended out of mere compliment,—nor were the intentions of the Pharisees towards Him so friendly as these invitations seem to imply. They were given mostly from deference to popular opinion, and from no love to Him;—sometimes even with a directly hostile object. See vv. 53, 54, and compare also ch. vii. 44–46. Observe also, that the *severest parts* of the discourse in Matthew (vv. 13–22, 33) were not uttered on this occasion.

Now, i.e. as instanced by your present conduct—**Here is an instance of your, &c.**

the cup and the platter—understand, ‘in the proverb’—or perhaps the application is left to be enthymematically filled up, for the next clause presupposes it.

the outside and the inward part of a man, are not the outside and inside of the body—but the outside apparent *conduct*, and the inner unseen. *motives*.

Some difficulty has been found in the parallelism of **the outside of the cup and platter** and **your inward part**. But the fact is, that the parable and its interpretation are intermixed throughout the whole, the mind of the hearer being left to find its own way in allotting each its part.

40.] seems clearly to me to be a *question*, and to mean, as A.V., **Did not He, who made the outside, make the inside also?**—i. e. if His works have become unclean and polluted through sin, what is the use of *only partially* purging them,—not *accomplishing* the purgation?—must not the cleansing, to be good for any thing, *extend to the whole*? See, on a proposal otherwise to understand it, the note in my Greek Test.

41.] Many Commentators, from whom I am compelled entirely to differ, understand this as *ironical*—‘but ye give alms of their contents, and, behold, all things are clean (in your estimation) to you.’ But this would be altogether irrelevant to the matter in hand, which was reproof to the Pharisees for their care about outward cleanliness, when the inside was left unclean. It would also be altogether contrary to our Lord’s usual habit of speaking about giving alms, to make Him cast a slur on it, as this would do: see Mark x. 21; ch. xii. 33, where the expression is very similar to this.

The command is *a rebuke for their covetousness* (see ch. xvi. 14), which follows in close connexion with *ravening (plunder) and wickedness*, ver. 39.

such things as ye have (literally, **the things inside**) are the *contents of the vessel*, which vessel (ver. 39: see note above) is *the men themselves*: and is therefore equivalent in its meaning to that **ye have** of ch. xii. 33,—and the **all things are clean answers to the treasure in heaven** of that verse, the *result* of which is the “*heart in heaven*.” and such persons being **pure in heart**,—to them, as *to the pure, all things are pure* (Titus i. 15).

42.] **But woe unto you**, for ye do not this,—but make the most trifling payments, &c. The connexion, which is thus so close, is quite destroyed by the *ironical* interpretation of ver. 41. See note on Matt. xxiii. 23.

43.] Matt. xxiii. 6, 7. There doubtless was ample illustration of this at the time and place when it was spoken.

44.] See Matthew, ver. 27;—but here the point of comparison is different. *There* (see note) *the sepulchres are whited, that men may not pass over them unawares*: and the comparison is to the outside fairness, and inside abomination. *Here*, the graves are not seen, and men thinking they are walking on clean ground are defiled by passing over them. Perhaps the difference of expression may have been occasioned by the greater wealth and splendour and display of the Pharisees in *the metropolis*, where Matt. xxiii. was spoken.

45.] This man appears to have been not a common Pharisee merely, but besides, a **lawyer**, whose duty it especially was to interpret the law. Perhaps he found himself involved in the censure of ver. 42; or generally among the other Pharisees.

46.] See on Matthew, ver. 4

47.] See on Matthew, vv. 29–32.

48.] See on Matthew, vv. 34–36.

We have here a remarkable variation of expression in ver. 49, **the wisdom of God said is** expressed by “*I*” in Matthew. Various explanations have been given of this. The difficulty is not the variation just noticed, so much as that *no such passage* exists in the O.T. But I have little doubt that the true explanation is this:—*the whole saying* is a reference to 2 Chron. xxiv. 18–22, and so marked a one, that I am surprised that no Commentators but Olahausen and Stier should have observed it, and they not thoroughly. That passage opens with remarks of the sacred historian on the delinquency of Judah and Jerusalem after the death of Jehoiada the priest: then ver. 19, ‘*He sent prophets to them, to bring them again to the Lord: and they testified against them: but they would not give ear. And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them...And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord...And when he died, he said, The Lord look upon it, and require it.*’ The words in our text are not indeed a citation, but an *amplification* of ver. 19 there—a paraphrase of them, giving the true sense of what the wisdom of God intended by them;—enlarging the mere historical notice which laid hold of God’s purpose only by one thread let down to the earth, into the *divine revelation of the whole purpose* of God as the counsel of His will in heaven. In Matthew, the Lord: *Jesus Himself*, as became the solemnity of that final and awful close of His testimony to His own who received Him not, stands forth as the doer of this work, the sender of the Prophets and Apostles. (On ‘*son of Barachias*, see on Matthew, ver. 35.)

52. **ye took away the key of knowledge**] “*Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men*,” Matthew, ver. 13, which words are the best explanation of our text:—**the key of knowledge** (i. e. not of, as *admitting to*, knowledge—but the key *is* the knowledge), being that right understanding of the Law and Prophets, which should shew Him to the people, of whom they testified; this the expounders of Scripture had taken away, neither themselves entering, nor permitting those to enter who were otherwise doing so,—and thus shutting the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces.

Luke: Chapter 12

CHAP. XII. 1–12.] WARNING AGAINST HYPOCRISY. A discourse spoken immediately or very soon after the former, and in connexion with it;—consisting for the most part of sayings repeated from other occasions, and found nearly verbatim in

Matthew. It is impossible that there should be any reasonable doubt of this view, when we remember that some of them have appeared before, or appear again, in this very Gospel.

While our Lord was in the house of the Pharisee, the multitudes appear to have assembled together again. If so, in the **mean time**, or **during which things**, will mean while those related above were happening.

He comes forth to them (ch. xi. 53) in the spirit of the discourse which He has just completed, and cautions His disciples against that part of the character of the Pharisees which was most dangerous to *them*. The connexion of these twelve verses may be thus enunciated:—*Beware of hypocrisy* (ver. 1), *for all shall be made evident in the end* (ver. 2), and *ye are witnesses and sharers in this unfolding of the truth* (ver. 3). *I n this your work, ye need not fear men; for your Father has you in His keeping* (vv. 4–7)—and *the confession of my name is a glorious thing* (ver. 8), *but the rejection of it* (ver. 9), and especially *the ascription of my works to the evil one* (ver. 10), *a fearful one. And in this confession ye shall be helped by the Holy Spirit in the hour of need* (vv. 11, 12).

4.] my friends: see John xv. 13–15.

10.] See on Matt. xii. 31.

11, 12.] See on Matt. x. 19, 20.

13–21.] ANSWER TO ONE WHO SOUGHT A DIVISION OF HIS INHERITANCE. Peculiar to Luke.

13.] The man was evidently *not a disciple*, nor preparing to be one, but *some hearer in the crowd*, whose mind had been working in him during our Lord's last sayings about the care of Providence for His friends, and he thought this was *just the care his circumstances wanted*; being, as appears, oppressed by his brother in the matter of his patrimony. Possibly too he had an idea that the Messias, or the great Rabbi to whom he was listening, was come to set all things right;—and with that feeling which we all have of the surpassing injustice of *our own wrongs*, broke out with this inopportune request.

14.] Man... a word of solemn reproof; see Rom. ii. 1; ix. 20. The **man** also forms a definite subject for you to refer to,... ‘men,’ i.e. mankind in general. This question is expressed in almost the very words of the Egyptian rejecting the arbitration of Moses, Exod. ii. 14;—and may shew us the essential difference of the two offices of Moses and Christ.

15.] them. i.e. the multitude. He saw into the covetousness of the man's disposition, and made it an instructive warning for His hearers.

all covetousness] There is a meaning in **all—every kind of covetousness**. *This kind*, of which they had an example before them, was by no means one of the worst; but **all** kinds must be avoided.

not, because a man hath abundance, doth his life (therefore) **consist in the things which he posseseth**. That is, **no man's life consists in what he posseseth**; (“*man shall not live by bread alone*”)... **nor by his not having abundance, can this be made to be the case**. Man's life is of *God*, not of *his goods*, *however abundant they may be*. And this is the lesson conveyed by the following parable, and lying at the foundation of the still higher lesson conveyed in ver. 21.

The word **life** is used in the pregnant sense, emphatically **his life**; including time and eternity. This is self-evident the parable and its application.

16.] Our Lord in this parable sets before us one arrived at the very height of worldly prosperity, and that by no unfair means; but, as Augustine says, “not by removing landmarks, not by robbing the poor, not by overreaching the simple.” It was *by God's blessing* that he made thus rich, which might have been a *real* blessing, if he had known how to use it.

17.] “The character of a mind at ease without being at rest is admirably expressed,” Bengel.

I have no room where to bestow my fruits] “Thou hast barns—the bosoms of the poor, the houses of widows, the mouths of infants.... these are the barns which will last for ever.” Ambrose.

18.] “His folly is *fourfold*:—he forgets the Giver, (‘*my fruits, my goods,*’)—he greedily reserves all for *himself*,—he imagines such things to be food for his *soul*—he forgets *death*, which is every day possible.” Stier. A very striking similarity is found in Ecclesiasticus xi. 18, 19, “There is that waxeth rich by his wariness and pinching, and this is the portion of his reward: whereas he saith, I have found rest, and now will eat continually of my goods: and yet he knoweth not what time shall come upon him, and that he must leave these things to others, and die.” Stier thinks this a convincing proof that our Lord did occasionally refer to the Apocrypha.

20.] God said unto him,—perhaps it is meant, by some unmistakeable judgment; but more likely, as occurring in a parable, the words are to be literally taken. By supposing merely a *divine decree* to be meant, *without personal communication*, as Grotius, Kuinoel, and Trench do, we lose the impressive part of the parable, where the man's selfishness and folly is brought into immediate contact with the solemn truth of his approaching death, which certainly our Lord intends us to contemplate.

Thou fool, opposed to his *worldly prudence*;—**this night**, to the

many years;—the **soul** in the one case, at its ease, eating, drinking, and making merry, to the **soul** in the other, demanded, rendered up, judged.

they require thy soul] Not strictly equivalent to “*Thy soul shall be required*,” as A.V.; there are those whose business it is, even *the angels*, the ministers of the divine purposes: see ch. vi. 38 and note. The merely impersonal sense may be defended: but this saying seems so solemn, as to require something more.

which thou hast provided; or, **madest ready**; but *not for thyself*.

21.] So: so, in utter confusion, and sudden destitution of all help and provision for eternity. **for himself... toward God...**] The meaning of these expressions will be brought out thus: He who is rich *for himself*, laying up treasure *for himself*, is by so much robbing his real inward life, his life in and toward God, of its resources: he is laying up store for, providing for, the *flesh*; but the *spirit*, that which God looketh into and searcheth, is stripped of all its riches.

These words may also, as remarked on ch. vi. 20, shew that St. Luke does not, as supposed by some recent critics, use ‘riches’ as merely *this world’s wealth*, but with a deeper spiritual meaning.

22–31.] LESSONS OF TRUST IN GOD. In the closest connexion with the preceding;—**Therefore...** since worldly riches are of so little real use, &c.: see Matt. vi. 25–33, and notes.

24.] the ravens, who are elsewhere spoken of in Scripture as the objects of the divine care: see Job xxxviii. 41, Ps. cxlvii. 9.

26.] that thing which is least: this shews the truth of the interpretation *age* (not “*stature*”) given in the note on Matthew. A *cubit* would not be *the least of things* to add to the stature, but a very large increase: whereas, as Trench observes, “a cubit would be infinitesimally small when compared to his length of life, that life being contemplated as a *course*, or *race*, which he may attempt, but ineffectually, to prolong.”

32–34.] Our Lord gives to his own disciples an assurance of the Father’s favour as a ground for removing all fear from them, and shews them the true riches, and how to seek them.

32. little flock] Thus He sets himself forth as their Shepherd (John x. 1 ff.), and them (as in Isa. xli. 10–14) as a weak and despised people.

33.] Meyer endeavours to evade the force this, by supposing it addressed only to the Apostles and then existing disciples. But it is said to the *little flock*, who are *all the elect people of God*.

Sell that ye have,&c.] This is the true way of in-vesting worldly wealth:—‘He that giveth

to the poor, lendeth to the Lord.’ See on Matt. vi. 19–21.

35–48.] EXHORTATIONS TO WATCHFULNESS. The attitude and employment of the *little flock* is carried on, even to their duty of continual readiness for their Lord’s coming. These verses are connected with ver. 32—‘since your Father hath seen fit to give you the kingdom, be that kingdom, and preparation for it, your chief care.’ There are continual *points* of similarity, in this part of the discourse, to Matt. xxiv. 42 ff., but *no more*: and the close connexion quite forbids us to imagine that the sayings have been collected merely by the Evangelist.

35.] There is a slight reference to, or rather another presentation of the truth set forth in, the parable of the virgins, Matt. xxv. 1 ff. But the image here is of servants waiting for their lord to *return from the wedding*;—left at home, and bound to be in readiness to receive him. There is only a hint at the cause of his absence—He is gone to a wedding: the word used may mean almost any feast or entertainment—and the *main* thought here only is that He is away at a feast, and will return. But in the background lies the *wedding* in all its truth—not brought out here, but elsewhere, Matt. xxii 1 ff.; xxv. 1 ff.

Let your loins be girded] See John xiii. 4.

your lights] See note on Matt. xxv. 1.

36.] ye yourselves, i.e. your whole conduct and demeanour.

37.] See Rev. iii. 20, 21, where the same similitude is presented, and the promise carried on yet further,—to the *sharing of his Throne*. The Lord Himself, in that great day of his glory,—the marriage-supper of the Lamb,—will invert the order of human requirements (see ch. xvii. 8), and in the fulness of his grace and love will serve his brethren:—the Redeemer, his redeemed, —the Shepherd, his flock.

come forth] more probably is the allusion to His *coming*

in turn to each. Compare the washing of the disciples' feet in John xiii. 1 ff., which was a foreshewing of this last great act of self-abasing love.

33.] Olshausen observes that the *first* watch is not named, because the marriage itself falls on it: but his view that because the *fourth* is not named, our Lord follows the ancient custom of the Jews and divides the night into three watches, is probably incorrect: it is more likely (Meyer) that the fourth is not named, because the return was not likely to be so long delayed;—for the *decorum* of the parable.

39.] I am surprised that it should have been imagined that this verse has been inserted so as to break the connexion, and by a later hand. Nothing can be more exact and rigid than the connexion as it now stands. Our Lord transfers, to shew the unexpected nature of his coming, and the necessity of watchfulness, the relation between *Himself* and the *servants*, to that between the *thief* and the **master of the house**. For the purposes of this verse, *they* represent the master of the house—collectively, as put in charge with the Lord's house and household (thus the verse is intimately connected with ver. 42):—and in the further application, individually—each as the householder of his own trust, he kept with watchfulness against that day: —*He* is represented by the thief—Rev. xvi. 15; iii. 3. Olshausen's view, that the **master of the house** is the “*prince of this world*,” is surely quite out of keeping with the main features of the parable. That *he* should be put in the place of the watching servants seems impossible: “besides that the **faithful steward** below is this very “*master of the house*,” being such in the absence of his Lord, but the **steward** when He appears.

41.] this parable; not, the two verses, but *the whole*:—‘Who are they that are thus to wait and watch, and to be thus honoured at the Lord's coming?’ This question coming in so suddenly and unconnectedly and remaining apparently unanswered, is among the many proofs of the originality and historic reality of this discourse.

42 ff.] Our Lord does not answer the question directly, but proceeds with His discourse, so as to furnish it with an answer;—viz. that in its highest sense it applies to his Apostles and ministers, inasmuch as to them most has been given as the *stewards*—but that its application is gradually downwards through all those who know their Master's will, even to the lowest, whose measure both of responsibility and of reward is more limited. For the comment on vv. 42–46 see on Matt. xxiv. 45–51. Notice that **unbelievers** here is “*hypocrites*” in Matthew.

47, 48.] *Primarily*, in reference to the question in ver. 41. Those **which knew** represent **us**, the disciples: those **that knew not** represent **all**, the multitude:—but the application is not limited to this: the truth is one of universal extent.

prepared not—we must not supply, “*himself*,” as A.V., but **matters**, according to his will: “*prepared*,” almost in the absolute sense of ‘making ready’:—it refers back to the “*be ye ready*” of ver. 40; this readiness being not only preparing *himself*, but the matters over which he has charge, ver. 35. There is reference to Deut. xxv. 2.

But he that knew not] The case is of one (a disciple in the *Sed* reference, but then generally of all men) who bona fide is ignorant of his Lord's will. That such persons *shall be punished*, is both the sentence of the **law**, see Levit. v. 17–19, and an inference from the truth set forth ver. 57, and Rom. i. 19, 20, 32; ii. 14, 15,—that the *natural conscience* would have prevented the **not doing**. (Observe that the two classes, *not included here*, are “*he that knew and did*,” and “*he that knew not and did*,” as far as that can be said [see Rom. ii. 14];—the reference *here* being only to the **did not** in both cases, or rather to the “*did not*” in the first case and its equivalent “*did things worthy of stripes*” in the second.) But the difficulty seems to be to assign a *spiritual meaning* to the words, **shall be beaten with few stripes**. *That such will ES the case*, would *à priori* be consonant to the justice of the Judge of all the earth: and we have it here declared, that *it shall*

be so: but *how*, is not revealed to us. It is in vain for the sinner to encourage himself in sin from such a declaration as this: for the very knowledge of the declaration excludes him from the exemption. “Our ears have heard the voice divine; We cannot be as they.” (Christian Year.)

much is given.... shall be much required] The second **much** is not the **much** that has been given, but a proportionable amount of result of diligence, a **much** which he is to render.

more] perhaps, *more than from others*: but more likely *more than had been deposited with him*, viz. that, and the interest of it;—see Matt. xxv. 15 ff.

49–53.] The connexion appears to be this:—the immense and awful difference between the faithful and unfaithful servants brings our Lord to the *ground* of that difference, and its necessary development in the progress of His kingdom on earth.

49. fire] It is extraordinary that the official announcement of the Baptist (ch. iii. 16)—“*He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*”—connected with the mention of a baptism here,—with the promise Acts i. 5, and the appearance Acts ii. 3, so strikingly expressed as “*cloven (divided, the very same word in the original) tongues as of fire*”—have not kept the Commentators in general (Bleek is an exception) from falling into the blunder of imagining here that the *fire* is synonymous with, and means no more than, the *discord* and *division* which follow. The fire is, *the gift of the Holy Spirit*,—the great crowning result of the sufferings and triumph of the Lord Jesus. To follow this out in all its references belongs to another place:—see notes on Mark ix. 49, and Acts ii. 3. This fire, in its purifying and separating effects on the mass of mankind, causes the **division** afterwards spoken of.

The *construction* of the latter words in this verse has been ever a matter of dispute, while the *meaning* is on all hands nearly agreed. The three prevalent explanations of it are: (1) That adopted in margin, which is apparently Origen’s, **And what will I?**

would that it were already kindled! This abrupt ejaculation might seem unlike the usual character of our Lord’s discourses: but we have a similar question in John xii. 27, and under corresponding circumstances, of *His soul being troubled*. (2) **And how I wish that it were already kindled!** To this, which is adopted by Theophylact, and some distinguished moderns, chief objection is, that the words of the original will not bear it: see in my Greek Test. (3) That of Euthymius, Beza, and the A.V., **What will I, if it be already kindled?** i.e. “*What more do I await in the world, seeing that it is already kindled?*” But this presents a great difficulty as regards the context; for, by ver. 50, it evidently was not kindled: and even if this were overcome, the expression, evidently a *deep one of personal anxiety* (and be it remembered who said it), would be vapid and unmeaning in the extreme. All things then being considered, I prefer the *first* explanation.

50.] The symbolic nature of Baptism is here to be borne in mind. *Baptism* is equivalent to *Death*. The figure in the Sacrament is the *drowning*,—the *burial*, in the water, of the *old man* and the *resurrection* of the *new man*: see 1 Pet. iii. 20–22, and notes. *The Lord’s Baptism* was *His death*, in which the Body inherited from the first Adam was buried, and the new Body raised again: see Rom. vi. 1–11, but especially ver. 10. And He was **straitened** (the best possible rendering) till this was accomplished:—i. e. in anxiety and trouble of spirit. The **but** here implies **but first**, i.e. **before** that *fire* can be shed abroad. Here we have then, as Stier expresses it, a “*beginning of the passion*” of our Lord; the first utterance of that deep anguish, which afterwards broke forth so plentifully,—but coupled at the same time with holy zeal for the great work to be accomplished

51–53.] The work of *this fire*, as as it burns onward in the world, will not be peace, but division; see Mal. iii 2, 3, 18; iv. 1, where we have the separating effect of this fire in its completion at the great day: see also Matt. iii. 12.

On the passage itself, see notes on Matt. x. 35, 36.

54–59.] REPROACHES FOR BLINDNESS TO THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES. The connexion of this with the foregoing is natural and close. *From henceforth* (ver. 52), the distinction shall begin to be made;—the discord and division between those who discern *this time* (ver. 56) and those who do not. Our Lord then turns to the crowd (**also**). He not only said to the disciples the foregoing, but to the crowd the following), and reproaches them (1) for their *blindness*, in not being able to discern it, as they did the signs in the natural heavens; and (2) for their *want of prudence* (vv. 57–59), in not repenting and becoming reconciled to the law of God while yet there was time.

54.] There is a somewhat similar saying of our Lord at Matt. xvi. 2 ff., but differing both in its occasion and its substance.

the cloud,—that usually rises there; see 1 Kings xviii. 44. The west, in Judæa, would the direction of the sea.

56.] the face of the earth—perhaps referring to other signs of rain or heat from the appearance of the hills, &c.

this time] The signs of this time were very plain;—the sceptre had departed from Judah;—the general expectation of the coming of the Messiah is testified even by profane authors;—the prophets had all spoken of Him, and the greatest of them, the Baptist, had announced His arrival.

57.] In what follows, our Lord takes occasion from the *request about the inheritance*, which had begun this discourse, to pass to infinitely more solemn matters. There is, I think, no denying that the “*judging what is right*” and the “*thine adversary*” have a reference to that request, in the ability and duty of every man to ‘judge what is right’—but the sense of the words far outruns that reference, and treats of loftier things. ‘*Why do ye not discern of yourselves your true state—that which is just—the justice of your case as before God? You are going (the course of your life is the journey) with your adversary (the just and holy law of God) before the magistrate (God Himself); therefore by the way take pains to be delivered from Him (by repentance, and faith in the Son of God, see Ps. ii. 12), lest he drag thee to the judge (who adjudges the case and inflicts the fine; that is, the Son to whom all judgment is committed), and the judge deliver thee to the exactor (see Matt. xiii. 41), and the exactor cast thee into prison*’ (ditto, ver. 42).

59.] See on Matt. v. 25, and, on the word **mite**, Mark xii. 42.

Luke: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII. 1–9.] ANSWER TO INTELLIGENCE OF THE MURDERED GALILÆANS, AND PARABLE THEREUPON. Peculiar to Luke.

1.] The words **at that season** may mean **at that very time**—viz. as He finished the foregoing discourse: but it is not necessary to interpret thus;—for, Matt. xii. 1; xiv. 1, the similar expression is certainly *indefinite*.

The opening words do not mean, as A.V., that these persons *were in the crowd, and remarked to the Lord concerning these Galilæans*, in consequence of what He had said ch. xii. 57:—such a finding of connexion is too fine-drawn. It is obvious that no connexion is intended between this incident and the foregoing discourse.

the Galilæans] The historical fact is otherwise unknown. The way of speaking here shews that it was well known to the writer. It must have occurred at some feast in Jerusalem, on which occasions riots often took place, and in the outer court of the temple. Such slaughters were frequent, and would not be particularly recorded by the historians. This mingling of their blood with their sacrifices seems to have been thought by the narrators evidence that they were very depraved sinners: for this was their argument, and is unconsciously that of many at this day,—‘the worse the affliction, the more deserved’: see Gen. xlvi. 21: Acts xxviii. 4.

2.] Our Lord perceives this to be their reasoning—they did not *express* it, as is plain by the **suppose ye....** He does not deny that all the Galilæans were sinners, and deserved God’s judgments, but *that these were pre-eminently so*.

3. in like manner] The force of this is lost in the A.V., ‘*likewise*.’ It is strictly **in like manner**, as indeed the Jewish people did perish by the sword of the Romans.

4, 5.] Our Lord introduces this incident as shewing that whether the hand of man or (so-called) accidents, lead to inflictions of this kind, it is in fact but one Hand which doeth it all—Amos iii. 6. There is also a transference from the Galilæans—a despised people—to the *inhabitants of Jerusalem*, on whom the fulness of God’s wrath was to be poured out in case of impenitence. Of the incident itself, or of the *tower in Siloam* (the word here meaning probably the *district* in which the fountain, John ix. 7, was situated,—though on the whole matter, and the situation of the fountain itself, there is considerable uncertainty), we know nothing. See also Neh. iii. 15.

debtors, i.e. *sinners*,—see Matt. vi. 12;—perhaps the same thought may be traced as pervading the saying, as in vv. 58, 59, of the last chapter. No such idea as that the tower was a *prison for debtors* is for a moment to be thought of.

See on **in like manner** above;—here, the similarity will be—in the ruin of your whole city: This does not render it necessary that these words should have been spoken to actual dwellers in Jerusalem: for nearly the whole nation was assembled there at the time of the siege.

6–9.] This Parable has perhaps been interpreted with hardly enough reference to its own peculiar context, or to the symbolic language of Scripture in other places. Ordinarily the owner of the vineyard is explained to be the *Eternal Father*: the dresser and intercessor, the *Son of God*: the fig-tree, the *whole Jewish people*: the vineyard, the *world*. But it may be objected to this, that the owner *comes* to seek the fruit, which can be properly said only of Him who “*came unto His own*”—who is even in Matthew “*the heir*”—and by implication there, the *possessor of the vineyard* “*whey he shall come*” (for that destruction He universally represents as *His coming*). The other objections will come out in the direct exposition of the Parable, which I take to be this:—The link which binds it to the foregoing is *Except ye repent...;* and it is addressed rather to individuals than to the whole nation—though of course to the whole nation as made up of individuals. The vineyard is not *the world*, which would be

wholly inconsistent with Scriptare symbolism (for Matt. xiii. 24 the comparison is to “*the kingdom of heaven*”—the *Gospel dispensation*, in which the field—not the vineyard—is the whole world); but, as in Isa. v. 7, *the house of Israel and the men of Judah* (see notes on Matt. xxi. 33 ff.). The fig-tree planted in the vineyard—among the vines—(a usual thing) denotes an individual application, fixing each man’s thought upon one tree—and that one, *himself*; just as the guest without the wedding-garment in Matt. xxii. He who had the tree planted in His vineyard (—‘All things that the Father hath, are Mine’—John xvi. 15), came seeking fruit, and found it not: see Matt. xxi. 19 and note. (The vine-dresser, see below.) He commands it to be cut down, as encumbering the soil (exhausting it, rendering it inactive); three years has He been coming and seeking fruit in this tree, and he findeth none. Then, at the intercession of the vine-dresser, He consents (for this is implied) to spare it this year also, until it been manured; if that fail, the Intercessor himself has no more plea to urge—it is to be cut down.

Now *who is this Intercessor?* First look at the matter of fact. *Who were the vinedressers of God’s vineyard?* They were many. Moses, the Prophets, the Baptist, the Lord Himself, the Apostles and Teachers after Him. But what *one Personality* might be set forth as pervading all these, ‘striving with man’ in them all—as being **the vine-dresser?** Clearly it seems to me, *the Holy Spirit of God*. In the passage just alluded to, Gen. vi. 3, we can hardly but recognize the main features of our present parable; especially when the days Of Noah are compared by the Lord Himself to His own coming to vengeance. The intercessory office of the Spirit (“*the Advocate*,” see on John xiv. 16), pleading with man and for man, and resigning that blessed conflict when met with inveterate obduracy, is often set before us in Scripture. See the whole history of Saul; Zech. vii. 12–14: Prov. i. 23–32: Isa. Ixiii. 10: Neh. ix. 20: Rom. viii. 26, 27.

7. three years] I have little doubt that an *allusion* is intended to the *three years of our Lord’s ministry*. The objection to this, that the cutting down ought then to have taken place *at the end of this year*, does not apply; for all is left indefinite in the request and the implied answer. In the individual application, *many thousands did bear fruit this very year*; and of those who did not, who shall say *when* the Spirit ceased pleading with them, and the final sentence went forth?

why moreover cumbereth it the ground?] i.e. Why, besides bearing no fruit, is it a impoverishing the soil—rendering the neighbouring ground useless?

8.] i.e. till **I dig holes about the root, cast in manure**, as is done to orange-trees in the south of Italy, and to hops in England.

9.] After **fruit** there is a breaking off, and **well** is to be supplied: but not without reason: to fill up the sentence *did not belong to the purpose of this parable.*

hereafter] This word belongs to **bear fruit**, not as in A.V., to the latter clause of the verse. We must remember, that as regards the Jews in *the collective sense*, the sentence lingered 40 years.

THOU **shalt cut it down**—not, “I will cut it down;” and I find in this an additional proof of the correctness of the foregoing interpretation. It is the “*lord of the vineyard*” who “*when He cometh, shall wretchedly destroy those wretches.*” *All judgment is committed to THE Son:*—it is not the work of the Holy Spirit to cut down and destroy, for He is the Giver of life.

The above interpretation is ritually given by Stier, who has however in my view quite missed the *vine-dresser*, understanding by him *the husbandmen in Matt. xxi.*, forgetting that they are *destroyed* in the sequel of that parable, and that their position, that of the *tenants* of the vineyard, does not appear at all in this, any more than does the *vine-dresser* in that.

10–21.] HEALING OF A WOMAN ON THE SABBATH: DISCOURSE THEREUPON. Peculiar to Luke, except the parables, which are in Matt. xiii. 31–33; Mark iv. 31–34.

10.] Time and place alike indefinite.

11. a spirit of infirmity] Her weakness was the effect of permitted power of the evil one (ver. 16); but whether we are to find here a direct instance of *possession*, seems very doubtful. There is nothing in our Lord’s words addressed to her, to imply it: and in such cases He did not *lay on His hands, or touch*,—but only in cases of sickness or bodily infirmity.

The A.V. has here mistaken the position of the word which it renders “*in no wise.*” It means **altogether**, and belongs to the verb **lift herself**.

12.] There is no reason to suppose any eminence of faith in her—though we may fairly conclude that she was there with *some expectation* of a cure: see ver. 14.

thou art loosed, expresses the setting free of her muscles from the power which bound them down,—and then, ver. 13, the laying on of the divine hands confers upon her strength to rise and stand upright. It would be, in such a case, one thing to be loosed from the stiffening of years,—and another to have strength at once conferred to stand upright.

14.] The ruler speaks not either to Jesus or to the woman; but covertly and cowardly, to the *multitude*. Stier notices the self-stultification of this speech, in making “*to be healed*,”—which is in fact a reception of divine grace and help, a species of “*working*.”

15. Ye hypocrites] The Lord saw the real thoughts of his heart, that they were false, and inconsistent with his pretended zeal, and addressed the multitude as represented by him, their leader. A man hardly could give forth a doctrine so at variance with common sense and common practice, without some by-end, with which he covered his violation of truth. That by-end *here* was enmity to and jealousy of Jesus.

The instance chosen *exactly fits* the circumstances. A beast tied to the manger is confined down as this poor woman was.

16.] The contrast is strongly drawn—between a *dumb animal*, and (not merely a human creature, but) a *daughter of Abraham*—one of the chosen people (I cannot see any necessity for a *spiritual daughtership* [Gal. iii. 7] being here implied),—between *a few hours*, since the last watering, and ‘*lo these eighteen years*’ (compare ver. 7, “*Behold these three years*”....).

17.] So far am I from thinking a description of this kind to be a mere general close, put in by the Evangelist, that I would take it as an accurate and graphic account of the immediate effect of our Lord’s power and irresistible words, and the following parables as spoken *immediately thereupon*, shewing the people the ultimate conquest which the Kingdom of God should obtain over all opposition, however strong. On the parables themselves, see on Matt. xiii. 31–33.

18–21.] These two parables, found in Matthew as above, and the former of them in Mark iv. 30–32, seem to have been again spoken by our Lord at this time, in reference to the progress of His Gospel indicated in ver. 17. The rendering **thereupon** is important, as pointing out the connexion.

22–30.] ANSWER TO THE QUESTION AS TO THE NUMBER WHO SHALL BE SAVED. Our Lord repeats, occasion being given by a question peculiar to Luke, parts of His discourses spoken elsewhere, as referred to below.

22.] This notice includes what follows in the cycle of this last journey, but disclaims any definiteness of place or time for it. But certainly it seems to follow in natural order after our Lord’s solemn warnings to repentance at the beginning of this chapter. The enquirer can hardly have been a disciple of Jesus (see ver. 28), but most likely a *Jew from the multitude*, who had heard his discourses, and either from Jewish pride, or perhaps out of real desire to learn from Him, put this question.

23.] On the word rendered **that be saved**, see note, Acts ii. 47. Here, the implication of final salvation is obvious.

unto them, i.e. the multitude. Similar sayings have occurred in the Sermon on the Mount, but the connexion here is intimate and strict.

24.] See on Matt. vii. 18. The description of *the broad and narrow ways* is not here inserted, as probably by this time, the **narrow door** (or **gate**) was a familiar image. In what follows we must not understand, ‘shall seek to enter *by it*, and shall not be able:’—the emphasis of the command is, **seek to enter** at the *narrow door*: **for many shall seek to enter** (else-where), **and shall not be able**. After **enter** is to be supplied, in both places, *into salvation*, or *into the Kingdom of God*.

25.] A reason why this strive is so important:—because there will be a day when the gate will be *shut*. The figure is the usual one,—of a *feast*, at which the householder entertains (in this case) the members of his family. These being assembled, he rises and shuts the door, and none are afterwards admitted. ‘The **from the time when extends** to the end of ver. 25,—and the second member of the sentence begins with **Then shall ye begin&c. to say** *The door is shut, ye begin to stand without and knock*. On the spiritual import, see note on Matt. xxv. 11. **I know you not whence ye are:** i.e. ‘*Ye are none of my family—have no relationship with me.*’

26. We have eaten and drank in thy presence] As applied to the *then assembled crowd*, these words refer to the miracles of feeding,—

perhaps also to His having so often sat at meat in the houses of various persons (the drinking must not be as meaning anything different from the *eating*:—the expression is a general one for taking a meal); as applied to Christians, to the eating and drinking whereof those miracles were anticipatory. Both these are merely in *His presence*;—very different from the drinking ‘with you’ of which He speaks Matt. xxvi. 29, and from “*I will sup with him and he with me,*” Rev. iii. 20.

thou hast taught in our streets] Applicable directly to those to whom the words were spoken; and further, in its fuller sense, to all among whom the Gospel is preached, even till the end.

27. workmen of iniquity] This unusual expression seems to mean, *persons engaged in the hire and receiving the wages of unrighteousness*:—see Matt. vii. 23, where “*ye that work lawlessness*” (20 literally) answers to it.

28, 29.] See Matt. viii. 11, 12, and notes. The verses occur here in a different connexion: ‘Ye Jews, who neglect the earnest endeavor to enter now, shall weep and gnash your teeth when ye see all the saints, Jews ‘and Gentiles, in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves excluded’ (see ch. xvi. 23). In these two verses is the real, answer to

the question of ver. 23 given:—‘*they shall be MANY—but what is that to you, if you be not among them?*’

30.] As the words here stand—somewhat different from those in Matt. xx. 16—they seem to be a prophetic declaration of what shall be in the course of the ingathering of these guests;—viz. that some who were the it, or among the first to believe, shall fall from their high place, and vice versa. This former has, as Stier notices, been remarkably the case with the Oriental Churches, which were the first founded and flourishing:—and, we may add, with the mother church of Jerusalem, which has declined, while her Gentile offsets have flourished.

31–35.] WARING OF HEROD’S ENMITY; OUR LORD’s REPLY. Peculiar to Luke:—the apostrophe in vv. 34, 35 was spoken by our Lord also on another occasion, Matt. xxiii. 37–39.

31.) In that hour is not necessarily *definite*.

These Pharisees appear to have been sent by Herod for the purpose of getting rid of Jesus out of his jurisdiction. Considering his character, it is hardly possible that he should really have wished to kill *one who was so popular*;—he refused to do so when Jesus was in his power afterwards in Jerusalem;—but, as great multitudes were now following Him about, and superstitious fears, as we know, agitated Herod, he wished to be quit of Him, and took this means of doing so. I think this view is necessary to justify the epithet applied to Herod, which certainly implies *cunning on his part*. Stier thinks the Pharisees *invented* is the tale about Herod: but then how can the *epithet applied to him* be explained? I cannot for a moment believe, as he does, that our Lord saw through the lie of the Pharisees, and yet *adopted* it, meaning the fox to signify themselves. “That Jesus in a public discourse uses such an expression of the ruler of his country, is not to be judged of by the manners, and ways of speech, of our times. The free-spokenness of the ancient world, which we meet with especially in the Hebrew prophets, allowed such strong expressions, without any thing peculiarly offensive being found in them.” Bleak.

32, 33.] The interpretation of this answer is difficult, for two reasons—(1) that the signification of the **to day, to tomorrow, and the third day** is doubtful—(2) that the meaning of **I am perfected** is also doubtful.

The days mentioned are ordinarily supposed to be proverbially used; **to day**, for his present working—**to tomorrow**, for that between the present time and his arrival at Jerusalem—**the third day**, for that arrival, and the end of his work and course by his Death.

Against this, is (1) the positive use of the *three days*, in an affirmative sentence,—of which no instance can be brought where the proverbial meaning is implied:—(2) the verb **journey**, proceed on my mission, belonging to *all three* in ver. 33, whereas thus it only belongs to the two first.

The interpretation adopted by Meyer (and Bleek) is this:—In three days (literal days) the Lord’s working of miracles in Galilee would be ended, which had excited the apprehension of Herod: and then He would leave the territory, not for fear of Herod, but because He was going to Jerusalem to die. The objection to this is, that the sense—of *ending these present works of healing, &c.* does not seem a sufficient one for **I am perfected**, which, as applied to the Lord, surely must include His Death. I own that neither of the above interpretations satisfies me,—and still less the various modifications of them which have been proposed. Nor can I suggest any less open to objection:—but merely state my conviction, (1) that the days mentioned must have some *definite reference to three actual days*: (2) that **perfected** is used in the solemn sense elsewhere attached to the word: see John iv. 34, “*finish:*” v. 36, xvii. 4; Acts xx. 24; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Heb. ii. 10, v. 9, vii. 28, especially; x. 14, xi. 40, are 28; in all which places it is used in the original.

If this Gospel had been a chronological calendar of our Lord’s journey, the meaning would probably have been clear: but as we have none such, it is, and I believe must remain, obscure. Dr. Wordsworth’s note is much to the point: “It must be remembered that Herod was ruler of Peræa as well as of Galilee: and that John the Baptist had been put to death at Machærus, where Herod had a palace about ten miles E. of Jericho, and thirty E. of Jerusalem. St. Matt. xix. 1, and St. Mark, x. 1, 46, speak of our Lord being in Peræa, whence He passed over the river Jordan, and so came to Jericho, and thence to Bethany and Jerusalem for His Passion. Herod had put John to death not in Galilee but in Peræa; and if our Lord was now, as seems probable, in Peræa or near it, it was very likely that the Pharisees should endeavour to intimidate Him with a threat of Herod’s anger.”

the day following means the same as “*the third day*” above.

I must journey—in the original, it is the very word in which had addressed Him, “*Depart (journey) hence,*” ver. 31.

for it cannot be...., a monopoly not without exceptions, for John had been put to death by Herod out of Jerusalem.

But our Lord’s saying is not to be so literally pressed; He states the general rule, which His own case was to be fulfilled. There is no reference to the power of the Sanhedrim to judge and condemn false prophets (as some think), for the fact of **perishing** only is here in question;—and our Lord never would place himself in such a category.

34, 35.] These verses are in too close connexion with the preceding to allow of the supposition that they are inserted chronologically, as many suppose: and their variations from those in Matthew (xxiii. 37–39) are striking and characteristic, For “*for*,” which *there* accounts for the *desolation* of the temple, then for the last time left by our Lord, *does not appear here*, but **and** (or **but**) introducing a **fresh** saying, *having I believe another meaning*; and the words “from *henceforth*,” which follow “*ye shall not see me*” there, marking that *moment* as the **commencement** of the dereliction, are here omitted. Surely these differences indicate an uttering of the words *prophetically*, previous to their utterance in the act of departure. Our Lord overleaps in prophetic foresight the death Just set forth as certain, and speaks of the ages to come, during which holy city should be desolate and trodden down of the Gentiles.

That the very words, **Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord**, *were used by the multitude* at the Lord’s entry into Jerusalem, I should much rather ascribe to a misunderstanding by them and the disciples of this very declaration, than for a moment suppose, as some have done, that these words found any sufficient *fulfilment* in that entry.

Luke: Chapter 14

CHAP. XIV. 1–6.] HEALING OF A DROPSICAL MAN ON THE SABBATH. Peculiar to Luke.

1.] when he had come, viz. during journeying, ch. Xiii. 33.

one of the chief [men of the]

Pharisees] Though the Pharisees had no Official rulers as such, they had men to whom they looked up, as Hillel, Schammai, Gamaliel, &c.

to eat bread] The Jews used to give entertainments on the Sabbath, see Neh. viii. 9–12; Tobit ii. 1. The practice latterly became **an abuse**,—see quotations from Augustine in my Greek Test.

2.] before him, not *as a guest*; see ver. 4, and compare ch. vii. 37, **and** note on ver. 45. “He was standing there,” says Euthymius, “not daring to **ask** to be healed, on account of the Sabbath, and the Pharisees; but only shewing himself, that our Lord might see him and be moved with pity, and so proceed to heal him.” It does not appear, though it is certainly possible, that he **was set** there by the pharisees *on purpose*. This was before the meal (ver. 7).

5.] There is a strict propriety in the comparison: the accident and disease are *analogous*.

son, or an ox] This reading, which, from the weight of ancient testimony in its favour, evidently was the original, seemed incompatible with the supposed argument *from the less to the greater*:—*son* was therefore altered to *ass* (as in ch. xiii. 15) or *sheep*, an one of our ancient MSS. has it. But our Lord’s argument is of another and a far deeper kind. The stress is on **you**: and the point of comparison is the ownership, consequent tender care, of the object in question. ‘*Those who are in your possession and care, whether belonging to your families, or your herds, are cared for, and rescued from perishing: am I, (the possessor of heaven and earth,—this lies in the background) to let mine perish without care or rescue?*’

There may be in the words the meaning “*son, or even ox;*” but I prefer rendering them simply.

7–24.] SAYINGS OF OUR LORD AT THIS SABBATH FEAST.

7–11.] It does not appear that the foregoing miracle gave occasion to this saying; so that it is with it. Our Lord, as was His practice, found His instructions on what He saw happening before Him.

As Trench remark, it is probable this was a splendid entertainment, and the guests distinguished persons (ver. 12).

7.] chief places, i.e., see Matt. xxiii. 6, the middle place in each couch, which was the most honourable. At a large feast there would be many of these.

8.] The whole of this has, besides its plain reference, a *deeper one*, linked into it by the important word *wedding*, carrying with it all that meaning which it always has when *relating to the Kingdom of God*. Both senses are obvious, and only one remark needed;—that all that *false humility*, by which men put themselves lowest and dispraise themselves of *set purpose to be placed higher*, is, by the very nature of our Lord's parable, *excluded*: for that is not bond fide abasing one's self. The exaltation at the hands of

the Host is not to be a *purposed end* to the guests, but will follow true humility.

9. **then shalt thou begin...**] The form of expression sets fo the reluctance and lingering with which it is done.

11.] As an example of the first clause, see Isa. xiv. 13–15; of the second, Phil. ii. 6–11. 13–14.) The *composition of the company before Him* seems to have given occasion for this saying of our The Pharisee his host had doubtless, with the view (of watching Him) mentioned in ver. 1, invited the principal persons of the place, and with the intention of *courting their favour*, and *getting a return*. The Lord rebukes in him this spirit;—and it has been well remarked, that the intercourse and civilities of social life among *friends* and *neighbours* are here *presupposed*, (inasmuch as for them there takes place a *recompense*, and they are struck off the list by this means,) with this caution,—that our means are not to be *sumptuously laid out upon them*, but upon *something far better*,—the providing for the poor and maimed and lame and blind. When we will make s sacrifice, and provide at some cost, let us not throw our money away, as we should if a recompense is made to us in this world: but give it to the poor, i.e. lend it to the Lord; and then, as in ver. 14, there will be a recompense at the resurrection of the just, which shall not be a mere equivalent, but a rich reward.

14.] **the resurrection of the just**, the *first* resurrection, here distinctly asserted by our Lord; otherwise the words **of the just** would be vapid and unmeaning. See 1 Cor. xv. 22 f.; 1 Thess. iv. 16; ve xx. 4, 5.

15–24.] *Parable of the Great Supper*. One of the guests takes this literally, and imagines *the great feast to which the Jews looked forward* to be meant. He spoke as a Jew, and probably with an idea that, as such, his admission to this feast was *sure and certain*. Our Lord answers him by the parable following, which shewed him that, true as his assertion was, (and He does not deny it,) the blessedness would not be *practically* so generally acknowledged nor entered into.

The Parable, whatever analogy it may bear with that in Matt. xxii. 1 ff., is *wholly Different from that in many essential points*

16.] The **great supper** is the *Kingdom of God*, the feast of fat things in Isa. xxv. 6; completed in the marriage-supper of the Lamb; but fully prepared when the glad tidings af the Gospel were

proclaimed.

bade many: these first *bidden* are the Pharisees and Scribes and the learned among the Jews.

17.] The **servant** represents one *spirit*, one *message*: but is not necessarily, in the three cases, one and the same *person*. The three messages were delivered (1) by John the Baptist and our Lord: (2) by our Lord and the Apostles; (3) by the Apostles and those who came after. The elder prophets cannot be meant, for [**all**] **things are now ready** was the message, representing the proclamation of John the Baptist and our Lord, "*The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

18–20.] **with one consent**; so (ch. vii. 30) they had rejected John's baptism, and (John vii. 48) the Lord himself. The saying is not to be taken strictly without exception, e.g. that of Nicodemus: but genetically. So also ver. 24. The *temper* of these self-excusers is threefold; their *spirit is one*. The first alleges a *necessity*,—*he must go and see his land*: the second not so much as this, only his own plan and purpose—“*I go to prove them*”: the third not so much as either of these, but rudely asserts “*I cannot (i. e. I will not) come.*” Also the *excuses themselves* are threefold. The first has his *worldly possession* (‘one to his farm,’ Matt. xxii. 5) to go and see: the second his purchase (‘another to his merchandise,’ *ibid.*) of stock to prove: the third his home engagements and his lust to satisfy. *All* are detained by *worldliness*, in however varied forms.

21.] The gathering of guests is still *in the city* (Matt. xxii. 7); that is, still *among the Jews*.

the streets and lanes, the broad and narrow streets: perhaps the *cities and villages* through which the Lord and his Apostles journeyed preaching.

Here appear again the very persons of ver. 13; the representatives of the wretched and despised: “the common people (*great multitude*),” Mark xii. 37: not perhaps without a hint, that only those who knew themselves to be spiritually poor and maimed

and halt and blind would come to the Gospel feast.

22.] The palace is large, and the guest-room: “neither nature nor grace endures a vacuum,” Bengel.

23.] The calling of the Gentiles, *outside the city; in the country* (Matt. xxii. 9, 10).

compel them to come in] Is there not here as *allusion to Infant Baptism?* for remember they who come in are *good* and *bad*. (Matt. l.c.)

24.) I think with Stier, that our Lord here speaks *in his own Person*: unto you will fit no circumstance in the parable; for the householder and his servant are alone: the guests are not present. He speaks, with His usual **For I say unto you**, to the *company present*: and half continuing the parable, half expounding it, substitutes *Himself* for the

master of the feast, leaving it hardly doubtful who those men which were bidden are.

25–35.] DISCOURSE TO THE MULTITUDES. Our Lord is at some time further on in the journey, going forward, and speaking to the multitude on counting the cost before any man becomes his disciple.

26, 27.] See Matt. x. 37, 88, and note. The remark there made of the *strangeness* of this sound of *the Cross*, still applies: our Lord had not yet announced his death by *crucifixion*:

hate not] It is well to enquire what sense this word here bears. That no such thing as *active hatred* can be meant, is plain: our Lord himself is an example to the contrary, John xix. 25–27; the *hate* is the *general*, not *personal*, feeling of alienation in the inmost heart,—so that this world’s relationships, as belonging to *the state things in this world*, are not the *home and rest* of the heart. This is evident from the **yea, and his own life also**, which follows. Let the *hate begin here*, and little explanation will be further wanted. This addition also shews that the saying **was** not meant only for those times, in which more perhaps of the disruption of earthly ties was required, but for *all time*: for *his own life* is equally dear to every man in every age. It hardly need be observed that *this hate* is not only consistent with, but *absolutely necessary* to the very highest kind of love. It is that element in love which **makes a man a wise and Christian friend**,—not for time only, but for eternity.

28–30.] Peculiar to Luke. *The same caution* is followed out in this parable. This is to be borne in mind, or it will be misinterpreted. The ground of the parable is, that *entire self: renunciation* is requisite, to become a disciple of Christ. This man wishes to build a: tower: to raise that building (eee 1 Cor. iii. 11–15), which we must rear on the one Foundation, and which shall be tried in the day of the Lord. He is advised to count the cost, to see whether he have enough thoroughly to finish it. If he begin, lay the foundation,—however seemingly well it may be done, it is *not well done*, because he has not enough to complete it; and the attempt can only lead to shame. So it is with one who would be Christ’s disciple: but with this weighty difference, lying in the background of the parable—that in his case the counting the cost must *always* issue in a discovery of the utter inadequacy of his own resources, and the going *out of himself* for strength and means to build.

31–33.] This same lesson is even more pointedly set before us in the following parable, which, **as well as** the other, is frequently misunderstood. The *two kings* here are,—the *man desirous to become a disciple*, to work out his salvation,—and GOD, with whose just and holy law he is *naturally at variance*;—it is his adversary,” see ch. xii. 58, and note:—these

two are to **engage in war**; and the question for each man to sit down and ask himself is, ‘Can I, with (the word may probably mean *clad in*,—surrounded by, all that I have, all my instrument of war) my ten thousand, stand the charge of Him who cometh against me with (the preposition is different, and may represent *only as many as He pleases to bring with Him* for the purpose, see Ps. xviii. 17, A.V.) twenty thousand?’—see Job xv. 24–26.

Here the inadequacy of man’s resources is *plainly set forth*, not left, as in the former parable, to be inferred. Then, finding that he has no hope of prevailing,—**while the other is yet a great way off**, while there is yet time,—he sends an embassy, and sues for peace, abandoning the conflict: throwing himself upon the mere mercy and grace of God;—**bidding fare-well to all that he hath** in both cases.

The ordinary misinterpretation of this parable is in taking the king wii twenty thousand to be the *ruler of this world*, i.e. *Satan*—which *destroys all the sense*:—for with him the *natural man is at peace*, but the *disciple of Christ at war*.

34, 35.] For the third time, our Lord repeats the saying concerning salt: see Matt. v. 18: Mark ix. 50, and notes. The **therefore** and **even**, here restored to the text are both valuable; the former as importing the recurrence of a saying known before, the latter as giving force to the supposition.. The *salt*, in Scripture symbolism, is the whole life-retaining antiseptic influence of the Spirit of God:—this, working in the *being My disciple*, is good: but if even this be corrupted—if the mere appearance of this, and not the veritable salt (which is the *savour*), be in you—wherewith, &c.? Such a disciple is to be **cast out**. Salt was not

used for *land*, Ps. vii. 34, nor for *mingling with manure*; it is of no use for either of those purposes, but must be utterly cast out.

Luke: Chapter 15

CHAP. XV.] PARABLES, SETTING FORTH GOD' S MERCY TO SINNERS.

1-7.] THE LOST SHEEP. It does not appear where or when this gathering of publicans and sinners to hear Him happened,—but certainly in the progress of this same journey, and, we may well believe, consecutively on the discourses in the last chapter. first parable had been spoken by our Lord before Matt. xviii. 12-14: but, as Trench has remarked, with a different view: there, to bring out *the preciousness of each individual little one in the eyes of the good Shepherd; here, to shew that no sheep can have strayed so widely, but He will seek it and rejoice over it when found*. The second is peculiar to Luke.

1.] **there were drawing near—were busied in drawing near—were continually about Him**, struck perhaps with penitence,—found, by His seeking them:—having come from the husks of a life of sin, to the bread of life;—so the three parables seem to imply.

all the publicans, a general term, admitting of course of exceptions, see ch. xiii, 33 and note.

2.] **receiveth** into His circle of adherente—**eateth with them**, allows them to sit at meat with Him;—on the journey, or at entertainments, as in Matt. ix. 10. Stier remarks (iii. 214, edu. 2) that this **receiveth sinners** is an important and affecting testimony, from the mouth of the enemies of our to his willingness to receive them. The peculiar word rendered **murmured** implies either that they did **so throughout the Journey;—or rather, one to another—responsively**

3-7.] The man having the hundred sheep, *the Son of God, the Good Shepherd*. This had been his prophetic description, and that in *this very connexion*,—of *seeking the lost*, Ezek. xxxiv. 6, 11 ff. This it is which gives so peculiar an interest to David as a type of Christ—that he was *a shepherd*; ibid. ver. 23. Our Lord plainly declares then by this parable—and that I take to be the reason why it is placed *first* (see below)—that the matter in which they had found fault with Him was the *very pursuit most in accordance with his divine Office of Shepherd*.

4.] It is the *Owner Himself* who goes to seek, see Ezek. ver. 11—*God in Christ*. The **hundred sheep** are the house of Israel, see Matt. x. 6; but in *present* application, mankind: (not, ‘*believers in Christ*;’ see on ver. 7.)

The argument is to *their self-interest*: but the act on the part of the good Shepherd is, from the nature of the case, one of *love*; or, as Stier remarks, also human love for *his own*; for in Him, Love, and His glory, are one and the same thing.

the ninety and nine] These pass altogether into the background, and are lost sight of. The character of the good Shepherd is a sufficient warrant for their being well cared for. The **wilderness** is not a barren place, but one abounding in pastures (John vi. 10, compared with Matt. xiv. 15).

5.] Not mere self-interest, but *love* comes forward here; see Isa. xl. 11. No blows are given for the straying—no hard words: mercy to the lost one,—and joy within himself,—are the Shepherd's feeling; the sheep is weary with long wanderings,—He gives it rest. Matt. ix. 36; xi. 28.

6.] In this return to His house, must be understood the whole course of seeking and finding which the good Shepherd, either by Himself or His agents, now pursues in each individual case, even until He brings the lost sheep home into heaven to Himself—not in *reality*, so that it should not take place till the *death* of the penitent—but by *anticipation*,—till the *name is written in heaven*;—till the sinner is penitent. This is clear from the interpretation in ver. 7. **The friends and neighbours** represent the angels (and spirits of just men made perfect?).

my sheep which was lost breathes a totally different thought from “*the piece (drachma) which I lost*.” There is pity and love in it, which, from the nature of the case, the other does not admit of.

7. **I say unto you**] In these words the Lord often introduces His revelations of the unseen world of glory: see Matt. xviii. 10.

On these **just persons**, see note at Matt. ix. 12, 13. They are the *subjectively* righteous, and this saying respects their own view of themselves. (Or if it be required that the words should be literally explained, seeing that these ninety-nine *did not err*,—then I see no other way but to suppose them, in the deeper meaning of the parable, to be the *worlds that have not fallen*;—and the one that has strayed, our human nature, in this our world.) But we have yet to enquire, *what sort of sinner* this parable represents; for each of the three sets before us a *different type* of the sinner sunk in his sin. Bengel, in distinguishing the three,

says, "The sheep, the drachma, the prodigal son;—signify respectively, (1) the stupid sinner,— (2) the sinner wholly unconscious of the fact and of himself,— (3) the sinner conscious and of purpose." This one is the stupid and bewildered sinner, erring and straying away in ignorance and self-will from his Shepherd, but sought the Shepherd, and fetched back with joy.

8-10.] THE LOST PIECE OF MONEY. In the following wonderful parable, we have the next class of sinners set before us, sought for and found by the power and work of the Spirit in the Church of Christ. It will be seen, as we proceed, how perfectly this interpretation comes out, not as a fancy, but as the *very kernel and sense* of the parable. The **woman** cannot be *the Church absolutely*, for the Church herself is a lost sheep at first, sought and found by the Shepherd. Rather is the **house** here the Church—as will come out by and by,—and the **woman** the *indwelling Spirit*, working in it. All men belong to this Creator-Spirit; all have been *stamped with the image of God*. But the sinner lies in the dust of sin and death and corruption—"wholly unconscious." Then the Spirit, lighting the candle of the Lord (Prov. xx. 27: Zeph. i. 12), searching every corner and sweeping every unseen place, *finds out* the sinner; restores him to his true value as made for God's glory. This lighting and sweeping are to be understood of the office of the Spirit in the Church, in its various ways of seeking the sinner—by the preaching of repentance, by the Word of God read, &c. Then comes the x again.

9.] her (female) friends her neighbours are invited—but there is *no return home* now—nor in the explanation, ver. 10, is there any "*in heaven*," because the Spirit *abides in the Church* because the *angels are present in the Church*, see 1 Cor. xi. 10:—nor is it "*shall be*" (as in ver. 7 at the return of the Redeemer then future), but is—the ministering spirits rejoice over every soul that is brought out of the dust of death into God's treasure-house by the searching of the blessed Spirit.

In this parable then we have set before us the sinner who is unconscious of *himself* and *his own real worth*; who is lying, though in reality a precious coin, in the mire of this world, and valueless, till he is searched out by the blessed and gracious Spirit. And that such a search will be made, we are here assured.

11-32.] THE PRODIGAL SON. Peculiar to Luke. 'If we might venture here to make comparisons, as we do among the sayings of *men*, this parable of the Lord would rightly be called, *the crown and pearl of all His parables*.' Stier.

We have here the and welcome reception of the returning sinner (sinner under the most aggravating circumstances) in the bosom of his heavenly Father: and agreeably to the circumstances under which the discourse was spoken, the **just men** who murmured at publicans and sinners are represented under the figure of the elder son:—see below. The parable certainly was spoken on the same occasion as the preceding, and relates to the same subject. Those who for the sake of upholding the patristic interpretation deny this, seem to me to have entirely missed the of the parable: see below.

11.] a certain man—*Our heavenly Father*, the Creator and Possessor of all: *not Christ*, who ever represents Himself *as a son*, although frequently as a possessor or lord.

two sons, *not*, in any *direct* or primary sense of the Parable, *the Jews and the Gentiles*: that there may be an ulterior application to this effect, is only owing to the parable grasping the *great central truths*, of which the Jew and Gentile were, in their relation, illustrations,—and of which such illustrations are furnished wherever such differences occur.

The two parties standing in the *foreground* of the parabolic mirror are, *the Scribes and Pharisees* as the elder son, the *publicans and sinners* as the younger;—all, *Jews*: all, belonging to God's family. The mystery of admission of Gentiles into God's Church was not yet made known in any such manner as that they should be represented as of one family with the Jews;—not to mention that this interpretation fails in the very root of the parable; for in strictness the Gentile should be the *elder*, the Jew not being constituted in his superiority till 2000 years after the Creation.

The upholders of this interpretation forget that when we speak of the Jew as elder, and the Gentile as younger, it is in respect not of birth, but of *this very return* to and reception into the Father's house, which is *not to be considered yet*. The objections of these interpreters do not touch the reasons here given. The relations of elder and younger have a peculiar fitness for the characters to be filled by them, and are I believe chosen on that account; as Euthymius says, "He names the sinner the younger, as being childish in mind and easily led astray."

12, 13.] The part of the parable relating to the prodigal himself divides itself into three parts—1. *his sin*: 2. *his misery*: 3. *his penitence*. In these verses his *sin* is described. It consists in a desire to depart from his Father's house and control, and to set up for himself,—to live a life of what the carnal man calls *liberty*.

12.] Such a request as this is shewn by Orientalists to have been known in the East, though not among the Jews.

The firstborn had two-thirds of the property, see Deut. xxi. 17. The father, as implied in the parable, reserves to himself the power during his life over the portion of the firstborn, see ver. 31. The parable sets before us very strikingly the *permission of*

free will to man.

13.] The images of both the preceding parables are united here:—in his *taking his journey*, we have the straying sheep; in *his state when he got into the far country*, the lost piece of money. But in this case the search is to be carried on *within him*—we are now on *higher ground* than in those two parables, “The far-off country represents forgetfulness of God.” Augustine.

profligate] The old English word **retchless** expresses perhaps best the meaning, which is not ‘unsparing,’ but **incorrigible**, past hope of reclaim.

14–18.] *His misery* set forth in these verses. He soon spends all:—there is a fine irony, as Stier remarks, in the word **spent**, as compared with **wasted** before—he *spent* his money for that which was no bread.

14. a mighty famine] This famine is the shepherd seeking his stray sheep—the woman sweeping to find the lost. The famine, in the interpretation, is to be *subjectively* taken; he begins to *be in want*,—to *feel* the emptiness of soul which precedes either utter abandonment or true penitence.

15.] He sinks lower and lower—becomes the despised servant of an alien (is there here any hint at the situation of the *publicans*, who were but the servants of wealthy Romans?) who employs him in an office most vile and odious to the mind of a Jew.

16. husks] ‘These are not the husks or pods of some other fruit, as of peas or beans, but *themselves a fruit*, that of the *carob* [or *caruba*, found not only in the East, but in South Europe, e.g. in abundance on the Riviera between Nice and Genoa. H.A.] like a bean-pod, though larger and more curved, thence called *keration* or little horn.... they have a hard dark outside and a dull sweet taste.... the shell or pod alone is eaten’ Trench. His appetite even drove him to these for food;—**for** (this is the real sense involved in and) **no man gave** (aught) to him.

We see him now in the depth of his misery,—the sinner reaping the consequences of his sin in utter shame and extremity of need.

17–20.] *His penitence*. And here we have a weighty difference between the permitted rational free will of man, and the stupid wandering on of the sheep, or the inanimate coin lying till it is picked up,—both these being however true in the case of man, *did not God seek and save the sinner*: ‘the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will and working with us when we have that will.’ Article X. of the Church of England.

17. when he came to himself] See 1 Kings viii. 47. Before this, he was *beside himself*. The most dreadful torment of the lost, in fact that which constitutes their state of torment, will be this *coming to themselves*, when too late for repentance.

He now recalls the peace and plenty of *his Father's house*.

hired servants] For he now was a *hireling*, but in how different a case!

18.] I will arise, see ver. 24, *was dead, and is alive again*; it was truly a resurrection from the dead. This resolution is a further step than his last reflection. In it be *nowhere gives up his sonship: this*, and the word **Father**, lie at the root of his penitence:—it is the thought of having sinned against (in the parable *itself*, Heaven and) Thee, which works now in him. And accordingly he does not resolve to ask to be made *one of the hired servants*, but **as** one of them:—still a *son*, but *as* an hireling. “And what is it that gives the sinner now a sure ground of confidence, that returning to God he shall not be repelled, nor cast out? The adoption of sonship which he received in Christ Jesus at his baptism, and his faith that the gifts and calling of God are *without repentance or recall*.” Trench.

20.] What he has resolved, he does: a figure not of the *usual*, but of the *proper* course of such a state of mind.

when he was yet a great way off] Who can say whether *this itself was not a seeking?* whether his courage would have held out to the meeting?

On what follows, see especially Jer. iii. 12; James iv. 8; Gen. xlvi. 29; 2 Sam. xiv. 33.

21.] The intended close of his confession is not uttered:—there is no abatement of his penitence, for all his Father’s touching and reassuring kindness,—but his filial confidence sufficiently awakened to prevent the request *that he might be as an hired servant*.

22.] All these gifts belong to his reception, not as a servant, but as a son: the *first robe*, for him who came in rags,—Isa. lxi.

10; Rev. iii. 18:—but *first* must not be understood as meaning *the robe which he used to wear—his robe*—this would not be consistent with the former part of the parable, in which he was not turned out with any disgrace, but left *as a son and of his own accord*: but *best*, as in the A.V.:—**a robe, (yea) the first and goodliest.**

The ring,—a token of a distinguished and free person, see James ii. 2; Gen. xii, 42.

The **shoes**, also the mark of a free man (for slaves went barefoot), see Zech. x. 12; Eph. vi. 15. These are the gifts of grace and holiness with which the returned penitent is clothed by his gracious Father; see Zech. iii. 4, 5.

23. the fatted calf] So Judg. vi. 25. Gideon is commanded to kill *thy father's young bullock of seven years old* (rendered by the LXX *thy father fatted calf*): some calf fatted for a particular feast or anniversary, and standing in the stall. No allusion must be thought of to the *sacrificing of Christ*:—which would be *wholly out of place* here,—and is *presupposed* in whole parable.

be merry] So ver. 6., “joy in heaven;”—*all rejoice.*

Some of these are servants who have entered into the *joy of their Lord*: Matt. xxv. 21, 23.

24.] dead, and is alive again,—the lost money: lost, and is found,—the lost sheep: see 1 John iii. 14; Eph. ii. 5: 1 Pet, ii, 25.

began, a contrast to the “*began*” in ver. 14,

25–28.] As far as *the penitent*, the parable is finished:—but those who murmured at his reception, who were the proud and faultless elder son,—always in the house and serving, but not, as will appear, either over-affectionate or over-respectful,—they too must act their part, in order to complete the instruction. As regards the penitent, this part of the parable sets forth the reception he meets with from his *fellow-men*, in contrast to that from his *father*; see Matt. xviii. 27, 30.

25.] in the field—probably *working*, in the course of his “*serving*,” as he expresses it, ver. 29. He was apparently returning at meal-time.

musick and dancing] This is one of those by-glances into the lesser occupations and recreations of human life, by which the Lord so often stamps his tacit approval on the joys and unbendings of men. Would these festal employments have been here mentioned by Him on so solemn and blessed an occasion, if they really were among those works of the devil which He came into the world to destroy?

23–32.] Stier well remarks that this elder is now the *lost son*: he has lost all childlike filial feeling; he betrays the hypocrite within. The love and forbearance of the father are eminently shewn—the utter want of love and humility in the son strongly contrasted with them.

29.] Lo, these many years de I serve thee, the very manner of speech of a Pharisee: as the continuation. Let us ask with reference to the differences in the explanation, Could the *Jewish nation* be introduced saying, even in the falsest hypocrisy, that *they had never transgressed God's commandments?*

thou never gavest me answers to the younger son’s “*give me*” in ver. 12;—it is a separation of the individual son from his father, and, as there pointed out, the very root and ground of sin.

a kid, of less value than a calf.

my friends—who are these? this elder son also then has *friends, who are not his father's friends*: see Matt. xxii. 16, “*they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians.*”

30. this thy son] The last degree of scorn and contempt,—just such as was shewn by the Pharisees towards the publicans and sinners (see ch. xviii. 11). ‘I will not count such an impure person *my brother*.’

thy living] A covert reproach of his father for having given it to him.

with harlots] A charitable addition on the part of the elder brother, such as those represented by him always take care to make under similar circumstances. Even supposing it a necessary inference from the kind of life which he had been leading, it was one which nothing but the bitterest jealousy would have uttered at such a time.

thou hast killed for him the fatted calf] Parallel with “*he receiveth sinners and eateth with them*,” ver. 2. ‘Thou hast not only

made him equal to me, but hast received him into superior favour.'

31.] thou art ever with me, as a reason why no *extraordinary* joy should be shewn over *him*; other reasons might be assigned, and lie indeed in the background, suggested by his tone and words: but this is the soft answer to turn away wrath.

all that I have is thine, because the portion of goods which remained **was his**.

32. It was meet] The Father still asserts the restored sonship of his returned prodigal—**this thy brother**. We may remark that the difficulties which have been found in the latter part of the parable, from the *uncontradicted* assertion in ver. 29, if the *Pharisees* are meant,—and the great pride and uncharitableness shewn, if *really righteous persons* are meant,—are considerably lightened by the consideration, that the contradiction of that assertion would have been *beside the purpose of the parable*; that it was the very thing on which the Pharisees prided themselves; that, besides, it *is* sufficiently contradicted *in fact*, by the spirit and words of the elder son. He was breaking his Father's commandment even when he made the assertion,—and the making it is part of his hypocrisy.

The result of the Father's entreaty is left purposely uncertain (see Trench, Parables): is it possible that this should have been the case, had the *Jewish nation* been meant by the elder brother? But now, as he typifies a set of individuals who might themselves be (and many of them were) won by repentance,—it is thus broken off, to be closed by each individual for himself. For we are all in turn examples of the cases of both these brothers, containing the seeds of both evil courses in our hearts: but, thanks be to God, under that grace, which is sufficient and willing to seek and save us from both.

Luke: Chapter 16

CHAP. XVI. 1–8.] PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD. Peculiar to Luke. No parable in the Gospels has been the subject of so much controversy as this: while, at the same time, the general stream of interpretation is well defined, and, in the main, satisfactory. It would be quite beyond the limits of this note to give any thing like a catalogue of the views respecting it: the principal ones which differ from that which I have adopted, will be noticed in the course of my remarks.

1.] he said also—a continuation, I believe, of the foregoing:—certainly closely connected in subject with it, as is the second parable in this chapter also: see below.

unto his disciples, not to the *Twelve only*, but to the *multitude of the disciples*; and more immediately perhaps to the *Publicans*, whose reception by Him had been the occasion of this discourse. I say this because I believe them to hold *a place*, though not a principal or an exclusive one, in the application of the parable which follows.

There was a certain rich man....] The history of this parable is, in itself, purely *worldly*. The *master* is a *son of this world*, as well as his steward: *bear this in mind*:—the whole parabolic machinery is *from the standing-point of the children of this world*. In the interpretation, this rich man is the *Almighty Possessor of all things*. This is the *only tenable view*. Meyer, who supposes him to be *Mammon* (defending it by the consideration that *dismissal from his service* is equivalent to *being received into everlasting habitations*, which it is *not*—see below), is involved in inextricable difficulties further on. Olshausen's view, that he represents the *Devil*, the *prince of this world*, will be found equally untenable. Schleiermacher's, that the *Romans* are intended, whose stewards the Publicans were, and that the debtors are the Jews, hardly needs refuting;—certainly not *more* refuting, than any consistent exposition will of itself furnish.

a steward, a general overseer—very much what we understand by *an agent*, or 'a man of business,' or, in the larger sense, **a steward**. They were generally of old, *slaves*: but this man is a *freeman*, from vv. 3, 4. This steward represents especially the *Publicans*, but also *all the disciples*, i.e. *every man in Christ's Church*. We are all God's stewards, who commits to our trust His property:—each one's office is of larger or smaller trust and responsibility, according to the measure entrusted to him. I say, *especially the Publicans*, because the Twelve, and probably others, had *relinquished all and followed Christ*, and therefore the application of the parable to them would not be *so direct*: and also because I cannot but put together with this parable and consider as perhaps prompted by it or the report of it, the profession of Zacchæus, ch. xix. 8. Others have supposed the steward to represent the *Pharisees*—but then the parable should have been *addressed to them*, which it was not: and this view entirely fails in the application.

was accused unto him: it is the same word in the original which generally represents *false* or *wrongful* accusation. This it was not here, but it was *malicious*: and the reason why the word has come so generally to signify '*wrongful* accusation,' is, that malicious charges are so frequently slanderous. The steward himself does not deny it.

The charge against him was not, that he *had wasted* (A. V.), but **was wasting**, his master's goods. In this charge (spiritually) we may see the real guilt of every man who is entrusted with the goods of our Heavenly Father. We are all 'scattering his

goods' If some one is to be found to answer to *the accusers*, the analogy of 'the Accuser of the brethren' is too striking to escape us.

2.] It makes very little difference either in admissibility of construction or of sense, whether we render, 'why do I hear this of thee?' i.e. 'what is the ground of this report?—what occasion has thou given for this being brought to me?' or, 'What is this that I hear of thee?' i.e. 'give some account of it.' I prefer rather the former, because no opportunity of explanation *what* it is, is given him, but he is commanded to produce his books, to shew *how* it has arisen.

give up the account of thy stewardship; for (taking for granted the correctness of the report, the steward not denying it) **thou wilt not be able to retain thy stewardship any longer**,—in ordinary English, **thou canst not**, &c. The impossibility lies in the *nature of things*—**thou art precluded from**. The interpretation of this announcement to the steward, is *the certainty*, spoken by God in every one of our consciences, *that we must give up, and give an account of, our stewardship at death*. The great truth lies in the background, that that dismissal, death itself, is the consequence of the *scattering His goods—the wages of sin*.

3.] The steward sets before himself the certainty of poverty and misery. He has not by his waste of his lord's property been laying up any store *for himself*;—that is not the point of the parable;—he has lived softly and effeminately, and cannot do an honest day's work:—**dig** is used for *all manual labours*. This speech, of digging and begging, must not be sought for in the interpretation; it belongs to the truth of the parable itself, as introducing the scheme which follows, but has no ulterior meaning.

4.] **I am resolved:** implying, **I have just arrived at the knowledge,—an idea has just struck me,—I have a plan.**

they may receive me—viz. those who are about to be spoken of, the *debtors*. He has them in his mind.

Observe, the aim of his scheme is that they may receive him into their houses,—*give him shelter*. This is made use of afterwards in the interpretation, for which see on ver. 9.

5.] It is more natural to suppose that these *debtors had borrowed*, i.e. not yet paid for these articles of food out of the stores of the rich man, than that they were *contractors* to the amounts specified.

of his own lord's,—shewing the unprincipled boldness of his plan for saving himself: as we express the same when we say, 'he robbed his own father.'

6.] **measures**—this first time the word is *baths*, for liquids, as the ephah for solids. See Ezek. xlvi. 10, 11, 14.

Take thy bill] The steward, not yet out of office, has all the vouchers by him, and returns each debtor his own bond for him to alter the figure (not, to *make another*, which would imply the *destruction* of the old bond, not its *return*).

sit down is graphic.

quickly implies the hurry with which the furtive business is transacted. The debtors seem to be all together, that all may be implicated and none may tell of the other.

7.] **measures**—this second time the word is the *corus*, twelve Attic bushels, according to Josephus. There does not appear to be any designed meaning in the variation of the amount deducted. We may easily conceive a reason, if we will, in the different circumstances of the debtors.

8.] **his lord**—of course, *the lord of the steward*. The A.V. ought to have been thus expressed, and not "*the lord*," and there would have been no ambiguity. He praised him, *because he had acted shrewdly, cleverly for his own interest*. The point brought out is not merely the shrewdness of the steward, but *his lord*, whose injury was wrought by this very shrewdness, *praising it*: for, our Saviour adds, **the sons of this world**, to which category *both* belonged—*he who conceived and he who praised the shrewdness—are more shrewd* (towards the purposes of) **their own generation—for the purposes of their self-interest,—than the sons of light**. But this very expression "*their own generation*," indicates that there is *a better and a higher generation, the family of light* (John xii. 36: Rom. xiii. 12: Eph. v. 8: 1 Thess. v. 5), whose interests require a higher and better wisdom and foresight. It is hardly necessary to add that the *discovery* of the steward's trick by the master is essential to the parable, as exemplifying the *wisely* and *wiser*.

9.] We now pass to the application at once—from the mouth of our Lord Himself. All that is dishonest and furtive in the character of the steward belonged entirely to him as a *son of this world*: but even in this character there was a point to praise and imitate. And the dishonesty itself is not inserted without purpose—viz. to shew us *how little the sons of this world scruple*

to use it, and how natural it is to them. Now, however, we stand on higher ground: to the pure, all things are pure:—in bringing up the example into the purer air which the children of light breathe, its grosser parts drop off, and the finer only remain.

Notice the emphasis, which ought always to be observed in reading, *And I say unto you*. It seems to recognize a necessary difference in the two situations:—‘although *you* are children of the light and the day, and *can do no such furtive acts, yet I say to YOU’*..... This view will explain how we may make **friends of the mammon of unrighteousness**, just as we can make an example for ourselves out of the **steward of unrighteousness**—that which is of itself **of unrighteousness**—which belongs to, is part of a system of, *unrighteousness*—which is the very *root of all evils*, the result, and the aptest concretion, of that system of *mine and thine* (see ch. xv. 12) which is itself the result of sin having entered into the world. And we are to use this mammon of unrighteousness to make ourselves,—not palaces, nor barns, nor estates, nor treasures,—but *friends*; i.e. to bestow it on the poor and needy—(see ch. xii. 33, which is the most striking parallel to our text—“*when it fails,*” with “*a treasure which shall not fail*”) **that when it shall fail,—they**, i.e. the friends—(compare the joy in heaven ch. xv. 7, 10, and Baxter’s remark cited there by Stier—‘Is there joy in heaven at thy conversion, and will there be none at thy glorification?’) **may receive you into the (or their) everlasting tabernacles.** See also ch. xiv. 13, 14.

God repays in their name. They receive us there with joy, if they are gone before us: they receive us there by making us partakers of their prayers, ‘which move the Hand that moves the world,’ even during this life.

Deeds then of charity and mercy are to be our spiritual shrewdness, by which we may turn to our account the *unjust mammon*,—providing ourselves with friends out of it;—and the debtors are here perhaps to be taken in their literal, not parabolic sense—we are to lighten their burdens by timely relief—the only way in which a son of light can change the hundred into fifty, or fourscore: see Isa. lviii. 6–8.

10–12.] Closely connected with the foregoing;—the ‘faithfulness in the least’ is the same as the prudence and shrewdness just spoken of;—in the case of the children of light they ran up into one—who is the **faithful and wise steward**, ch. xii. 42;—the **least** is the *unrighteous mammon*, which is the same as *that which is another man’s—the wealth of this present world*, which is not the Christian’s own, nor his proper inheritance. The **much,—the true [riches],—that which is your own, is the true riches of God’s inheritance:** of which the earth (see Matt. v. 5) forms a part, which God (implied in the who? for there will be none to give it you if you be untrue during this state of probation;—He will not God) shall give to you. The wealth of this world is *another man’s*—forfeited by sin—only put into our hands to try us, and to be rendered an account of.

13.] See note on Matt. vi. 24. The connexion here is,—that we must, while put in trust with the *unrighteous mammon*, be serving *not it, but God*. The saying here applies admirably to the Pharisees and Publicans: the former were, to outward appearance, the servants of God, but inwardly served Mammon;—the latter, *by profession* in the service of Mammon, were, by coming to Jesus, shewing that they inwardly served God.

14–31.] BY OCCASION OF THE COVETOUS PHARISEES DERIDING HIM, OUR LORD SPEAKS THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. The Pharisees were not slow in perceiving that the scope of *all these things* was to place this world’s goods, and all that the covetous seek after, at a very low price. It will be observed that the sayings which follow are in reference to matters mentioned during the discourses, or arising out of the character of the Pharisees as commented on in them.

15.] See last. note, end. **justify yourselves before men**—a contrast to “*I have sinned before thee,*” ch. xv. 18: and **abomination in the sight of God**, to “*joy in the presence of the angels of God,*” ch. xv. 10.

16.] See Matt. xi. 12 and note. The connexion is,—‘*Ye are they that justify yourselves before men; ye are no publicans and sinners,—no poor and needy,—but righteous, and increased with this world’s goods. But, since John, a kingdom has been preached, into which every one, publicans and sinners too (ch. xv. 1), are pressing in. The true relation however of that kingdom to the law is not as ye suppose, to destroy the law (Matt. v. 17), but to fulfil.*’ Then, as an example, our Lord reiterates the decision which He had before given on a point much controverted among the Jews—the law of adultery. But this He does, not *without occasion given*, and close connexion with the circumstances, and with what had before been said. As early as Tertullian, in the third century, it was remarked, that an allusion was meant here to the adultery of Herod Antipas with his brother Philip’s wife, which the Pharisees had tacitly sanctioned, thus allowing an open breach of that law which Christ came to fulfil. To this mention of Herod’s crime the **until John** gave relevance. Still the idea must not be too lightly assumed. Bleek’s remark is worth notice, that, had such an allusion been intended, the last words of the verse would have been otherwise expressed. Antipas had not *married a divorced woman*, but abducted a married woman from her husband. See on Matt. v. 32.

19–31.] Our Lord, in this closing parable, grasps the whole covetous and self-seeking character of the Pharisees, shews them a case in which it is carried to the utmost, by one who ‘*made no friends*’—with the unrighteous Mammon;—places in contrast

with it a case of extreme destitution and poverty,—the very thing which the *covetous* most abhorred;—and then passes over into the region beyond the grave, shewing them the contrast there also—and ending with a mysterious prophetic hint at the final rejection of the Kingdom of God and Himself by those for whom the law and prophets were insufficient to bring them to repentance. And while it does not appear that the *covetousness* of the Pharisees shewed itself in this particular way, our Lord here grasps the depravity by its root, which is, *a godless and loveless self-seeking*—saying in the heart, ‘There is no God’—and acting accordingly. The explanation of particular points see below.

19.] Now connects this directly with what goes before; being an answer, not immediately to *any thing said* by the Pharisees, but to their *scoffs* at Him;—as if He had said, ‘*hear now a parable*.’

a certain rich man.] Tertullian thought that *Herod* was meant, and by Lazarus *John*; and this view has been taken by others also: but surely with no probability. Our Lord might hint with stern rebuke at the present notorious crime of Herod, but can hardly be thought to have spoken thus of him. That the circumstances *will in some measure apply to these two*, is owing, as above in ch. xv., to the parable taking the *general case*, of which theirs was a particular instance. Others have thought that the rich man sets forth the Jews and the poor man the Gentiles. In my view, the very name of the poor man (see below) is a sufficient answer to this.

Observe, that this rich man is *not accused of any fragrant crimes*:—he lives, as the world would say, *as became his means and station*; he does not oppress nor spoil other men: he is simply a **son of this generation**, in the highest form.

purple and fine linen, the Tyrian costly purple—and the fine linen (for under clothing) from Egypt.

20.] The significant name Lazarus and Eleazar, the same as Eleazar,—and meaning, *God is my help*, should have prevented the expositors from imagining this to be *a true history*.

Perhaps by this name our Lord may have intended *to fill in the character of the poor man*, which indeed must otherwise be understood to be that of one who feared God.

He **was, or had been—cast down**, i.e. was placed there on purpose to get what he could of alms.

his gate, see on Matt. xxvi. 69: it was the portal, which led out of the *vestibule* into the *court*.

21.] It would seem that he *did obtain* this wish, and that the word **desiring**, as *would fain* in ch. xv. 16, must mean that he **looked for it, willingly took it**.

The **moreover** seems also to imply, that he *got the crumbs*: this verse relating the two points of contrast to the rich man: his only food, the crumbs, with which he longed to fill his belly, but could not:—his only clothing, nakedness and sores, and instead of the boon companions of the rich man, none to pity him but the dogs, who **licked**—certainly in pity, not *increasing his pain*, as Bengel thinks,—his sores, as they do their own. Such was the state of the two in this world.

22.] The *burial* of Lazarus is not mentioned, “on account of the neglect attending the burial of beggars,” as Euthymius.

was carried by the angels] In the whole of this description, the following canon of interpretation may be safely laid down:—Though it is unnatural to suppose that our Lord would in such a parable formally *reveal any new truth* respecting the state of the dead,—yet, in conforming himself to the ordinary language current on these subjects, it is impossible to suppose that He, whose essence is Truth, could have assumed as existing any thing which does not exist. It would destroy the truth of our Lord’s sayings, if we could conceive Him to have used popular language which *did not point at truth*. And accordingly, where *such language* was current, we find Him not adopting, but protesting against it: see Matt. xv. 5.

The bearing of the spirits of the just into bliss by the holy angels is only analogous to their other employments: see Matt. xiii. 41: Heb. i. 14.

Abraham’s bosom] The above remark does not apply here—for this, a form of speech among the Jews, was not even by themselves understood in its strict literal sense; and though the *purposes of the parable* require this, ver. 23, no one would think of pressing it into a truth, bot all would see in it the graphic filling up of a state which in itself is strictly actual. The expression **Abraham’s bosom** signified the *happy side of Hades*, where all the Fathers were conceived as resting in bliss.

No preeminence is signified as in John xiii. 23;—*all the blessed* are spoken of as in Abraham’s bosom. See also John i. 18.

The death of the rich man *last* should be remarked; Lazarus was taken soon from his sufferings; Dives was left longer, that he might have space to repent.

and was buried] There can be no doubt that the *funeral* is mentioned as being congruous to his station in life,—and, as Trench observes, ‘in a sublime irony,’—implying that he had all things *properly cared for*; the purple and fine linen which he wore in life, not spared at his obsequies.

23. in Hadès] Hadès, in Hebrew Sheöl, is the abode of *all disembodied spirits* till the resurrection; not, the place of torment,—much less *hell*, as understood commonly, in the A.V. Lazarus was *also in Hadès*, but separate from Dives; one on the blissful, the other on the baleful side. It is the *gates of Hadès, the imprisonment of death*, which shall not prevail against the Church (Matt. xvi. 18);—the Lord holds the *key of Hadès* (Rev. i. 18):—Himself went into the same Hadès, of which Paradise is a part.

in torments—*not eternal condemnation*;—for the judgment has not yet taken place; men can only be judged *in the body*, for the deeds *done in the body*:—but, *the certainty and anticipation of it*.

he lift up his eyes, not necessarily *to a higher place*, though that *may* be meant.

24.] “The proud man of earth is the beggar in hell,” Augustine.

On **Father Abraham** see Matt. iii. 9.

this flame, not subjective (i. e. confined to his own feeling) *only*, though perhaps mainly. But where lies the limit between inner and outer to the disembodied? Hardened sinners have died crying ‘Fire!’—Did the fire leave them, when they left their bodies?

25.] The answer is solemn, calm, and fatherly;—there is no mocking, as is found in the Koran under the same circumstances; no grief, as is sometimes represented affecting the blessed spirits for the lot of the lost.

remember] Analogy gives us every reason to suppose, that in the disembodied state the whole life on earth will lie before the soul in all its thoughts, words, and deeds, like a map of the past journey before a traveller. That which he was to remember is not sufficiently expressed by ‘*receivedst*,’ A.V.:—it is analogous to the word in Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16,—and expresses the receipt *in full*, the exhaustion of all claim on.

Those that were good things to *thee*, **thy good things came to an end** in thy lifetime: there are no more of them.

What a weighty, precious word is this **thy**: were it not for it, De Wette and the like, who maintain that the only meaning of the parable is, ‘*Woe to the rich, but blessed are the poor*,’ would have found in this verse at least a specious defence for their view.

evil things—not, **his evil things**,—for to him *they were not so*.

comforted: see ch. vi. 24.

26.] Even if it were not so,—however, and for whatsoever reason, God’s decree hath placed thee there,—thy wish is *impossible*.

a great gulf] In the interpretation,—the irresistible decree—*then truly so, but no such on earth*—by which the Almighty Hand hath separated us and you, **in order that**, not merely *so that*, none may pass it. In the graphic description, a yawning chasm impassable.

is fixed] for ever. This expression precludes all idea that the following verse indicates the beginning of a better mind in the rich man.

27.] This is the *believing and trembling* of James ii. 19. His eyes are now opened to the truth; and no wonder that his natural sympathies are awakened for his brethren.

That a *lost spirit* should feel and express such sympathy, is not to be wondered at; the misery of such will be very much heightened by the awakened and active state of those higher faculties and feelings which selfishness and the body kept down here.

29.] “*Faith ts by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ*,” Rom. x. 17. “We are saved by faithful hearing, not by apparitions.” Bengel. This verse furnishes a weighty testimony from our Lord Himself of the sufficiency *then* of the O.T. Scriptures for the salvation of the Jews. It is *not so now*.

30, 31.] Nay—not, ‘*they will not hear them:*’ he could not tell that, and besides, it would have taken away much of the ground of the answer of Abraham:—the word deprecates leaving their salvation in *such uncertainty*, as the chance of their hearing Moses and the prophets seems to him to imply.—‘*Leave it not so, when it might be at once and for ever done by sending them one from the dead.*’

Abraham’s answer, besides opening to us a depth in the human heart, has a plain application to the Pharisees, to whom the parable was spoken. They would not hear Moses and the Prophets:—Christ rose from the dead, but He did not go to *them*;—this verse is not *so* worded, ‘they would have rejected Him, had He done so;’—the *fact* merely is here supposed, and that in the very phrase which so often belongs to His own resurrection. They were not persuaded—did not believe, though One rose from the dead. To deny altogether this allusion, is to rest contented with merely the surface of the parable.

Observe, Abraham does not say, ‘*they will not repent*’—but, ‘*they will not believe, be persuaded:*’ which is another and a deeper thing.

Luther does not seem to conclude rightly, that this *disproves* the possibility of appearances the dead. It only says, that such appearances will not bring about *faith* in the human soul: but that they may not serve other ends in God’s dealings with men, it does not assert. There is no gulf between the *earth* and Hadēs: and the very form of Abraham’s answer, setting forth no impossibility in this second case, as in the former, would seem to imply its *possibility*, if requisite.

We can hardly pass over the identity of the *name* LAZARUS with that of him who *actually was recalled from the dead*, but whose return, far from persuading the Pharisees, was the immediate exciting cause of their crowning act of unbelief.

Luke: Chapter 17

CHAP. XVII. 1–10.] FURTHER DISCOURSES. The discourse appears to proceed onward from the foregoing.

1.] The words were perhaps spoken owing to some *offence* which had happened;—the departure of the Pharisees in disgust, or some point in their conduct; such as the previous chapter alluded to.

2.] See Matt. xviii. 6, 7, and notes.

these little ones] Perhaps the publicans and sinners of ch. xv. 1; perhaps also, repeated with reference to what took place, Matt. 1. c.

3, 4.] See on Matt. xviii. 15, 21, 22. The **take heed to yourselves** here is to warn them not to be too readily dismayed at *offences*, nor to meet them in a brother with an unforgiving spirit.

rebuke him] “Love begins with speaking truth,” Stier:—who remarks, that in the Church, as in the world, the love of many waxing cold,—not being strong or warm enough for this *rebuke*,—is the cause why offences abound.

5.] ‘*Increase our faith,*’ of the A.V., is not exact: Add unto us, i.e. give us more faith, is more literal and simpler.

This is the only example in the Gospels in which the *Apostles* are marked out as requesting or saying any thing to Lord. They are amazed at the greatness of the faith which is to overcome *offences* and for-give *sins* as in vv. 8, 4:—and pray that *more faith* may be added to them.

6.] See on Matt. (xvii. 20) xxi. 21. On this occasion some particular tree of the sort was close at hand, and furnished the instance, just as the Mount of Transfiguration in the former of those passages, and the Mount of Olives in the latter.

The mulberry tree is not very common in Palestine, but still found there. It must not be confounded with the *sycomore*, ch. xix. 4, which is the Egyptian fig. See note there.

7–10.] The connexion is,—‘Ye are *servants* of your Master; and therefore endurance is required of you,—faith and trust to endure out your day’s work before you enter into your rest. Your Master will enter into His, but your time will not yet come; and all the service which you can meanwhile do Him, is but that which is your bounden duty to do,—seeing that your body, soul, and spirit are His.’

7.] **by and by** (literally, immediately) in the A.V. is wrongly joined with **will say unto him**: it corresponds to “*afterward*” in ver. 8, and must be joined with **go and sit down**.

8.] till I have eaten and drunken: see ch. xii. 37, where a different assurance seems to be given. But our Lord is here speaking of what we in our state of *service* are to *expect*; there, of what, in our state of *freedom, reward, and adoption*, the *wonders of His grace will confer on us*. Here the question is of *right*: there, of *favour*.

9.] Our Lord is not laying down rules for the behaviour of an earthly master to his servants,—but (see above) is speaking of the rightful state of relation *between us, and Him whose we are, and whom we serve*.

10.] This shews the sense of the parable, as applying to our own thoughts of ourselves, and the impossibility of any *claim* for our services to God.

In Rom. vi. 23 (see also the foregoing verses) we have the true ground on which we look for eternal life set before us:—vix. as the *gift* of God *whose servants we are*,—not the *wages*, as in the case of sin, *whose we are not*. In the case of *men* this is different; a good servant is “*profitable*” (Philem. 11), not *useless*. See Acts xvii. 25.

The case supposed introduces an argument à fortiori, i.e. from the stronger to the weaker: ‘*how much more, when ye have failed in so many respects.*’ Wretched is he, whom the Lord calls an unprofitable servant: happy, he who calls himself so.’ Bengel.

Thus closes the series of discourses which began with ch. xv. 1.

11–19.] HEALING OF TEN LEPERS. It does not appear to what part of the last journey this is to be referred. There is no reason for supposing it to have been subsequent to what has just been related:—this is not implied. It may have been at the very beginning of the journey. From the circumstance that these lepers were a mixed company of Jews and Samaritans, the words rendered **through the midst of Samaria and Galilee**, probably mean ‘*between Samaria and Galilee*,’ on the frontiers of both.

This seems to be parallel with Matt. xix. 1. The journey mentioned there would lead Him *between Samaria and Galilee*.

12.] afar off: see Levit. xiii. 46: Num. v. 2.

Their misery had broken down the national distinction, and united them in one company.

On the nature of leprosy and its significance, see on Matt. viii. 2.

14.] One of our Lord’s first miracles had been the healing of a leper; then He touched him and said, ‘Be thou clean:’ now He *sinks as it were the healing*, and keeps it in the background;—and why so? There may have been reasons unknown to us; but one we can plainly see, and that is, to bring out for the Church the lesson which the history yields. In their going away, in the absence of Jesus, they are healed: what need to go back and give him thanks? Here was a trial of their *love: faith* they had, enough to go, and enough to be cleansed: but *love* (with the one exception)—gratitude, they had not.

shew yourselves] See note on Matt. viii. 4.

as they went] The meaning evidently is, that they had not gone far, and that the whole took place within a short time. They had not been to the priests, As some suppose.

15.] The words here set before us something immediate, and, I should be inclined to think, witnessed by the narrator.

18. this stranger] literally, **this foreigner by birth.** The Samaritans were *Gentiles*;—not a *mixed race*, as is sometimes erroneously supposed. They had a *mixed religion*, but were themselves originally from other countries: see 2 Kings xvii. 24–41. There may have been a reason for the nine Jews not returning,—that they held the ceremonial duty imposed on them to be paramount, which the Samaritan might not rate so highly. That he was going to Mount Gerizim does not appear: from his being found with Jews, he probably would act as a Jew.

19.] hath made thee whole—in a higher sense than the mere cleansing of his leprosy—*theirs* was merely the beholding of the brazen serpent with the outward eyes,—but his, with the eye of inward faith; and this faith saved him;—not only healed his body, but his soul.

20–37.] PROPHETIC ANSWER TO THE PHARISEES. In this discourse we have several sayings which our Lord afterwards repeated In His last prophetic discourse to the four apostles on Mount Olivet; but much also which is peculiar to Luke, and most precious.

20.] The question certainly is asked by the Pharisees, as all their questions were asked, with no good end in view: to entangle our Lord, or draw from Him some direct announcement which might be matter of accusation.

with (accompanied with) **anticipation**, or **observation**. The cognate verb is used ch. xiv. 1 of the Pharisees ‘watching’ Jesus.

21.] Its coming shall be so gradual and unobserved, that none during its waxing onward shall be able to point here or there for a proof of its coming,—**for behold the kingdom of God is (already) among you**. The misunderstanding which rendered these words ‘*within you*’ meaning this in a spiritual sense, ‘*in your hearts*,’ should have been prevented by reflecting that they are addressed to the *Pharisees*, in whose hearts it certainly was not. Nor could the expression in this connexion well bear this spiritual meaning *potentially*—i. e. is in its nature, within your hearts. The words are too express and emphatic for this. The kingdom of God was *begun among them*, and continues thus making its way in the world, without observation of men; so that whenever men can say ‘*lo here! or, lo there!*’—whenever great ‘revivals’ or ‘triumphs of the faith’ can be pointed to, they stand self-condemned as *not belonging to that kingdom*. Thus we see that every such marked event in the history of the Church is by God’s own hand as it were *blotted and marred*, so as not to deceive us into thinking that the kingdom has come. So it was at the Pentecostal era:—so at that of Constantine;—so at the Reformation.

The meaning ‘among you,’ includes of course the deeper and personal one ‘within each of you,’ but the two cannot be interchanged the one for the other.

22.] This saying is *taken up from* the last verse.—‘*He is among you, who is the Bridegroom,—the Son of Man;*’—during whose presence ye cannot mourn, but when He shall be taken from you, you shall wish in vain for one of these days of His presence.

23. And they shall say to you] ‘Ye shall not see one of those days;—therefore do not run after false reports of My coming.’ A warning to all so-called expositors, and followers of expositors, of prophecy, who cry “*see here*” and “*see there*,” every time that war breaks out, or revolutions occur.

See on these verses, 23, 24, Matt. xxiv. 23–27 and notes.

25–30.] *The events which must precede the coming:* and (1) ver. 25, as regards *the Lord Himself*,—His sufferings and rejection, primarily by this generation,—but in implication, by the world;—and (2) vv. 26–30, which unfold this implication as regards the whole world, which shall be in its state of carelessness and sensuality at that time;—see notes on Matt. xxiv. 37–39. The example of *the days of Lot* is added here,—and thereby the sanction of the Lord of Truth given to another part of the sacred record, on which modern scepticism has laid its unhallowed hands.

31.] refers immediately to the example of Sodom just related. In Matt. xxiv. 16–18, it finds its place by a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, see there.

32.] A solemn caution is here added, binding the warning to the example before,—**let him not return back—remember her who did.**

33.] See on Matt. x. 39, and ch. ix. 24. In connexion here, it leads the way to vv. 34, 35.

whosoever shall have sought, i.e. ‘during his preceding life,’—**shall lose it then: whosoever shall have lost it**, by self-sacrifice, during this life, **shall quicken it then**.

shall quicken it] “The verb in the original is an expressive word, derived from animal parturition, bringing forth to air and life what was before concealed in the womb. That day shall come as the pains of labour on a woman in travail (Matt. xxiv. 8): but to the saints of God it shall be the birth of the soul and body to life and glory everlasting.” Wordsw.

34–36.] See on Matt. xxiv. 40, 41. Here, there are two references (1) to the servants of the Lord in the midst of the world out of which they shall be separated: (2) to the separation of the faithful and unfaithful among *themselves*.

34.] indicates a closer relationship than that of mere fellow-workmen, and sets forth the division of even families in that day.

87.] Where, Lord? i.e. where shall this happen? The disciples know not the universality of this which our Lord is announcing to them, and which His dark and awful saying proclaims; see note on it, Matt. xxiv. 28.

Observe, there is *not a word*, except so far as the greater coming includes the lesser, in all this, of the destruction of Jerusalem. The future coming of the Lord is the *only subject*: and thus it is an entirely distinct discourse from that in Matt. xxiv., or in our

Luke: Chapter 18

CHAP. XVIII. 1–3.] THE UNJUST JUDGE. This parable, though not perhaps spoken in immediate unbroken sequence after the last discourse, evidently arose out of it:—perhaps was the fruit of a conversation with the disciples about the day of His coming and the mind with which they must expect it. For observe, that in its *direct* application it is ecclesiastical; and not individual, but by a legitimate accommodation. The widow is the Church; the judge, her God and Father in heaven. The argument, as in the parable of the *steward of injustice* (so literally), so in this of the **judge of injustice** (so literally), is “*à fortiori*, from the stronger to the weaker.” ‘If such be the power of earnest entreaty, that it can win right even from a man sunk in selfishness and fearing neither God nor men, how much more will the right be done by the just and holy God in answer to the continued prayers of his elect;’ even though, when this very right is asserted in the world by the coming of the Son of Man, He may hardly find among his people the power to believe it—though few of them will have shewn this unweariedness of entreaty which the poor widow shewed.

1. always] See 1 Thess. v. 17.

The *mind* of prayer, rather than, though of course including, the outward act, is here intended. The earnest desire of the heart, is prayer.

to faint;—to languish,—to give up through the weight of overpowering evil.

2.] See Deut. xvi. 18 and Matt. v. 21, 22.

3.] Avenge me of...or perhaps, deliver me from—the justice of her cause being presupposed—this adversary being her oppressor on account of her defenceless situation, and she wanting a sentence from the judge to stop his practices.

4.] The point of this part of the parable is, the extortion of *right* from *such a man* by importunity. *His act* was not an act of justice, but of injustice; his very *avenging* was *injustice*, because he did it from *self-regard* and *not from a sense of duty*. He, like the steward above, was *a man of injustice*,—*belonging to, being of*, the iniquity which prevails in the world.

5.] The word rendered **weary** is a remarkable one. It properly signifies to **smite in the face**;—and proverbially (see reff.), **to mortify or incessantly annoy**. It is the same verb as that in 1 Cor. ix. 27 rendered “*keep under*.” Meyer interprets it literally—‘*lest at last she should become desperate, and come and strike me in the face*.’ It has been observed that the Apostles acted from this very motive when they besought the Lord to send away the Syrophenician woman,—‘*for she cried after them*.’ Matt. xv. 23.

6. the unjust judge] literally (see above) **the judge of injustice**—i. e. who was of, belonged to, the unrighteousness which is in the world.

7.] The poor widow in this case (the forsaken Church, contending with her adversary the devil, 1 Pet. v. 8) has this additional claim, in which the right of her cause consists,—that she is Elect of God,—His Beloved.

day and night] This answers to the **always** in ver. 1, but is an amplification of it.

and he is long-suffering over them] or,..... **and He delays his vengeance in their case:—and He, in their case, is long-suffering**, i.e. He is long-suffering to those who oppress them: which though it is merciful to the oppressors, yet may be taken in the light of a hardship to the oppressed.

8. Nevertheless....] This can hardly be, as Meyer interprets it, that the painful thought suddenly occurs to the Lord, how many there will be even at His coming who will not have received Him as the Messiah: for **the faith**, though it includes ‘faith’ generally, is yet here, strictly speaking, *faith in reference to the object of the parable*—faith which has endured in prayer without fainting. Or the meaning may be general: *the faith* in Him, who is the hearer and answerer of prayer.

9–14.] THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN. This parable is spoken not to the Pharisees, for our Lord would not in their presence have chosen a Pharisee as an example; nor *concerning* the Pharisees, for then it would have been *no parable*—but to the people, and with reference to some among them (then and always), certain, who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise other men.

The parable describes an every-day occurrence: the parabolic character is given by the concurrence and grouping of the two,

and by the fact that each of these represents psychologically a class of persons.

10, 11.] The Pharisee stood (in the ordinary place) **and prayed thus with himself**:—such a prayer he would not dare to put up aloud. The Church has admirably fitted to this parable the declaration of thankfulness in 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10 (the two being the Epistle and Gospel for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity), also made by a Pharisee, and also on the ground ‘*that he was not as other men*:’—but how different in its whole spirit and effect! There, in the deepest humility, he ascribes it to the *grace of God* that he laboured more abundantly than they all;—**yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.**

12. I fast twice in the week] This was a *voluntary* fast, on the Mondays and Thursdays; the only prescribed fast in the year being the great day of atonement, see Levit. xvi. 29: Num. xxix. 7. So that he is boasting of his *works of supererogation*.

I give tithes of all] Here again, the law perhaps (but compare Abraham’s practice, Gen. xiv. 20; and Jacob’s, Gen. xxviii. 22) only required tithe of the fruit of the field and the produce of the cattle: see on Matt. xxiii. 23.

Not all that I *possess*, which is an incorrect rendering: but of all that **I acquire**;—**of all my increase**; see Deut. xiv. 22. His speech shews admirably what his *trusting in himself* was.

13.] afar off—far from the Pharisee;—a contrast in spirit to the other’s *thanks* that he was not as other men, is furnished by the poor Publican in his humility acknowledging this by an *act*.

would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven—another contrast,—for we must here suppose that the Pharisee prayed with all significance of gesture, with eyes and hands uplifted (see Matt. vi. 5). There is a slight but true difference also in the original, in the word rendered **stood** of the Pharisee—‘being put in position’ (answering to ‘being **seated**’ of the other usual posture) and **standing** of the publican,—coming in merely and remaining, in no studied place or posture.

smote upon his breast] See ch. xxiii. 48, “for sorrow of mind. Where the pain is, there is the hand.” Bengel. The original is, **to me the sinner**. But probably the article is only generic, pointing him out as one of a class. It seems to me that any emphatic comparison here would somewhat detract from the solemnity and simplicity of the prayer. The definite article rather implies, not comparison with others, but intense self-abasement: “sinner that I am.” Nor are we to find any doctrinal meanings in the word **be merciful** (or, **be propitiated**). WE know of *one only way*, in which the prayer could be accomplished: but the words here *have no reference to that, nor could they have*.

14.] The sense is, One returned home in the sight of God with his prayer answered, and that prayer had grasped the true object of prayer,—the forgiveness of sins (so that **justified** is in the usual sense of the Epistles of St. Paul, **justified before God**—see reff.), the other prayed not for it, and obtained it not. Therefore he who would seek justification before God must seek it by humility and not by self-righteousness.

every one that exalteth himself has been illustrated in the demeanour of the Pharisee;—**shall be abased**, in his failure to obtain justification from God:—**he that humbleth himself**, in that of the Publican;—**shall be exalted**, in his obtaining the answer to his prayer, which was *this justification*. Thus the particular instance is bound up with the general truth.

15–17.] LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST. Here the narrative of St. Luke again falls in with those of St. Matthew and St. Mark, after a divergence of nearly nine chapters, see note on ch. ix. 51.—Matt. xix. 13–15: Mark x. 13–16. The *narrative* part of our text is distinct from the two; the words of our Lord are verbatim as Mark; see notes on Matthew. The place and time indicated here are the same as before, from ch. xvii. 11.

15.] also their infants; not the people came only, but also brought their children. Or, the article may be merely generic, as in A.V.

The word used by St. Luke points out more distinctly the tender age of the children than that in Matthew and Mark.

13–30.] QUESTION OF A RICH RULER: OUR LORD’ S ANSWER, AND DISCOURSE THEREUPON. Matt. xix. 16–30. Mark x. 17–31. The only addition in our narrative is that the young man was *a ruler*,—perhaps of the synagogue: see notes on Matthew and Mark.

31–34.] FULLER DECLARATION OF HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH. Matt. xx. 17–19. Mark x. 32–34. The narrative of the journey now passes to the *last section of it*,—the going up to Jerusalem, properly so called: that which in Matthew and Mark forms *the whole journey*: We know from John xi. 54 that this journey took place from Ephraim, a city near the desert.

32.] The *betrayal* is omitted

here, which is unaccountable if St. Luke saw St. Matthew's account, as also the omission of the *crucifying*, this being the *first* announcement of it; see a similar omission in ch. ix. 45.

34.] Peculiar to Luke. **none of these things**—i. e. neither the Sufferings nor the Resurrection. **All was as** yet hidden from them, and it seems not to have been till very shortly before the event itself that they had any real expectation of its happening.

35–43.] HEALING OF A BLIND MAN AT THE ENTRANCE INTO JERICHO. Matt. xx. 29–84, Mark x. 46–52, where see notes.

I have on Matthew spoken of the discrepancy of his narrative from the two others. The supposition that they were two miracles is perfectly monstrous: and would at once destroy the credit of St. Matthew as a truthful narrator. If farther proof of their identity were wanting to any one, we might find it in the fact that so many expressions are common to Mark and Luke: compare the wording of the two accounts. In Matthew of course they are in the plural, as he has *two* blind men.

39.] **they which went before:** in Matthew, “*the multitude;*” in **Mark**, “**many.**”

43.] Peculiar (except **followed him**, which three relate) to St. Luke;—his usual way of terminating such narrations, as it certainly was the result of such a miracle—see ch. xiii. 17; ix. 48; v. 26. He, of the three evangelists, takes most notice of the glory given to God on account of the miraculous acts of the Lord Jesus.

Luke: Chapter 19

CHAP. XIX. 1–10.] ZACCHÆUS THE PUBLICAN. Peculiar to St. Luke, and indicating that though in the main his narrative is coincident with, yet it is wholly independent of those of St. Matthew and St. Mark.

2.] **Zacchæus** signifies in Hebrew, ‘pure;’ the name occurs in Ezra ii. 9: Neh. vii. 14. He was not a Gentile, as Tertullian supposed, but a Jew, see ver. 9.

chief among the publicans] Probably an administrator of the revenue derived from *balsam*, which was produced in abundance in the neighbourhood.

4. **a sycamore tree]** not what we know that name, but the Egyptian fig, a tree like the mulberry in appearance, size, and foliage, but belonging generically to the fig-trees. It grows to a size and height. See on ch. xvii. 6.

5.] The *Probability* is, that our Lord’s supernatural knowledge of man (see John i. 48–50) is intended to be understood as the means of his knowing Zacchæus: but the narrative does not absolutely exclude the supposition of a personal knowledge of Zacchæus on the part of some around Him. But of what possible import can such a question be, when the narrative plainly shews us that Jesus saw into his *heart*? Cannot He who knows the thoughts, call by the name also?

abide, probably over the night. See John i. 40.

I must—perhaps it is **my purpose**, or even more, **there is necessity that I should**; for especially in these last days of our Lord’s ministry, every event is fixed and determined by a divine plan.

7.] The murmurers are Jews who were accompanying Him to Jerusalem, on the road to which Zacchæus’s house lay (see ver. 1).

with a man that is a sinner] His profession in life, and perhaps an unprincipled exercise of his power in it, had earned him this name with his fellow-countrymen. Compare his confession in the next verse.

8.] This need not have taken place *in the morning*; much more probably it was immediately on our Lord’s entrance into the house, while the multitude were yet murmuring in the court, and in their presence. Our Lord’s answer, **This day is salvation come to this house**, looks as if He were just entering the house, not just leaving it; and the *day* meant must be the same with that in ver. 5.

stood and said has something formal and pre-determined about it: he stood forward, with some effort resolve: see on ch. xviii. 11 ff., where the word used of the pharisee is the same.

the half of my goods I give to the poor] See note on ch. xvi. 9. Zacchæus may well have heard of that parable from one of his publican acquaintances, or perhaps repentance may have led him at once to this act of self-denial.

There is no *uncertainty* in if **I have taken any thing:** the expression is equivalent to, **whatever I have unfairly exacted from any man.** See note on ch. iii 14.

9.] The announcement is made to *him*, though not in the second person.

Salvation] in the stronger sense, bringing with it all its blessings.

Is a son of Abraham: though despised by the multitude, has his rights as a Jew, and has availed himself of them by receiving his Lord in faith and humility.

10.] For, the greater sinner

sinner he may have been, the more does he come under the description of those (sheep) whom the good Shepherd came to **seek and save** (Matt. xv. 24).

11–27.] PARABLE OF THE MINE, or POUNDS. Peculiar to Luke. By the introductory words, the parable must have been spoken in the house of Zacchæus, i.e. perhaps in the open room looking into the court, where probably many of the multitude were assembled. A parable very similar in some points to this was spoken by our Lord in His last great prophetic discourse, Matt. xxv. 14–30.

Many modern Commentators maintain that the two parables represent one and the same: if so, we must at once give up, not only the pretensions to *historical* accuracy on the part of our Gospels (see ver. 11), but all idea that they furnish us with the words of our Lord any where: *for the whole structure and incidents of the two are essentially different.* If oral tradition thus varied before the Gospels were written, in the report of our Lord's spoken words, how can we know that He spoke *any thing which they relate?* If the Evangelists themselves altered, arranged, and accommodated those discourses, not only is the above the case, but their honesty is likewise impugned.

Besides, we shall here find the parable, in its very root and point of comparison, *individual and distinct.* Compare throughout the notes on Matthew.

11.] The distance of Jericho from Jerusalem was 150 stadia = 16 English miles and 6 furlongs.

that the kingdom of God should immediately appear] They imagined that the present journey to Jerusalem, undertaken as it had been with such publicity, and accompanied with such wonderful miracles, was for the purpose of revealing and establishing the Messiah's kingdom.

12.] The groundwork of this part of the parable seems to have been derived from the history of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great. The kings of the Herodian family made journeys to Rome, to receive their "Kingdom." On Archelaus's doing so, the Jews sent after him a protest, which however was not listened to by Augustus. The situation was appropriate; for at Jericho was the royal palace which Archelaus had built with great magnificence.

13. **ten]** See on Matt. xxv. 1. The giving the *mina to each*, is a totally different thing from giving to one *five*, to another *two*, and to a third *one* talent. The sums given are here all the *same*, and all *very small*. The (Attic) mina is, of a talent, and equal to about £3 of our money, In Matthew the man gives his whole *property* to his servants; here he makes trial of them with these small sums ("*a very little*," see ver. 17).

14.] The nobleman, son of a king, literally, **one high born**, is the Lord Jesus; the kingdom is that over his own citizens, the Jews. They sent a message after Him; their cry went up to Heaven, in the persecutions of his servants, &c.; **we will not have this man to reign over us.** The parable has a double import: suited both to the disciples (*his own servants*), and the multitude (*his citizens*).

15.] **what business they had carried on:** not, '*what had gained'*

16–28.] See on Matthew. It is observable here, however, how exactly

and minutely in keeping is every circumstance. Thy pound hath gained ten pounds; the humility with which this is stated, where no account of *each man's own ability* is taken as in Matthew, and then the proportion of the reward,—**ten cities**,—so according with the nature of what the Prince went to receive, and the occasion of his return.

It has been shewn by rabbinical citations that the Jews used the *napkin*, or *handkerchief*, for wrapping and keeping their money in.

25.] is parenthetical, spoken by *the standers-by in the parable*, in surprise at such a decision: then in ver. 26, the king answers them.

27.] This command brings out both coming of the Lord,—at the destruction of Jerusalem, and at the end of the world: for we must not forget that even now '*He is gone to receive a Kingdom and return:*' ‘we see not yet all things put under His feet.’

28.] Not *immediately* after saying these things;—see on ver. 5: unless they were said in the morning on his departure.

29–38.] TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO

JERUSALEM. Matt. xxi. 1–9. Mark xi. 1–10. John xii. 12–19, where see notes.

37. the whole multitude of the disciples] In the widest sense; it is equivalent to “*the multitudes,*” Mat. thew. The “*mighty work,*” In the which dwelt, mostly on their minds, **was the raising** of Lazarus, John xii. 17, 18:—but as this perhaps was not known to St. Luke, we must understand him to mean, *all that they had seen during their journey with Him.*

38.] in heaven is equivalent to **in the highest**, and was probably added by them to fill out the parallelism.

39, 40.] THE PHARISEES MURMUR: OUR LORD’ S REPLY. Peculiar to Luke.

39.] These Pharisees could hardly in any sense be disciples of Jesus. Their spirit was just that of modern Socinianism: the prophetic expressions used, and the lofty epithets applied to Him, who was merely in their view a teacher (so is the word rendered “*master*”), offended them.

40.] A proverbial expression—but probably not without reference to Habakuk ii. 11.

41–44.] OUR LORD WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM. Peculiar (in this form) to Luke.

41.] Our Lord stood on the lower part of the Mount of Olives, whence the view of the city even now is striking. What a history of divine Love and human ingratitude lay before him!

when He grieved, it was for the **hardness of men’s hearts:** when He wept, in Bethany and here, it was over the *fruits of sin.*

42.] “Those who lament,” says Euthymius in reference to the unfinished form of this sentence, “are in the habit of breaking off their sayings, by reason of the vehemence of their sayings, by reason of the vehemence of their affection.” Perhaps in the actual words spoken by the Lord there may have been an allusion to the *name Jerusalem*, which itself imports *the seeing of peace.*

even thou] or thou also, as well as these My disciples. For contains the awful reason which there was for the fervent wish just expressed: it was the Lord’s desire, **because.... a trench]** Literally, a mound with palisades. Josephus gives an account of its being built. When the Jews destroyed this, Titus built a wall round them,—see Isa. xxix. 2, 3, 4—to which our Lord here tacitly refers.

44.] The verb rendered *shall lay thee even with the ground* is used in two meanings:—*shall level thy buildings to the foundation, and dash thy children against the ground.*

thy children] Not *infants* merely; the meaning is general.

Shall not leave in thee one stone upon another]

see Matt. xxiv. 2 and note there.

‘because of thy sins and rebellions;’—**t hose might be all blotted out, hadst thou known, recognized, the time of thy visit by Me.**

visitation is a word of ambiguous meaning, either for good or for evil. It brings at once here before us the *coming seeking fruit*, ch. xiii. 7—and the *returning of the Lord of the vineyard*, ch. xx.

16. It is however the first or favourable meaning of *visitation*, that is here prominent.

45, 46.] CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE. see on Matt. xxi. 12, 13: Mark xi. 15–17

41, 48.] A general description of His employment during these last days, the particulars of which follow. It is rightly however placed at the *end* of a chapter, for it forms a close to the long section wherein the last journey to Jerusalem has been described.

Luke: Chapter 20

CHAP. XX. 1–8.] HIS AUTHORITY QUESTIONED. HIS REPLY. Matt. xxi. 23–27 Mark xi. 27–33, where see notes. ()
(*The history of the fig tree is not in our text.*)

1.] the days, viz. of this His

being in Jerusalem.

2.] or—that is “*to speak more definitely*”

9–19.] PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO HUSBANDMEN. Matt. xxi. 33–46. Mark xii. 1–12. See notes on Matthew for the sense; and for comparison of the reports, on Mark.

9.] The parable was spoken to the *people*—but (ver. 19) **at, with reference to, against the chief priests and scribes.** Bengel suggests that he addressed it to the people, to guard against interruption on the part of the chief priests.

14. when the husbandmen saw him] This is taken up from **when they saw him** of the verse before, and is emphatic—**On the contrary, when they saw him....**

17.] The **then** infers the negation of **Let it not be—‘How then,**

supposing your wish to be fulfilled, could this which is written come to pass?’

19. and they feared the people] The copula, **and**, introduces the state of mind in which this their attempt was made: **and they did so in fear of the people.**

20–26.] REPLY CONCERNING THE LAWFULNESS OF TRIBUTE TO CÆSAR. Matt. xxii. 15–22. Mark xii. 13–17, where see notes as before.

20.] Spies: literally, **men suborned, instructed and arranged for that purpose.**

that they might....] *they*, not the spies, but the chief priests.

The A.V., in rendering **his words**, has mistaken the construction of the clause. It is, **that they might lay hold of him by some saying;** “*catch him by a word*,” as St. Mark. unto the ruling (Roman) **power** (genus), **unto the authority of the governor** (species). The form of the sentence in the original renders the separation of the two necessary.

27–40.] REPLY TO THE SADDUCEES RESPECTING THE RESURRECTION. Matt. xxii, 28–33; Mark xii. 18–27, and notes.

29.] therefore: i.e. well then—

‘as an example of this law,...’

34, 35.] Peculiar to Luke, and important. For this present state of men, marriage is an ordained and natural thing; but in “*that world*,” which is by the context the state of the *first resurrection* (nothing being said of the rest of the dead, though the *bare fact* might be predicated of them also), they who are found worthy to obtain that state of life and the resurrection from the dead, are no longer under the ordinance of marriage: for neither can they any more die; i.e. they will have no need of a succession and renewal, which is the main purpose of marriage.

36.] The fact, that **they are equal unto the angels**, is alleged, not as shewing them to be without passions or lusts, but as setti

forth their *immortality*.

sons of God is here used, not in its *ethical sense*, as applied to believers in this world,—but its *metaphysical sense*, as denoting the *essential state* of the blessed after the resurrection:—‘they are, by their resurrection, *essentially* partakers of the divine nature, and so cannot die.’ When Meyer says that the Lord *only* speaks of the risen, and has not here in His view the ‘quick’ at the time of His coming, it must be remembered that the ‘change’ which shall pass on them (1 Cor. xv. 51–54) shall put them into precisely the same immortality as the risen (compare *ibid.* ver. 42).

37.] even Moses, i.e. *that very* Moses, whom you allege as showing by inference the contrary.

38.] On all live unto him see on Matt. vv. 31–33: but we have in this argument even a further generalization than in Matthew and Mark. There, it is a *covenant relation* on which the matter rests: here, a life of *all*, living and dead, *in the sight of God*,—so that none are annihilated,—but in the regard of Him who inhabiteth Eternity, the being of *all is a living one*, in all its changes.

39, 40.] Peculiar to Luke;—implied however in Matthew ver. 34, and Mark ver. 28. **41–44.]** QUESTION RESPECTING CHRIST AND DAVID. Matt. xxii. 41–46; Mark xii. 85–87, where see notes. St. Luke omits the question of the lawyer, which occurred *immediately* on the gathering together of the Pharisees after the last incident. This question of our Lord seems to have followed close on that, which (and not that in vv. 27 ff. here) was their *last to Him*, Mark xii. 34.

41.] unto them, i.e. the Scribes. The same thing is signified by “*How say the Scribes?*” in Mark. In Matthew the question is addressed to the Pharisees. I mention these things as marks of the independence of the accounts. The underlying *fact* is, the Lord addressed the Pharisees and Scribes on a view which they (the Scribes, the Pharisees agreeing) entertained about the **Messiah**. Hence the three accounts diverge. **43.]** On in the book of **Psalms**, Wordsw. says, “added here as conveying information necessary to Gentile readers.” This might be well, did the words occur in the Evangelist’s narrative: but surely not, when they are in a discourse of our Lord. If His words were so loosely reported as this, where is any dependence on the accuracy of the Evangelists?

45–47.] DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES. Matt. xxiii. 6, 7. Mark xii. 88–40, with which latter our text almost Yorbally, agrees: see notes there.

45.] This particular, **in the audience of all the people**, is only in Luke.

Luke: Chapter 21

CHAP. XXI. 1–4.] THE WIDOW’ S MITES. Mark xii. 41–44, where see notes.

1. looked up] Our Lord as yet has been surrounded with His disciples (see ch. xx. 45), and speaking to them and the multitude. He now lifts up His eyes, and sees at a distance, &c.

5–36.] PROPHECY OF HIS COMING, AND OF THE TIMES OF THE END. Matt. xxiv. 1–51 (xxv. 1–46). Mark xiii. 1–37. See notes on both, but especially on Matthew. Meyer says truly, that there is no trace in Luke of the

discourse being delivered on the *Mount of Olives*—but he adds, that it belongs to the discourses in *the temple*, which begin ch. xx. 1, and that therefore St. Luke alone mentions the *offerings*. He seems to have overlooked the *break* at ver. 7, corresponding to the change of scene. three speak of the *opening incident* as happening while He was departing from the temple; and St. Matthew and St. Mark, of the enquiry being made afterwards, on the Mount of Olives,—i. e. in the evening, when he had retired thither (ver. 37).

5.] The **offerings** were many and precious. Tacitus calls it “a temple of immense opulence:” and Josephus gives an account of the gilding, and golden vines (presented by Herod the Great) with bunches of grapes as large as a man, &c. in the temple.

7.] That St. Luke’s account *alone* gives us no trace of a different scene or a different auditory, is a proof of its independence of the others: for how could any rational writer have omitted so interesting a matter of accurate detail, if he had been aware of it?

but when] Their question begins with “*but,*” on account of what our Lord had said, ver. 6.

8.] The time draweth near, i.e. the **time of the Kingdom**. They are the words, not of our Lord, but of the many just mentioned: see on Matthew, verses 4, 5.

10.] **Then said he unto them** perhaps implies a break in the discourse, which the other reports do not notice.

12.] Why the words **before all these things** should have made any difficulty, I am at a loss to imagine. The prophecies of vv. 7, 8 in Matthew,—ver. 8 Mark,—and vv. 10, 11 here, are a parenthetical warning of what shall happen *before* the end. And then having stated, that these things shall be the *very beginning of the actual pangs themselves* (see note on Matthew), the prophetic chronology is resumed from “the end is not yet,” in all three accounts; here, by distinct statement, **But before all these things:** in Mark by implication, “*But take ye heed to yourselves,*” by which “but” the following words are thrown back to the “*Take heed*” before:—in Matthew, by the gathering up of the parenthetical announcements “all these things,” and thus casting them off, as the “*beginning of pangs*” belonging to the “end,” before the discourse proceeds with the “then” taken

up from ver. 6. The whole difficulty has arisen from not rightly apprehending the force of the word **pangs as the death-throes of the end.**

13.] **for a testimony**, viz. of *your* faithfulness, and (Mark) against them.

15.] Luke only. **Gainsay** corresponds to **mouth, resist to wisdom.**

16.] **even by...** ‘not only by strangers’ Bengel.

some of you—i. e. of the Apostles. One of the four who heard this discourse was put to death, Acts xii. 2.

18.] Not *literally*, but *really* true; not corporeally, but in that real and only *life* which the disciple of Christ possesses.

19.] **In your Patience** (i. e. by your endurance of all these things) **ye shall acquire** (not, *possess*, which is an ungrammatical rendering) **your souls:** this endurance being God’s appointed way, in and by which your salvation is to be put in your possession.

acquire, as “find,” Matt. xvi. 25—“**save,**” ch. ix. 24.

20.] **being compassed** graphically sets forth the scene now before them, as it should then appear. On the variation of expression from Matthew and Mark, see note on Matthew, ver. 15.

21.] of it belongs to the “of it” (*thereof*) of ver. 20, and signifies not “of Judæa,” but “*of Jerusalem.*” **the fields**—not “*the countries,*” or “*the provinces.*”

It is in the original the same word as our Lord uses in John iv. 35, where He commands His disciples to lift up their eyes on the fields.

22.] **vengeance;** from this being the same word in the Greek, it is a hint perhaps at ch. xviii. 8. The latter part of the verse alludes probably to the prophecy of Daniel, which St. Luke has omitted, but referred to in “*the desolation thereof*” ver. 20.

23.] **on the earth, general—for this people, particular.** The distress on all the earth is not so distinctly the result of the divine anger, as that which shall befall this nation.

24.] A most

important addition, serving to fix the meaning of the other two Evangelists,—see notes there,—and carrying on the prophetic announcements past our own times, even close to the days of the end.

they, viz. this people. shall remain trodden down—see Rev. xi. 2.—The *present state* of Jerusalem. The construction of the verb in the original is unusual, and is made use of to signify a state of duration,—a condition which shall continue.

The **times of the Gentiles** are the *end of the Gentile dispensation*,—just as the **time** of Jerusalem was the end, fulfilment, of the *Jewish Dispensation*;—the *great rejection of the Lord by the Gentile world, answering to its type, His rejection by the Jews, being finished, the time shall come, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was a type.* **Times** has the same me **time:** no essential difference is to be insisted on. It is plural, because the Gentiles (nations) are plural: each Gentile people having in turn its *time.*

25, 26.] The greater part of these signs are peculiar to Luke.

28.] your redemption, i.e. **the completion of it by My appearing.**

34–36.] Peculiar to Luke.

34.] yourselves and **your** are emphatic, recalling

the thoughts to *themselves*, after the recounting of these outward signs.

35.] There is meaning in sit; on them who are **sitting securely**.

36.] to be set, i.e., by the angels—see Matthew, ver. 31—before the glorified Son of **Man**.

37, 38.] Peculiar to Luke. These verses close the scene of our Lord's disclosures in Jerusalem which began ch. xx. 1. It does not appear, that St. Luke believed our Lord to have taught *after this* in the temple. Nothing is said to imply it—a general closing formula like this applies to what *has been* related.

38.] St. Luke relates nothing of any visits to *Bethany*. He has the name, Incidentally only, in ch. xix. 29 and ch. xxiv. 50, where see note.

On the whole question regarding the history of the woman taken in adultery, which some of our MSS. insert here, compare notes, John viii. 1 ff. This certainly would seem a more appropriate place for it, than that which it now holds.

Luke: Chapter 22

CHAP. XXII. 1, 2.] CONSPIRACY OF THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES TO KILL JESUS. Matt. xxvi. 1–5. Mark xiv. 1, 2. The account of St. Matthew is the fullest;—see notes there. The words here give us a mere compendium of what took place.

3–6.] COMPACT OF JUDAS WITH THEM TO BETRAY HIM. Matt. xxvi. 14–16. Mark xiv. 10, 11. Our account is strikingly peculiar and independent of the others. The expression **Satan entered into Judas** is found in John xiii. 27,—and certainly *in its proper place*. Satan had not yet entered into Judas,—only (John xiii. 2) put it into his heart to betray our Lord.

4.] and captains is peculiar to Luke: the others have merely *the chief periests*.

On the office, see Acts iv. 1. The Levitical guard of the temple would be consulted, because, it had been of late especially *in the temple* that our Lord had become obnoxious to them (see ver. 53 and ch. xxi. 37, 38). The words **covenanted** and **promised** here seem clearly to imply that the money was *not now paid, but afterwards*, when the treachery was accomplished;—see note on Matt. xxvi. 15.

The concluding words of the verse may bear either the meaning in the text or that in the margin.

7–14.] PREPARATION FOR CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER. Matt. xxvi. 17–19. Mark xiv. 12–16. Our account is the fullest of the three, related however nearly to St. Mark's. By **came** we must of course understand that the day **was come**, not, as some would interpret it, *was at hand*.—On this whole subject see notes on Matt. xxvi. 17, and John xviii. 28. **when the passover must be killed literally, sacrificed**), i.e. the *legal time* of being sacrificed. So the narrators in the three Gospels evidently intend.

8.] It was a solemn message, and for it were chosen the two chief Apostles.

In the report of St. Matthew, the suggestion is represented as coming from the disciples themselves.

9.] The question, **Where wilt thou? was asked**, but only in reply to the command of our Lord.

10.] There can, I think, be no question that this direction was given in super-human foresight, just as that in ch. xix. 30:—see also 1 Sam. x. 2–8, and Matt. xvii. 27. This person carrying water would probably be a *slave*, and the time, towards evening, the usual hour of fetching in water.

11.] The “*goodman of the house*” was a man of some wealth, and could not be *identical with* the water-carrier (see notes on Matthew).

The Greek word rendered **guestchamber** is not here, as in ch. ii. 7, an *inn*, but a room set apart at this season of the feast, by

residents in Jerusalem, in which parties coming from the country might eat the Passover. The question therefore would be well understood;—and the room being **spread**, and as Mark adds, “*prepared*,” would be no matter of surprise.

14.] The hour was *evening*; see above on ver. 10, and Matt. xxvi. 20.

15–18.] Peculiar to Luke. The desire of our Lord to eat this His last Passover may be explained from ch. xii. 50: not *merely* from his depth of love for His disciples, though this formed an element in it,—see John xiii. 1 sq. The for in ver. 16 gives us the leading reason. This is *the only instance in the Gospels, the absolute use of suffer*, as in the Creed, ‘*He suffered*.’ We have several times “*suffer many things*,” ch. ix. 22; xvii. 25; Matt. xvi. 21 al.; “*suffer these things*,” ch. xxiv. 26, and “*thus to suffer*,” ditto ver. 46.

16.] The full meaning of this declaration is to be sought in the words *this passover*. It was *that particular* Passover, not *merely* the Passover generally,—though of course that also,—that was to receive its fulfilment in the kingdom of God. And to this fulfilment our Lord alludes again in ver. 30. It is to this marriage supper of the Lamb, that the parable Matt. xxi. 1–14 in its ultimate application refers: nor can we help thinking on the faithless Apostle at this very supper, in verses 11–13 there:—see notes on that Lace.

17.] Some Suppose that it is here implied that our Lord *did not drink of the cup Himself*. But surely this cannot be so. The two members of the speech are strictly parallel: and if He desired to *eat* the Passover with them, He would also *drink of the cup*, which formed a usual part of the ceremonial. This seems to me to be implied in “*He took the cup*,” where the original has a different word from that used by all *afterwards*, when He did *not* partake of the bread and wine. This most important addition in our narrative, amounts, I believe, to a solemn declaration of the *fulfilment of the Passover rite*, in both its usual divisions,—the eating the flesh of the lamb, and drinking the cup of thanksgiving. Henceforward, He who fulfilled the Law for man will no more eat and drink of it. I remark this, in order further to observe that *this division of the cup* is not only not *identical with*, but has *no reference to*, the subsequent one in ver. 20. That was the *institution of a new rite*;—this the *abrogation of an old one*, now fulfilled, or about to be so, in the person of the true Lamb of God.

This is generally supposed to have been the *first cup* in the Passover-meal, with which the whole was introduced. On the possible connexion of this of our Lord with the celebration of the Passover at this particular time, see note on Matt. xxvi. 17 (p. 183, col. 2). After these verses, in order of time, follows *the washing of the disciple’s feet* in John xiii. 1–20, referred to in our ver. 27.

19, 20.] INSTITUTION OF THE LORD’ S SUPPER. Matt. xxvi. 26–29. Mark xiv. 22–24. 1 Cor. xi. 23–25. See notes on Matthew.

20.] Here follows, in Matthew ver. 29, Mark ver. 26, a second declaration, respecting *not drinking any more of this fruit of the vine*.

21–23.] ANNOUNCEMENT OF A BETRAYER. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 20–25. I would not venture absolutely to maintain that this announcement is *identical* with that one; but I own the arguments of Stier and others to prove them distinct, fail to convince me. The expression **But**, behold, bears marks of verbal accuracy, and inclines us to believe that this announcement was made *after the institution of the cup*, as here related. ‘Notwithstanding this My declaration of love, in giving My Body and Blood for you, there is one here present who shall betray Me.’

on the table] viz. in dipping into the dish with the Lord.

22. **goeth**] A somewhat similar expression to this occurs ch. xiii. 38, “I must walk (the Greek word is the same) *to day and to tomorrow*;” but that is used of our Lord’s ministerial progress this of His progress through suffering to glory.

24–80.] DISPUTE FOR PRE-EMINENCE. OUR LORD’ S REPLY. Without attempting to decide the question whether this incident is strictly narrated in order of time, or identical with one of those strifes on this point related Matt. xviii. 1, xx. 20, I will offer one or two remarks on it as it here stands. (1) Its having happened at this time is not altogether unaccountable. They had been just enquiring *among themselves* (ver. 23), *who among them should do this thing*. May it not reasonably be supposed, that some of them (*judas at least*) would be anxiously employed in *self-justification*, and that this would lead, in some part of the table to a dispute of the kind here introduced? The natural effect of the Lord’s rebuke would be to give rise to a different spirit among them, and the question, “*Lord, is it I?*” may have been the offspring of this better mind;—but see note on Matthew vv. 20–25. (2) It is surprising to find the very declaration of our Lord on the former strife related in this Gospel (ch. ix. 46–48), repeated as having been made *at this Paschal meal*,—by John, xiii. 20. May not this lead us to suppose that there has been a transposition of some of the circumstances regarding these various contentions among the Apostles, and that these words occurring in John may possibly point to a strife of this kind? (3) The “*I am in the midst of you as he that ministereth*” is too clear an allusion to the *washing of at by the Lord*, to have escaped even those Commentators who are slow

to discern such hints. The appeal, if *it had taken place*, is natural and intelligible; but not otherwise. (4) The diction is repeatedly allusive to their *then* employment: “*sitting at meat*”—“*eat and drink*”—“*in my Kingdom*”—all these have reference to things present, or words spoken, during that meal.—I therefore infer that the strife *did happen at this time, in the order related here.*

25.] See on Matt. xx. 25. The expression **here they that exercise authority upon (over) them are called benefactors**, also seems to be connected with what had just taken place. ‘Among *them*, the *benefactors* are those who *exercise authority*—but among *you*, I, your *benefactor* (see vv. 19, 20), *do not so*, but am in the midst of you as your servant.’ Ptolemy Euergetes (the benefactor) at once occurs to us;—numerous other examples are given by Wetstein.

27.] Compare John xii. 13–17.

28.] These words could hardly have been spoken except on this occasion, when “*the matter concerning me hath an end,*” ver. 37.

29, 30.] See above, and note on Matt. xix. 28, see also Rev. ii. 27. **30.] at my table:** see above, ver. 21, and note on ver. 16.

31–34.] APPEAL TO PETER: HIS CONFIDENCE, AND OUR LORD’s REPLY. (See Matt. xxvi. 30–35: Mark xiv. 26–31:

John xiii. 36–38.) The speech appears to *proceed continuously*. There are marks, in these words of our Lord, of close connexion with what has gone before. *His way*, which the Father *appointed* to Him, is to *His Kingdom*—but it is *through temptations*. To *these*, who have been with Him in these trials, He *appoints a king-dom*,—but *His way* to it must be *their way*: and here is the *temptation*,—the sifting as wheat. The sudden address to Simon may perhaps have been occasioned by some remark of his,—or, which I think more probable, may have been made in consequence of some part taken by him in the preceding strife for precedence. Such sudden and earnest addresses spring forth from deep love and concern awakened for another.

31.] not only ‘*hath desired to have you*,’ A.V., but **hath obtained you;**—‘his desire is granted.’

you, all of you: not Simon alone, as sometimes understood, even by preachers, from the A.V. only. This must include Judas, though it does not follow that he was present; the sifting separated the chaff from the wheat, which chaff he was, see Amos ix. 9.

32. but I have prayed for thee] As Peter was the foremost (the rest are here addressed through him), so he was in the greatest danger. It must not be supposed that our Lord’s prayer was not heard, because Peter’s faith *did fail*, in his denial; this word **fail** here implies a *total extinction*, which Peter’s faith *did not suffer*. Though the **you all** included Judas, he is not included in the *prayer*; see John xvii. 6–12. We may notice here, that our Lord speaks of the total failure of even an *Apostle’s faith*, as possible.

when thou hast turned again] There can, I think, be little doubt that this word is here used in the general N.T. sense, of *returning as a penitent after sin*, turning to God,—and not in the almost expletive meaning which it has in such passages as Joel ii. 14; Acts vii. 42. **strengthen (or confirm)]** The use of this word, and the cognate substantive, *thrice by St. Peter in his two epistles*, 1 Pet. v. 10; 2 Pet. i. 12; iii. 17, and in the first passage in a connexion with the mention of *Satan’s temptations*, is remarkable.

33, 34.] Whether these words are in close connexion with the preceding, may I think be doubted. They may represent the same reply of our Lord as we have recorded in John xiii. 38. One thing seems clear, without any attempt at minutely harmonizing: that *two announcements were made* by our Lord to Peter of his future denial, occasioned by *two very different professions of his*: One,—*during last meal*, i.e. before going out, and occasioned by Peter’s professed readiness to go to prison and to death (“*to lay down his life*”) for and with the Lord:—the other,—*on the way to the Mount of Olives*, after the declaration that all should be offended, and occasioned by Peter’s profession that though all should be offended, yet would not he. Nothing is more natural or common than the repetition, by the warm-hearted and ardent, of professions like these, in spite of warning;—and when De Wette calls such an interpretation ‘*a mere shift in difficulty*,’ all that we can say is, to disclaim any wish to clear up difficulties, except by going into their depths, and examining honestly and diligently. If the above view be correct, I conceive that the account in John of this profession and our Lord’s answer, being in strict coherence, and arising out of the subject of conversation, must be taken as the *exact one*: and St. Luke must be supposed to have inserted them here *without being aware of the intermediate remarks* which led to them.

This is the only place in the Gospels where our Lord addresses Peter by the name *peter*. And it is remarkable, as occurring in the very place where He forewarns him of his approaching denial of Himself.

35–38.] FOREWARNING OF PERILS AT HAND. Peculiar to Luke.

The meaning of our Lord in this much-controverted passage appears to be, to *forewarn the Apostles of the outward dangers which will await them henceforward in their mission*:—unlike the time when He sent them forth without earthly appliances, upheld by His special Providence, they must now make use of common resources for sustenance, yea, and even of the sword itself for defence. This they misunderstand, and point to the two swords which they have,—for which they are rebuked (see below).

35.] See ch. ix. 3; x. 4; also Matt. x. 9.

36.] **take** was the very word used in the prohibition before. There is a question how this sentence, which is elliptical in the original, should be filled up. Very many authorities make a *sword* understood after “*hath not*” (as in A.V.);—but the simpler construction and better sense is to place **hath not** in contrast with **hath, He that hath a purse, &c., and he that hath none, let him, &c.** Thus the sense will be complete,—for he who *has a purse*, can buy a sword, *without selling his garment*. The ‘sword of the Spirit’ (Olshausen and others) is *wholly out of the question* in interpreting this command. The saying is both a description to them of their altered situation with reference to the world without, and a declaration that self-defence and self-provision would henceforward be necessary. It forms a *decisive testimony, from the mouth of the Lord Himself, against the views of the Quakers and some other sects on these points*. But it does not warrant *aggression* by Christians, nor, as some R. Catholics, *spreading the Gospel the sword*.

37.] The connexion is this: ‘your situation among men will be one of neglect and even of danger;—for I myself (see Matt. x. 24, 25) am about to be reckoned among transgressors.’

By the very form of the expression it is evident, that the sword alluded to could have no reference to *that night's danger*, or the *defending Him from it*.

the matter concerning me hath an end] The prophecy cited closes the section of Isaiah, which eminently predicts the Lord’s sufferings (ch. lii. 13—liii. 12).

hath an end does not merely mean ‘*must be fulfilled*,’ which would be an assertion without any special reference here—but are coming to the *completion* of their accomplishment. So “*it is finished*,” John xix. 30.

38.] Two of them were armed,—either from excess of zeal to defend Him, excited by His announcement of His sufferings during this feast,—or, perhaps because they had brought their weapons from Galilee as protection by the way. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem (see ch. x. 30) was much infested with robbers;—and it was the custom for the priests, and even for the quiet and ascetic Essenes, to *carry weapons* when travelling. Chrysostom gives a curious explanation of the two swords,—that it was probable they had knives to cut up the Paschal lamb. This certainly agrees with the number of the disciples sent to get ready the Passover: but it has nothing else to recommend it. They exhibit their swords, misunderstanding His words, and supposing them to apply to that night. Our Lord breaks off the matter with **It is enough**,—not ‘*they are sufficient*;’—but, **It is well,—we are sufficiently provided**—‘it was not to this that My words referred.’ The rebuke is parallel with, though milder than, the one in Mark viii. 17,—as the misunderstanding was somewhat similar.

39–46.] CHRIST' S AGONY AT THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. Matt. xxvi. 36–46. Mark xiv. 32–42. John xviii. 1. For all comment on the general narrative, see notes on Matthew. Our account is compendious combines the three prayers of our Lord into one, and makes no mention of the Three Apostles being taken apart from the rest. On the other hand it inserts the very important additional details of vv. 43, 44, besides the particularity of ver. 41, “*about a stone's cast*.”

42.] The sentence is broken off at **me... If Thou be willing;—let it be so.** The A.V. is not a correct reading in grammar.

43.] With the early and weighty evidence cited in my Gr. Test. in favour of verses 43, 44, it is impossible that they should have been an apocryphal insertion. They were perhaps expunged by the orthodox, who imagined they found in it an inconsistency with the divine nature of our Lord. We have reason to be thankful, that orthodoxy has been better understood since. The strengthening by means of the angel is *physical*—and the appearance likewise. It is strange how Olshausen can have so far deceived himself as to imagine that **appeared unto him** can imply a merely inward and spiritual accession of strength from above. It is strange likewise that the analogy of the ministration of angles in the Lord’s former temptation should not have occurred to those modern Commentators who have objected to this circumstance as improbable.

This strengthening probably took place *between the first and the second prayer*;—and the effect of it is, that **He prayed more earnestly**, ver. 44, and arrived at the entire resignation expressed in the second and third Prayer of St. Matthew’s narrative.

44.] The intention of the Evangelist seems clearly to be, to convey the idea that the **sweat was** (not *fell* like, but *was*) *like*

drops of blood;—i. e. *coloured with blood*,—for so I understand the **as it were**, as just distinguishing the drops *highly coloured with blood*, from *pure blood*. Aristotle, speaking of certain morbid states of the blood, says, “when the blood is watery, grievous disease ensues: for it becomes serous and milky, to such an extent that some have been known to *perspire a bloody sweat.*” To suppose that it only *fell like drops of blood* (why not drops of any thing else? and drops of blood *from what, and where?*) is to nullify the force of the sentence.

We must not forget, in asking on what testimony this rests, that the marks of such drops would be visible after the termination of the agony. An interesting example of a sweat of blood under circumstances of strong terror, accompanied loss of speech, is cited in the Medical Gazette for December, 1848. It occurred in the case of certain Norwegian sailors in a tremendous storm.

45.] for sorrow—the effect of anxiety and watching. The

words *may possibly* express an inference of the Evangelist: but I would rather understand them as exactly describing the cause of their sleeping.

47–53.] BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS. Matt. xxvi. 47–56. Mark xiv. 43–52. John xviii. 2–11. Our narrative is here distinguished even more than before by minute and striking details (see on the whole the notes to Matthew).

The first of these is the address to Judas, ver. 48, calling the traitor by name, and setting before him the whole magnitude of his crime in the very words in which the treason had lately (Matthew, ver. 45; Mark, ver. 41) and so often (Matt. xxvi. 2; xx. 18; xvii. 22) been announced.

Another is in ver. 49, where the disciples, seeing **what would follow, ask, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?** which question refers to, and is the filling up of their misunderstanding of our in ver. 38.

Again ver. 51 is peculiar to Luke.

51.] Suffer ye thus far I understand as addressed, not to the disciples, but to the multitude, or rather *to those who were holding Him;*—His hands were held,—and **He says, Suffer, permit me, thus far:** i.e. to touch the ear of the wounded person. If this interpretation be correct, it furnishes an additional token of the truthfulness of our narrative; for the previous laying hold of Jesus has not been mentioned here, but in Matthew (ver. 50) and Mark (ver. 46).

53.] There is an important addition here to the other reports of our Lord’s speech;—**but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.** It stands here instead of the declaration that *this was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled* (Matthew, ver. 66: Mark, ver. 49). The inner sense of those words is indeed implied here—but we cannot venture to **say** that our report is of the same saying,

Our Lord here distinguishes between the power exercised over Him by *men*, and that by *the Evil One*:—but so as to make the *power* which rules over them to be that of darkness—while His own assertion of this shews that all was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. In the word **darkness** there is also an allusion to the time—midnight. Compare with this declaration of the power of darkness over Him, the declaration, in ch. iv. 13, that the devil left Him “*for a season.*”

64.] Matt. xxvi. 57. Mark xiv. 53. John xviii. 13. Our narrative leaves it undecided *who this high priest was*, inasmuch as, ch. iii, 2, *Annas and Caiaphas* are mentioned as high priests. From St. John we find that it *was Annas*; who having questioned Jesus, sent Him bound to Caiaphas, before whom His trial took place. St. Luke omits this trial altogether—or perhaps gives the substance of it in the account (vv. 66–71) of the morning assembly of the Sanhedrim. See notes on Matthew.

55–62.] PETER’S THEREDENIALS OF JESUS. Matt. xxvi. 69–75. Mark xiv. 66–72. John xviii. 17, 18, 25–27. See throughout, table and notes in Matthew.

56.] The word **light** here seems to be used as accounting for the words *beholding him:* not so in Mark xiv. 54, where it is merely “*he warmed himself at the light.*”

58. another (masculine)] In Mat. thew it is feminine,—in **Mark, the maid.**

61.] See extract from Robinson’s notes on Matthew, ver. 69. If, as there supposed, the trial was going on *in an open chamber looking on the court*, the look might well have been given from a considerable distance. *We* need not enquire, *how* our Lord could hear what **was** going on round the fire in the court, as some Commentators have done. But even were such an enquiry necessary, I see no difficulty in answering it. The anathemas of Peter, spoken to *those who stood by* with vehemence and the crowing of the cock,—were not these audible? But our Lord needed not these to attract His attention.

63–65.] HE IS MOCKED. St. Luke does not, as some Commentators say, place this mocking *before the trial* in Caiaphas's house, but in the same place as Matthew, vv. 67, 68, and Mark ver. 65, viz. *after* what happened there. The trial he *omits altogether*, having found no report of it. How those who this view of St. Luke's arrangement can yet suppose him to have had Matthew and Mark before him while writing, I am wholly at a loss to conceive.

66–71.] HEARING BEFORE THE COUNCIL. (Probably) Matt. xxvii, 1. Mark xiv, 1. It seems probable that St. Luke here gives us an account of *a second and formal judgment held in the morning*. The similarity of the things said at the two hearings may be accounted for by remembering that they were both more or less formal processes in legal courts, one the Precognition, the other the decision, at which the things said before would be likely to be nearly repeated.

66. as soon as it was day] Some trace of

meeting of the Sanhedrim after daylight I believe our Evangelist to have found, see Matt. xxvii. 1—and to have therefore related as then happening, the following account of what really took place at the former meeting.

67.] First, before this enquiry, took place the “*witness*” referred to in ver. 71; and the person who said this **was** the high priest, and with an adjuration, Matthew, ver. 63. The rendering in the margin is the most natural and correct: **If thou art** (not if thou *be*) **the Christ, tell us.** The others, ‘*Tell us whether thou be the Christ;*’ and, ‘*Art thou the Christ? tell us,*’ are forced and unusual renderings of the original.

68.] I believe these words to have been said as a formal protest on the part of our Lord against the spirit and tendency of the question asked Him, before He gives an answer to it: and as such, they form an original and most valuable feature in the report.— ‘*It is with no view to examine and believe, that you ask this question: nor, were I to attempt to educe from your own mouths my innocence, would you answer Me [or release Me]. I am well aware of the intention of this question: BUT (Matthew, ver. 6) the time is come for the confession to be made:*—**Hence-forth&c.**

69.] On **henceforth**, see notes on Matthew. The words “*sit on the right hand of power*” are common to all Three: only St. Luke adds “*of God.*”

70.] We find here, and it is worth observing, **the Son of God** used as synonymous with **the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God**, i.e. with the glorified Messiah. On **Ye say that I am.....** see note on Matthew, ver. 64.

71.] How would it have been possible that these words should have been said, if no “*witness*” had been brought forward at this examination, and if the *very same question* had been asked at the termination of the former one?

Luke: Chapter 23

CHAP. XXIII. 1–5.] HE IS ACCUSED BEFORE PILATE. Matt. xxvii. 2, 11–14. Mark xv. 1–5. John xviii. 23–38. Our account, not entering at length into the words said, gives a particular and original narrative of the things transacted at this interview.

2.] This charge was intended to represent the result of their previous judgment, **we found;**—whereas, in fact, *no such matter had been before them:* but they falsely allege it before Pilate, knowing that it was the point on which his judgment was likely to be most severe. The words themselves which they use are not so false, as the spirit, and impression which they convey. The **forbidden to give tribute to cæsar** was, however, *false entirely* (see ch. xx. 22 ff.); and is just one of those instances where those who are determined to effect their purpose by falsehood, do so, in spite of the fact having been precisely the contrary to

that which they assert.

3.] This question is related in all four Gospels. But in John the answer is widely different from the distinct affirmation in the other three, amounting perhaps to it in substance—at all events affirming that He was ‘a King’—which was the form of their charge. I believe therefore that the Three give merely the general import of the Lord’s answer, which St. John relates in full. It is hardly possible, if Jesus had affirmed the fact so strongly and barely as the Three relate it, that Pilate should have made the avowal in ver. 4—which St. John completely explains.

4.] The preceding question had been **asked within** the pretorium—a fact which our Narrator does not adduce,—representing the whole as a continuous conversation in presence of the Jews; see John, ver. 38. We may remark (and on this see Matthew, ver. 18: Mark, ver. 10) that Pilate must have known well that a man who had really done that, whereof Jesus was accused, would be *no such object of hatred to the Sanhedrim.* This knowledge was doubtless accompanied (as the above-cited verses imply) with a previous acquaintance with some of the sayings and doings of Jesus, from which Pilate had probably formed his

own opinion that He was *no such King* as His foes would represent Him. This is now confirmed by His own words (as related by St. John); and Pilate wishes to dismiss Him, finding no fault in Him.

5.] Possibly they thought of the matter mentioned ch. xiii. 1, in introducing Galilee into their charge. The opening words may mean, **they strengthened, redoubled, the charge**—or perhaps, **they became urgent, they were the more fierce, as** in text.

6–12.] HE IS SENT TO HEROD, AND BY HIM RETURNED TO PILATE. Peculiar to Luke; see remarks on ver. 12. Pilate, conscious that he must either do the duty of an upright judge and offend the Jews, or sacrifice his duty to his popularity, first attempts to get rid of the matter altogether by sending his prisoner to Herod, on occasion of this word *Galilee*. This was Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa (see ch. iii. 1 and note on Matt. xiv. 1), who had come up to keep the feast.

7. **he sent] or remitted him, to Herod.** Grotius observes that this was the regular practice among the Romans, to *remit* a criminal to the ruler or judge of the district in which his crime was alleged to have been committed.

8, 9.] The reason of our Lord's silence is sufficiently shewn, in the account of Herod's feelings at seeing Him. He would not use His discourses or His miracles for liberating Himself from death, any more than He did for ostentation, or to gratify the curiosity of men.

10.] The accusations, of *worldly kingship and of blasphemy*, would Probably be here *united*, as Herod was a Jew, and able to appreciate the latter.

11.] **his men of war** are the *body-guard in attendance upon Herod*.

a gorgeous robe] Variously interpreted:—either *purple*, as befitting a king,—and why should this not be the very “*scarlet robe*” afterwards used by Pilate’s soldiers (Matt. xxvii. 28; “*purple robe*,” John xix. 2)?—or *white*, as the word rendered “*bright*” is understood by, some (but see note), Acts x. 30.

12.] The cause of the quarrel is uncertain: apparently something concerning Herod's power of jurisdiction, which was conceded by Pilate in this sending Jesus to him, and again waived by Herod in sending Him back again. From chap. xiii. 1, Pilate appears to have encroached on that jurisdiction. The remarks of some Commentators about their *uniting in enmity against Christ*, are quite beside the purpose. The present feeling of Pilate was any thing but hostile to the person of Christ: and Herod, by his treatment of Him, shews that he thought Him beneath his judicial notice.

This remission of Jesus to Herod seems not to have been in the possession of either of the other three Evangelists. It is worthy of notice that they all relate the mocking by the soldiers of Pilate, which St. Luke omits, whereas he gives it as taking place before Herod. This is one of the very few cases where the nature of the history shews that *both* happened.

Let the student ask himself, How could St. John, if he composed his Gospel with that of St. Luke before him, have here given us a narrative in which so important a fact as this is not only not related, but absolutely *cannot find any place of insertion? Its real place* is after John ver. 38;—but obviously nothing was further from the mind of that Evangelist, for he represents Pilate as speaking continuously.

13–25.] FURTHER HEARING BEFORE PILATE, WHO STRIVES TO RELEASE HIM, BUT ULTIMATELY YIELDS TO THE JEWS. Matt. xxvii. 15–26. Mark xv. 6–15. John xviii. 39, 40. Our account, while entirely distinct in *form* from the others, is in *substance* nearly allied to them. In a few points it approaches John very nearly, compare ver. 18 with John ver. 40, also ver. 17 with John ver. 39. The second declaration of our Lord's innocence by Pilate is in St. John's account united with the first, ver. 88. In the three first Gospels as asserted in our. ver. 14, the questioning takes place in the presence of the Jews: not so, however, in John (see xviii. 28).

15.] Not as A.V., is *done unto him*, but **is done by him:** meaning, such is the issue of Herod's judgment: I assume that he has thus decided.

16.] Here, as Bengel observes, Pilate begins to shew culpable weakness in yielding to the Jews. If there be no fault in Him, why should He be *corrected at all?*—the Jews perceive their advantage, and from

this moment follow it up. 25. **him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison**] The description is inserted for the sake of contrast;—see Acts iii. 14. St. Luke omits the scourging and mocking of Jesus. It is *just possible* that he might have omitted the mocking, because he had related a similar incident before Herod; but how shall we say this of the scourging, if he had seen any narratives which contained it? If St. Luke had had any materials wherewith to fill up the break between verses 25 and 26, I have no doubt he would have done so.

26–33.] HE IS LED FORTH TO CRUCIFIXION. Matt. xxvii. 31–34. Mark xv. 20–23. John xix. 16, 17. Our account is an original one—containing the count is an original one—containing the affecting narrative, vv. 27–32, peculiar to itself. **26. coming out of the country]** See on Mark. **after Jesus** is peculiar to Luke, and a note of accuracy. **27.]** These were not the women who had followed Him from Galilee, but the ordinary crowd collected in the streets on such occasions, and consisting, as is usually the case (and especially at an execution), *principally of women*. Their weeping appears to have been of that kind of well-meant sympathy which is excited by an affecting sight, such as that of any innocent person delivered to so cruel a death. This description need not of course exclude many who may have wept from deeper and more personal motives, as having heard Him teach, or received some benefit of healing from Him, or the like.

28.] turning unto them—after He was relieved from the burden of the cross. This word comes from an eyewitness.

for me—His future course was not one to be bewailed—see especially on this saying, Heb. xii. 2,— “*who for the Joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.*” Nor again were His sacred sufferings a mere popular tragedy for street-bewailing; the sinners should weep for *themselves*, not for Him. **for yourselves, and for your children...**—see Matthew ver. 25, where the people called down the vengeance of His blood on themselves “*and upon our children.*” *Many of those who now bewailed Him perished in the siege of Jerusalem.* Those who now were young wives, would not be more than *sixty* when (A. D. 70) the city was taken. But to *their children* more especially belonged the miseries of which the Lord here

speaks.

29. the days are coming] Between this and then, would be time for that *effectual weeping*, which might save both themselves and their children;—see Acts ii, 37, 38,—but of which few availed themselves. These few are remarkably hinted at in the change to the third person, which excludes them—**they shall say**, i.e. not ‘*men in general*,’ nor ‘*My enemies*,’ but ‘*the impenitent among you*,—those who weep merely tears of idle sympathy for Me, and none of repentance for themselves;—those who are in *Jerusalem* and its misery, which My disciples *will not be.*’

On the ‘saying itself, compare the whole of Hosea ix., especially vv. 12–16.

30.] This is cited from the next chapter of Hosea (x. 8). It was partially and primarily accomplished, when multitudes of the Jews towards the end of the siege sought to escape death by hiding themselves in the subterranean passages and sewers under the city, as related by Josephus: who adds that more than two thousand were found dead in these hiding-places, besides those who were detected there and killed.... But the words are too solemn, and too often used in a more awful connexion, for a further meaning to escape our notice: see Isa. ii. 10, 19, 21, and Rev. vi. 16, where is the striking expression “*from the wrath of the Lamb*”—of Him who now was the victim about to be offered. And the whole warning—as every other respecting the destruction of Jerusalem—looks through the type to the antitype, the great day of His wrath. Now, **the days are coming**—then “**the great day of His wrath is come,**” Rev. vi.

17. It is interesting to see how often David, who had passed as long in hiding among the rocks of the wilderness from Saul, calls the Lord *his Rock* (see Ps. xviii. 2, 46; xlvi. 9, &c.). They who have this defence, will not need to call on the rocks to hide them.

31.] This verse—*the solemn close of our Lord’s teaching on earth*—compares His own sufferings with that awful judgment which shall in the end overtake sinners, the unrepentant human kind—the *dry tree*. **These things**—were a judgment on sin;—He bore our sins;—He,—the vine, the *green tree*, the fruit-bearing tree,—of Whom His people are the branches,—if He, if they in Him and in themselves, are so treated, so tried with sufferings, *what shall become of them who are cast forth as a branch and are withered?* Read 1 Peter iv. 12–18;—ver. 18 is a paraphrase of our text. Theophylact’s comment is excellent: “If they do these things to Me, fruitful and ever-flourishing and immortal from my Godhead, what will happen to you, unfruitful, and void of all life-giving righteousness?”—The explanations which make the *green tree* mean the young, and the *dry*, the old,—or the *green tree* mean the women comparatively innocent, the *dry*, the guilty, at the destruction of Jerusalem,—seem to me unworthy of the place which the words hold, though the latter agrees with the symbolism Ezek. xx. 47, compared with xxi. 4. **32.]** Since the publication of the first edition of this work, the additional evidence of the Sinaitic MS. has made it appear that we ought to read the text simply, **two other malefactors:** not, as I maintained before, “**two others, male-Factors.**”

33–49.] THE CRUCIFIXION, MOCKING, LAST WORDS, AND DEATH OF JESUS. Matt. xxvii. 35–50. Mark xv. 24–37. John xix. 18–30; with however some particulars inserted which appear later in the other gospels.

34] Spoken

apparently *during the act of the crucifixion*, or immediately that the crosses were set up. Now, first, in the fullest sense, from

the wounds in His Hands and Feet, is His Blood shed, for the **forgiveness** of sins (Matt. xxvi. 28), and He inaugurates His intercessional office by a prayer for His murderers— “*forgive them.*” This also is a fulfilment of Scripture, Isa. liii. 12,— where the contents of our verses 33, 34 are remarkably pointed out.

His *teaching* ended at ver. 31. His *High Priesthood* is now begun. His first three sayings on the Cross are *for others*: see ver. 43: John xix. 26, 27.

Father] He is the *Son of God*, and He speaks in the fulness of this covenant relation,— “*I knew that Thou always hearest Me*”—it is not merely *a prayer*—but *the prayer* of the Great Intercessor, which is always heard. Notice that even on the Cross, there is no alienation, no wrath of condemnation, between the Father and the Son.

forgive them] *Who are here intended?* Doubtless, first and directly, *the four soldiers*, whose work it had been to crucify Him. The words **they know not what they are doing** point directly at this: and it is surely a mistake to suppose that they *wanted no forgiveness*, because they were merely *doing their duty*. Stier remarks, “This is only a misleading fallacy, for they were sinners even as others, and their obedient and unsuspecting performance of their duty was not without a sinful pleasure in doing it, or at all events formed part of their entire standing as sinners, included in that *sin of the world*, to which the Lord here ascribes His Crucifixion.” But not only to *them*, but to them as the representatives of that sin of the world, does this prayer apply. The persons pointed at by **they are all mankind**,—the Jewish nation, as the next moving agent in His death,— but all of us,—inasmuch as for our sins He was bruised.

for they know not what they do, primarily, as before, spoken of the *soldiers*,—then of the *council*, who delivered Him up, see John xi. 49, “**ye know nothing**,”—then of *all*, whose sin is from lack of knowledge of the truth, of *what sin is*, and what it *has done*,—even the crucifixion of the Lord. But certainly from this intercession is excluded *that one sin*—strikingly brought out by the passage thus cited as committed by him who said it, viz. Caiaphas,—and hinted at again by our Lord, John xix. 11—and perhaps also by the awful answer Matt. xxvi. 64,— ‘*thou saidst it*’—viz. in prophecy, John xi. 49; see also Matt. xxvi. 25,—and on the sin alluded to, Matt. xii. 31: 1 John v. 16. Observe that between the two members of this prayer lies the work of the Spirit leading to repentance—the prayer that they may have their eyes opened, and *know* what they have done: which is the necessary subjective condition of forgiveness of sins, see 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

35.] The insults of *the people* are by no means excluded, even if the words **with them** be omitted: nay they are implied, by the **and.... also** which follows in the next verse. To find a discrepancy with Matthew and Mark here, is surely unfair:—the people’s *standing looking on*, does not describe their mind towards Jesus: St. Luke reports no more than he had before him: and the inference may be drawn that those whom he has related to have cried out an hour ago, ‘Crucify him,’—would not have stood by in silence. On ver. 48, see note there.

the rulers are the chief priests and members of the Sanhedrim, Matthew, ver 41. The concluding words may be rendered either (see the reading in the margin) **the Christ of God, His elect one**,—or, **elect Christ of God**. I prefer the former: but either way, **the Christ of God** must be taken together.

36.] A different incident from that related in Matthew, ver. 48; Mark, ver. 36; John, vv. 28, 29. It was about the time of the mid-day meal of the soldiers,—and they in mockery offered Him their *poscea* or sour wine, to drink with them.

38.] See on Matthew, ver. 37. **over him**, on the projecting upright beam of the cross.

39–43.] Peculiar to Luke. St. Matthew and St. Mark have merely a general and less precise report of the same incident. All were now mocking; the soldiers, the rulers, the mob:—and the evil-minded thief, perhaps out of bravado before the crowd, puts in his scoff also.

40.] Bengel supports the notion that this penitent, thief was *a Gentile*. But surely this is an unwarranted assumption. What should a Gentile know of Paradise, or of the kingdom of the Messiah **as** about to come?

The silence of the penitent is broken by the **us** of the other compromising him in the scoff.

also alludes to: the multitude—**Dost thou too not fear God?** (as thou oughtest to do) **seeing that....**

41. we] He classes himself with the other in condemnation, but not in his prayer afterwards.

amiss] literal **unseemly**. This is a remarkable testimony to the innocence of Jesus from one who was probably executed for his share in those very tumults which He was accused of having excited.

42.] The thief had heard of the announcements which Jesus had made,—or at all events of the popular rumour concerning his

Kingdom. His faith lays hold on the truth that this *is* the King of the Jews in a higher and immortal sense. There is nothing so astounding in this man's faith *dogmatically* considered, as has been thought; he merely *joins* the common belief of the Jews of a Messianic Kingdom, in which the ancient Fathers were to rise, &c.,—with the conviction, that *Jesus is the Messiah*. What is *really* astounding, is the *power and strength* of that faith, which, amidst shame and pain and mockery, could thus lift itself to the apprehension of the *Crucified* as this King. This thief would fill a conspicuous place in a list of the triumphs of faith supplementary to Heb. xi.

in thy kingdom] The A.V., following the Latin Vulgate (so also Luther), renders this “*into thy kingdom,*” which is a sad mistake, **as** it destroys the force of the expression. It is in **thy kingdom—with thy kingdom**, so “*shall come in His glory,*” Matt. xxv. 31, which we (A. V.) have translated rightly. The above mistake entirely loses the solemn sense of **comest**—making it merely ‘*comes into*,’ just as we say to “*come into*” an estate: whereas it is the chief word in the clause, and “*is Thy kingdom*” its qualification, at thy coming in thy kingdom.

It will be seen that there is no necessity for supposing the man to have been *a disciple*, as some have done.

It is remarkable how, in three following sayings, the Lord appears **as** Prophet, Priest, and King: as *Prophet*, to the *daughters of Jerusalem*;—as *Priest*, interceding for forgiveness;—as *King*, acknowledged by the penitent thief, and answering his prayer.

43. Verily I say unto thee.....] The Lord surpasses his prayer in the answer; the verily *I say unto thee*, to day, is the reply to the uncertain “*when (whensoever)*” of the thief.

Today] i.e.

this day: *before the close Of this natural day*. The attempt to join it with **I say unto thee** (“*I say unto thee this day*”), considering that it not only violates common sense, but destroys the force of our Lord's promise, is surely something worse than silly; see below.

shalt thou be with me can bear no other meaning than the ordinary sense of the words, ‘I shall be in Paradise, and thou with Me.’

in paradise] On these words rests the whole explanation of the saying. *What is this PARADISE?* The *word* is used of the *garden of Eden* by the LXX, Gen. ii. 8, &c., and subsequently became, in the Jewish theology, the name for that part of Hadéa, the abode of the dead, where the souls of the righteous await the resurrection. It was also the name for a supernal or heavenly abode, see 2 Cor. xii. 4: Rev. ii. 7, which are the only other places in which it occurs in the New Testament. The *former of these* is, I believe, here primarily to be understood;—but only as *introductory, and that immediately, to the latter*. By the death of Christ only was *Paradise* first, opened, in the *true sense of the word*. He Himself, when speaking of Lazarus (ch. xvi. 22), does not place him in Paradise, but in Abraham's bosom—in that place which the Jews *called* Paradise, but by an anticipation which our Lord did not sanction. I believe the matter to have been thus. Our Lord spoke to the thief so as He knew the thief would understand Him; but He spoke with a fuller and more blessed meaning than he could understand then. For *that day, on that very evening*, was ‘*Paradise*’ truly ‘*regained*:’—opened by the death of Christ. We know (1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, where see note; iv. 6) that our Lord went down into the depths of death,—announced His triumph—(for His death was His triumph) to the imprisoned spirits,—and in that moment—for change of state, to the *disembodied*, is possibly all that *change of place* implies—they perhaps were in the Paradise of God,—in the blessed heavenly place, implied by the word, 2 Cor. xii. That this is not *fulness* of glory as yet, is evident;—for the glorified *body* is not yet joined to their spirits,—they are not yet perfect (Heb. xi. 40); but it is a degree of bliss compared to which their former was but as imprisonment.

This work of the Lord I believe to have been accomplished *on the instant of His death*, and the penitent to **have** followed Him at *his death*—which took place some little time after—into the Paradise of God. That our Lord *returned* to take His glorified Body, was in accordance with His design, and He became thereby the *firstfruits of the holy dead*, who shall like Him put on the body of the resurrection, and be translated from disembodied and imperfect bliss in the Paradise of God, to the perfection of glorified humanity in His glory, and with Him, *not in Paradise*, but at *God's right hand*.

44–46.] Our account is very short and epitomizing—containing, however, peculiar to itself, the *last of our Lord on the cross*. The impression conveyed by this account, if we had no other, would be that the *veil was rent before* the death of Jesus:—but the more detailed account of St. Matthew corrects this.

45.] The words **the sun was darkened** are probably added to give solemnity to the preceding, assigning its reason. It can hardly be, as Meyer, that the *earth* was darkened till the ninth hour, and *then* the *sun* became dark also.

46.] The use of **with a loud voice** shews that *this was the cry* to which St. Matthew and St. Mark allude. The words uttered are from the LXX, varying however from the common reading “*I will command,*” and giving the verb in the *present*, which is

also the rendering of the Hebrew.

These words have in them an important and deep meaning. They accompany that, which in our Lord's case was strictly speaking the *act* of death. It was *His own act*—not ‘feeling the approach of death,’ as some, not apprehending the matter, have commented; but a *determinate delivering up of His spirit to the Father*.—“*He delivered up His spirit*,” John: see John x. 18 —“*no man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself*.” None of the Evangelists say ‘*He died*.’ although that expression is ever after used of His death stated as one great fact:—but it is, “*yielded up His spirit*,” Matthew; “*breathed His last*,”

Mark, Luke; “*delivered up His spirit*,” John, The spirit here is the *Personality*—the human soul informed by the Spirit, **in union**:—not separated, so that His soul went to Hadés, and His spirit to the Father, as Olshausen thinks. Both are delivered into the hand of the Father; by Whom quickened, He worked His great victory over death and Hell. See again 1 Pet. iii, 18, 19 and notes, and Rom. viii. 10, 11.

The latter part of the verse in Ps. xxxi. ‘*for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth*,’ is not applicable here. The whole Psalm is not strictly prophetic, but is applied by the Lord Himself.

47–49.] Our account, as well as that of St. Mark, ascribes the impression made on the centurion to that which took place at the death of Jesus,—i. e. “*that He thus breathed His last*.” Something in the manner and words convinced him that this man was the Son of God; which expression he used doubtless with reference to what he had before heard, but especially to the words just uttered—“*Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit*.” St. Luke has not expressed the words exactly the same:—but the A.V. has wrongly and ungrammatically rendered what he relates the Centurion to **have said**, and made ‘*a righteous man*’ (St. Luke), stand in the place of ‘*the Son of God*’ (St. Mark);—whereas the words only give the *general sense* of the persuasion of the centurion. **Truly, this man was innocent:**—and if innocent (nay, more, **just, truthful**), He was the Son of God, He had asserted it.

48.] Peculiar to Luke.

the things which came to pass are the darkness and other prodigies, after which we have no more *raillery*:—men’s tempers are changed, and we here see the result.

smote their breasts.... a sign of self-accusation, at least for “the time,—which is renewed on the preaching of Peter, Acts ii. 37.

49.] See on Matthew and Mark.

50–56.] BURIAL OF THE BODY OF JESUS BY JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA. Matt. xxvii. 57–61. Mark xv. 42–47. John xix, 38–42: see notes on Matthew.

51. the same had not consented....] Peculiar to Luke. The meaning is, he had absented himself, and taken no part in their (the council’s) determination against Jesus.

54.) preparation—‘the day before the sabbath,’—which now **drew on (was dawning)**;—a *natural* word,

used of the *conventional* (Jewish) day beginning at sunset. There is no reference to the lighting of candles in the evening or on the sabbath. Lightfoot **has** shewn that such use of the word **wa** s common among the Jews, who called the evening (the beginning) of a day, ‘light.’

55.] Only Mary Magdalene and Mary, the. mother of Jesus (‘the other Mary,’ Matthew),—Mark.

56.] They bought their spices&c. *in the short time before sunset*.

Luke: Chapter 24

CHAP XXIV. 1–12.] THE WOMEN COMING TO THE SEPULCHRE LEARN THAT HE IS RISEN, AND ANNOUNCE IT TO THE APOSTLES, BUT ARE DISBELIEVED. Matt. xxviii. 1–10. Mark xvi. 1–8. John. xx. 1–10: see notes on Matthew.

1.] at deep dawn, i.e. just beginning to dawn: “*while it was yet dark*” John, “*as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week*” Matthew, and “*very early*” Mark; but not “*when the sun had risen*” Mark also: see notes there.

they came—the same women as those afterwards mentioned (ver. 10) who told the Apostles the intelligence. The reference is to ch. xxiii. 55. **spices**, which (ch. xxiii. 56) they had made ready before the sabbath; in Mark xvi. 1, had bought the evening before, “*when the sabbath was past.*”

2.] This agrees with the more detailed account in Mark:—and, as regards the majority of the women, may also with that in Matthew:—but not as regards the two Maries.

4.] The narrative does not, as the A.V. (“*stood by them*”), determine the *position* of the angels. It says merely that they **came upon them**, or that they **appeared to them**; the same Greek word is used in ch. ii. 9. On the *two* angels here, see note on Mark ver. 5; to which I will just add, that the Harmonistic view, as represented by Greswell, strangely enough puts together the angel in Matthew, and the angel in Mark, and makes the *two* angels in Luke: see Acts i. 10.

men—to all appearance; the Evangelist does not mean that they *were* such, as clearly appears from what follows.

5.] They call the Lord simply **the living,—Him who liveth**, as addressed to the women; but Olshausen’s view of a deeper meaning in the words should be borne in mind; for, as Origen truly observes, “Life, in its highest sense, is His alone.”

6, 7.] See ch. ix. 22; xviii. 32. The mention of *Galilee* is remarkable, as occurring in the angelic speeches in Matthew and Mark in quite another connexion. Here it is said to the women, as *being Srom Galilee*, see ch. xxiii. 55—and meaning,

‘when he was yet with you.’

9.] See note on Mark ver. 8.

10.] It seems as if the testimony of one of the disciples who went to Emmaus had been the ground of the whole former part—perhaps of the whole—of this chapter. We find consequently this account exactly agreeing with his report afterwards, vv. 23, 24.

Joanna was the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, ch. viii. 2.

12.] This verse cannot well have been interpolated from John xx., for the only reason for the insertion would be, to tally with ver. 24, and in that case it certainly *would not men-tion Peter alone*. That Cleopas bak ver. 24, **certain of them that were with us went**, &c. must not be pressed too much, although it does certainly look as if he knew of more than one (see note there). The similarity in diction to John xx. 5, 10—(“*stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves*,” and “*went away home*,” being common to the two passages) indicates a common origin, and, if I mistake not, one distinct from the rest of the narrative in this chapter.

13–35.] Jesus APPEARS TO TWO OF THE DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS. Peculiar to Luke:—the incident (but from another source) is alluded to in the fragmentary addition to Mark xvi. (ver. 12.)

13.] **of them**, not of the *Apostles*—the last mentioned were “*the eleven, and all the rest*,” ver. 9: see also ver. 22, “*of us*” (“*of our company*”). One of them ver. 18, was walled kleopas (equivalent to Kleopatros, probably a different name from Clopas, John xix. 25: see note on Matt. x. 3). Who the other was, is idle to conjecture. Origen, in several places, calls him Simon; apparently from having understood “*saying*” in ver. 34 to refer to the two from Emmaus, and referring “*hath appeared unto Simon*” to the present appearance. Epiphanius says it was Nathanael; Theophylact, St. Luke himself. This may shew what such reports are worth. Wieseler believes the two to have been, James the son of Alphæus or Clopas or Cleopas (but see above) journeying *with his father*, and the appearance on the road to Emmaus to be the same as “*was seen of James*,” 1 Cor. xv. 7. Our narrative seems to have been from the report of Cleopas.

Emmaus] Josephus also mentions this Emmaus as sixty furlongs from Jerusalem. There were two other places of the same name: (1) a town afterwards called Nicopolis, twenty-two Roman miles from Jerusalem, where Judas Maccabeus defeated the Syrian general Gorgias: see 1 Macc. iii. 40–57. (2) Another Emmaus is mentioned by Josephus as being *in front of the sea of Tiberias*: and he adds, that Emmaus means, that there were warm springs there. This was the case also with the other places of the name. Our Emmaus is now called Cubeibi (?).

15.] **Jesus himself**, of whom they had been speaking, drew near to them. But this expression forbids the supposition that He was here, *strictly speaking, in another form*, as we find it less precisely expressed in Mark xvi. 12. The reason why they

did not know Him was (ver. 16), that *their eyes were supernaturally influenced*,

so that they could not;—see also ver. 31. No change took place in *Him*—nor apparently in *them*, beyond a power upon them,

which prevented the recognition just so much as to delay it till aroused by the well-known action and manner of His breaking the bread. The *cause* of this was the will of the Lord himself, who would not be seen by them till the time when He saw fit.

drew near—from *behind*: see ver. 18, where they take Him for an inhabitant of Jerusalem.

17.] He had apparently been walking with them some little time before this **was** said. The term used by our Lord implies that they had been disputing with some earnestness: but there is no *blame* implied in the word. Possibly, though both were sad, they may have taken *different views*:—and in the answer of Cleopas we have that of the one who **was** most disposed to abandon all hope.

18.] They took Him (but we must not think of a *peculiar dialect* as giving that impression) for one who had been at Jerusalem at the feast:—and asked, **Dost thou lodge (sojourn) alone at Jerusalem?**

19–24.] Stier well remarks, that the Lord here gives us an instructive example how far, in the wisdom of love, we may carry *dissimulation, with-out speaking untruth*. (See the citation from Jer. Taylor below, on ver. 29.) He does not assert, that He was one of the strangers at this feast at Jerusalem, nor does He deny that He knew what had been done there in those days, but He puts the question by, **with things?**

19. they said unto him] Either, one spoke and the other assented; or perhaps each spoke, sometimes one and sometimes the other;—only we must not break up these verses, and allot an imagined portion to each. They contain the substance of what was said, as the reporter of the incident afterwards put it together. **which was a prophet...:** see a similar general description of Him to the Jewish people, Acts ii. 22. They had repeatedly acknowledged Him as a Prophet: see especially Matt. xxi. 11, 46. The phrase "**mighty in words and in deeds**" occurs of Moses, Acts vii. 22.

20.] The how follows on the **hast not known**, ver. 18. **our rulers**] Therefore the two disciples were *Jews*, not Grecian converts, as some have supposed.

delivered him, to Pilate.

21.] hoped is a word of weakened trust, and shrinking from the avowal that they ‘believed’ this.

redeemed—in the theocratic sense—including both the spiritual and political Kingdom; see ch. i. 68, 69, 74, 75, and compare Acts i. 6.

to day is the third day] literally, **he is now in the third**

day: the words are spoken not without a reference, in the mind of the speaker, to His promise of rising on the third day.

22.] Yea, and... or, but, **moreover**—equivalent to, ‘certainly, thus much has happened, that’.... **of our company**—literally, **of us**:—‘disciples, as we are.’ The *Apostles* are distinguished presently **as certain of them which were with us**, ver. 24.

23.] This agrees exactly with St. Luke’s own narrative, but not with St. Matthew’s, in which they had seen *the Lord Himself*. There seems however to be some hint that the *women* had said something of having seen the Lord, in the “*him they saw not*,” said below of the “*certain of them which were with us*.”

24. certain] See ver. 12 and note. It is natural, even in accordance with ver. 12, that the antithesis to “*certain women*” before, and the loose way of speaking to a stranger, who (they believed) was not acquainted with any among them, might cause them here to use this word without any reference to Peter being *accompanied*. But what wonder, if the reports of such a day of anxiety and confusion were themselves disjointed and confused?

25.] The word rendered *fools* is more properly **without understanding**:—**slow of heart**, i.e. sluggish—in disposition—to **believe**: these were both shewn in their not having apprehended, from the fulfilment of the sufferings and death of Christ, the sequel of that death, the resurrection.

26. to have suffered... and to have entered] The sufferings were the appointed way by which Christ should enter into His glory. It **was** not the *entering into His glory*, but the *suffering*, about which they wanted persuading.

27.] beginning belongs to *both* the following clauses. A similar expression is found Acts iii. 24. He began with Moses first;—He began with each as He came to them.

the things concerning himself. De Wette remarks, “It were much to be wished that we knew what prophecies of the death

and triumph of Christ. are here meant. There are but few that point to the subject." But I take *the things concerning himself* to mean something very different from mere *prophetical passages*. The *whole Scriptures* are a *testimony to Him*: the whole history of the chosen people, with its types, its law, and its prophecies, is a *shewing forth Him*: and it **was** here the *whole—all the scriptures*,—that He laid out before them. This general leading into the meaning of the whole, *as a whole*, fulfilled in Him, would be much more opportune to the place, and time occupied, than a direct exposition of selected passages.

the things concerning himself is right: not, 'the *parts* concerning Him.'

Observe the testimony which this verse gives to the divine authority, and the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures: so that the denial of the references to Christ's death and glory in the O.T. is henceforth *nothing less than a denial of His own teaching*.

29. they constrained him] It is not implied that He *said* any thing to indicate that He would go further—but simply, that He was passing on. "Our

blessed Saviour pretended that He would pass forth beyond Emmaus; but if He intended not to do it, yet He did no injury to the two disciples, for whose good it was that He intended to make this offer: and neither did He prevaricate the strictness of simplicity and sincerity, because they were persons with whom He had made no contracts; to whom He had passed no obligation; and in the nature of the thing, it is proper and natural, by an offer, to give an occasion to another to do a good action: and in case it succeeds not, then to do what we intended not; and so the offer was conditional." Jer. Taylor, Sermon on Christian Simplicity. Works (Heber), vi. 156.

with us does not imply 'that they lived at Emmaus; merely **in the same quarters with us**.

30.] I believe that there was something in the manner of His breaking the bread, and helping and giving it to them, which was his own appointed means of opening their eyes to the recognition of Him. But we must not suppose any reference to, much less any celebration of, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, *Neither of these disciples was present at its institution* (but see Wieseler's conjecture, which is at all events worth consideration, in note on ver. 13); and certainly it had never been celebrated since. With this simple consideration will fall to the ground all that Romanists have built on this incident, even to making it a defence of administration in one kind only. The analogy of such a breaking and giving with His institution of that holy ordinance becomes lost, when we force the incident into an example of the ordinance itself. The Lord at their meal takes on Him the office of the *master of the house* (which alone would shew that it was not *their house*, but an inn), perhaps on account of the superior place which His discourse had won for Him in their estimation:—and as the Jewish rule **was**, that "three eating together were bound to give thanks," He fulfils this duty. In doing so, perhaps the well-known manner of His taking bread, &c., perhaps the marks of the nails in His hands, then first noticed, or these together, as *secondary* means,—but certainly *His own will and permission to be seen by them*, opened their eyes to know Him.

31.] he vanished out of their sight does not imply His Body to have remained, though *invisible to them*: but plainly indicates in the original, besides the supernatural disappearance, a real objective *removal from them*.

32.] 'Was there not something heart-kindling in His discourse by the way, which would have led us to suppose that it was none but the Lord Himself?' not that they *did* suppose it,—but the words are a sort of selfreproach for not having done so. Compare Matt. vii. 29.

he spoke to us, not merely, '*with us*,' as A.V.: it **was** not so much a talking with them, as a discourse delivered *to them*.

33.] "They have now no fear of the journey at night, from which they before dissuaded their unknown companion." Bengel. The *whole eleven* were not there—Thomas was not present. Some have derived an argument from this incompleteness in their number, for the second of the travellers being also an Apostle; see above on ver. 13.

Who **them that were with them** are, we learn from Acts i, 14,

34.] This *appearance to Simon* (i. e. Peter—the

other Simon would not be thus named without explanation; see ch. v. 8 ff.) is only hinted at here—but is asserted again, 1 Cor. xv. 5, in immediate connexion with that which here follows. It is not clear whether it took place before or after that on the way to Emmaus.

35.] And they—the travellers, distinguished from the others—not '*they also*,' for thus we should leave the clause without a copula.

known of them in his breaking of bread] That this should have been so, does not exclude the supernatural opening of their eyes: see above, on ver. 31.

36–49.] APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO THE DISCIPLES. Mark xvi. 14. John xx. 19–23. The identity of these appearances need hardly be insisted on. On St. Mark's narrative, see notes there. That of St. John presents no difficulties, on one supposition, *that he had not seen* this of St. Luke. The particulars related by him are mostly additional, but not altogether so.

36.] stood in the midst of them—while they were speaking of these things,—possibly not entirely crediting the account, as seems hinted at in Mark xvi. 13,—the Lord appeared, the doors being shut, in the midst (John xx. 19 and notes).

Peace be unto you, the ordinary Jewish salutation, see ch. x. 5, but of more than ordinary meaning in the mouth of the Lord: sec John xiv. 27.

37.] On account of His sudden appearance, and the likeness to one whom they knew to have been dead.

a spirit is a *ghost* or *spectre*—an appearance of the dead to the living; not exactly as “*a phantasm*,” Matt. xiv. 26, which might have been any appearance of a supernatural kind.

38.] Not merely ‘*thoughts*,’ as A.V., **but reasonings, questionings.**

39.] There seems to be some doubt whether the reference to His hands and feet were on account of the *marks of the nails*, to prove His *identity*,—or as being the *uncovered parts* of His body, and to prove his *corporeity*. Both views seem supported by the text, and I think both were united. The sight of the Hands and Feet, which they recognized as His, might at once convince them of the *reality* the appearance, and the identity of the Person. The account of St. John confirms the idea that He showed them the marks of the nails, both by *His side* being added, and by the expressions of Thomas which followed. The same seems also implied in our ver. 40.

The assertion of the Lord must not be taken as representing merely ‘the popular notion concerning spirits’ (Dr. Burton); *He who is the Truth, does not speak thus of that which He knows, and has created.* He declares to us the truth, that those appearances to which He was now likened by the disciples, and spirits in general, have not flesh and bones. Observe **flesh and bones**—but not **blood**. This the resurrection Body probably *had not*,—as being the *animal life*:—see notes on John vi. 51,

and John xx. 27.

42.] This was done farther to convince them of his real corporeity. The omission of the words **and of an honeycomb** in the best MSS. is remarkable: see var. readd. It may possibly have arisen from an idea in some transcriber that this meal is the same as that in John xxi. 9. The words could hardly have been an interpolation.

44.] Certainly, from the form of the beginning of this verse, which implies immediate sequence, St. Luke, at the time of writing his Gospel, was not in possession of records of any Galilæan appearances of the Lord, nor indeed of any later than this one. That he corrects this in Acts i., shews him meantime to have become acquainted with some other sources of information, not however perhaps including the Galilæan appearances.

The following discourse apparently contains a summary of many things said during the last forty days before the ascension;—they cannot have been said *on this evening*;—for after the command in ver. 49, the disciples would not have gone away into Galilee. Whether the Evangelist regarded it as a summary, is to me extremely doubtful. Knowing apparently of no Galilæan appearances, he seems to relate the command of ver. 49, both here and in the Acts, as intended to apply to the *whole time* between the Resurrection and the Ascension.

These are my words... i.e. ‘behold the realization of My words,’ &c.

which I spoke: see ch. xviii. 31–33; xxii. 37; Matt. xxvi. 56 al.; but doubtless He had often said things to them on these matters, which have not been recorded for us. So in John x. 25, we have perhaps a reference to a saying not recorded.

This threefold division of the O.T. is the ordinary Jewish one, into the Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa,—the first containing the Pentateuch;—the second Joshua, Judges, the four books of Kings, and the Prophets, except Daniel;—the third the Psalms, and all the rest of the canonical books:—Daniel, Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah being reckoned as one book, and the Chronicles closing the canon.

47.] The substance of the preaching of the Gospel literally corresponded to this description—see Acts ii. 38: “*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*,”—were the words of the first sermon preached

at Jerusalem.

48. ye] From what follows, Acts i. 22, if these words are to be taken in their strict sense, they must have been spoken *only to the Apostles*;—they may however have been more general, and said to all present.

49.] This promise is explained (Acts i. 5) to be the *baptism with the Holy Ghost*,—and the time is limited to ‘not many days hence.’

I send (the **I** is emphatic)] The procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son is clearly here declared, as well as that from the Father. And consequently we find St. Peter, in Acts ii. 33, referring back to these very words, in ascribing the outpouring of the Spirit to the now exalted Saviour. In that verse, the “I” of this is filled up by “*being by the right hand of God exalted*”—the proper supplement of it here also.

The promise itself is not found in the three Gospels, but expressly and frequently in John xiv.—xvi.: see xiv. 16–26; xv. 26; xvi. 7–1], 13, 14,

The present, **I send**, is not equivalent to a future, but implies that the actual work is done, and the state brought in, by which that sending is accomplished;—viz. the giving. of the ‘*all power in heaven and earth*,’ Matt. xxviii. 18. The words “*of Jerusalem*” have probably been interpolated by some who, believing these words to represent the Galilæan discourse, placed it here for an explanation: or perhaps Acts i. 4 gave occasion to it. This command must have been (historically) uttered *after the return from Galilee*: see above.

be clothed with] verb here has its full meaning, of *abiding upon and characterizing*, as a garment does the person. This, as Stier remarks, was the true and complete clothing of the nakedness of the Fall.

50.] The Ascension appears to be related as taking place *after the above words were spoken*—but there is an uncertainty and want of specification about the narrative, which forbids us to conclude that it is intended as following immediately upon them. This, however, can only be said as taking the other Gospels and Acts i. into account: if we had *none but the Gospel of St. Luke*, we should certainly say that the Lord ascended *after the appearance to the Apostles and others, on the evening of the day of His resurrection*.

he led them out, i.e. probably, from the words “*in the city*” just having occurred, outside *Jerusalem*: but the “*out*” might only apply to the house in which they were: see Matt. xxvi. 75.

as far as to Bethany—not quite to the village itself, but over the brow of the Mount of Olives, where it descends on Bethany: see Acts i. 12. (The synonymousness of these two expressions may shew that the same is meant, when, Mark xi. 11, our Lord is said to have gone out at night to *Bethany*, and Luke xxi. 37, to *the Mount of Olives*.)

51.] he was parted from them—not, ‘*He went a little distance from them previous to His ascension*,’—as Meyer would interpret it; but the two verbs belong to one and the same incident,—**he was parted from them and borne up into heaven**. We need not understand, ‘*by an angel*,’ or ‘*by a cloud*;’ the absolute passive is best.

The tense is *imperfect*, signifying the continuance of *the going up* during the “*worshipping*” of the next verse.

The more particular account of the Ascension is given Acts i. 9–12, where see notes. That account is in perfect accordance with this, but supplementary to it.

52. they worshipped him] This had been done before by the women, Matt. xxviii. 9, and by the disciples on the mountain in Galilee. This however was a more solemn act of worship, now paid to Him as exalted to God’s right hand.

53.] continually,—not ‘*all their time*;’—daily, at the hours of prayer: see Acts i. 13, 14; iii. 1.

A few words must be appended here in vindication of THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ASCENSION. To those who doubt the *fact of an Ascension at all*, I have nothing to say, standing as I do altogether on different ground from them.

The Lord Himself foretold His Ascension, John vi. 62; xx. 17:—it **was** immediately after His disappearance from the earth *expressly announced by the Apostles*, Acts ii. 33, 34; v. 31:—*continued to be an article of their preaching and teaching*, 1 Pet. iii. 22; Eph. ii. 6; iv. 10; 1 Tim. iii. 16. So *far* should we have been assured of it, even had we *not possessed* the testimonies of St. Luke here and in the Acts:—for the fragment superadded to the Gospel of St. Mark *merely states the fact, not the manner of it*. But, to take first the *à priori* view,—*is it probable that our Lord would have left so weighty a fact in His history on earth, without witnesses?* And might we not

have concluded from the wording of John vi. 62, that our Lord must have intended an ascension *in the sight of some of those to whom He spoke*, and that the Evangelist himself *gives that hint, by recording those words without comment, that he had seen it?*

Then again, is there any thing in the bodily state of our Lord after His Resurrection, which raises any even the least, difficulty here? He appeared suddenly, and vanished suddenly, when He pleased:—when it pleased Him, He ate, He spoke, He walked; but his Body was the Body of the Resurrection;—only not yet his *Body of Glory* (Phil. iii. 21), because He had *not yet assumed* that glory: but that He *could* assume it, and did assume it at his Ascension, will be granted by all who believe in Him as the Son of God. So that it seems, on *à priori grounds*, probable that, *granted the fact of the Ascension*, it did take place in some such manner as our accounts relate:—*in the sight of the disciples, and by the uplifting of the risen Body of the Lord towards that which is to those on this earth the visible heaven.*

This being so, let us now, secondly, regard the matter *à posteriori*. We possess two accounts of the circumstances of this Ascension, written by the same person, and that person a contemporary of the Apostles themselves. Of the *genuineness* of these accounts there never was a doubt. How improbable that, St. Luke should have related *what any Apostles, or apostolic persons might have contradicted?* How improbable that the universal Church, founded by those who are said to have been eye-witnesses of this event, should have *received these too ac-counts as authentic, if they were not so? That these accounts themselves* are never referred to in the Epistles, is surely no argument against them. If an occasion had arisen, such as necessitated the writing of 1 Cor. xv., there can be little doubt that St. Paul would have been as particular in the circumstances of the Ascension, as he has been in those of the Resurrection. The fact is, that by far the greatest difficulty remains to be solved by those who can imagine a myth or fiction on this subject to have arisen in the first age of the Church. Such a supposition is not more repugnant to our Christian faith and reverence, than it is to common sense and historical consistency.

JOHN

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1-18.] Prologue: in which is contained the substance and subject of the whole Gospel. THE ETERNAL WORD OF GOD, THE SOURCE OF ALL EXISTENCE, LIFE, AND LIGHT, BECAME FLESH, DWELT AMONG US, WAS WITNESSED TO BY JOHN, REJECTED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE, BUT RECEIVED BY SOME, WHO HAD POWER GIVEN THEM TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD. HE WAS THE PERFECTION AND END OF GOD's REVELATION OF HIMSELF; WHICH WAS PARTIALLY MADE IN THE LAW, BUT FULLY DECLARED IN JESUS CHRIST.

1-5.] THE ETERNAL PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE WORD: HIS PERSONAL DISTINCTNESS; BUT ESSENTIAL UNITY WITH GOD. His WORKING IN CREATION, AND IN THE ENLIGHTENING OF MEN, BEFORE HIS MANIFESTATION IN THE FLESH; HIS NON-APPREHENSION BY THEM.

1.] Before commenting on the truths here declared, it is absolutely necessary to discuss the one term on which the whole turns: viz. THE WORD. This term is used by St. John *without explanation*, as bearing a meaning well known to his readers. The enquiry concerning that meaning must therefore be conducted on *historical*, not on mere *grammatical* grounds. And the most important elements of the enquiry are, (I.) *the usage of speech as regards the term*, by St. John himself and other biblical writers: and (II.) *the purely historical information* which we possess on the *ideas attached to the term*.

(a) From the first consideration we find, that in other biblical authors, as well as in John, the term LOGOS, which is the original word here, is never used to signify the divine *Reason* or *Mind*; nor indeed those of any human creature. These ideas are otherwise expressed. The usual Scripture meaning of *Logos* is *speech*, or *word*. The *logos* of God is the *creative, declarative, injunctive Word of God*.

(b) That this is also the import in our prologue, is manifest, from the evident relation which it bears to the opening of the history of creation in Genesis. "The Word" is not an *attribute* of God, but an *acting reality*, by which the Eternal and Infinite is the great first cause of the created and finite.

(c) Again, this "Word" is undoubtedly in our prologue, *personal*:—not an abstraction merely, nor a personification,—not the speaking word of God, once manifested in the prophets and afterwards fully declared in Christ, as Luthardt, comparing our prologue with Heb. i. 1,—but a PERSON: for "*the Word was with God*," and "*the Word became flesh*." also the Word **was God**, not *was God's*:—which certainly would be said of none but a PERSON.

(d) Moreover, the WORD is *identical* with JESUS CHRIST, as the pre-existing Son of God. A comparison of verses 14 and 15 will place this beyond doubt.

(e) And Jesus Christ is the Word of God, not because He *speaks the word*;—nor because He is the One promised or spoken of,—nor because He is the Author and source of the Word as spoken in the Scriptures, &c.,—any more than his being called **life** and **light** implies only that He is the *Giver* of life and light: but because *the Word dwells in and speaks from him*, just as the Light dwells in and shines from, and the Life lives in and works from, Him.

(f) This WORD, which became flesh, *is not from, nor of, Time or Space* (ch. iii. 31; viii. 58); but *eternally pre-existent*.—and *manifested in Time and Space*, for the gracious ends of divine Love in Redemption (ch. iii. 16, 17).

(g) This Word spoke in the law and prophets, yet partially and imperfectly (ver. 17; ch. v. 39, 46); but in the personal WORD, spoke forth in fulness of grace and truth. It was He who made the worlds (ver. 3); He, who appeared to Isaiah (Isa. vi. compare ch. xii. 41); He, whose glory is manifested in His power over nature (ch. ii. 11); He, by reception of whom the new birth is wrought (ch. i. 12, 13); who has power over all flesh (ch. xvii. 2),—and can bestow eternal life (*ibid.*); whose very sufferings were His glory, and the glorifying of God (ch. xvii. 1 al.); and who, after those sufferings, resumed, and now has, the glory which He had with the Father before the world began (ch. xviii. 5, 24).

(h) Luthardt, in his Commentary on this Gospel, has propounded the following view of the term "Word" and its usage: "Jesus Christ is the fulness of that word of God which was fragmentarily manifested in the prophets (Heb. i. 1). But in this prologue, 'the Word' is not to be taken as *identical with* Jesus not yet incarnate, nor is He the subject of vv. 1 ff." And he urges ch. x. 35, 36 (see note there, where I have discussed this) as a key text to the meaning of "the Word."

It seems to me, that while much of his view is true and sound, that part of it will not hold which denies the identity of the pre-existent “Word” with Jesus, in the Apostle’s mind. Had he intended by the “Word” of vv. 1–4 any other than the personal Son of God, who in ver. 14 became flesh, I do not see how “*was with God*,” and “*was God*,” could be used of “the Word.”

Nor again can I consent with him to disconnect the use of “Logos” by St. John from its previous history. The reasons given in this note for believing such use, as matter of fact, to have been prepared by the Alexandrine philosophy, are no way affected by the objections which he alleges, the difference between the “Logos” of St. John and that of Philo, and the corrupt character of the philosophy itself.

II. (a) We are now secondly to enquire, how it came that St. John found this term “Logos” *so ready made to his hands, as to require no explanation*. The answer to this will be found by tracing the *gradual personification* of the *Word*, or *Wisdom of God*, in the O.T. and Jewish writings.

(b) We find faint traces of this personification in the *book of Psalms*: see Ps. xxxiii. 4, 6; cxix. 89, 105; cvii. 20; cxlvii. 15, 18. But it was not the mere offspring of poetic diction. For the whole form and expression of the O.T. revelation was that of the *Word of God*. The Mosaic History opens with ‘*God said, Let there be light.*’ *Spoken* commands, either openly, or in visions, were the communications from God to man. It is the Word, in all the Prophets; the Word, in the Law; in short, the Word, in all God’s dealings with his people: see further, Isa. xl. 8; lv. 10, 11; Jer. xxiii. 29 al.

(c) And as the *Word of God* was the constant idea for His revelations *relatively to man*, so was the *Wisdom of God*, for those which related to His own *essence and attributes*. That this was a later form of expression than the simple recognition of the divine Word in the Mosaic and early historical books, would naturally be the case, in the unfolding of spiritual knowledge and divine contemplation. His Almighty was first felt, before His Wisdom and moral Purity were appreciated. In the books of Job (ch. xxvii. 12 ff.) and the Proverbs (ch. viii. ix.) we find this *Wisdom of God* personified; in the latter in very plain and striking terms; and this not poetically only, but practically; ascribing to the *Wisdom of God* all his revelation of Himself in His works of Creation and Providence. So that this *Wisdom* embraced in fact in itself the *Power of God*; and there wanted but the highest divine attribute, *Love*, to complete the idea. But this was reserved for the N.T. manifestation.

(d) The next evidences of the gradual personification of the *Wisdom of God* are found in the two Apocryphal Books, the *Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach*, and the *Wisdom of Solomon*. The first of these, *originally written in Hebrew*, belongs probably to the latter half of the second century before Christ. In ch. i. 1, Wisdom is said to be “*from the Lord; and with Him for ever:?*” and in ver. 4, “*Wisdom hath been created before all things.*” Then in ch. xxiv. 9–21, the same strain is continued; “*He created me from the beginning before the world,*” &c., and the passage concludes with these remarkable words, “*They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty.*”

In the book of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, dating probably about 100 before Christ, we find (in ch. vi. 22—ch. ix.) a similar personification and eulogy of Wisdom. In this remarkable passage we have “*Wisdom, that sitteth by Thy throne*” (ch. ix. 4)—said to have been “*present when Thou madest the world*” (ch. ix. 9)—parallelized with “*Thy word*” (ch. ix. 1, 2: see also ch. xvi. 12). In ch. xviii. 15, 16, the “*Almighty Word*” is set forth as an Angel coming down from heaven, and destroying the Egyptians.

It seems highly probable that the author’s monotheistic views were confused by the admixture of Platonism, and that he regarded Wisdom as a kind of soul of the world. He occasionally puts her for God, occasionally for an attribute of God. But he had not attained that near approach to a *personal* view which we shall find in the next step of our enquiry. (e) The large body of Jews resident in Alexandria were celebrated for their *gnosis*, or religious philosophy. The origin of this philosophy must be referred to the mixture of the Jewish religious element with the speculative philosophies of the Greeks, more especially with that of Plato, and with ideas acquired during the captivity from Oriental sources. One of these Alexandrine writers in the second century A.C. was Aristobulus, some fragments of whose works have been preserved to us. He tells us that by the “*voice of God*” we are not to understand a “*spoken word*,” but the whole working of God in the creation of the world.

But the most complete representation of the Judeo-alexandrine gnosis, or philosophic theology, has come down to us in the works of Philo, who flourished cir. A.D. 40–50. It would be out of the province of a note to give a review of the system of Philo: the result only of such review will be enough. He identifies the “*word*” with the “*wisdom*” of God; it is the “*image of God*”; the “*archetype and pattern of light, but itself like none of created things:*” “*the eldest of begotten things:*” “*the eldest son of the Father of all that are:*” “*His first-begotten, the eldest angel, being as an archangel with many names*” (i. 427): “*the shadow of God, using whom as an instrument He made the world:*” “*through whom the world was constituted:*” “*The Father which begat all gave to the Arch-angel and the eldest born, the Word, the eminent prerogative, that, standing between, he might divide the made from the Maker;... and He (the Word) rejoices in the prerogative.... not being unbegotten, as God, nor begotten, as we, but intermediate between the extremes, acting as a hostage to both:*” “*there are, as it seems, two temples of God; one, this world, in which also His first-begotten divine Word is High Priest:*” “*the viceroy of God:*” “*he contains and hath fulfilled all things:*” “*the second God, which is His Word.*” These instances, the number of which might be much

enlarged, will serve to shew how remarkably near to the diction and import of some passages in our Gospel Philo approached in speaking of the Word.

At the same time there is a *wide and unmistakable difference* between his “Word” and that of the Apostle. He does not distinguish it from the *Spirit of God*, nor does he connect it with any Messianic ideas, though these latter were familiar to him. Besides, his views are strangely compounded of Platonism and Judaism. The “Word” seems with him to be one comprehending, or ruling, the “powers” or “ideas” of God, which, although borrowed from Plato, he Judaically calls “*angels*,” and the “Word” their “*archangel*.” We see by this however how fixed and prepared the term, and many of its attributes, were in the religious philosophy of the Alexandrine Jews.

(f) Meanwhile the Chaldee paraphrasts of the O.T. had habitually used such expressions as ‘the glory,’ or ‘the presence,’ or ‘the word,’ of God,—in places where nothing but His own agency could be understood. ‘The latter of these—the Memra, or word of God,—is used in so strictly personal a sense, that there can be little doubt that the Paraphrasts understood by it a divine Person or Emanation.

(g) From these elements, the Alexandrine and Jewish views of the “Word” or “Wisdom” of God, there appear to have arisen very early among Christians, both orthodox and heretic, formal expressions, in which these or equivalent terms were used. Of this the Apostle Paul furnishes the most eminent example. His teacher Gamaliel united in his instruction both these elements, and they are very perceptible in the writings of his pupil. But we do not find in them any direct use of the term “WORD,” as personally applied to the Son of God. This shews him to have spoken mainly according to the Jewish school,—among whom, as Origen states, he could find none who held “that the WORD was the Son of God.”

(h) We find a much nearer approximation to the Alexandrine method of speech in the Epistle to the Hebrews, written evidently by some disciple intimately acquainted with the Alexandrine gnosis (see the opening verses, and especially “*upholding all things by the word of His power*”). But even there we have not the “Logos” identified personally with the Lord Jesus Christ, or indeed personally spoken so at all,—however near some passages may seem to approach to this usage (ch. iv. 12, 13; xi. 3).

(i) The Alexandrine gnosis was immediately connected with Ephesus, where the Gospel of John was probably written. Apollos (Acts xviii. 24) came thither from Alexandria; and Cerinthus is related by Theodoret to have studied and formed his philosophic system in Egypt, before coming to Ephesus.

(j) These notices will serve to account for the term “Logos” being already found by St. John framed to his use; and the anti-Gnostic tendency of his writings will furnish an additional reason why he should rescue such important truths as the pre-existence and attributes of the divine “Word” from the perversions which false philosophy had begun to make of them.

(k) In all that has been said in this note, no insinuation has been conveyed that either the Apostle Paul, or the Writer to the Hebrews, or John, adopted in any degree their TEACHING from the existing philosophies. Their teaching (which is totally distinct from any of those philosophies, as will be shewn in this commentary) is that of the Holy Spirit;—and the existing philosophies, with all their follies and inadequacies, must be regarded, in so far as they by their terms or ideas subserved the work which the Spirit had to do by the Apostles and teachers of Christianity, as so many providential preparations of the minds of men to receive the fuller effulgence of the Truth as it is in Jesus, which shines forth in these Scriptures.

In the beginning] Equivalent to “before the world was,” ch. xvii. 5. The expression is indefinite, and must be interpreted relatively to the matter spoken of. ‘Thus in Acts xi. 15, it is “the beginning of the Gospel;” and by the same principle of interpretation, here it is the beginning of all things, on account of “all things were made by him” ver. 3.

These words, if they do not assert, at least imply, the *eternal pre-existence* of the divine Word. For “was in the beginning is not said of an act done in the beginning (as in Gen. i. 1), but of a state existing in the beginning, and therefore without beginning itself.

was, not equivalent to “is” (see “I am,” ch. viii. 58 al.), as Euthymius and others have supposed; but Origen has given the true reason for the indefinite past being used,—“It would have been more strict, in speaking of God the Word, to say **is**; but seeing that he is speaking with reference to the distinction of the Incarnation, which took place at a certain time, the Evangelist uses **was** instead of **is**.” The existence of an enduring and unlimited state of being, implied in “was,” is contrasted with “was made,” or “became” (the word is the same) in verses 3 and 14.

and the Word was with God] ‘With’ is here used in the sense of “chez,” abiding with. Basil remarks that St. John says “with God, not in God, that he may set before us the distinctness of Person:... that he may give no opening for the confusion of person.” Both the inner substantial union, and the distinct personality of the “Word” are here asserted. The former is distinctly repeated in the next words.

and the Word was God] This is the true form of the sentence; not ‘*God was the Word*.’ This is absolutely required by the usage of the Greek language: see in my Gr. Test. But the *sense* to be conveyed here is as weighty a consideration as the form of the sentence. Had St. John intended to say, ‘*God was the Word*,’—what meaning could his assertion possibly have conveyed? None other than a contradiction to his last assertion, by which he had distinguished God from the Word. And not only would this be the case, but the assertion would be inconsistent with the whole historical idea of the Word, making this term to signify merely an attribute of God, just as when it is said, “*God is love*.” Not to mention the unprecedented inversion of subject and predicate which this would occasion; “*the Word*” having been the subject before, and again resumed as the subject afterwards.

The rendering of the words being then as above, their meaning is the next question. **God** (see the grammatical reasons in my Gr. Test.) must be taken as implying God in substance and essence,—not ‘the Father,’ in Person. It does not mean “divine,” nor is it to be rendered “*a God*”—but, as in “*became flesh*,” “flesh” expresses that state into which the Divine Word entered by a definite act, so in “*was God*,” “God” expresses that essence which was His in the beginning:—that He was very God. So that this first verse might be connected thus: the Word was from eternity,—was with God (the Father),—and was Himself God.

2.] In order to direct the mind to the difference (in unity) between this “Word” and “God,” St. John recalls the reader’s attention to the two first clauses of ver. 1, which he now combines, in order to pass on to the creative work, which distinctly belongs to the “Word.” Thus also this verse fixes the reference of him in ver. 3, which might otherwise, after the mention of “God,” have seemed ambiguous. **3.] All things** (1 Cor. viii. 6. Col. i. 16), equivalent to “*the world*,” ver. 10. This parallelism of itself refutes the Socinian interpretation of “*all things*,” “all Christian graces and virtues, ‘the whole moral world.’” But the history of the term “Logos” forbids such an explanation entirely. For Philo says, “*Thou shalt find that the cause of the world is God, by whom it was made; the matter, the four elements, out of which it was composed: the instrument, the Word of God, through whom it was constituted:*” see also Col. i. 16, and Heb. i. 2. Olshausen observes, that we never read in Scripture that ‘Christ made the world;’ but ‘the Father made the world through the Son,’ or ‘the world was made by the Father, and through the Son,’ because the Son never works of Himself, but always as the revelation of the Father; His work is the Father’s will, and the Father has no Will, except the Son, who is all His will (in whom He is well pleased). The Christian Fathers rightly therefore rejected the semi-Arian formula, ‘The Son was begotten by an act of the Father’s will;’ for He is that Will Himself.

and without him] This addition is not merely a Hebraistic parallelism, but a distinct denial of the eternity and uncreatedness of matter as held by the Gnostics. They set *matter*, as a separate existence, over against God, and made it the origin of evil:—but St. John excludes any such notion. Nothing was made without Him (the Word); all matter, and implicitly evil itself, in the deep and inscrutable purposes of creation (for it was not in the beginning, but was made), **was made through Him.**

The punctuation at the end of the verse is uncertain, if we regard solely manuscript authority. Some of our MSS. set a full stop at “*was not any thing made:*” so that the sense of the words following would be, “*That which hath been made by (or in) him was life.*” The question must however be determined by the sense of the passage, which is rendered weak, and inconsistent with analogy, by adopting this punctuation:—weak, because in that case we must render ‘That which hath been made by Him was life (i. e. having life), and that life was the light of men;’ but how was that life, i.e. that living creation which was made by Him, the light of men?—inconsistent with analogy, for St. John’s usage of beginning a sentence with “*in*” or “*by*” and a demonstrative pron. should have its weight: compare ch. xiii. 35; xv. 8; xvi. 26: 1 John ii. 3, 4, 5; iii. (8,) 10, 16, 19, 24; iv. 2 al. fr. Compare also 1 John ii. 4,—ib. iii. 5. I have determined therefore for the ordinary punctuation. It is said to have been first adopted owing to an abuse of the passage by the Macedonian heretics, who maintained that if the exclusion (“*without him was not any thing made that was made*”) was complete, the Holy Spirit can also not have been without His creating power, i.e. was created by Him. But this would be refuted otherwise, for the Holy Spirit “*was*,” and “*was not made*.”

4.] In him was life—compare 1 John v. 11, i. 1, 2, and ch. vi. 33.

life is not merely ‘*spiritual life*,’ nor ‘*the recovery of blessedness*,’—as some explain it:—the Word is the source of *all life* to the creature, not indeed ultimately, but mediately (see ch. v. 26: 1 John v. 11).

and the life was the light of men] This is not to be understood of the teaching of the Incarnate Word, but of the enlightening and life-sustaining influence of the eternal Son of God, in Whom was life. In the material world, light, the offspring of the Word of God, is the condition of life, and without it life degenerates and expires:—so also in the spiritual world that *life* which is in Him, is to the creature the very condition of all development and furtherance of the life of the spirit. All knowledge, all purity, all love, all happiness, spring up and grow from this life, which is the light to them all.

It is not “*light*,” but *the light*:—because this is the only true light: see ver. 9, also 1 John i. 5.

5.] As *light* and *life* are closely connected ideas, so are *death* and *darkness*. The whole world, lying in death and in darkness, is the **darkness** here spoken of:—not merely the “*darkened*” (Eph. iv. 18; see Eph. v. 7, 8), but the *whole mass*, with the sole exception (see below, ver. 12) of “*as many as received Him*” (compare ch. iii. 19; 1 John v. 19).

This **shineth** not merely the historical present, but describes the whole process of the light of life in the Eternal Word shining in this evil and dark world; both by the O.T. revelations, and (see ch. x. 16; xi. 52) by all the scattered fragments of light glittering among the thick darkness of heathendom.

and the darkness comprehended (understood, apprehended) **it not**] That this is the meaning, will be clear from the context. St. John states here as a *general fact*, what he afterwards states of the appearance of the Incarnate Word to the chosen people, ver. 11. The sentences are strictly parallel. “*The light shineth in the darkness*” is parallel to “*He came to his own*,” and “*the darkness comprehended it not*” is parallel to “*His own received him not*.” In the first, he is speaking of the *whole shining of this light over the world*; in the second, of its *historical manifestation to the Jews*. In both cases, *the Divine Word was rejected*.

received is used in the second case as expressing the personal assumption to oneself. as a friend or companion.

Lücke observes, that the almost tragic tone of this verse is prevalent through the Gospel of St. John and his first epistle, see ch. iii. 19; xii. 37 ff. al.: and is occasionally found in St. Paul also; see Rom. i. 18 ff.

The connexion of the two members of our verse by and is not, “The Light shineth in the darkness, *and therefore* (i. e. because darkness is the opposition to light, and they exclude one another) the darkness comprehended it not;” but, “The Light shineth in the darkness, *and yet* (notwithstanding that the effect of light in darkness is so great and immediate in the physical world) the darkness comprehended it not;” see “*and*” below, ver. 11.

6–18.] THE MANIFESTATION AND WORKING OF THE DIVINE WORD, JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, INCARNATE IN OUR FLESH.

6.] The Evangelist now passes to the *historic manifestation* of the Word. “In passing to the manifestation of the Son, what other beginning should he have fixed on, but the matters concerning John?” Theodore of Mopsuestia. He *enunciates* briefly in these verses 6, 7, what he afterwards, vv. 19–86, narrates with historical detail.

There was does not belong to **sent**, but to **a man**: “*There was a man, sent from God*.” In **sent from God** we have possibly a reference to Mal. iii. 1.

7.] The purpose of John’s coming was to *bear witness to a fact*, which fact (ver. 33) was made known to him by divine revelation. We must not render, as A.V., ‘*for a witness*, but **for witness** or **for testimony**, for the purpose of bearing witness.

to bear witness&c. is an expansion of **for witness**:—the subject of his testimony was to be,—**the Light**,—and the aim of it,—**that all might believe** (see ch. xii. 36) **through him** (i. e. John: not. through *it*, *the light*, which confuses the whole, for then we must understand **on God** after **believe**, which is here out of place)

8.] John was himself “*the candle, lighted and shining*” (ch. v. 35), see note on Matt. v. 14, but not **the light**.

9.] The word **true** in this connexion imports original, ‘archetypal,’ and is used of the true genuine sources and patterns of those things which we find here below only in fragmentary imitations and derivations. Such an *original* was the light here spoken of;—but John was only a derived light,—not a light *lighting*, but a light *lighted*.

The construction of this verse has been much disputed. Is **coming into the world** to be taken with **every man** (as many ancient versions, and most of the

ancient Commentators, and A.V.), or does it belong to **the true light**?

The former construction can only be defended by a Rabbinical usage, by which “*all that cometh into the world*” means ‘all men.’ But it is very questionable whether St. John ever speaks thus. Certainly he does not, in any of the passages commonly cited to defend this rendering, ch. xviii. 87 (which is spoken by Christ of Himself and His Mission); xvi. 21, 28; xii. 46. And even if he had thus spoken, how harsh and how unmeaning is the sentence, however we take it; whether with Euthymius we lay an emphasis on “was,” or with A.V. &c. supply “*that*” before it. If this latter had been intended, surely it would have been more distinctly expressed; and even when it is supplied, we have in this verse only a less forcible repetition of ver. 4.

It seems then that we must join **coming into the world** with **the true light**.

But even then, three ways of rendering are apparently open to us.

The first of these, which is that of Socinus, takes “*coming into the world*” as meaning, ‘*at its coming into the world?*’ This however—besides the sense being inconsistent with ver. 4—leaves the opening clause without a demonstrative pronoun, as before. Then, secondly, **coming** might seem to be used in the sense in which we frequently have it, as a sort of future, ‘who was, or is, to come;’ see Matt. xi. 3; Mark x. 30 al. fr.; ch. vi. 14; xi. 27, in which last two places it is joined, as here, with “*into the world.*” But if this be adopted, the only sense will be that the true light, &c. *was to come*; i.e. *had not yet come*; which manifestly is not correct;—for it *had come*, when John gave his witness; and the whole of these verses 6–13 relate to the time when He had appeared, and *come* to His own.

We are driven then to the only legitimate rendering, which is to take **was coming** as equivalent to an imperfect, **came**:—this usage being frequent in the N.T.:—i. e. at the time when John bore this witness, the true light which lighteth every man, came—was in process of manifesting Himself,—into the world.

which lighteth every man is a further expansion of **the true.**

10.] The world is the created world, into which He came (ver. 9), which was made by Him (ver. 3), which nevertheless (i.e. as here represented by *man*, the only creature who “*knows*”) knew, recognized Him not.

and is as in ver. 5. The three members of the sentence form a climax;—**He was in the world** (and therefore the world should have known Him), **and the world was made by Him** (much more then should it have known Him), **and the world knew Him not.**

11.] It is impossible to express this verse in terse and short English. In the original, the first **his own** is neuter—*his own things, or possessions*: the second, masculine, *his own people*. If we enquire for the sense, **his own things** here cannot well mean *the world, or his own people* mankind in general: it would be difficult to point out any Scripture usage to justify such a meaning. But abundance of passages bear out the meaning which makes the former His own inheritance or possession, i.e. Judæa; and the latter, the Jews; compare especially the parable Matt. xxi. 33 ff.; and Eccl. xxiv. 7 ff. And thus **came** forms a nearer step in the approach to the declaration in ver. 14. He *came* to His own.

On **received him not** see above on ver. 5. **12.]** The words, **as many as....** primarily refer to the “*election*” among the Jews, who have just been spoken of: but also, by implication, being opposed to both **the world** and **his own**, the *election* in all the world.

as many as received him, i. e., as many as recognized Him as that which He was—the Word of God and Light of men.

them gave he power] The word means, not merely *capability*,—still less *privilege or prerogative*,—but **power**; involving all the actions and states needful to their so becoming, and removing all the obstacles in their way (e. g. the wrath of God, and the guilt of sin).

to become children of God] The spiritual life owes its beginning to a *birth from above*, ch. iii. 3–7. “And this birth is owing to the Holy Spirit of God; so that this is equivalent to saying, ‘As many as received Him, to them gave He His Holy Spirit.’ And we find that it was so: see Acts x. 44,

children of God is a more comprehensive expression than “*sons of God*” (which rendering in the A.V. is entirely without authority), which brings out rather our *adoption*, and hope of inheritance (Rom. viii. 14 ff.), whereas the other involves the *whole generation and process* of our life in the Spirit, as being from and of God, and consequently our *likeness* to God, walking in light as He is in light (1 John i. 5–7)—free from sin (ib. iii. 9; v. 18) and death (ch. viii. 51).

to them that believe on his name **His name** is *His manifestation as that which He has given Himself out to be: i.e. as a Saviour from sin;* see Matt. i. 21, “*Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for He himself shall save His people from their sins.*”

13.] The Jews grounded their claim to be children of God on their descent from Abraham. St. John here negatives any such claim, and asserts the exclusive divine birth of all who become children of God by faith. It is to be noticed that the conjunctions here are not merely disjunctive ones, which would necessitate the ranging the clauses as co-ordinate and parallel, but exclusive ones, which rise in climax from one clause to another,—‘*not of blood, nor yet of the will of the flesh, nor yet of the will of man, but of God.*’—Many Interpreters have seen in “*the will of man*” (the word in the original is that expressing the *man* as distinguished from the *woman*) the male, and in “*the will of the flesh*” the female side of human concupiscence (so Augustine, Theophylact, &c.); or in the former the higher and more conscious, in the latter the lower and animal side (Bleek, Luthardt). But both these interpretations seem to be objectionable.

14.] And must not be understood as giving a reason for the verse before; it is only the same copula as in vv. 1, 3, 4, 5; sing on to a further assertion regarding the Word.

became flesh] the most general expression of the great truth that He became *man*. He became that, of which man is in the body compounded. ‘There is no reference here to the doctrine of the Lord Jesus being the second Adam, as Olshausen thinks; but although there may be no reference to it, it lies at the ground of this wideness of expression. The doctrine in this form may have been, as Lücke observes, alien to St. John’s habits of thought, but not that which is implied in the doctrine, the taking of the nature of man by the Eternal Word.

The simplicity of this expression is no doubt directed against’ the Docete of the Apostle’s time, who maintained that the Word only apparently took human nature. Therefore he says, absolutely and literally **became** flesh:—see 1 John iv. 2. The word rendered “dwelt,” properly is ‘sojourned,’ or ‘tabernacled,’ in us. There is no reference to the flesh being the *tabernacle* of the Spirit;—but the word is one technically used in Scripture to import the dwelling of God among men. **us**] “men, who are flesh,” Bengel.

we beheld] See 1 John i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 16. This is the Apostle’s testimony as such, see Acts i. 21.

The mention of **glory** seems to be suggested by the word **tabernacled**, so frequently used of the divine Presence or *Shechinah*, and cognate in its very form with it.

This glory was seen by the disciples, ch. ii, 11; xi. 4: also by Peter, James, and John, specially, on the mount of transfiguration: to which occasion the words “as of the only-begotten from the Father” seem to refer: but mainly, in the whole converse and teaching and suffering of the Lord, who was full of grace and truth, see below. On the term **as**, Chrysostom remarks that ‘it is not a word of mere likeness, or comparison, but of confirmation, and unquestionable endowment: as if he had said, We saw glory such as became, and such as was likely would be possessed by, the only begotten and genuine Son of God the King of all.’

only-begotten] This word applied to Christ is peculiar to John, and occurs in ver. 18; ch. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9 only. In the N.T. usage it signifies the *only* son:—in the LXX, Ps. xxii. (xxi. 21 of the LXX) 20 (Heb., *my only one from the hand of the dog*), the *beloved*. It has been attempted to render the word in John, according to

the usage in Ps. xxi. 20. But obviously in the midst of ideas reaching so far deeper than that of regard, or love, of the Father for the Son, the word cannot be interpreted except in accordance with them. It refers to, and contrasts with, the children of God in vv. 12, 13. *They receive their divine birth by faith in Him, and through Him; but HE is the Only-begotten of the Father in the higher sense, in which He is begotten the Son of God.*

The words **full of grace and truth** (see the note in my Gr. Test.) belong probably to the last words, **the only-begotten of the Father**, and there is no need of a parenthesis, as in A.V.

grace and truth] not equivalent to “*true grace*,” which destroys the precision of the expression, and itself conveys no sense whatever; but *setting out the two sides* of the divine manifestation in Christ,—**grace**, as the result of Love to mankind,—**truth** (see ch. xiv. 6), as the unity, purity, and light of His own Character.

15.] The testimony of John, so important as being the fulfilment of the very object for which he was *sent from God*, is in this prologue ranged, so to speak, parallel with the assertions and testimony of the Evangelist himself. So that this verse does not interrupt the train of thought, but confirms by this important testimony the assertion “*the Word became flesh*,” shewing that John bore witness to His pre-existence. Then (ver. 16) the “*full of grace and truth*” is again taken up. Euthymius paraphrases: “Even if I,” says the Evangelist, “may perhaps seem to some not worthy of credit, yet before me John witnesseth to His Godhead, that John, whose name is great and celebrated among all the Jews.”

beareth witness, present, for solemnity—as part of the testimony to Him, not only once given, but still subsisting.

crieth (in the original, *perfect*, being, in sense, *present*, ‘*hath cried*,’ so that the voice is still sounding), see ch. vii. 37: “John crieth out with confidence and joy, as becometh a great herald.” Bengel.

This was he of whom I spake...] This reference to a former saying seems to shew, as indeed would appear from the announcement of his own office by the Baptist, that he had uttered these words in the power of the Spirit concerning Him whose forerunner he was before he saw and recognized Him in the flesh. Then, on doing so, he exclaimed, **This was He of whom I spake**, &c. This view seems to be borne out. by his own statement, ver. 33, and by the order of the narrative in Matt. iii. 11, 12, 13.

cometh after me] In point of *time*; not of *birth*, merely or principally, nor of *commencement of official life*: but, inasmuch as John was His *Forerunner*, on account of official position.

taketh place before me] This expression, **taketh place**, represents one, in the original, very difficult to render in English. It is the same word as that rendered “*hath been made*” in ver. 8: *hath come to be, is constituted*. The A.V., “*is preferred*,” would be very suitable, setting forth the advancement to official dignity before which John’s office waned and decreased (ch. iii. 30), which took place even while John’s course was being fulfilled: but the objection to ‘*preferred*’ is, its possible ambiguity: the word to *prefer* meaning to *esteem more highly*, as well as to *advance or promote*, which is the sense required here. Even Dr. Johnson has fallen into the mistake of quoting this very passage, in his Dictionary, as an instance of the sense “to love more than another.”

because (or, **for**, but better because) **He was** (not “*became*” or “*was made*,” but as in ver. 1) before me; i.e. ‘*He existed*, was in being, before me.’ The question raised by some, whether it is probable that the Baptist had, or expressed such views of the pre-existence of Christ, is not one for us to deal with, in the face of so direct a testimony as is given to the *fact*, here and in ch. iii. 27 ff. In all probability, the Evangelist was himself a disciple of the Baptist: and if he has given us, as compared with the other Evangelists, a fuller and somewhat differing account of his testimony to Christ, it is because his means of information were ampler than those of the other Evangelists. The questioners seem to forget that the Baptist was divinely raised up and commissioned, *and full of the Holy Ghost, and spoke in that power*; his declarations were not therefore merely conclusions which he had arrived at by natural means,—the study of the prophecies, &c.: but *inspirations and revelations of the Spirit*.

16.] Origen blames Heracleon for terminating the testimony of John at the end of ver. 17, and makes it continue to the end of ver. 18. But it can hardly be that his testimony extends beyond ver. 15, for **all we** (in ver. 16) would bear no very definite meaning in his mouth, and the assertions in ver. 17 are alien from the character of the Baptist, belonging as they do to the more mature development of Christian doctrines. I cannot doubt that this and the following verses *belong to the Evangelist*, and are a carrying onwards of his declarations concerning the divine Word.

Ver. 15 is not parenthetical, but confirmatory of ver. 14, and this verse *grounds itself on the fact of ver. 14, corroborated by the testimony of ver. 15,—that He dwelt among us, and that we saw His glory, full of grace and truth*.

his fulness is *that of which He was full*, ver. 14,

all we] All who believe on Him; see ver. 12.

received, and...] ‘Our relation to Him has been that of recipients out of His fulness, and the thing received has been’....

grace for grace] The ancient interpretation, *the New Covenant instead of the Old* (Euthymius), is certainly wrong, for the **received** is spoken entirely of *the times of the Incarnate Word*: and besides, *the law and grace* are distinctly *opposed* to one another in the next verse.

The preposition rendered **for** (*instead of*) is properly used of any thing which *supersedes* another, or occupies its place. This is in fact its ordinary usage when *exchange* is spoken of: the possession of the thing gotten succeeds to, supersedes, the possession of the thing given in exchange, and I possess one thing *instead of* (or, *for*) another. ‘Thus also we have received **grace for grace**, continual accessions of grace; new grace coming upon and superseding the former.

17.] The connexion of this verse with the foregoing lies in the words **his fulness** (ver. 16), and **in grace and truth** (ver. 14). ‘We received from His fulness continual additions of grace, *because that fulness is not, like the law, a positive enactment, finite and circumscribed*, of which it could be said that it **was given**, but the *bringing in of grace and truth*, which **came** (came in, came to pass) by Jesus Christ.’ The **fulness** of Christ is set against the *narrowness of positive enactment* in the law. The distinction must not be lost sight of, nor denied, as Lücke attempts to do: for Bengel truly observes: “No philosopher places his words so accurately, and observes their minute differences, as John, especially in this chapter.”

18.] The connexion is: ‘Moses could not give out of the *fulness* of grace and truth, for he had no *immediate* sight of God, and no man can have: there is but One who can *declare* God, the *only-begotten Son*, who is no mere *man*, but abides in the bosom of the Father.’ The *sight of God* here meant, is not only bodily sight (though of that it is true, see Exod. xxxiii. 20: 1 Tim. vi. 16), but *intuitive and infallible knowledge*, which enables him who has it to declare the nature and will of God; see ch. iii. 11; vi. 46; xiv. 7.

The Evangelist speaks in this verse in accordance with the sayings of the Alexandrine philosophy, whose phraseology he has adopted: *Who hath seen Him, that he might tell us?* Eccl. xlivi. 31.

the only-begotten Son] A remarkable various reading, **the only-begotten God**, occurs here in many of our oldest MSS.,

versions, and Fathers. The evidence for and against it is given in full in my Gr. Test. (edn. 6.) It seems to have arisen from a confusion of the contracted forms of writing the words “Son” and “God” in the Greek: the former being in our ancient MSS. written YC, the latter ΘC. The question, which reading to adopt, is one which, in the balance of authorities, must be provisionally decided by the consideration that, as far as we can see, we should be introducing much harshness into the sentence, and a new and strange term into Scripture, by adopting **only-begotten God**: a consequence which ought to have no weight whatever where authority is overpowering, but may fairly be weighed where this is not so. I therefore retain the commonly received reading, **only-begotten Son**.

which is in the bosom] ‘The expression must not be understood as referring to the custom of reclining *on the bosom*, as in ch. xiii. 23: for by this explanation confusion is introduced into the imagery, and the real depth of the truth hidden. The expression signifies, as Chrysostom observes, *Kindred and oneness of essence*:—and is derived from the fond and intimate union of children and parents. The *present, which is*, as in ch. iti. 18, is used to signify *essential truth*, without any particular regard to time.

he] In the original this pronoun is very marked: He, and none else: an emphatic exclusive expression.

declared] Better than ‘*hath declared*, as A.V. On the sense, see Matt. xi. 27.

I. 19-II. 11.] INTRODUCTION OF CHRIST TO THE WORLD: BY THE WITNESS OF JOHN (vv. 19–40): BY HIMSELF (ver. 41—ii. 11).

19–28.] *The first witness borne by John to Jesus: before the deputation from the Sanhedrim.*

19. the Jews] St. John alone of the Evangelists uses this expression;—principally as designating *the chiefs of the Jewish people*, the members of the Sanhedrim. It is an interesting enquiry, what this usage denotes as to the author or date of our Gospel. Prof. Bleek has satisfactorily shewn that no inference can be deduced from it *against the Jewish origin* of the author, as some have endeavoured to do; but it is rather confirmatory of the belief that the Gospel was written after the Jews had ceased to be politically a nation,—and among Gentiles;—the author himself contemplating these last as his readers.

priests and Levites] This was a *formal deputation*;—priests and Levites, constituting the two classes of persons employed about the service of the temple (see Josh. iii. 3), are sent (Matt. xxi. 23) officially to enquire into the pretensions of the new Teacher (ver. 25), who had collected about him such multitudes (Matt. iii. 5), and had awakened popular expectation that he was the Messiah (Luke iii. 15).

Who art thou?] The emphasis should be on the **thou**. “The question is asked with reference to the popular doubts respecting him; in an unbelieving and inquisitorial spirit,—compare Matt. iii. 7 ff., which had already taken place. Even among the learned, as well as among the people, there were considerable differences as to the prophecies respecting the Messiah: see ch. vii. 40–52.

20.] He openly and formally confessed. This emphatic notice of his declaration seems to be introduced *not with any view of removing too high an estimate of John’s work and office*, as sometimes supposed, but rather to *shew the importance of his testimony*, which was so publicly and officially delivered,—that the Messiah was come (see ch. v. 33–35); and the way in which he depreciated himself in comparison with Him who came after him.

21.] Our earliest MS. (the Vatican) reads here, “*What then art thou?*” equivalent to *What sayest thou of thyself?* ver. 22.

Art thou Elias?] The whole appearance of John reminds them of Elias:—see Matt. iii. 4, and compare 2 Kings i. 8. Besides, his announcement that *the Kingdom of God was at hand*, naturally led them to the prophecy Mal. iv. 5. Lightfoot cites from the Rabbinical books testimonies, that the Jews expected a general purification or baptism before the coming of the Messiah (from Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, and Zech. xiii. 1), and that it would be administered by Elias.

And he saith, I am not] The right explanation of this answer seems to be the usual one,—that the deputation asked the question in a mistaken and superstitious sense, meaning Elias bodily come down from heaven, who was expected to forerun and anoint the Messias. (Our Lord seems to refer to the same extravagant notion in Matt. xi. 14, *If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which shall come.*) *In this sense*, John was not Elias; nor indeed in any other sense, *was he Elias*;—but only (Luke i. 17) *in the spirit and power of Elias*. **Art thou the prophet?]** From the prophecy of Moses, Deut. xviii. 15, 18, the Jews expected some particular prophet to arise,—distinct from the Messiah (this distinction however was not held by all, see ch. vi. 14),—whose coming was, like that of Elias, intimately connected with that of the Messiah Himself: see ch. vii. 40, 41. In Matt. xvi. 14 we have ‘*Jeremiah, or one of the prophets*,’ apparently spoken as representing this expected prophet. There seem to have been various opinions about him;—all however agreeing in this, that he was to be *one of the old prophets raised from the dead* (see also 2 Macc. ii. 1–8). This John was not: and he therefore answers this also in the negative.

22.] Notice—they ever ask about his *person*: he ever refers them to his *office*. He is no one—a *voice* merely: it is the work of God, the testimony to Christ, which is every thing. So the formalist ever in the church asks concerning any one who appears, *Who is he?* while the witness for Christ only exalts, only cares for Christ's work.

23.] These words, which by the other Evangelists are spoken of John as the fulfilment of the prophecy, appear from this place to have been first so used by *himself*. They introduce the great closing section of the prophecy of Isaiah (ch. xl.—lxvi.) so full of the rich promises” and revelations of the Messiah and His kingdom.

Make straight (straighten) is used as compendiously expressing the commands in the prophecy.

By implication, the Baptist, quoting this opening prophecy of himself, announces the approaching fulfilment of the whole section.

24. Now they had been sent by the Pharisees] The reason of this explanation being added is not very clear. Lücke refers it to the apparent hostility of the next enquiry: but I confess I cannot see that it is more hostile than the preceding. Luthardt thinks that it imports, there were some of the deputation present, who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, which the words will hardly bear. Might it not be to throw light on their question about *baptizing*, as the Pharisees were the most precise about all ceremonies, lustrations, &c.? Thus the explanation will refer to the nature of the following question.

25.] This question shews probably that they did not interpret Isa. xl. 3 of any herald of the Messiah. They regarded baptism as a significant token of the approach of the Messianic Kingdom, and they asked, ‘Why baptizest thou, if thou art no forerunner of the Messiah?’

26, 27.] The latter part of ver. 26 and beginning of ver. 27, as read in our oldest and best authorities, runs, as in the corrected text, **There standeth one among you whom ye know not, He that cometh after me.**

The insertions, “*it is*,” and “*is preferred before me*,” have been made by some one not aware of the meaning, and wishing to square the verse with vv. 15, 30. The answer of the Baptist seems not to correspond to the question in ver. 25. This was noticed as early as Heracleon (Century II), who said, *John answers the deputation from the Pharisees not with reference to what they asked, but what he himself chose*. This however is impugned at some length by Origen, but not on very convincing grounds. The truth seems to have been apprehended by Olshausen,—that the declaration of John that the Messiah was standing among them at that moment unknown to them, *was an answer to their question demanding a legitimation of his prophetic claims;—a sign that he was sent from God*:—see ch. ii. 18. Olshausen also suggests that this may clear up the saying of the Jews in ch. x, 41 (see note there). In repeating this saying at other times (see Matt. iii. 11 and parallel places), the Baptist plainly states of the Messiah, that he should baptize them with the Holy Ghost (and fire), as here in ver. 33. Here, in speaking to those learned in the offices of the Messiah, he leaves that to be supplied.

whose shoe's latchet....] See note on Matt. iii. 11. ‘The **latchet** is the *thong* of the shoe or sandal, with which it was bound to the foot.

28.] The common reading, *Bethabara*, is owing to a conjecture of Origen, the grounds of which he thus states:— “*We are not ignorant, that in almost all our copies it is stated, 'these things were done in Bethany;*” and this seems to have been so read even before our time: for I have read it so in Heracleon. But I am persuaded that we ought not to read *Bethany*, but *Bethabara*; for I have been on the spot, in my desire to track the footsteps of Jesus and of His Apostles and of the prophets. Bethany, as the Evangelist himself says, is only fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, far away from the river Jordan, about 180 furlongs, roughly stated. Nor is there any place near the Jordan of the same name as *Bethany*: but *they say that a place is shewn on the banks of the Jordan called Bethabara, where they relate that John baptized.*” He goes on to shew from the *etymology of the names* that it must have been Bethabara; an argument which modern criticism will not much esteem. It will be seen that his testimony is decisive for the universality and authority of the reading **Bethany**, while for the other he only produces a tradition, and that only at second-hand: ‘*they say* that such a place is shewn.’ That no Bethany beyond Jordan was known in his time proves but little;—for 300 eventful years had changed the face of Palestine since these events, and the names and sites of many obscure places may have been forgotten. I abstain from enumerating modern conjectures on the identity of the two, or the etymology of the names, as being indecisive and unprofitable. The objection of Paulus, that *beyond Jordan* the Sanhedrim had no authority, appears not to be founded in fact.

The question whether this testimony of the Baptist is identical with that given by the other three Evangelists, especially by St. Luke (iii. 16), is, after all that has been said on it, not of great importance. The whole series of transactions here recorded, from ver. 15 onwards, certainly happened *after* the baptism of our Lord;—for before that event John *did not know Him as He that was to come*: and “*standeth among you*,” ver. 26, shews that *he had so recognized Him* (see below on “*the next day*”): whereas the testimony in Luke iii. 16 and parallel places, is as certainly given *before* the baptism. But since the great end of

John's mission was to proclaim Him who was coming after him, it is not only probable, but absolutely necessary to suppose, that he should have delivered this testimony *often*, and under varying circumstances: *before* the baptism, in the form given by St. Luke, "*One mightier than I cometh*," &c., and *after* it in this form, "*This is He of whom I said*," &c. (ver. 15), where his former testimony is distinctly referred to. And among John's disciples and the multitudes who frequented his baptism, many reports of such his sayings would naturally be current. So that there is neither a real nor even an apparent contradiction between John and the other Evangelists.

It is a far more important question, *in what part of this narration the forty days' Temptation is to be inserted*. From ver. 19 to ch. ii. 1 there is an unbroken sequence of days distinctly marked. Since then ver. 19 must be understood as happening after the baptism, it must have happened *after the Temptation* also. And in this supposition there is not the slightest difficulty. But when we have made it, it still remains to say whether at that time our Lord had returned from the Temptation or not. The general opinion of Harmonists has been, that the approach of Jesus to John in ver. 29 was *His return after the Temptation*. But this I think questionable, on account of the "*standeth among you*," ver. 26; which I can only understand literally. I therefore believe—that the return from the Temptation to Bethany beyond Jordan had taken place before the deputation arrived.

29–34.] Second witness borne by John to Jesus: apparently before His disciples.

29.] The next day (the morrow). Those who wish to introduce the Temptation between vv. 28 and 29, interpret it, '*on some day after*.' Thus Euthym., "*the next day*; that is, the next after his return from the wilderness." But this sense, although certainly found in the Old Testament,—see Gen. xxx. 33 (*'in time to come'*, Heb. "*to-morrow*"),—is not according to the usage of St. John (see ch. vi. 22; xii. 12), and would be quite alien from the precision of this whole portion of the narrative, which, ver. 40, specifies even the hours of the day. I understand it therefore literally, both here and. in vv. 35 and 44.

coming unto him] It is not said *whence*, or *why*, or whether for the purpose of an interview, or not; *the fact* merely is related, for the sake of the testimony which follows. I mention this, because on these points difficulties have been raised.

Behold the Lamb of God] This is one of the most important and difficult sayings in the New Testament. *The question to be answered* is, In calling Jesus by so definite a name as **the Lamb of God**, to what did John refer? And this question is intimately connected with that of the meaning of the following words, **which taketh away the sin of the world**.

(a) The title must refer to *some "known and particular lamb*, and cannot be a mere figure for a just and holy man, as some suppose. It is inconceivable, that *the Lamb of God* should, in a testimony so precise and formal as this of the Baptist, be *nothing but an hyperbole*, and that one *wholly unprecedented*, and to his hearers *unintelligible*. Had no doctrinal considerations been at stake, we may safely say that this interpretation would never have been proposed. In its bearing on the latter clause of the verse, it is equally untenable. These interpreters make *which taketh away the sin of the world* to mean, "who shall, though innocent, have, throughout his life, grievous experience of the wickedness of men, but shall, like a lamb, bear the evils inflicted upon him with a patient and gentle mind" (Gabler); or, "He shall remove the sins of men, i.e. wickedness, out of the earth." The first of these meanings of the verb rendered "*takeaway*" is *altogether without example*. The second, though common enough in other connexions, is never found in connexion with "*sin*." The common sense account of this part of the matter is:—John wished to point out Jesus as *the Messiah*: he designates Him as *the lamb of God*; he therefore referred to some definite lamb,—revealed by God, sent by God, pleasing to God, or in some meaning especially, **of God**. *Whence did this idea come?*

(b) Can John have referred to the *paschal lamb*? Further than the very use of the name brings in with it the general typical use of the animal, and thus this particular use may lie in the background, *I think not*,—and for this reason:—The *ruling idea* in the paschal sacrifice has no connexion, in any sense of the words, with *taking away sin*. However, by the light now thrown back on it since the Spirit has opened the things of Christ, we discern this typical meaning in the sprinkling of the blood (see 1 Cor. v. 7),—in the *Jewish mind*, no mention being made of sin or the removing of sin in any connexion with the paschal lamb, the two could not be brought forward, in such an announcement as this, in close connexion with one another.

(c) Can the reference be to the *lamb of the daily morning and evening sacrifice*? or to the *sacrificial lamb* generally? With the same reservation as above, *I think not*: for (1) this expression is too definite to have so general and miscellaneous a reference; (2) of many animals which were used for sacrifice, the lamb was *only one*, and that one *not by any means so prominent as to serve as a type for the whole*; and (3) the lamb (with only two exceptions, Levit. iv. 32: Num. vi. 14, in both which cases it was to be a *female*, as if for express distinction from the ordinary use of the lamb) *was never used for a sin-offering*, properly so called and known. The *question is not*, whether Christ be not typified by all these offerings, which we *now know* to be the case (1 Pet. i. 19 al.), but whether *the Baptist is likely to have referred to them in such words as these*. (d) There remains but one reference, and that is, to *the prophetic announcement in Isa. liii. 7*. The whole of that latter

— section of Isaiah, as before remarked on ver. 23, is Messianic, and was so understood by the Jews (see my Hulsean Lectures for 1841, pp. 62–66). We have there the servant of God (the Messiah) compared to *a lamb brought to the slaughter*

(lili. 7), and it is said of Him (ib. ver. 4), “He hath borne our griefs (in the LXX, “beareth our sins”) and carried our sorrows”—ver. 5, “He was wounded for our transgressions”—ver. 6, “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (in the LXX, “delivered Him to our sins”—ver. 8, “He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was He stricken”—ver. 12, “He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (in the LXX., “and was delivered because of their iniquities”). So that here, and here only, we have the connexion of which we are in search,—between *the lamb*, and the *bearing or taking away of sin*,—expressly stated, so that it could be formally referred to in a testimony like the present. And I have therefore no doubt that *this was the reference*.

(e) We have now to enquire into the specific meaning of **which taketh away the sin of the world** (see above under [a]). The verb rendered taketh away answers to a Hebrew verb, which is used frequently in the O.T., in connection with *sin*, in the sense of *bearing its punishment*:—see Levit. xxiv. 15: Num. v. 31; xiv. 3: Ezek. iv. 5; xxiii, 35a]. A form of this very Greek verb is used by the LXX in the sense of taking away sin and its guilt by expiation: see in our English Bible, Levit. x. 17. The word in our verse will bear either of these meanings, or both conjoined; for if the Lamb is to suffer the burden of the sins of the world, and to take away sin and its guilt by expiation, this result must be accomplished by the *offering of Himself*.

(f) But it is objected, that this view of a suffering Messiah, and of expiation by the sufferings of *one*, was *alien from the Jewish expectations*;—and that the Baptist (see Matt. xi. 2 ff. and note) cannot himself have had any such view. But the answer to this may be found in the fact that the view, though not generally prevalent, among the Jews, was by no means unknown to many. The application by the early Jewish expositors of Isa. lili. to the Messiah, could hardly have been made, without the idea of the suffering and death of their Messiah being presented to their minds. The same would be the case in the whole sacrificial economy:—the removal of guilt (which was universally ascribed to the Messiah) by suffering and death would be familiarized to their minds. Traces of this are found in their own writings. In 2 Macc. vii. 37, 38, the last of the seven brethren thus speaks before his martyrdom:—“But I, as my brethren, offer up my body and life for the laws of our fathers, beseeching God that He would speedily be merciful unto our nation; and that thou by torments and plagues mayest confess, that He alone is God: and that in me and my brethren the wrath of the Almighty, which is justly brought upon all our nation, may cease.” And Josephus says of these same martyrs, that they were “as it were a ransom for the nation’s sin: and by means of the blood of those pious ones and the propitiation of their death, divine Providence saved afflicted Israel.” The whole history of the sacrifices and devotions of the heathen world abounds with examples of the same idea variously brought forward; and to these the better-informed among the Jews could be no strangers. And as to the Baptist himself, we must not forget that the power of the Holy Spirit which enabled him to recognize by a special sign the Redeemer, also *spoke in him*, and therefore his words would not be the result of education merely, or his own reasoning, but of that kind of intuitive perception of divine truth, which those have had who have been for any special purpose the organs of the Holy Ghost.

As regards Matt. xi. 3, the doubt on the mind of John there expressed does not appear to have touched at all on the matter now in question,—but to have rather been a form of expressing his impatience at the slow and quiet progress of Him of whom he expected greater things and a more rapid public manifestation.

30.] See on ver. 15.

31.] On the apparent discrepancy between this statement, **I knew him not**, and St. Matthew’s narrative, I have stated my view on Matt. iii, 14. Both accounts are entirely consistent with the supposition that John had been from youth upwards acquainted with our Lord, and

— indeed may have in his own mind believed Him to be the Christ:—but having (ver. 33) *a special sign appointed him*, by which to recognize Him as such,—until that sign was given, he, like the rest of the people (the words may be rendered, **I also**, as well as you, see ver. 26), had no certain knowledge of Him. De Wette gives the sense well: “This testimony (ver. 30) does not rest upon my long personal acquaintance with Him, but on that which happened during my work of baptizing.”

but that he should be made manifest] Justin Martyr represents Trypho the Jew saying, “Even if Christ has been born and exists somewhere, he is unknown, and is not even conscious of his own identity, until Elias shall come and anoint him, and make him manifest to all.” But our narrative is not built upon any such Jewish belief, for it is evidently only as a *spiritual preparation*, through repentance, for the knowledge of Him, that John regarded his baptism, not as any thing making Him manifest to all.

32, 33.] “What follows, is testimony, properly so called: what is said from ver. 29 f. was *demonstration following on testimony*. In the continued discourse of the Baptist the Evangelist as it were interposes a parenthesis, ‘*And John bare witness, saying,*’” Bengel.

The occurrence related by John happened *at the baptism* of Jesus, which is therefore here *pre-supposed as known*, Although this has been questioned, I cannot see how it can be reasonably doubted. We cannot surely suppose that such a sign was *twice shewn*. On the appearance itself, see note Matt. iii. 16. The account here given confirms the view which I have there

maintained, that the appearance was confined to our Lord and the Baptist: *he* was to receive the sign, and then to testify to the others, who were not themselves yet the bearers, but the recipients of testimony:—“It was seen, in a kind of spiritual vision, by John alone.” Theodore of Mopsuestia.

I have beheld, in reference to the sign divinely intimated to him, in the abiding fulfilment of which he now stood. So again, below, ver. 34.

it remained upon him] By some appearance which is not described, the Holy Spirit was manifested to John as *not removing from Jesus again, but remaining on Him*. But we are not to understand that he had seen the Spirit descending on *others*, and *not remaining*; for (see ch. vii. 39; Acts i. 5; xix. 2 ff. (the gift of the Holy Spirit did not ordinarily accompany John’s baptism, but only in this one case; and its occurrence was to point out to him the Messiah.

the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost] Here again we seem to have a reference to the cycle of narratives of the three other Gospels, for our Evangelist has not before mentioned this office of the Messiah.

34.] A solemn reiteration of his testimony, after the mention of the giving of this token by Him who sent him;—**And I have seen (accordingly)&c.**

The token must have been given to the Baptist *by a special revelation*, which also revealed to him his own errand and office; so Luke iii. 2, “*The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*”

The perfect tense in this verse is stronger than the present,—**I have seen** (on the perf. see above ver. 32) **and have borne witness**—it is a reference to his testimony at the time, as a thing on record in their memories, and as still continuing.

the Son of God] See ver. 18—the **Word** made flesh, the Messiah. On the import of the descent of the Spirit

on Jesus at his baptism, I may remark, that the Personal Word, Who *became flesh* in our Lord, and was subjected to all the laws of human development in infancy, childhood, youth,—evermore in an especial degree under the leading of the Holy Spirit, by whose agency the Incarnation had taken place,—was the Recipient of this fulness of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost: and that herein consisted the real depth and propriety of this sign;—the abiding of the Spirit without measure (ch. iii. 34) on Him indicated beyond doubt that He was the *Word become flesh*—for no mere human intelligence could be thus receptive of the Holy Spirit of God;—*we receive Him only as we can*, only as far as our receptivity extends,—*by measure*; but HE, into the very fulness and infinite capacities of His divine Being.

35–43.] *On account of the testimony of John, first Andrew, and another of his disciples, and through Andrew, Simon Peter, became acquainted with Jesus.*

35. the next day after] See on ver. 29. I can hardly suppose, with De Wette, that these two had been absent on the preceding day. Rather, what they then heard seems to have made a powerful impression on their minds, so that the repetition of the notice is now the signal for them to follow Jesus. (On the second disciple, see below on ver. 40.)

37.] We must not understand **followed** in the narrower sense which it bears when they *left all and followed Him*; but here only of *mechanical going after Him*, “wishing to know somewhat of Him,” as Euthymius says.

38.] **On What seek ye?** Euthymius remarks, “This was not asked in ignorance, seeing that He witnesses the inner thoughts of men’s minds, but that He might attach them to Himself by the enquiry, and give them confidence. It is likely that they were bashful as yet and in perplexity, as being unacquainted with Him.”

They ask **where dwellest thou?** wishing to find Him alone and in quiet. Euthymius. They enquire after *His place of lodging for the night*, intending to visit Him there; or perhaps He was then apparently going thither, as it was late in the day. But He furthers their wish by inviting them to follow, and they will see.

39. about the tenth hour] i.e. 4 P.M., according to the Jewish reckoning; not, as some have thought, 10 A.M., according to that of the Romans. Our Evangelist appears always to reckon according to the Jewish method, see ch. iv. 6, 52; xix. 14, and notes, but especially ch. xi. 9. And as Lücke remarks, even among the Romans, the division of the day into twelve equal hours was, though not the civil, the popular way of computing time.

They remained with Him *the rest of that day*, which would be four or five hours, and need not strictly be limited by sunset.?,

40.] Who the other disciple was, is not certain: but considering (1) that the Evangelist *never names himself* in his Gospel, and (2) that this account is so minutely accurate as to specify even the hours of the day, and in all respects *bears marks of an eye-*

witness, and again (3) that this other disciple, from this last circumstance, certainly *would have been named*, had not the name been suppressed *for some especial reason*, we are justified in inferring that it was *the Evangelist himself*. And such has been the general opinion. Euthymius, mentioning this, gives an alternative which is hardly probable: that this disciple may have been one of those who were but little known or distinguished.

41. Messias] Heb., the Anointed: the well-known name of the expected Deliverer. In the interpretation, it should be **Christ**, not the Christ: it is the two words which are here identified, not the two titles.

42.] This is evidently the *first bestowal of the new name* on Simon: and it is done from our Lord's prophetic knowledge of his future character; see note on Matt. xvi. 18. *Kaphā* in Aramaic, *Kaph* in Hebrew, a **stone**. But the rendering of *Petros* in this verse should be as in margin, **Peter**, not as in A.V., *a stone*. The Greek name *Peter* became the prevalent one in the apostolic Church very soon: St. Paul uses both names indiscriminately.

I own I cannot but think that the knowledge of Simon shewn by the Lord is *intended to be miraculous*, So also Stier, "I know who and what thou art from thy birth till thy present coming to me.... I name thee, I give thee a new name, I know what I will make of thee in thy following of Me and for my Kingdom." The emphatic use of *looked on him* here (it is not so emphatic in ver. 36, but still even there may imply fixed contemplation, in the power of the Spirit, who suggested the testimony) is hardly accountable except on this explanation of supernatural knowledge. Similarly Abram, Sara, Jacob, received new names in reference to the covenant and promises of God to them.

43–52.] *The calling of Philip and Nathanael.*

43. The day following] Apparently, the day after the naming of Peter; and if so, the next but one after the visit of Andrew and the other disciple, and the *fourth day after* ver. 19. Our Lord is on the point of setting out from the valley of the Jordan to Galilee, and finds Philip, with whom there is every reason to believe He was previously acquainted (see ver. 45). Here we find Jesus himself *calling* a disciple, for the first time. But **Follow me** does not here bear its strict apostolic sense; the expression, "*We have found*" afterwards, and the going to search for others to be disciples, unites Philip to the company of those who have been before mentioned, who we know were not immediately or inseparably attached as followers to Jesus.

44.] This is Bethsaida on the *Western* bank of the lake of Gennesaret; another Bethsaida (Julias) lay at the top of the lake, on the Jordan. See note on Luke ix. 10.

45.] It does not appear where Nathanael was found: but he is described, ch. xxi. 2, as *of Cana of Galilee*: and as we find Jesus there in ch. ii. 1, it is probable the call may have taken place in its neighbourhood. Nathanael (meaning, "the gift of God," corresponding to Theodore or Theodosius in Greek) is mentioned *only in these two places*. From them we should gather that he was an apostle; and as his name is nowhere found in the catalogues of the twelve, but Philip is associated in three of them, Matt. x. 3: Mark iii. 18: Luke vi. 14, with *Bartholomew*, it has been supposed that Nathanael and Bartholomew *were the same person* (see note on Matt. x. 3). This is however mere conjecture.

Moses in the law] Probably in Deut. xviii. 15; but also in the promises to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7 al.: and in the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlvi. 10, and the prophets, *passim*; see the references.

the son of Joseph, which is from Nazareth] This expression seems to shew previous acquaintance on the part of Philip with Jesus. No stress can be laid, as has been most unfairly done, on Jesus being called by Philip, the son of Joseph, as indicating that the history of His birth and childhood, as related by St. Matthew and St. Luke, was *unknown to St. John*. Philip *expresses what was the prevailing belief, in the ordinary words*, as Olshausen remarks. In an admirable note, Neander remarks, that by combining the two declarations of John, that *in Jesus the Eternal Word of God became flesh* (ver. 14), and that '*that which is born of the flesh is flesh*' (ch. iii. 6), we cannot escape the inference, that a *supernatural working of God in the conception of the Ban Christ Jesus is implied*.

46.] As Lücke observes, the meaning of this question is simpler than at first sight appears. It is impossible that Nathanael, himself a Galilean, could speak from any feeling of contempt for Galilee generally: and we have no evidence that Nazareth was held in contempt *among the Galileans*. He alluded therefore to the smallness and insignificance of the town in proportion to the great things which were now predicated of it. Nazareth is never named in the O.T. nor in Josephus.

47.] The Evangelist certainly intends a supernatural insight by the Lord into Nathanael's character to be here understood; and there is probably no reference at all to the question which Nathanael had just asked. To suppose that Jesus *overheard that question*, is just one of those perfectly gratuitous assumptions which the very Commentators who here make this supposition are usually the first to blame. Compare ch. ii. 25.

an Israelite indeed] 'An Israelite who truly answers to the inner and honourable meaning of the name' When we reflect what

was contained in that name, and Who it is that speaks, we can hardly agree with De Wette that the words are spoken merely in the spirit in which every nation attaches some peculiar virtue, and especially those of openness and straightforwardness, to itself.

Our Lord probably referred to Ps. xv.

48.] The remark was overheard by Nathanael, and recognized as indicating perfect knowledge of his character. The question, **Whence knowest thou me?** is one of astonishment, but not perhaps yet of suspicion of any thing supernatural. Our Lord's answer first opens this to him.

Before that&c.] The whole form of our Lord's answer seems to indicate that the place where Philip called Nathanael was not *now* in sight, nor had been. The declaration that Jesus had seen him there, at once brings the conviction which he expresses in the next verse. This would not have been the case, unless the sight had been evidently and unquestionably supernatural: and unless the words "*when thou wast under the fig tree*" involved this. Had Jesus merely seen Nathanael without being seen by him, or had "*I saw thee*" only expressed, '*I knew thy character,*' at first sight, '*although at a distance, no such immediate conviction would have followed.*'

when thou wast under the fig tree, ses Wordsw., "is something more than merely '*under the fig tree*' would be; it indicates retirement thither as well as concealment there,—perhaps for purposes of prayer and meditation." In fact it contains in it, 'when thou wentest under the fig tree, and while thou wert there.'

49.] The answer expresses, 'Thou art the Messiah;' see Ps. ii. 7: ch. xi. 27: Matt. xvi. 16: Luke xxii. 70. Olshausen maintains that **the Son of God** was not a Jewish appellation for the Messiah,—on account of the Jews taking up stones to cast at Jesus when He so called Himself, ch. x. 33. But as Lücke observes, it was not for the *mere use* of this Name,—but for using it in a *close and literal sense* which was unintelligible and appeared blasphemous to them, 'I and My Father **are one**',—that they wished to stone Him; see note on ch. x. 36. It was certainly not so common a name as 'the Son of David, for the Messiah. Nathanael can hardly have meant the name in other than its popular meaning; and the synonymous and better known appellation which he adds, confirms this.

50.] Our Lord says this not in blame, rather in praise of the simple and honest expression of Nathanael's conviction; but principally to shew him, that if he believed by reason of this comparatively small proof of His divine power, his faith would increase from strength to strength at the greater proofs which should from that time forward be given.

There is no *need* to understand our Lord's reply as a question; it may be, **thou believest**. The question is perhaps most natural here: but see notes on the similar sentences, ch. xvi. 31, and ch. xx. 29.

51.] Verily, verily is peculiar to St. John. 'The other Evangelists use 'verily' *once* only in such asseverations. Stier remarks, that the **Verily, verily, I say unto you of the Lord**, is spoken in His coequality with the Father: not as the 'Thus saith the Lord' of the prophets.

unto you] The words following are then spoken to all the disciples present, not only to Nathanael.

With or without **From henceforth**, the meaning will be much the same. The glories of a period beginning from the opening of the Lord's public ministry, and *at this day not yet completed*, are described. For it is not the outward visible opening of the material heavens, nor ascent and descent, of angels in the sight of men, which our Lord here announces; but the series of glories which was about to be unfolded in His Person and Work from that time forward. Luther beautifully says: "When Christ became man and had entered on His ministerial office and begun to preach, then was the heaven opened, and remains open; and has from that time, since the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, never been shut, and never will be shut, although we do not see it with our bodily eyes... Christ says this: 'Ye are now heavenly citizens, and have your citizenship above in the heavenly Jerusalem, and are in communion with the holy angels, who shall without intermission ascend and descend about you.'"

The **opening of heaven** is a symbolical expression, signifying the imparting of divine grace, help, and revelation. See Gen, xxviii. 10–17: Ezek. i. 1: Isa. vi. 1: Mal. iii. 10: Isa, lxiv. 1: also Deut, xi. 17: 1 Kings viii. 35. The words have a plain reference to the *ladder of Jacob*, and imply that what he then saw was now to receive its fulfilment: that He, the Son of Man, was the dwelling of God and the gate of Heaven, and that *through* Him, and *on* Him in the first place, was to descend all communication of help and grace from above.

That no allusion is meant to the Transfiguration, or the Agony, is plain; for *all* those here addressed did not witness these appearances, but Peter and John only; nor to the Ascension, for they did not see heaven opened, nor did angels ascend nor descend.

The above has, remarks Olshausen, been the interpretation of all Commentators of any depth in all times: Origen as well as Augustine, Luther as well as Calvin, Lücke as well as Tholuck: and I may add, De Wette as well as Stier.

the Son of man] An expression originally (as appears) derived, in its Messianic sense, from Dan. vii. 13, 14, and thenceforward used as one of the titles of the Messiah (see ch. xii. 34). It is never predicated of our Lord by any but Himself, except in Acts vii. 56 by Stephen, in allusion apparently to Matt. xxvi. 64, and—which is hardly an exception—in the passages of the Revelation (ch. i. 13; xiv. 14) which are almost citations from Daniel.

John: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1-11.] *The miracle of turning water into wine: the first fulfilment of the announcement in ch. i. 51: see ver. 11.*

1.] the third day—reckoned from the day of Nathanael's calling. There would thus be but one day between that event and the marriage.

Cana of Galilee, see ch. iv. 46;—not far from Capernaum. Josephus calls it “*a village of Galilee*.” There is a Kanah in Josh. xix. 28, in the tribe of Asher, which must be distinct from this. Jerome however believes it to have been the same. This was the residence, and probably birthplace, of Nathanael. If his calling took place in its neighbourhood, our Lord may have gone on and spent the intervening day at Nazareth. Dr. Robinson satisfactorily establishes that Kâna-el-Jelîl, about 3 hours N. 1/2 E. from Nazareth, is the site of this miracle. The name is identical, and so stands in the Arabic Version of the N.T. He shews this to have been recognized in early tradition, and its honour to have been only recently usurped, by Kefr Kenna, a village 1 1/2 hour N.E. from Nazareth, on one of the roads to Tiberias. See a very interesting description of Kâna-el-Jelîl in “*The Land and the Book*,” pp. 426, 427.

the mother of Jesus] St. John *never names* her, as being already well known: or perhaps more probably from his own intimate connexion with her, in pursuance of the injunction ch. xix. 26, 27. He never names either himself, or his own brother, James.

2. and his disciples] It does not appear *who these were*, unless we assume that they were those called in ch. i., which seems most probable. John himself was most likely present. He does not relate so circumstantially any thing which he had not witnessed.

In this case, there must have been some other reason for the invitation, besides mere previous acquaintance. This would be the probable reason for *Jesus himself* being invited; but the *disciples*, being from various places in the district, can hardly *all have been* (De Wette) *friends of the family*. The fact of Jesus having attached disciples to Himself must have been known, and they were doubtless invited *from consideration to Him*.

Our Lord at once opens His ministry with the character which He gives of himself, Matt. xi. 18, 19, as distinguished from the asceticism of John. He also, as Trench admirably remarks (*Miracles*, edn. 2, p. 98, note), gives us his own testimony against the tendency which our indolence ever favours, of giving up those things and occasions to the world and the devil, which we have not Christian boldness to mingle in and purify. Even Cyprian, for instance, proscribes such festivals,—“Let the wicked feasts and licentious banquets at marriages be avoided, of which the contagion is perilous.” And such is the general verdict of modern religionism, which would keep the leaven distinct from the lump, for fear it should become *unleavened*. ‘The especial honour conferred upon *marriage* by the Lord should also be noticed. ‘He here adorned and beautified it with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought.’”

3.] There is no necessity to suppose that the feast had lasted several days, as Do Wette and Lücke do. It has been suggested that the unexpected presence of the disciples may have occasioned a failure in the previously sufficient supply: a gloss in one of the old Latin MSS. has, “And it came to pass, that through the great number of guests the wine was used up.”

The mother of Jesus evidently is *in a position of authority* (see ver. 5) in the house, which was probably that of a near relative. The conjectures and traditions on the subject are many, and wholly unsatisfactory.

A graver question arises as to the intent with which this, **They have no wine**, was said. She cannot have had *from experience* any reason to suppose that her Son would work a miracle, for this (ver. 11) was *His first*. Chrysostom and others suggest that, knowing Him to be Who He was, she had been by the recent divine acknowledgment of Him and His calling disciples to Himself, led to expect the manifestation of His Messianic power about this time; and here seemed an occasion for it. Some of the other explanations are: “that she had always found Him a wise counsellor, and mentioned the want to Him merely that He might suggest some way of remedying it.” Cocceius. “Do thou depart, that the other guests may do the same, before the lack of wine is noticed.” Bengel. “That by some pious exhortation He might prevent the guests from feeling annoyance, and at the

same time spare the bridegroom's shame." Calvin, "Jesus had wrought miracles, but in secret, before this." Tholuck.

On the whole, the most probable explanation is that of Lücke, which somewhat modifies the first hero mentioned,—that our Lord Himself had recently given some reason to expect that He would shew forth His glory by wonderful works. So, very nearly, Stier. 4.] The answer of our Lord is beyond question *one of reproof*, and *disclaimer of participation in the grounds on which the request was made*. See instances, besides reff. in Josh. xxii, 24: Mark i, 24. And so all the early expositors understood it. Irenæus says, "The Lord, repelling her unseasonable urgency, said,"&c.;—and Chrysostom, "She wished.... to gain glory to herself by means of her Son," and therefore He "answered her with severity."

The Romanist expositors mostly endeavour to divest the answer of any aspect of rebuke, and maintain that it was so uttered for *our sakes* alone, to teach us that He did not perform His miracles from regard to human affinity, but solely from love and His object of manifesting His glory. So Maldonatus. And this is true:—but first among those to be taught this, was *she herself, who had tempted Him to work a miracle from that regard*.

It has perhaps not been enough noticed, that in this answer the Lord declares His period of subjection to her as His earthly parent to be at an end. Henceforth His thoughts are not her thoughts. At twelve years of age, see Luke ii. 49, He answers, 'thy father and I,' by 'My Father:'—now, He is to be no longer before the world as *Mary's son*, but as sanctified by the Father and sent into the world:—compare Matt. xii. 48–50, and Luke xi. 27, 28.

Woman] There is no reproach in this term: but rather respect. The Lord henceforth uses it towards her, not calling her 'mother,' even on the Cross (see ch. xix. 26), doubtless for the reason alleged above.

mine hour is not yet come] This expression, **mine hour**, is generally used in John of the time of the *Death of Christ*:—see reff. But it is only so used because His death is in those passages the subject naturally underlying the narrative. It is, *any fixed or appointed time*;—and therefore here, the appointed time of His self-manifestation by miracles. This time was not yet come, but was close at hand. Some have supposed that the wine was not yet wholly exhausted, and that our Lord would wait till the miracle should be undoubted (so Trench): but Stier well remarks that the known *depth* of all His early sayings forbids us from attaching only this meaning to it;—and he sees in it a reference to the great marriage-feast and the new fruit of the vine in the Kingdom of God. If this be so, it can be only in the background; the words must have had a present meaning, and I believe it to be, '*My time, the time at which, from the Father's appointment and my own concurring will, I am to begin miraculous working, is not yet arrived: forestall it not*' Very similarly he speaks, ch. vii. 6, to His brethren, and yet afterwards goes up to the feast. The notion that **mine hour** refers to the hour of our Lord's human infirmity on the Cross when (ch. xix. 27) He "acknowledged her as His mother," Wordsw., seems wholly unfounded. Where do we find any such special acknowledgment there? And why should we go out of our way for a fanciful sense of words which bear an excellent meaning as referring to circumstances then present?

5.] There certainly seems beneath this narrative to lie *some incident which is not told us*. For not only is Mary *not repelled* by the answer just given, but she is *convinced that the miracle will be wrought*, and she is not without an anticipation of the *method of working it*: for how should He require the aid of the servants, except the miracle were to take place according to the form here related? I believe we shall find, when all things are opened to us, that there had been a previous hint given her,—where or how I would not presume to say,—by our Lord, of His intention and the manner of performing it, and that her fault was, *the too rash hastening on of what had been His fixed purpose*.

6.] These vessels were for the washings usual at feasts: see Mark vii. 4. There could be no collusion or imposture here, as they were *water-vessels*, and could have no remnants of wine in them (see also ver. 10). And the large quantity which they held could not have been brought in unobserved. The word here rendered **firkin** is probably equivalent to the Jewish "*bath*" (which held 8 gall. 7–4 pints), and stands for it in the LXX, ref. 2 Chron. According to this, the quantity of wine thus created would be 6 times[2 or 3 times]8 gallons 7–4 pints: i. e. 6 times[17 or 25 gallons: i. e. (say, taking the mean,) 6 times 21 gallons: i. e., 126 gallons. The large quantity thus created has been cavilled at by unbelievers. We may leave them to their cavils with just one remark,—that He who creates abundance enough in this earth to "put temptation in men's way," acted on this occasion *analogously with His known method of dealing*. We may answer an error on the other side (*if at be on the other side*), by saying that the Lord here most effectually and once for all stamps with His condemnation that false system of moral reformation, which would commence by *pledges to abstain from intoxicating liquors*. He pours out His bounty for all, and He vouchsafes His grace to *each* for guidance; and to endeavor to evade the work which He has appointed for each man,—by *refusing the bounty, to save the trouble of seeking the grace*, is an attempt which inst ever end in degradation of the individual motives, and in social demoralization,—whatever present apparent effects may follow its first promulgation. One visible sign of this degradation, in its intellectual form, is the miserable attempt made by some of the advocates of this movement, to shew that the wine here and in other places of Scripture is unfermented wine, not possessing the power of intoxication.

The filling with water,—and drawing out wine, is all that is related. 'The *moment* of the miracle,' says Lücke, 'is rather understood than expressed. It seems to lie between vv. 7 and 8' (i. 471). The *process* of it is wholly out of the region of our

imagination. In order for wine to be produced, we have the growth and ripening of the grape; the crushing of it in proper vessels; the fermentation;—but here all these are in a moment brought about in their *results*, by the same Power which made the laws of nature, and created and unfolded the capacities of man. See below on ver. 11.

8.] The **ruler of the feast** seems to be the same with the “*master of a feast*” spoken of Eccl. xxxii. 1, and with the Latin “*king*,” or “*master*,” “*of the feast*.” It would seem, from the place in Ecclesiasticus, that he was *one of the guests* raised to the post of presiding over the arrangements of the feast. This is however doubted by the older Commentators, who make him not one of the guests, but a person *holding this especial office, and attending on feasts*. Here, he *tastes the wine*; and therefore probably was a guest himself.

10.] The saying of the *ruler of the feast* is a general one, not applicable to the company then present.

We may be sure that the Lord would not have sanctioned, nor ministered to, *actual drunkenness*. Only those who can conceive *this*, will find any difficulty here; and they will find difficulties every where.

The account of the practice referred to is, that the palates of men become after a while dull, and cannot distinguish between good wine and bad. Pliny speaks of persons “who even give their guests other wine than they drink themselves, or *bring it in as the banquet proceeds*.” But the practice *here* described is not precisely that of which Pliny speaks, nor is there any meanness to be charged on it: it is only that, when a man has some kinds of wine choicer than others, he naturally produces the choicest, to suit the most discriminating taste. The word rendered **have freely drank**, in its common meaning, implies, “*are intoxicated*,” “*are drunken*”; but while there is no reason here to *press* its ordinary meaning, so neither is there any to shrink from it, as uttered by the ruler of the feast. ‘The safest rendering is that of Tyndall and Cranmer, “*when men be dronke: and so it is in the Vulgate also*.

11.] The words may also be rendered. according to the reading of most of our ancient MSS., **This wrought Jesus as the beginning of his miracles.**

This assertion of St. John excludes all the apocryphal miracles of the Gospel of the Infancy, and such like works, from credit.

The word **sign**, which occasionally occurs in the other Gospels and the Acts in this absolute sense of *a miracle* (e. g. in the original of Mark xvi. 17, 20; Luke xxiii. 8; Acts iv. 16, 22; viii. 6), is St. John’s ordinary word for it.

his glory] The glory, namely, which is referred to in ch. i. 14, where see note. It was a miracle eminently shewing forth the glory of the *Word, by whom all things were made*, in His state of having become flesh. And this ‘*believing on Him*,’ here predicated of the disciples, was certainly a higher faith than that which first led them to Him. They obtained new insight into His power:—not yet reflectively, so as to infer what all this implied, but so as to increase their faith and trust in Him. Again and again ‘*they believed*:’ new degrees of faith being attained; just as this has since been the case, and will continue to be, in the Church, in the continual providential development of the Christian spirit,—the leavening of the whole lump by degrees.

This important miracle, standing us it does *at the very entrance of the official life of Christ*, has been the subject of many doubts, and attempts to get rid of, or explain away, the power which was here manifested. But never did a narrative present a more stubborn inflexibility to the wresters of Scripture:—never was simple historical veracity more strikingly stamped on any miracle than on this. And doubtless this is providentially so arranged: sec the objections to it treated, and some admirable concluding remarks, in Lücke, i. 478.

To those who yet seek some sufficient *cause* for the miracle being wrought, we may—besides the conclusive answer that we are not in a position to treat this question satisfactorily,—assign the unmistakeable spiritual import of the change here made, as indicating the general nature of the beneficent work which the Lord came on earth to do. So Cornelius a Lapide: “Chuist, at the beginning of His ministry, by changing water into wine, signified, that He was about to change the Mosaic law, insipid and cold as water, into the Gospel of Grace, which is as wine, generous, full-flavoured, ardent, and powerful.” Similarly Eusebius, Augustine, Bernard, and Gregory the Great. **II 12—IV. 54.] FIRST MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF AS THE SON OF GOD:—and herein, ii. 13—iii. 36, IN JERUSALEM AND JUDÆA.**

12.] went down, because Capernaum lay on the lake,—Cana higher up the country. There is no certainty as to this visit, whether or not it is the same with that hinted at in Luke iv. 23: so that no chronological inferences can be built on the hypothesis with any security.

On **his brethren** see Matt. xiii. 55 and note.

Notice the transition from His private to His public life. His mother and brethren are still with Him, attached merely by nature: His disciples, newly attached by faith. In the next verse He has cast off His mere earthly ties for His work. Also in the **not**

many days notice less a mere chronological design, than one to shew that He lost no time after His first miracle, in publicly manifesting Himself as the Son of God.

13–22.] *The first official visit to Jerusalem*, at a Passover: and cleansing of the Temple.

13.] No data are given to determine whether the reason of the short stay at Capernaum was the near approach of the Passover.

Nothing is said of those who accompanied Jesus: but at all events, *His already called disciples* would be with Him (see ver. 22, and ch. iii. 22), and among them in all probability the Evangelist himself;—but *not the rest of the Twelve*, who were not yet called. Of this visit, the narrative of the three other Evangelists records nothing.

14.] On the distinctness of this cleansing from that related in Matt. xxi. 12 ff, see note there.

in the temple] In the court of the Gentiles, the *outer temple*, as distinguished from the *sanctuary*, or the inner temple. This market appears to have sprung up since the captivity, with a view to the convenience of those Jews who came from a distance, to provide them with the beasts for offering, and to change their foreign money into the sacred shekel, which alone was allowed to be paid in for the temple capitulation-tax (Matt. xvii. 24 ff). This tax was sometimes, as in Matthew, 1. c., paid elsewhere than in Jerusalem; but generally there, and in the temple. The very fact of the market being held there would produce an unseemly mixture of sacred and profane transactions, even setting aside the abuses which would be certain to be mingled with the traffic. It is to the *former* of these evils that our Lord makes reference in this *first* cleansing; in the *second*, to the *latter*.

15.] The **small cords** were probably *the rushes* which were littered down for the cattle to lie on. That our Lord used the scourge on the beasts only, not on the sellers of them, is almost necessarily contained in the form of the sentence here: which, according to the grammar of the original, should be rendered as in margin, “He drove all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen.” It has been imagined, that He dealt more mildly with those who sold the doves, which were for the offerings of *the poor*. But this was not so; He dealt alike with all. No other way was open with regard to them, than to order them to take their birds away.

This cleansing of the temple was in the direct course of His manifestation as the Messiah. Immediately after the prophetic announcement of the Forerunner, Mal. iii. 1, is that of the Lord’s *coming suddenly to His temple and purifying it*. This act also answers (but like the fulfilment last mentioned, only in an *imperfect* and *still prophetic* sense) to the declaration of the Baptist “Whose fan is in His hand,” &c., Matt. iii. 12.

His proceeding was not altogether unexampled nor unauthorized, even in an uncommissioned person: for all had the right to reform an abuse of this sort, and the zealots put this right in practice, ‘The disciples by their allusion in ver. 17 seem to refer the action to this latter class.

16. my Father’s house] The coincidence with Luke ii. 49 is remarkable. By this expression thus publicly used, our Lord openly announces His Messiahship. Nathanael had named Him ‘the Son of God’ with this meaning—see on ch. i. 50,—and these words, coupled with the expectation which the confession of John the Baptist would arouse, could leave no doubt on the minds of the Jews as to their import: see on ch. iii. 2.

an house of merchandise] not yet as at the end of His ministry; see above on ver. 14.

17.] his disciples remembered, *at the time*, not afterwards, which would have been expressed, as in ver. 22. But the very remembrance itself was prophetic. The “*eating up*” spoken of in that passion-Psalm, was the marring and wasting of the Saviour’s frame by His zeal for God and God’s Church, which resulted in the buffeting, the scourging, the Cross.

18.] On the demand of the Jews, see Deut. xiii. 1–3. It was not only to justify His having driven out the abomination; this any one might have done;—but to justify the mission and the whole course of action which the words **my Father’s house** implied. They used the same expression at the end of His ministry, Matt. xxi. 23.

19.] This answer of our Lord has been involved in needless difficulty. That in uttering the words, this temple, He *pointed to* His own Body, is inconceivable;—for thus both the Jews and His own disciples must have understood Him, which (see vv. 20, 22) neither of them did. That He implied in saying, **Destroy this temple**, that *their lawless proceedings in the temple would at last bring it to an end*, is equally inconceivable; both on account of the latter part of His declaration, which would thus have no meaning,—and because of the use in this case of the peculiar word,—which signifies *the holy and the holiest place*, the *temple itself*,—as distinguished from the whole enceinte of the sacred buildings. Stier has well remarked that our Lord in this saying *comprehended in the reality*,—His own Body, *its type and symbol*,—the temple then before them. That temple, with all its ordinances and holy places, was but the shadow of the Christian Church;—that, the type of the Body of the Lord,

represented the Church, which is *veritably His Body*. And so the saying was fulfilled by the slaying of His actual Body, in which rejection of Him the destruction of the Jewish temple and city was involved,—and the raising of that Body after three days, in which resurrection we, all the members of His new glorified Body, are risen again. The difficulties attending the interpretation are,—besides the double meaning which I have treated above,—

(1) *the use of the imperative, as applied to the death of Christ.* But this surely may be understood as used hypothetically, and not by way of command. Matt. xii. 33 (“muke the tree good, &c.”) is an instance in point.

(2) *The words I will raise it up*—seeing that the resurrection of the Lord is ever spoken of as *the work of the Father*. Yes,—but by power committed to Christ Himself;—see ch. x. 18, where this is distinctly asserted: and ch. vi. 39, 40, 44, where it is implied, for He is the first-fruits of them that sleep,—and (though the whole course of His working was after the will of the Father,—and in the Spirit, which wrought in Him) strictly and truly *raised Himself* from the dead in the sense here intended.

(3) *The utterance of such a prophecy at so early a period of His official life.* But it was not a prophecy known and understood,—but a *dark saying*, from which no one could then draw an inference as to His death or resurrection. The disciples did not understand it; and I cannot agree with Stier that the Jews could have had any idea of such being His meaning. Chrysostom says, “He speaks many such things, which were not plain to men at the time, but to those who should come after. Why does He do this? that He might be shewn to Lave foreknown future events, when the accomplishment of the prophecy should have come: which has come to pass in the case of this very prophecy.” Lücke remarks, that the circumstance of the words being spoken so long before his trial by the Sanhedrim, would make it more easy for the false witnesses to distort them. This they did, but not so as to agree with one another. They reported it, ‘I can destroy,’ &c. which makes a wide difference, and represents our Lord as an enemy of the temple (Matt. xxvi. 61), and some added to **this temple** the epithet “which is made with hands,” and that He would raise another “made without hands” (Mark xiv. 58).

20.] The building of the temple by Herod the Great is stated by Josephus in one place to have been begun in the *eighteenth* year of his reign; in another, in the *fifteenth*; the difference being made by counting his reign from the death of Antigonus, or from his appointment by the Romans. Reckoning from this latter, we shall have twenty years till the birth of Christ, and thirty years since that event, from which fifty, however, four must be taken, since our era is four years too late. This gives forty-six. The temple was not completed till A.D. 64, under Herod Agrippa II., and the procurator Albinus; so that **was in building** must refer to the greater part of the work now completed.

22.] the Scripture, by all analogy, must mean the *O.T. scriptures*. That the resurrection of the Lord is the subject of O.T. prophecy, we find in several passages of the N.T., see ch. xx. 9; Luke xxiv. 26, 27; 1 Cor. xv. 4. At first sight it appears difficult to fix on any passage in which it is directly announced: but with the deeper understanding of the Scriptures which the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles and still gives the Christian Church, such prophecies as that in Ps. xvi. are recognized as belonging to Him in Whom alone they are properly fulfilled; see also Hos. vi. 2.

23–25.] MANY BELIEVE ON JESUS AT THE PASSOVER: HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR CHARACTER, AND WITHHOLDING OF HIMSELF FROM THEM.

23. when they beheld the miracles which he did] “They believed on Him, but not firmly. Those converts believed in a stricter sense, who believed not owing to the miracles only, but owing to His teaching.” Euthymius. *What miracles* these were, is not related:—certainly some notable ones, see ch. iii. 2.

The mention of them precludes us from understanding ch. iv. 54, as indicating that the healing of the ruler’s son was *absolutely His second miracle*.

24, 25.] The meaning is, **He did not trust Himself** (in the original, the same verb is used for ‘believed,’ in ver. 23, and for ‘trust’ in this verse) **to them**,—i. e. treat them as true and earnest disciples: they entered into no spiritual relation with Him, and He in consequence into none with them. The fact of this being narrated shews that it made an impression on the Evangelist, and led him perhaps first to the conclusion which he here expresses, and which higher knowledge enabled him afterwards to place, as he here does, on its right ground;—His *knowing what was in man*. Nothing less than *divine knowledge* is here set forth; the words are even stronger than if the reference had been to the persons here mentioned (“*needed not that any should testify of them: for He knew what was in them*”): as the text now stands, it asserts an entire knowledge of all that is in all men.

John: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1–21.] *The Lord’s discourse with Nicodemus,—one of these believers on account of His miracles,—of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God and the necessity of the new birth.*

1.] There is mentioned in the Talmud a Nicodemus ben Gorion, who was properly called Bonai, and said to have been a disciple of Jesus: but he is found living at the destruction of Jerusalem. This might certainly have been; still it must be quite uncertain whether he be the same with this Nicodemus. He is mentioned again ch. vii. 50; xix. 39. He was a member of the Sanhedrim, and, besides, a teacher of the law (ver. 10).

2.] *by night, for fear of the Jews*: see ch. xii, 42. The discourse seems to have taken place between Jesus and Nicodemus alone,—and may have been related by our Lord to the Evangelist afterwards. If this be deemed improbable (though I do not see why it should),—of the two other alternatives I would rather believe that St. John was present, than that Nicodemus should have so minutely related a conversation which in his then position he could not understand.

we know] This plural may be merely an allusion to others who had come to the same conclusion, e.g. Joseph of Arimathea; or it may express that Nicodemus was sent in the name of several who wished to know the real character of this Person who wrought such miracles. It is harsh, in this private conversation, to take the plural as merely of singular import, as Lightfoot seems to do. His other rendering, “*it is commonly acknowledged*,” is better,—but not satisfactory; for the common people did not generally confess it, and Nicodemus, as a “*ruler*,” would not be likely to speak in their name (see ch. vii. 49). I would rather take it to express *the true conviction respecting Jesus, of that class to which Nicodemus belonged*—the “*rulers*:” and see in it an important fact, that their persecutions and murder of the Prince of Life hence found their greatest aggravation, that they were carried on *against the conclusions of their own minds*, out of bitter malice, and worldly disappointment at His humble and unobtrusive character, and the spiritual purity and self-sacrifice which He inculcated. Still this must not, though undoubtedly it has truth in it, be carried too far: compare Acts iii. 17, and Acts xiii. 27; 1 Cor. ii. 8. *Some degree of ignorance* there must necessarily have been in all of them, even Caiaphas included, of our Lord’s office and Person. Stier seems to think that Nicodemus, by using the plural, is sheltering himself from expressing *his own conviction*, so as to be able to draw back again if necessary.

art.... come] Stier and others think that there is involved in this word a *recognition* by Nicodemus of the Messianic mission of Jesus:—that it expresses His being “*He that was to come*” (Matt. xi. 3 al.). It is never used of any but the Messiah, except by the Lord Himself, when speaking of John the Baptist as the subject of prophecy (see Matt. xi. 14 al.)

a teacher] In this and the following words, Nicodemus seems to be cautiously withdrawing from his admission being taken as expressing too much. For who of the Jews ever expected a *teacher* to come from God? They looked for a *King*, to sit on David’s throne,—a *Prophet*, to declare the divine will;—but the Messiah was never designated as a *mere teacher*, till the days of modern Socinianism. So that he seems trying to qualify or recall his “*art... come*” by this addition.

The following words exhibit the same cautious inconsistency. **No man can do, &c. unless**—we expect some strong expression of the truth, such as we had from Nathanael in ch. i. 50, but the sentence drops to merely—*God be with him*, which is a very poor and insufficient exponent of “*art come from God*.” Against this inconsistency,—the inner knowledge that the Kingdom of God was come, and He who was to found it, on the one hand,—and the rationalizing endeavour to reduce this heavenly kingdom to mere learning, and its Founder to a *mere teacher*, on the other,—is the following discourse directed.

3.] We are not to imagine that any thing is wanting to complete the sense or connexion. Our Lord replies, It is not *learning*, but *life*, that is wanted for the Messiah’s Kingdom; and *life* must begin by *birth*. Luther says: “My teaching is not of *doing* and *leaving undone*, but of a *change in the man*;—so that it is, not *new works* done, but a *new man* to do them; not another *life* only, but another *birth*.” And *only by this means* can Nicodemus gain the teaching for which he is come,—“*see the Kingdom of God*,”—‘become a disciple of Christ:’—”*see, that is, understand*,” says Theophylact,—‘*understand, by sharing*’—‘have any conception of.’

anew] “*some say, from heaven, some, from the beginning*.” Chrysostom:—who, as also Euthymius, explains it by ‘*regeneration*:’—Origen, Cyril, and Theophylact taking the other meaning.

The true meaning is to be found by taking into account the answer of Nicodemus, who obviously understood it of a *new birth in mature life*. **Born anew or afresh** is a better rendering than ‘*born again*,’ being closer to the meaning of the Greek word, ‘from the very beginning,’—‘unless a man begin his life anew altogether (see Gal. iv. 9), he cannot’&c.

It is not impossible that the other meaning may lie *beneath this*,—as the *kingdom is of God*, and so must the birth be;—but Grotius has made the important remark, that in the language in which our Lord probably spoke, there is no word of double meaning corresponding to the Greek word here:—so that He must have expressed it, as Nicodemus understood it, of an *entirely new birth*.

4.] It is impossible that Nicodemus can have so entirely and stupidly misunderstood our Lord’s words, as his question here would seem to imply. The idea of new birth was by no means alien from the Rabbinical views. They described a proselyte

when baptized as “like an infant just born.” Lightfoot. I agree with Stier in thinking that there was something of the spirit that *would not* understand, and the disposition to turn to ridicule what he heard. But together with this there was also considerable *real ignorance*. ‘The proselyte might be regarded as born again, when he became one of the seed of Abraham: this figure would be easily explained on the Judaical view: but that *every* man should need this, was beyond Nicodemus’s comprehension. He therefore rebuts the assertion with a reduction to an absurdity, which in spirit expresses, as in ch. vi. 60,—‘This saying is hard; who can hear it?’”

when he is old: probably he himself was old, and he instances his own case.

5.] Our Lord passes by the question of Nicodemus without notice, further than that this His second assertion takes as it were the ground from under it, by explaining the token and means of the new birth.

There can be no doubt, on any honest interpretation of the words, that **to be born of water** refers to the token or outward sign of baptism,—**to be born of the Spirit** to the thing signified, or inward grace of the Holy Spirit. All attempts to get rid of *these two plain facts* have sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which the views of expositors have been warped. Such we have in Calvin: who explains the words to mean, “the Spirit, who cleanses us, and by diffusing His influence in us inspires the vigour of heavenly life:”—Grotius, “the Spirit, who cleanses like water;”—Cocceius, “the grace of God, washing away our uncleanness and sins;”—Tholuck, who holds that not Baptism itself, but only its *idea*, that of *cleansing*, is referred to;—and others, who endeavour to resolve **water and the Spirit** into a figure, so as to make it mean ‘*the cleansing or purifying Spirit.*’ All the better and deeper expositors have recognized the coexistence of the two, *water* and the *Spirit*.

This being then recognized, to what does **water** refer? At that time, two kinds of baptism were known: that of the *proselytes*, by which they were received into Judaism,—and that of John, by which, as a preparatory rite, symbolizing repentance, the people were made ready for Him who was to baptize them with the Holy Ghost. But both these were significant of *one and the same truth*; that, namely, of the *entire cleansing of the man* for the new and spiritual life on which he was to enter, symbolized by water cleansing the outward person. Both were appointed means,—the one by the Jewish Church,—the other, stamping that first with approval, by God Himself,—towards their respective ends. John himself declared his baptism to be *incomplete*,—it was *only with water*; One was coming, who should baptize *with the Holy Ghost*. *That declaration of his is the key to the understanding of this verse.* Baptism, *complete, with water and the Spirit*, is the admission into the kingdom of God. Those who have received *the outward sign and the spiritual grace*, have entered into that Kingdom. And this entrance was fully ministered to the disciples when the Spirit descended on them on the day of Pentecost. So that, as spoken to Nicodemus, these words referred him to the baptism of John, which probably (see Luke vii. 30) he had slighted. But they were *not only* spoken to him. The words of our Lord have in them life and meaning for all ages of His Church: and more especially these opening declarations of His ministry, He here unites together the two elements of a complete Baptism which were sundered in the words of the Baptist, ch. i. 33—in which united form He afterwards (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 16) ordained it as a Sacrament of His Church. Here he speaks of spiritual Baptism, as in ch. vi. of spiritual Communion, and in both places in connexion with the outward conditions and media of these ‘sacraments. It is observable that here as ordinarily (with a special exception, Acts x. 44 ff.), the outward sign comes first, and then the spiritual grace, vouchsafed in and by means of it where duly received.

enter into is more than “*see*” above, though no stress is to be laid on the difference. The former word was perhaps used because of Nicodemus’s expectation of *teaching* being all that was required; but now, the necessity of a real vital change having been set forth, the expression is changed to a practical one—the *entering into* the Kingdom of God.

6.] The neuter gender (**that which is born....**) denotes not only the universal application of this truth, but (see Luke i. 35) the very first beginnings of life in the embryo, before sex can be predicated. So Bengel: “It denotes the very first elements of life.”

The Lord here answers Nicodemus’s hypothetical question of ver. 4, by telling him that *even could it be so*, it would not accomplish the birth of which He speaks.

In this **flesh** is included *every part* of that which is born after the ordinary method of generation: even the spirit of man, which, receptive as it is of the Spirit of God, is yet in the natural birth *dead*, sunk in trespasses and sins, and in a state of wrath. Such ‘flesh and blood’ cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. xv. 50. But when the man is born again of the Spirit (the water does not appear any more, being merely the outward form of reception,—theless included in the greater), then just as flesh generates flesh, so spirit generates spirit, after its own image, see 2 Cor. iii. 18 end; and since the Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, such only who are so born can enter into it.

7.] The weightiest word here is **Ye**. The Lord did not, could not, say this of *Himself*. Why?—Because in the full sense in which the flesh is incapacitated from entering the kingdom of God, He was *not born of the flesh*. He inherited the weakness of the flesh, but His spirit was not, like that of sinful man, alien from holiness and God; and therefore on Him no second birth

passed; when the Holy Spirit descended on Him at his baptism, the words spoken by the Father were indicative of *past approval*, not of *renewal*. His obedience was accepted as perfect, and the good pleasure of the Father rested on Him. Therefore He includes not Himself in this necessity for the new birth.

The **Marvel not** points on to the next verse, in which Nicodemus is told that he has things as wonderful around him every day in the natural world.

8.] Our Lord might have chosen any of the mysteries of nature to illustrate the point:—He takes *that one*, which is above others symbolic of the action of the *Spirit*, and which (in both languages, that in which He spoke, as well as that in which His speech is reported) is expressed by *the same word* as it;—*Pneuma* being both *wind* and *spirit*. So that the words as they stand apply themselves at once to the Spirit and His working, without any figure. Bengel, after Origen and Augustine, takes the word *pneuma* with which this verse opens, and which we have rendered **wind**, of the *Holy Spirit* exclusively: but this can hardly be. The *form* of the sentence, as well as its import, is against it. The words “*bloweth*,” “*hearest*,” “*knowest*,” are all said of well-known facts. And the comparison would not hold on that supposition—‘As the *Spirit* is in His working on those born of Him, so is *every one that is born of the Spirit*. But on the other interpretation, we have **The wind bloweth, &c.:—so is**, i.e. ‘so it is with’ (see a similar construction Matt. xiii. 45) **every one born of the Spirit**.

The word *pneuma* is not the violent wind, which is otherwise expressed, but the *gentle breath* of the wind;—and it is *heard, not felt*;—a case in which “*thou knowest not, &c.*” is more applicable than in that of a violent wind steadily blowing. It is one of those sudden breezes springing up on a calm day, which has no apparent direction, but we hear it rustling in the leaves around. The **where it listeth**, in the application, implies the *freedom* (2 Cor. iii. 17) and *unrestrained working of the Spirit* (1 Cor. xii. 11).

every one that is born of the Spirit] Our Lord can hardly, as Stier explains, mean *Himself* by these words; or if He does, only *inclusively*, as being *one born of the Spirit*,—not principally. He describes *the mystery of the spiritual life*: we see its *effects*, in ourselves, and others who have it; but we cannot trace its beginnings, nor can we prescribe to the Holy Spirit His course: He works in us and leads us on, accompanying us with His witness,—*His voice*, spiritually discerned.

This saying of the Lord—in contradiction to all so-called Methodism, which prescribes the time and manner of the working of the Spirit—assures us of the manifold and undefinable variety of both these. ‘The physiognomies of those who are born again, are as various as those of natural men.’ Draseke.

9.] The question of Nicodemus is evidently still one of disbelief, though no longer of frivolity see ver. 12.

11.] Henceforward the discourse is an answer to the *unbelief*, and in answering that, to the *question (How can these things be?)* of Nicodemus: by shewing him the appointed means of this. new birth, and of being upheld in the life to which it is the entrance, viz. *faith in the Son of God*.

We speak that we do know...] Why these plurals? Various interpretations have been given: “Either He speaks concerning Himself and the Father, or concerning Himself alone.” Euthymius;—‘He speaks of Himself and *the Spirit*’ (Bengel);—of Himself and *the Prophets* (Beza, Tholuck);—of Himself and *John the Baptist* (Knapp);—of *Teachers like Himself* (Meyer);—of *all the born of the Spirit* (Lange, Wesley);—of *the three Persons in the Holy Trinity* (Stier);—or, the plural is *only rhetorical* (Lücke, De Wette). I had rather take it as a *proverbial* saying; q.d. “I am one of those who,” &c. Our Lord thereby brings out the unreasonableness of that disbelief which would not receive *His witness*, but made it an exception to the general proverbial rule.

ye receive not, addressed still to Nicodemus, and through him to the Jews: not to certain others who were present, as Olshausen supposes.

12.] The words **receive our testimony** prepared the way for the new idea which is brought forward in this verse—**believing**. Faith is, in the most pregnant sense, ‘the receiving of testimony;’ because it is the making *subjectively real* the contents of that testimony. So the **believing in him** (see ver. 15) is, *the full reception of the Lord’s testimony*; because the burden of that testimony is, *grace and truth and salvation by Himself*. This faith is neither reasoning, nor knowledge, but a *reception* of divine Truth declared by One who came from God; and so it is *far above* reasoning and knowledge:—**we believe above we know.**

But what are the **earthly things**? The matters relating to the new birth which have hitherto been spoken of;—called so because *that side of them* has been exhibited which is *upon earth*, and happens among men. That the *parable about the wind* is not intended, is evident from “*and ye believe not,*” which in that case would be ‘*ye understand not.*’ And the **heavenly things** are the things of which the discourse goes on to treat *from this point*: viz. the *heavenly side* of the new birth and salvation of man, in the eternal counsels of God regarding His only-begotten Son.

Stier supposes a reference in this verse to Wisd. ix. 16, "Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon the earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us: but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out?"

13.] The whole verse seems to have intimate connexion with and reference to Prov. xxx. 4, "Who hath ascended up to heaven, or descended?" and as spoken to a learned doctor of the law, would recall that verse,—especially as the further question is there asked, 'Who hath gathered *the wind* in His fists?' and 'What is His name, and what His Son's name?' See also Deut. xxx. 12, and the citation, Rom. x. 6–8.

All attempts to explain away the plain sense of this verse are futile and ridiculous. The Son of Man, the Lord Jesus, the Word made Flesh, was in, came down from, heaven,—and was in heaven (heaven about Him, heaven dwelling on earth, ch. i. 52), while here, and ascended up into heaven when He left this earth;—and by all these proofs, speaking in the prophetic language of accomplished Redemption, does the Lord establish, that *He alone* can speak of *heavenly things* to men, or convey the blessing of the new birth to them. Be it remembered, that He is here speaking by *anticipation*, of *results* of His course and sufferings on earth,—of the way of regeneration and salvation which God has appointed by Him. He regards therefore throughout the passage, the great facts of redemption as *accomplished*, and makes announcements which could not be literally acted upon till they had been so accomplished. See vv. 14 ff., whose sense will be altogether lost, unless this **hath ascended up** be understood of His exaltation to be a Prince and a Saviour.

which is in heaven] See ch. i. 18 and note. Doubtless the meaning involves '*whose place is in heaven;*' but it also asserts the **being in heaven** of the *time then present*: see ch. i. 52. Thus majestically does the Lord characterize His whole life of humiliation in the flesh, between His descent and His ascent. As uniting in Himself God, whose dwelling is Heaven, with man, whose dwelling is on earth, He ever was in heaven. And nearly connected with this fact is the transition to His being the fountain of eternal life, in vv. 14 ff: cf. 1 Cor. xv. 47–50, where the same connexion is strikingly set forth.

To explain such expressions as "*to ascend up into heaven,*" &c., as mere *Hebrew metaphors* (Lücke, De Wette, &c.) is no more than saying that Hebrew metaphors were founded on deep insight into divine truth:—these words in fact express the *truths on which Hebrew metaphors were constructed*. Socinus is quite right, when he says that *those who take 'hath ascended up into heaven' metaphorically, must in all consistency take 'he that came down from heaven' metaphorically also*; "the descent and ascent must be both of the same kind."

14.] From this point the discourse passes to the *Person* of Christ, and Redemption by His Death.

The Lord brings before this doctor of the Law the mention of Moses, who in his day by divine command lifted up a symbol of forgiveness and redemption to Israel.

In interpreting this comparison, we must avoid all such ideas as that our Lord *merely compares* His death to the elevation of the brazen serpent, as if only a *fortuitous likeness* were laid hold of by Him. This would leave the *brazen serpent itself meaningless*, and is an explanation which can only satisfy those who do not discern the typical reference of all the ceremonial dispensation to the Redeemer.

It is an important duty of an expositor here, to defend the obvious and only honest explanation of this comparison against the tortuous and inadequate interpretations of modern critics. The comparison lies between the *exalted serpent of brass*, and the *exalted Son of Man*. The *brazen serpent* sets forth the *Redeemer*. This by recent commentators (Lücke, De Wette, and others) is considered impossible: and the *thing compared* is held to be only 'the lifting up.' But this does not satisfy the construction of the comparison. 'The brazen serpent was lifted up: every one who looked on it, lived;' this sentence, in its terms, represents. this other,— 'The Son of Man must be lifted up: every one who believes on Him, shall live.' The *same thing* is predicated of the two;—both are lifted up; cognate consequences follow,—*body-healing* and *soul-healing* (as Erskine, On the Brazen Serpent). There must then be *some reason* why the *only two members of the comparison yet unaccounted for* stand where they do,—considering that the brazen serpent was lifted up not for any physical efficacy, but by command of God alone. Now on examination we find this correspondence fully established. The 'serpent' is in Scripture symbolism, *the devil*, —from the historical temptation in Gen. iii. downwards. But why is the devil set forth by the *serpent*? How does the bite of the serpent operate? It pervades with its poison the frame of its victim: that frame becomes poisoned:—and death ensues. So sin, the *poison of the devil*, being instilled into our nature, that nature has become a *poisoned nature*,—*a flesh of sin* (see Rom. viii. 3). Now the brazen serpent was made in the *likeness of the serpents* which had bitten the children of Israel. It represented to them the *poison* which had gone through their frames, and it was hung up there, on the banner-staff, as a trophy, to shew them that for the *poison*, there was *healing*;—that the plague had been overcome. In it, there was *no poison*; only the *likeness* of it. Now was not the Lord Jesus made in the *likeness of the flesh of sin*, Rom. viii. 3? Was not He made 'Sin for us, who knew no sin' (2 Cor. v. 21)?

Did not He, on His Cross, make an open shew of, and triumph over, the Enemy, so that it was *as if the Enemy himself had*

been nailed to that Cross (Col. ii. 15)? Were not Sin and Death and Satan crucified, when *He was crucified*? “In that case, since the injury was by the serpent, by the serpent was also the cure: and in this, since by man death came into the world, by man entered life also.” Euthymius.

must the Son of man be lifted up: i.e. it is necessary, in the Father’s counsel—it is decreed, but not arbitrarily;—the very necessity of things, which is in fact but the evolution of the divine Will, made it requisite that the pure and sinless Son of Man should thus be uplifted and suffer; see Luke xxiv. 26.

In the word **lifted up** there is more than the mere crucifixion. It has respect in its double meaning (of which see a remarkable instance in Gen. xl. 13, 19) to the exaltation of the Lord on the Cross, and through the Cross to His Kingdom; and refers back to “*hath ascended up into heaven*” before.

15.] The corresponding clause applying to the type is left to be supplied—‘And as every one who looked on it was healed, so....’

believeth in him] This expression, here only used by John, *implies his exaltation*,—see ch. xii. 32. It is a *belief in (abiding in, see note on ver. 18)* *His Person being what God by his sufferings and exaltation hath made Him to be, and being that TO ME*. This involves, on the part of the believer, the anguish of the bite of the fiery serpent,—and the earnest looking on Him in Whom sin is crucified, with the inner eye of faith.

have eternal life] Just as in the type, God did not remove the fiery serpents,—or not all at once,—but healing was to be found in the midst of them by looking to the brazen serpent (‘every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it **shall live**,’ Num. xxi. 8),—so the temptations and conflicts of sin shall not *leave* the believer,—but *in the midst of these*, with the Eye of Faith fixed on the uplifted Son of Man, he *has eternal life*; perishes not of the bite, but **shall live**.

See on this verse the remarkable passage, Wisd. xvi. 5–13, where as much of the healing sign is opened as could be expected before the great Antitype Himself appeared.

16.] Many Commentators—since the time of Erasmus, who first suggested the notion,—have maintained *that the discourse of our Lord breaks off here*, and the rest, to ver. 21, consists of the remarks of the Evangelist. (So Tholuck, Olshausen, Lücke, De Wette; which last attributes vv. 13, 14 also to John.) But to those who view these discourses of our Lord as intimately connected *wholes*, this will be as inconceivable, as the idea of St. Matthew having combined into one the insulated sayings of his Master. This discourse would be altogether fragmentary, and would have left Nicodemus *almost where he was before*, had not this most weighty concluding part been also spoken to him. This it is, which expands and explains the assertions of vv. 14, 15, and applies them to the present life and conduct of mankind.

The principal grounds alleged for supposing the discourse to break off here seem to be

(a) *that all allusion to Nicodemus is henceforth dropped.*

But this is not conclusive, for it is obvious that the natural progress of such an interview on his part would be *from questioning to listening*: and that even had he joined in the dialogue, the Evangelist would not have been bound to relate all his remarks, but only those which, as vv. 2, 4, and 9, were important to bring out his mind and standing-point.

(b) *that henceforth past tenses are used*; making it more probable that the passage was added after the great events alluded to had taken place. But does not our Lord speak here, as in so many other cases, *proleptically*, of the fulness of the accomplishment of those designs, which *in the divine counsels were accomplished*? Is not this way of speaking natural to a discourse which is treating of the *development* of the new birth, itself not yet brought in till the Spirit was given? See a parallel instance, with the Evangelist’s explanation, ch. vii. 37–39. (c) *on account of this use of only-begotten*, verses 16, 18, which is peculiar to John. But, as Stier well enquires, *whence did John get this word*, but from the lips of his divine Master? Would he have ventured on such an expression, except by an authorization from Him? (d) *It is asserted that John often continues our Lord’s discourses with additions of his own*;—and ver. 31, and ch. i. 16, are alleged as instances. Of these, ch. i. 16 is *beside the question*;—for the whole prologue is spoken in the person of the Evangelist, and the Baptist’s testimony in ver. 15 is merely confirmatory of ver. 14, and then the connexion goes on with ver. 16. On the untenability of the view with regard to vv. 31 ff., see notes there.

It would besides give us a very mean idea of the honesty or reverence of one who sets forth so sublime a view of the Divinity and Authority of our Lord, to suppose him capable, *in any place*, of attributing to his Master words and sentiments of his own invention. And that the charge amounts to this, every simple reader can bear testimony. The obvious *intention* of the Evangelist here is, *that the Lord shall have said these words*. If our Lord did not say them, but the Evangelist, we cannot stop with the view that he has *added his own remarks* to our Lord’s discourse, but must: at once pronounce him *guilty of an*

imposture and a forgery. I conclude therefore on all these grounds that the words following, to ver. 21, cannot be otherwise regarded than as *uttered by our Lord in continuation of His discourse.*

loved] The indefinite past tense, signifying the universal and eternal existence of that love which God Himself *is* (1 John iv. 8).

the world, in the most general sense, as represented by, and included in, man,—Gen. iii. 17, 18, and i. 28;—not, *the elect*, which would utterly destroy the force of the passage; see on ver. 18.

The Lord here reveals *Love* as the *one ground of the divine counsel* in redemption,—*salvation* of men, as its *one purpose with regard to them*.

he gave his only-begotten Son] These words seem to carry a reference to the offering of Isaac; and Nicodemus in that case would at once be reminded by them of the love *there required*, the *substitution there made*, and the *prophecy there uttered* to Abraham, to which the following words of our Lord so nearly correspond.

gave—absolute, not merely *to the world*—**gave up**,—Rom. viii. 32; where, as Stier remarks, we have again, in the “*spared not*,” an unmistakeable allusion to the same words, said to Abraham, Gen. xxii. 16.

that whosoever...] By the repetition of this final clause verbatim from ver. 15, we have the identity of the former clauses established: i.e. the uplifting of the Son of Man like the serpent in the wilderness *is* the manifestation of the divine Love in the gift of the Son of God: “*the Son of Man*” of ver. 14 is equivalent, in the strictest sense, to “*his only-begotten Son*” of ver. 16.

17.] the world,—the Gentile world,—was according to Jewish ideas to be judged and condemned by the Messiah. This error our Lord here removes. The assertion ch. ix. 39, “*for judgment (or, condemnation) came I into this world*,” is no contradiction to this. The judgment there, as here, results from the separation of mankind into two classes,—those who will and those who will not come to the light; and that result itself is not the *purpose why* the Son of God came into the world, but is evolved in the accomplishment of the higher purpose, viz. Love, and the salvation of men. Observe, the latter clause does not correspond to the former—it is not *that He might save the world*, but **that the world through Him might be saved**:—the *free will* of the *world* is by this strikingly set forth, in connexion with verses 19, 20. Not that the Lord is not the *Saviour of the world* (ch. iv. 42), but that the peculiar cast of this passage required the other side of the truth to be brought out.

18.] cometh not into judgment—see ch. v. 24, where the same assertion is made more fully; and note there.

is judged already, implying,—*by no positive act of judgment of Mine*,—but by the very nature of things themselves. God has provided a remedy for the deadly bite of sin; this remedy the man has not accepted, not *taken*: he must then perish in his sins: he is *already judged and sentenced*.

hath not believed] The *perfect* sets before us the deliberate choice of the man, q.d. ‘he hath not chosen to believe’ see 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

in the name—not without meaning: that name was “*JESUS, for He shall save his people from their sins*,” Matt. i. 21.

The word **only-begotten** also here sets before us the *hopelessness of such a man’s state*: he has no *other* Saviour.

19.] The particular *nature* of this decided judgment is now set forth,—**that the light** (see ch. i. 7, and notes) **is come into the world, and men** (men in general; an awful revelation of the future reception of the Gospel) loved (the perversion of the affections and will is the deepest ruin of mankind) **the darkness** (see note on ch. i. 5; = the state of sin and unbelief) rather than (not to be resolved into ‘*and not*;’ but, as Bengel says, “The loveliness of the light struck them, but they persevered in the love of the darkness,” see ch. v. 35; xii. 43; 2 Tim. iii. 4) **the light, because their deeds were evil** (their habits, thoughts, practices,—all these are included,—were perverted).

loved and **were** are the *indefinite past tense*, implying the general usage and state of men, when and after the light came into the world.

20.] This verse analyzes the psychological grounds of the preceding. The *light* is not here ‘the common light of day,’ nor light in general: but, as before, **the Light**; i.e. *the Lord Jesus*, and His salvation: see ver. 21 end.

There is here a difference between the verbs used in the original in the expressions **doeth evil** and **doeth the truth**, which is too remarkable to be passed over,—especially as the same distinction is observed in ch. v. 29. I think the distinction is perhaps this,—that the first verb represents more the *habit of action*; so that we might say ‘*he that practises evil*;’ but the second the

true *doing* of good, good *fruit*, good that *remains*. He who *practises*, has nothing but his *practice*, which is an event, a thing of the past, a source to him only of condemnation; he has nothing to shew for it, for it is also empty, worthless (which is the real primitive meaning of the adjective here rendered “evil”); whereas he that **does, makes, creates** (for this is the force of the second verb), has his **deed, or thing made**,—he has abiding fruit; *his works do follow him*. So that the expressions will not perhaps here admit of being interchanged. In the allusion to *darkness*, there may possibly be a hint at the *coming by night* of Nicodemus, but surely only by a distant implication. He might gather this from what was said, that it would have been better for him to make open confession of Jesus; but we can hardly say that our Lord reproves him for coming even as he did.

21.] Who is this *doer of the truth*? the end of ch. i. will best explain to us,—*in whom there is no guile*, see also Luke viii. 15, and Ps. xv. The *practiser of wickedness* is crooked and perverse; he has a light, which he does not follow; he knows the light, and avoids it; and so there is no truth, singleness, in him; he is a man at variance with himself. But the simple and single-minded is he who knowing and approving the light, comes to it; and comes that he may be carried onward in this spirit of truth and single-mindedness to higher degrees of communion with and likeness to God. “The good man seeks the light, and to place his works in the light, not from a vain love of praise, but from a desire for communion wherein he finds strength and security,” De Wette. But this is not all: the *manifesting his works, that they are wrought in God*, is and can be only by the candle of the Lord being kindled within him, and he himself born again in the Kingdom of God; see Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

We hear nothing of the effect produced on Nicodemus by this interview. It certainly did not alienate him from Jesus, see ch. vii. 50; xix. 39, also ch. xii. 42. “It speaks for the simplicity and historic truthfulness of our Evangelist, that he adds nothing more, and even leaves untold the immediate result which the discourse had.” Baumgarten-Crusius.

22–36.] Removal of Jesus and His disciples into the neighbourhood of the Baptist, who, upon occasion given, bears another notable testimony to Him.

22.] After these things: the sequence is not *immediate*; for this, St. John uses “*after this*” or “*that*,” see ch. xi. 7, 11; xix. 28.

the land of Judæa] The rural districts of Judæa, in distinction from the metropolis.

baptized, viz. by means of His disciples;—see ch. iv. 2, and note. The place is not named: perhaps He did not remain in one fixed spot.

23.] The situation of these places is uncertain, Eusebius and Jerome place Salim eight Roman miles south of Scythopolis, and Ænon at the same distance, on the Jordan. If Scythopolis was the ancient Bethshan, both places were in *Samaria*: and to this agree Epiphanius, and the Samaritan chronicle called Abul Phatach. In Judith iv. 4, we find mention of “*the valley of Salem*” in Samaria (see note on Heb. vii. 1). An Ænon in the wilderness of Judah is mentioned Josh. xv. 61 (in the Alexandrine text of the LXX, not in our English Bible) and ib. ver. 32, Shilhim (Seleem, LXX) and Ain, both in Judah, where it is certainly more probable, both from the text here and from other considerations, that John would have been baptizing, than in Samaria. The name Ænon is an intensitive form of *Ain*, a fountain, which answers to the description here given. Both places were West of the Jordan: see ver. 26, and compare ch. i. 28.

they came, and were baptized, i.e. the multitudes.

24] There is much difficulty, which probably never will be cleared up, about the *date of the imprisonment* of John, and its reference to the course of our Lord’s ministry. Between Matt. iv. 11, 12, there seems to be a wide hiatus, in which (see note there) the first chapters of this Gospel should be inserted. But the records from which the three Gospels have arisen were apparently unconscious of any such interval. Our Evangelist seems here to refer to such records, and to insert this remark, that it might not be imagined, as it would be from them, that our Lord’s public ministry (in the wider sense, see below on ver. 26) began with the imprisonment of the Baptist.

25.] The circumstances under which this dispute arose seem to have been these:—John and our Lord were baptizing near to one another. (On the relation of their baptisms, see below on ver. 26.) They were both watched jealously (see ch. iv. 1) by the Pharisees. One of these (a **Jew**, i.e. a certain Jew, which, in St. John’s use of that term, would mean, one of the rulers or chief men) appears to have entered into dispute with the disciples of John about the relative importance of the two baptisms; *they* perhaps maintaining that their master’s *purification* preparatory to the Messiah was absolutely necessary for all, and *he* (the **Jew**) pointing out to them the apparent inconsistency of this Messiah himself authorizing a baptism in his name, and alleging that if so, their master’s baptism was rendered superfluous. We are driven to these conjectures, because the text gives us no further insight into the fact, than what the circumstances and the answer of John render probable.

26.] Compare ch. i. 28.

all men come to him] Not, probably, any who had been baptized already by John; but multitudes of persons. The baptism

now carried on by the disciples appears to have stood very much in the same position as that of John. It was preparatory to the *public ministry* of our Lord *properly so called*, which began in Galilee after the imprisonment of John. It was *not accompanied with the gift of the Spirit*, see ch. vii. 39. As John's commission was now on the wane, so our Lord's was expanding. The solemn cleansing of the temple was its opening; and now it is proceeding onwards, gathering multitudes around it (see ch. iv. 1).

27.] The subject of this answer is,—*the divinely-appointed humiliation and eclipsing of the Baptist himself before the greater majesty of Him who was come after him.* Accordingly he begins in this verse by answering to the zeal of his disciples, ‘that he cannot go beyond the bounds of his heaven-appointed mission.’ ‘I cannot arrogate to myself and take upon me what God has not given.’ Wetstein. Some apply the words to Jesus:— ‘If His circumstances are more illustrious, and all men come to Him, it is no matter of wonder; for such would be the case with Divinity.’ Chrysostom. But the whole tone of the answer makes the other view more likely. Of course the remark, being general, may in the background have reference to the greater mission of Jesus; but not primarily. The parallelism of “*a man*” here, and himself, as the subject of “*I said*” in the next verse, also supports this view; see Heb. v. 4.

28.] ‘Not only so, but I have always given the same consistent testimony; that I was only the forerunner of One greater than myself.’ The word **him** in the original does not refer to “*the Christ*,” but to *Jesus*, as the subject of ver. 26; and thus is not merely a *general* testimony with regard to the Messiah, but a *personal* one to Jesus. In reading this verse therefore, strong emphasis should be laid on the word **him**.

29.] Here first, (and here only in our Gospel,) comes, from the mouth of the Forerunner, this great symbolical reference, which is so common in the other Gospels and in the Epistles. It is remarkable that our Lord brings it forward in His answer to *the disciples of John* respecting fasting, Matt. ix. 15: where see note on the further import of the terms used.

The **friend of the bridegroom** was the regular organ of communication in the preliminaries of marriage, and had the ordering of the marriage feast. It is to this last time, and not to any ceremonial custom connected with the marriage rites, that this verse refers. The friend rejoices at hearing the **voice of the bridegroom**, (see Jer. vii. 34; xvi. 9; xxv. 10: Rev. xviii. 23,) in his triumph and joy, *at the marriage*. He **rejoiceth with joy** because he hears in the voice of the Bridegroom an assurance of the happy completion of his mission, and on account of the voice itself,— “so sweet, so lovely, so telling of salvation.”

The words standeth and belong merely to the graphic setting forth of the similitude.

this my joy therefore is fulfilled] ‘Because I have presented the bride to Him, and fulfilled, as is elsewhere said, the ministry entrusted to me.’ Euthymius.

30.] decrease, ‘as the morning-star at the rise of the sun.’ Euthymius. See note on Matt. xi. 2 ff.

31.] Many modern critics maintain that after ver. 30 we have the words, *not of the Baptist, but of the Evangelist*. Lücke and De Wette assume that the Evangelist has put his own thoughts into the Baptist's mouth, or at least mixed them with his words. The reason of this arbitrary hypothesis is, (a) *That the sentiments of the following verses seem to them not to be congruous with the time and position of the Baptist.* But some of them confess that this very position of the Baptist is to them yet unexplained, and are disposed to question the applicability to their idea of it of very much which is undoubtedly recorded to have been said by him. So that we cannot allow such a view much critical weight, unless it can be first clearly shewn, *what were* the Baptist's convictions concerning the Person and Office of our Lord, (b) *That the diction and sentiments of the following verses are so entirely in the style of our Evangelist.* But first, I by no means grant this, in the sense which is here meant. It will be seen by the reff. in my Greek Test. that the Evangelist does not so frequently repeat his own favourite expressions as in most other passages of equal length. And even were this so the remark made above on vv. 16–21, would apply here also; that the Evangelist's peculiar style of theological expression was formed on some model; and on what more likely than in the first place the discourses of his divine Master, and then such sententious and striking testimonies as the present? But there is a weightier reason than these for opposing the above view, and that arises from what modern criticism has been so much given to overlook,—*the inner coherence of the discourse itself*; in which John explains to his disciples the *reason why HE must increase*; whereas his own dignity was to be eclipsed before Him. This will!be seen below as we proceed.

And there is nothing inconsistent with what the Lord himself says of the Baptist in these verses. He (the Baptist) ever speaks not as *a disciple* of Jesus, not as *within* the Kingdom,—but as knowing the blessedness of those who should be within it; as *standing by*, and hearing the Bridegroom's voice.

Nor again is there any thing inconsistent with the frame of mind which prompted the question sent by John to our Lord afterwards in the onward waning of his days in prison; see note on Matt. xi. 2.

he that cometh from heaven] This gives us *the reason why HE must increase*: His power and His words are not from below,

temporary, limited; but are divine and inexhaustible; and, ver.

32] His witness is not, like John's, only of what he has been forewarned to expect, but of that which He has seen and heard. But **no man**,—i. e. in reference to the *world*, into which He is come, the *darkness* in which His light shines,—*no one comparatively*,—receives His testimony. The state of men's minds at Jerusalem with regard to Jesus must ere this have been well known to the Baptist.

33, 34.] This exception shews the correctness of the sense just assigned to “*no man*.” “He that hath received His testimony, and believeth Him, hath confirmed, shewn, that God is true who sent Him, Whose are the words which He speaks; but he that hath not received it and disbelieveth Him, doeth the contrary, and in fact is an open withstander of God,” Euthymius.

true, not as Wetstein, that God has been true to His promises by the prophets: this does not suit the context; but as above from Euthym., **true** in Himself: a revealer, and fountain of truth.

for God giveth not the Spirit by measure] Seeing that the contrast is between the *unlimited* gift of the Spirit to Him that comes from above, and the *limited* participation of Him by those who are of the earth; we must not understand the assertion generally, but supply *to Him* as has usually been done. The Rabbinical books say that the Holy Spirit was only given to the prophets by measure. This unmeasured pouring of the Spirit on Him accounts for his speaking the words of God.

35.] This, again, is the *ground why* the Father **gives not the Spirit by measure** (to Him): see Matt. xi. 27–29, with which this verse forms a remarkable point of connexion, shewing that what is commonly known as John's form of expression was not confined to him, but originated higher, having its traces in the narrative of the other Gospels, which is confessedly, in its main features, independent of him.

36.] Compare ch. i. 12, 13; ver. 15. The word rendered “*believeth not*” may mean **disobeyeth**, and is so rendered Rom. ii. 8; x. 21: 1 Pet. ii. 7, and elsewhere. Unbelief implies disobedience.

abideth] It was on him, see ver. 18, in his state of darkness and nature,—and can only be removed by faith in the Son of God, which he *has not*.

John: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1–54.] MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF AS THE SON OF GOD IN SAMARIA AND GALILEE.

1–42.] *On his way back to Galilee through Samaria, he discourses with a Samaritan woman. Confession of his Messiahship by the Samaritans.*

1.] An inference may be drawn from this, that our Lord knew the anger of the Pharisees to be more directed against Him than against the Baptist,—probably on account of what had passed in Jerusalem.

that Jesus, not “*that He*”.... because the report which the Pharisees had heard is given verbatim.

2.] Probably for the same reason that Paul did not baptize usually (1 Cor. i. 14–16); viz. because His office was to preach and teach;—and the disciples as yet had no office of this kind. To assume a further reason, e.g. that there might not, be ground for those whom the Lord himself had baptized to boast of it, is arbitrary and unnecessary.

4] If He was already on the borders of Samaria, not far from Ænon (see note on ch. iii. 23), the direct way was through Samaria. Indeed without this assumption, we know from Josephus that the Galilæans ordinarily took this way. But there was probably design also in the journey. It could not have been mere speed,—since He made two days' stay on the way.

5.] **Sychar** is better known by the O.T. name of Shechem. It was a very old town on the range of Mt. Ephraim, in a narrow valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, Judg. ix. 7. Some think that Sychar, which means “drunken,” was originally a contemptuous name applied by the Jews to Shechem,—which had supplanted the proper appellation.

Very near it was afterwards built Flavia Neapolis. There is a long and interesting history of Sychem, and the Samaritan worship on Gerizim, and the Christian church in the neighbourhood, in Robinson's Palestine, iii. 113–136. See also Dr. Thomson, The Land and the Book, p. 472 ff. He thinks that Sychar and Shechem are not the same, because at Shechem (Nablus) there are delicious fountains of water, which the woman would hardly have left to draw from a deep well two miles off.

the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph] This is traditional: finds however support from Gen. xxxiii. 19 where we find Jacob buying a field near Shechem, and Josh. xxiv. 32, where, on the mention of Joseph's bones being laid there, it is said that it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. *Our Lord* does not allude to the tradition in the conversation, though the woman does.

6.] Robinson (iii, 112) can only solve the difficulty of the present well standing in a spot watered by so many natural fountains, by supposing that it may have been dug, according to the practice of the patriarchs, by Jacob, in connexion with the plot of ground which he bought, to have an independent supply of water.

thus refers to **being wearied with his journey**, and might be expressed by **accordingly**. There is no authority for the meaning 'just as he was,' or 'just as it happened,' i.e. on the bare stone.

the sixth hour, i.e. **mid-day**. Townson supposed the sixth hour, according to St. John, to mean *six in the evening*, 'after the way of reckoning in Asia Minor';—but, as Lücke observes, this way of reckoning in Asia Minor is a pure invention of Townson's. A decisive answer however to such a supposition here, or any where else in our Evangelist, is that if would naturally have specified whether it was 6 A.M. or P.M. The *unusualness* of a woman coming to draw water at mid-day is no argument against its *possibility*; indeed the very fact of her being *alone* seems to shew that it was not the common time.

8.] The disciples had probably taken with them the baggage, among which would be the vessel for drawing water,—see ver. 11.

The Rabbis say that a Jew might not eat the bread or drink the wine of a Samaritan: but that appears from this verse to be exaggerated.

9. being a Jew] She knew this perhaps by his dress, more probably by his dialect. 'There seems to be a sort of playful triumph in the woman's question, q.d. 'even a Jew, when weary and athirst, can humble himself to ask drink of a Samaritan woman.'

for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans are the words of the Evangelist to explain her question. The word rendered **have no dealings** is properly spoken of *trade*,—but hero is in a wider signification. The fact is abundantly illustrated in the Rabbinical writings. The question of the woman shews a lively, naïve disposition, which is further drawn out and exemplified by Him who knew what is in man, in the following dialogue.

10.] The important words **the gift of God** have been misunderstood by many Commentators. Some suppose them to mean '*our Lord Himself*', and to be in apposition with the next clause, **and who it is**, &c. Others, '*this opportunity of speaking with Me*' Doubtless both these meanings are *involved*,—especially the former: but *neither of them is the primary one*, as addressed to the woman. The WATER is, in this first part of the discourse, the subject, and serves as a point of connexion, whereby the woman's thoughts may be elevated, and her desire aroused. The process of the discourse in this particular is similar to that in Acts xiv. 17, From recognizing *this water* as the gift of God, in its *limitation*, ver. 13, and its *parabolic import*, ver. 14, her view is directed to Him who was speaking with her, and the Gift which He should bestow,—THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: see ch. vii. 37–39.

who it is] These pregnant words form the *second step* in our Lord's declaration. He who speaks with thee is no ordinary Jew, nor any ordinary man, but One who can give thee the gift of God; One sent from God, and God Himself. All this lies in the words, which however only serve to arouse in the woman's mind the question of ver. 12 (see below).

living water] Designedly used in a double sense by our Lord, that the woman may lay hold of the *material* meaning, and by it be awakened to the *higher one* (see reff.). The words bring with them, and in our Lord's inner meaning involved, the performance of all such prophetic promises as Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Zech. xiii. 1 (see also Jer. ii, 13); but, as regarded the woman, the *ordinary sense* was that intended for her to fasten on, which she does accordingly. On the question, how this living water could be *now* given, before Jesus was glorified, see on ch. vii. 38, 39.

11, 12.] Though "Sir" (the same word as that commonly rendered "*Lord*") is not to be pressed as emphatic, it is not without import; it surely betokens a different regard of the stranger than the words "*thou being a Jew*" did:—* "She calls him 'Sir,' thinking Him to be some great man." Euthymius. The course of her thoughts appears to be: "*Thou canst not mean living water* ('*bubbling up and leaping*,' Euthymius), *from this well, because thou hast no vessel to draw with, and it is deep; whence then hast thou* (knowest thou of, drawest thou) *the living water of which thou speakest? Our father Jacob was contented with this, used it, and bequeathed it to us: if thou hast better water, and canst give it, thou must be greater than Jacob.*" There is something also of Samaritan nationality speaking here. Claiming Jacob as her father (Josephus says of the Samaritans, 'When they see the Jews prospering, they call them their relatives, as being themselves sprung from Joseph; but when they see them in trouble, they profess to have no connexion with them'), she expresses by this question an appropriation of descent from him, such as almost to exclude, or at all events set at a greater distance, the Jews, to one of whom she believed herself to be

speaking.

13, 14.] Our Lord, without noticing this, by His answer leaves it to be implied, that, *assuming what she has stated*, He is greater than Jacob: for his (Jacob's) gift was of water which cannot satisfy; but the water which He should give has *living power*, and becomes an eternal fountain within. This however, ‘that *He was greater than Jacob*,’ lies only in the background: *the water* is the subject, as before.

The words apply to every similar quenching of desire by earthly means: the desire springs up again;—is not *satisfied*, but only *postponed*. The manna was as insufficient to satisfy hunger,—as this water, thirst, see ch. vi. 49, 58: it is only the **living water**, and the *bread of life*, which can *satisfy*.

In the original, the words **Every one that drinketh** set forth the recurrence, the interrupted seasons, of the drinking of earthly water;—but **whosoever shall have drunk** sets forth the *once having tasted*, and ever continuing in the increasing power, and living forth-flowing, of that life-long draught.

shall thirst no more for ever, shall never have to go away and be exhausted, and come again to be filled;—but shall have the spring at home, in his own breast,—so that he can “*draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation*” (Isa. xii. 3) at his pleasure. “When thirst does recur, it is the defect of the man, not of the water.” Bengel.

shall become a well] All earthly supplies have access only into those lower parts of our being where the desires *work themselves out*—are but *local applications*; but the heavenly gift of spiritual life which Jesus gives to those who believe on Him, enters into the *very secret and highest place of their personal life*, *the source whence the desires spring out*:—and, its nature being living and spiritual, it does not merely *supply*, but it *lives* and waxes onward, unto everlasting life, *in duration*, and also *as producing and sustaining it*.

It should not be overlooked, that this discourse had, besides its manifold and wonderful meaning for us all, an especial moral one as applied to the woman,—who, by successive draughts at the ‘broken cistern’ of carnal lust, had been vainly seeking solace:—and this consideration serves to bind on the following verses (ver. 16 ff.) to the preceding, by another link besides those noticed below.

15.] This request seems to be made still under a misunderstanding, but not so great an one as at first sight appears. She apprehends this water as something not requiring a *water-pot* to draw as something whose power shall never fail;—which shall quench thirst for ever;—and half in banter, half in earnest, wishing perhaps besides to see whether the gift would after all be conferred, and how,—she mingles in with “*this water*,”—implying some view of its distinct nature,—her ‘not coming hither to draw,’—her willing avoidance of the toil of her noonday journey to the well. We must be able to enter into the complication of her character, and the impressions made on her by the strange things which she has heard, fully to appreciate the spirit of this answer.

16.] The connexion of this verse with the foregoing has been much disputed; and the strangest, and most unworthy views have been taken of it. Some (e. g. Grotius) have strangely referred it to the supposed indecorum of the longer continuance of the colloquy with the woman alone; some more strangely still (Cyril of Alexandria) to the incapacity of the female mind to apprehend the matters of which He was to speak. Both these need surely no refutation. The band of women from Galilee, ‘last at the cross, and earliest at the tomb,’ are a sufficient answer to them.

Those approach nearer the truth, who believe the command to have been given *to awaken her conscience*; or to shew her the divine knowledge which the Lord had of her heart. But I am persuaded that the right account is found, in viewing this command, as *the first step of granting her request*, “*give me this water*.” The first work of the Spirit of God, and of Him who here spoke in the fulness of that Spirit, is, to *convince of sin*. The ‘give me this water’ was not so simple a matter as she supposed. The heart must first be laid bare before the wisdom of God: the secret sins set in the light of His countenance; and this our Lord here does. The command itself is of course given in the fulness of knowledge of her sinful condition of life. In every conversation which our Lord held with men, while He connects usually one remark with another by the common links which bind human thought, we perceive that He knows, and sees through, those with whom He speaks.

17.] This answer is not for a moment to be treated as something unexpected by Him who commanded her. He *has before Him her whole life of sin*, which she in vain endeavours to cover by the doubtful words of this verse.

18.] There was *literal truth*, but no more, in the woman’s answer: and the Lord, by His divine knowledge, detects the hidden falsehood of it. Notice it is **true** (a fact—bare truth), not **truly**: this *one word was true*: further shewn by the emphatic position of the word **husband** in our Lord’s answer,—which was not so placed in hers.

thou hast had five husbands] These five were certainly lawful husbands; they are distinguished from the sixth, who was not;

—probably the woman had been separated from some by divorce (the law of which was but loose among the Samaritans),—from some by death,—or perhaps by other reasons more or less discreditable to her character, which had now become degraded into that of an openly licentious woman, The conviction of sin here lies beneath the surface: it is not pressed, nor at the moment does it seem to have worked deeply, for she goes on with the conversation with apparent indifference to it; but our Lord's words in vv. 25, 26 would tend to infix it more deeply, and we find at ver. 29, that it had been working during her journey back to the city.

19.] In speaking this her conviction, she virtually confesses all the truth. That she should pass to another subject immediately, seems, as Stier remarks, to arise, not from a wish to turn the conversation from a matter so unpleasing to her, but from a real desire to obtain from this Prophet the teaching requisite that she may pray to God acceptably. The idea of her endeavouring to *escape from the Lord's rebuke*, is quite inconsistent with her recognition of Him as a prophet. Rather we may suppose a pause, which makes it evident that He does not mean to proceed further with His laying open of her character.

20.] in this mountain—Mount Gerizim, on which once stood the national temple of the Samaritan race, In Neh. xiii. 28, we read that the grandson of the high priest Eliashib was banished by Nehemiah because he was son-in-law to Sanballat, the Persian satrap of Samaria. Him Sanballat not only received, but made him high priest of a temple which he built on Mount Gerizim. Josephus makes this appointment sanctioned by Alexander, when at Tyre;—but the chronology is certainly not accurate, for between Sanballat and Alexander is a difference of nearly a century. This temple was destroyed 200 years after by John Hyrcanus (B. c. 129); but the Samaritans still used it as a place of prayer and sacrifice, and to this day the few Samaritans resident in Nablus (Sychem) call it *the holy mountain*, and turn their faces to it in prayer.

They defended their practice by Deut. xxvii. 4, where our reading and the Heb. and LXX is Ebal, but that of the Samaritan Pentateuch, Gerizim (probably an alteration): also by Gen. xii. 6, 7; xiii, 4; xxxiii. 18, 20; Deut. xi. 26 ff.

Our fathers most likely means *not the patriarchs*, but the ancestors of the then Samaritans.

the place where men ought to worship] The definite place spoken of in Deut. xii. 5.

She pauses, having suggested, rather than asked, a question,—seeming to imply, ‘Before I can receive this gift of God, it must be decided, where I can acceptably pray for it,’ and she leaves it for Him whom she now recognizes as a prophet, to resolve this doubt.

21.] Our Lord first raises her view to a higher point than her question implied, or than indeed she, or any one, without His prophetic announcement, could then have attained.

The concluding words mean, **Ye shall worship the Father but not (only) in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem....** The prophetic **ye shall worship**, though embracing in its wider sense *all mankind*, may be taken primarily as foretelling the success of the Gospel in Samaria, Acts viii. 1–26.

the Father, as implying the One God and Father of all. There is also, as Calvin remarks, a “tacit opposition” between **the Father**,—and *our father Jacob*, ver. 12, *our fathers*, ver. 20.

22.] But He will not leave the temple of Zion and the worship appointed by God without His testimony. He decides her question not merely by affirming, but by *proving* the Jewish worship to be the right one. In the Samaritan worship there was no leading of God to guide them, there were no prophetic voices revealing more and more of His purposes. The neuter, **that which**, is used to shew the want of personality and distinctness in their idea of God:—the second **that which**, merely as corresponding to it in the other member of the sentence. Or perhaps better, *both*, as designating merely the abstract *object of worship*, not the personal God. The word **we** is remarkable, as being the *only instance* of our Lord thus speaking. But the nature of the case accounts for it. He never elsewhere is speaking to one so set in opposition to the Jews on a point where Himself and the Jews stood together for God's truth. He now speaks as *a Jew*. The nearest approach to it is in His answer to the Canaanitish woman, Matt. xv. 24, 26.

because: this is *the reason* why we know what we worship, because the promises of God are made to us, and we possess them and believe them; see Rom. iii. 1, 2.

salvation (or, literally, **the salvation [of men]**) **cometh of the Jews**] It was in this point especially, expectation of the promised salvation by the great Deliverer (see Gen. xl ix. 18), that the Samaritan rejection of the prophetic word had made them so deficient in comparison of the Jews. But not only this;—the Messiah Himself was to spring from among the Jews, and *had sprung* from among them;—not “*shall come*,” but **cometh**, the abstract present, but perhaps with a reference to what was then happening. See Isa. ii. 1–3.

23.] The discourse returns to the ground taken in ver. 21, but not so as to make ver. 22 parenthetical only: the spiritual worship now to be spoken of is the carrying out and consequence of the *salvation* just mentioned, and could not have been brought in without it.

and now is] “This which was not added in ver. 21, is now added, that the woman might not think that the locality of this true worship was to be sought in Judæa alone,” Bengel.

the true worshippers, as distinguished (1) from *hypocrites*, who have pretended to worship Him: (2) from *all* who went before, whose worship was necessarily imperfect.

The words **in spirit and in truth** (not without an allusion to “*in this mountain*”) are, in their first meaning, opposed to *in mere habit and falsehood*,—and denote the *earnestness of spirit* with which the true worshippers shall worship; so Ps. exlv. 18, “*The Lord is nigh.... unto all that call upon him in truth.*” A deeper meaning is brought out where the ground of this kind of worship is stated, in the next verse.

Such worshippers God not only ‘requires,’ from His very nature, but **seeks**,—is seeking. This seeking on the part of the Father naturally brings in the idea, in the woman’s answer, of the Messiah, by *Whom* He seeks (Luke xix. 10) His true worshippers, to gather them out of the world.

24.] God is a Spirit, was the great Truth of Judaism, whereby the Jews were distinguished from the idolatrous people around them. And the Samaritans held even more strongly than the Jews the pure monotheistic view. Traces of this, remarks Lücke, are found in the alterations made by them in their Pentateuch, long before the time of this history. This may perhaps be partly the reason why our Lord, as Bengel remarks, ‘never delivered, even to His disciples, things more sublime,’ than to this Samaritan woman.

God being pure **spirit** (perhaps better not ‘*a* Spirit,’ since it is His *Essence*, not His Personality, which is here spoken of), cannot dwell in particular spots or temples (see Acts vii. 48; xvii. 24, 25); cannot require, nor be pleased with, earthly material offerings nor ceremonies, as such: on the other hand, is only to be approached in *that part of our being, which is spirit*,—and even there, inasmuch as He is pure and holy, with no by-ends nor hypocritical regards, but in truth and earnestness. But here comes in the deeper sense alluded to above. How is the Spirit of man to be brought into communion with God? “Thou seekest to pray in a temple: pray in thyself. But first *be* the temple of God,” Augustine. And how is this to be? *Man cannot make himself the temple of God.* So that here comes in the *gift of God*, with which the discourse began,—*the gift of the Holy Spirit*, which Christ should give to them that believe on Him: thus we have ‘*praying in the Holy Spirit*,’ Jude 20. So beautifully does the expression **the Father** here bring with it the new birth by the Spirit,—and for us, the readers of the Gospel, does the discourse of ch. iii. reflect light on this. And so wonderfully do these words form the conclusion to the great subject of these first chapters: GOD IS BECOME ONE FLESH WITH US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME ONE SPIRIT WITH HIM.’ **25.]** These words again seem uttered under a complicated feeling. From her “*story*,” ver. 29, she certainly had some suspicion (in her own mind, perhaps over and beyond His own assertion of the fact: but see note there) that He who had told her all things, &c., was the *Christ*; and from her breaking in with this remark after the weighty truth which had been just spoken, it seems as if she thought thus, ‘*How these matters may be, I cannot understand;—they will be all made clear when the Christ shall come*’ The question of ver. 20 had not been answered to her liking or expectation: she therefore puts aside, as it were, what has been said, by a remark on that suspicion which was arising in her mind.

It is not certain what expectations the Samaritans had regarding the Messiah. The view here advanced might be well derived from Deut. xviii. 15;—and the name, and much that belonged to it, might have been borrowed from the Jews originally.

which is called Christ appear to me to be the words of the woman, *not of the Evangelist*; for in this latter case he would certainly have used *Messias* again in ver. 29. See also the difference of expression where he inserts an interpretation, ch. i. 42: xix. 13, 17. It is possible that the name “*Christ*” had become common in popular parlance, like many other Greek words and names.

The verb rendered **will tell us** is used especially of *enouncing or propounding by divine or superior authority*.

26.] Of the reasons which our Lord had, thus to declare Himself to this Samaritan woman and through her to the inhabitants of Sychem (ver. 42), as the *Christ*, thus early in his ministry, we surely are not qualified to judge. There is nothing so opposed to true Scripture criticism, as to form a preconceived plan and rationale of the course of our Lord in the flesh, and then to force recorded events into agreement with it. Such a plan *will be formed* in our own minds from continued study of the Scripture narrative:—but by the arbitrary system which I am here condemning, the ver facts which are the chief data of such a scheme, are themselves set aside. When De Wette says, ‘This early and decided declaration of Jesus is in contradiction with Matt. viii, 4, and xvi. 20,’—he forgets the very different circumstances under which both those injunctions were spoken:—while he is forced to confess that it is in agreement with the whole spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. He who knew what was in man,

varied His revelations and injunctions, as the time and place, and individual dispositions required.

I] In saying **I that speak unto thee**, He intends a reference to her words, “*will tell us all things*,”—**I am He, who am now speaking to thee**—fulfilling part of this *telling all things*; see also her confession ver. 29.

27.] The ground of their wonder, as given in the original, was the circumstance, that our Lord was talking with **a woman**. None of them said either—*to the woman*—**What seekest thou?** or to the Lord, **Why disputest thou**, or **Why talkest thou with her?**—or perhaps both questions *to Him*. *Why talkest thou with her?*—I rather prefer the former interpretation.

28–30.] She does not mention to the men *His own* announcement of Himself,—but as is most: natural under such circumstances, rests the matter on the testimony likely to weigh most with them,—*her own*. We often, and that unconsciously, put before another not *our* strongest, but what is likely to be his strongest reason. At the same time she shews how the suspicion expressed in ver. 25 arose in her own mind.

30.] *came*,—more properly, **were coming**,—had not arrived, when what follows happened.

31, 32.] The bodily thirst (and hunger probably, from the time of day) which our Lord had felt before, had been and was forgotten in the carrying on of His divine work in the soul of this Samaritan woman. Although **I** and **you** are emphatic, the words are not spoken in *blame*, for none was deserved: but in fulness and earnestness of spirit; in a feeling analogous to that which comes upon us when called from high and holy employment to the supply of the body or to the business of this world.

33.] It is very characteristic of the first part of this Gospel to bring forward instances of unreceptivity of spiritual meaning; compare ver. 11; ch. ii. 20; iii. 4; vi. 42, 52. The disciples probably have the woman in their thoughts.

34.] Christ alone could properly say these words. In the believer on Him, they are partially true,—true as far as he has received the Spirit, and entered into the spiritual life;—but in Him they were absolutely and fully true. His whole life was the doing of the Father’s will. We can ‘eat and drink, &c. to the glory of God,—but in Him the hallowing of the Father’s name, doing His will, bringing about His Kingdom, was His *daily bread*, and superseded the thoughts and desires for the other, needful as it was for His humanity.

My meat is to be (better, **that I may be**) **doing, &c.**] That is, it was our Lord’s continued sustenance, to be ever carrying onward to completion that performance of His Father’s will for which He came into the world. In the words **finish his work**, the way is prepared for the idea introduced in the next verse. These words give an answer to the questioning in the minds of the disciples, and shew *that He had been employed in the Father’s work during their absence*.

35.] The sense of these much-controverted words will be best ascertained by narrowly observing the form of the sentence.

Say not ye.... surely cannot be the introduction to an observation of what was matter of fact at the time. Had the words been spoken *at a time when it wanted four months to the harvest*, and had our Lord intended to express this,—is it conceivable that He should have thus introduced the remark? Would not, *must* not, the question have been a *direct* one in that case—‘*are there not four months?*’ &c. I know not how to account for this **Say not ye that....** except that it introduces *some common saying* which the Jews, or perhaps the people of Galilee only, were in the habit of using. **Are not ye accustomed to say, that....?** That we hear of no such proverb elsewhere, is not to the point;—for such unrecorded sayings are among every people. That we do not know whence to date the four months, is again no objection:—there may have been, in the part where the saying was usual (possibly in the land west of the lake of Tiberias, for those addressed were from thence, and the emphatic ‘*ye*’ seems to point to some particular locality), *some fixed period in the year*,—the end of the sowing, or some religious anniversary,—when it was *a common saying, that it wanted four months to harvest*. And this might have been the first date in the year which had regard to the harvest, and so the best known in connexion with it.

If this be so, all that has been built on *this* saying, as giving a chronological date, must fall to the ground. (Lightfoot, Wieseler, and others, maintain, that since the harvest began on the 16th of Nisan, we must reckon four months back from that time for this journey through Samaria, which would bring it to the middle of Chisleu, i.e. the beginning of December.)

To get the meaning of the latter part of the verse, we must endeavour to follow, as far as may be, the train of thought which pervades the discourse. He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man: our Lord had now been employed in this His work. But not as in the natural year, so was it to be in the world’s lifetime. One-third of the year may elapse, or more, before the sown seed springs up; but the *sowing by the Son of Man* comes late in time, and the harvest should immediately follow. The fields were whitening for it; these Samaritans (not that I believe He pointed to them approaching, as Chrysostom and most expositors, but had them in his view in what He said), and the multitudes in Galilee, were all nearly ready. In the discourse as far as ver. 38, He is *the sower*, the disciples (see Acts viii.) were the *reapers*:—He was the *one who had laboured*, they were the *persons who had entered into his labours*. The *past* is used, as descriptive of the office which each held, not of the actual

thing done. I cannot also but see an allusion to the words spoken by Joshua (xxiv. 18), *on this very spot*;—«I have given you a land for which ye did not labour.'

Taking this view, *I do not believe there was any allusion to the actual state of the fields at that time.* The words **Lift up your eyes**, &c., are of course to be understood *literally*;—they were to lift up their eyes and look on the lands around them;—and then came the assurance; ‘they are whitening already towards the harvest.’ And it seems to me that on *this view*—of the Lord speaking of spiritual things to them, and announcing to them the approach of the spiritual harvest,—*and none else*,—*the right understanding of the following verses depends.*

It is of course *possible* that *it may have been seed-time*;—possible also, that the fields may have been *actually whitening* *So* *the harvest*;—but to lay down either of these as certain, and build chronological inferences on it, is quite unwarranted.

36.] The **wages** of the **reaper** is in the “joy” here implied, in having gathered many into eternal life, just as the **meat** of the **sower** was His joy already begun in His heavenly work. See Matt. xx. 1–16 and notes.

38.] Here, as often, our Lords speaks of the office and its work as *accomplished*, which is but beginning (see Isa. xlvi. 10).

By **other men** here our Lord cannot mean the O.T. prophets as some say, for then His own place would be altogether left out;—and besides, all Scripture analogy is against the idea of the O.T. being the *seed* of which the N.T. is the *fruit*;—nor can it be right, as Olshausen maintains, to leave Him out, as being the *Lord of the Harvest*:—for He is certainly *elsewhere*, and was by the very nature of the case *here*, the *Sower*. The plural is I believe merely inserted as the correspondent word to **ye** in the explanation, as it was one *soweth* and another *reapeth* in the proverb.

39–42.] The truth of the saying of ver. 35 begins to be manifested. These Samaritans were the foundation of the church afterwards built up there. It does not seem that any miracle was wrought there: the feeling expressed in the words “*we have heard Him ourselves*” was enough to raise their faith to a point never attained by the Jews, and hardly as yet by the disciples, —that He was the Saviour of *the world*. Their view seems to have been less clouded by prejudice and narrow-mindedness than that of the Jews; and though the conversion of this people lay not in the plan of the official life of our Lord, or working of His Apostles during it (see Matt. x. 5),—yet we have abundant proof from this history, of His gracious purposes towards them. A trace of this occurrence may be found ch. viii, 48, where see note. Compare throughout Acts viii. 1–25. The word rendered **story** (literally, “*this talking*”) is one in which it is hardly possible not to see something of allusion to the woman’s eager and diffuse report to them.

43–54.] *The second miracle of Jesus in Galilee. The healing of the Ruler’s son.*

43.] after the two days, viz. those mentioned above.

We find no mention of the disciples again, till ch. vi. 3.

And thus the “*therefore*” in the next verse will be a word connecting it with this preliminary reason given.

The reason (ver. 1) why Jesus left Judæa for Galilee was, because of the publicity which was gathering round Himself and his ministry. He betakes himself to Galilee therefore, to avoid fame, testifying that His own country (Galilee) was that where, as a prophet, He was least likely to be honoured. See on the difficulties which have been found in the connexion of this verse, in my Greek Testament. The above explanation seems to me completely satisfactory.

45.] They received Him, but in accordance with the proverbial saying just recorded;—not for any honour in which they themselves held Him, or value which they had for His teaching; but *on account of His fame in Jerusalem*, the metropolis,—which set them the fashion in their estimate of men and things.

for they also went unto the feast is inserted for those readers who might not be aware of the practice of the Galileans to frequent the feasts at Jerusalem.

46. a certain nobleman] literally, “*a royal person*.” “Either,” say Euthymius and Chrysostom, “one of the royal race, or one in possession of some dignity from which he was called ‘royal’;” or, Euthymius adds, “because he was a servant of the King.” Origen thinks he may have been one of the household of Cæsar, having some business in Judæa at that time. But the usage of Josephus is perhaps our surest guide. He uses this word “*royal*,” to distinguish the soldiers, or courtiers, or officers of the *kings* (Herods or others), from those of *Rome*,—but never to designate the royal family. So that this man was probably an officer of Herod Antipas. He may have been Chuza, Herod’s steward, Luke viii. 3: but this is pure conjecture. The man seems to have been a Jew: see below.

47, 48.] This miracle is a notable instance of our Lord ‘not quenching the smoking flax.’ just as His reproof of the Samaritan woman was of His ‘not breaking the bruised reed.’ The little spark of faith in the breast of this nobleman is by Him lit up into a clear and enduring flame for the light and comfort of himself and his house.

come down: see on ch. ii. 12.

The charge brought against them, **Except ye see signs and wonders, &c.,** does not imply, as some think, that they would not believe signs and wonders *heard of*, but required to *see* them—for in this case the expression would certainly have been fuller, “*see with your eyes,*” or something similar;—and it would not accord with our Lord’s known low estimate of all *mere miracle-faith*, to find Him making so weighty a difference between faith from miracles *seen* and faith from miracles *heard*. The words imply the contrast between the Samaritans, who believed *because of His word*, and the Jews (the *plural* reckoning the nobleman among them), who would not believe but *through signs and prodigies*:—see 1 Cor. i. 22. And observe also that it is not implied that even when they had seen signs and wonders, they would believe:—they required these as a condition of their faith, but even these were rejected by them: see ch. xii. 37.

But even with such inadequate conceptions and conditions of faith, our Lord receives the nobleman, and works the sign rather than dismiss him. It was otherwise in Matt. xvi. 1 ff.

49.] Here is the same weakness of faith as there,—but our Lord’s last words have made visible impression. It is like the Syrophenician woman’s rejoinder,—‘Yea, Lord; but...,’ only the faith is of a far less noble kind than hers. He seems to believe it necessary that Jesus should be on the spot;—not that there was any thing strange or blameable in this, for Martha and Mary did the same, ch. xi. 21, 32:—and to think that it would be too late when his child *had expired*;—not, imagining that He to whom he spoke could *raise the dead*.

50.] The bringing out and strengthening of the man’s faith by these words was almost as great a spiritual miracle, as the material one which they indicated.

We may observe the difference between our Lord’s dealing here and in the case of the centurion (Matt. viii. 6 ff. and parallel places). There, when from humility the man requests Him to speak the word only, He offers to go to his house: here, when pressed to go down, He speaks the word only. Thus (as Trench observes, after Chrysostom) the weak faith of the nobleman is strengthened, while the humility of the centurion is honoured.

51.] He appears (see below) to have gone leisurely away—for the hour (1 P.M.) was early enough to reach Capernaum the same evening (twenty-five miles)—in confidence that an amendment was taking place, which he at present understood to be only a gradual one.

52, 53. the fever left him] This was probably more than he expected to hear; and the coincidence of so sudden a recovery with the time at which Jesus had spoken the words to him raises his faith at length into a full belief of the Power and Goodness and the Messiahship of Him, who had by a word commanded the disease, and it had obeyed. The word **believed, absolutely**, implies that in the fullest sense he and all his *became disciples of Jesus*. It is very different from “*believed the word that Jesus spake*” in ver. 50—as believing on **HIM** must be always different from believing on *any thing else in the world*, be it *even His own word or His own ordinances*. The cure took place in the afternoon: the nobleman probably set out, as indeed the narrative implies, immediately on hearing our Lord’s assurance, and *spent the night on the way*.

54.] The *meaning* of the Evangelist clearly is, that this was the second *Galilean* miracle (see ch. iii. 2, and ver. 45). But (1) how is that expressed in the words? The miracles which He did at Jerusalem in the feast being omitted, the words naturally carry the thoughts back to a former one related; and the clause added (“*when He was come out of Judaea into Galilee*”) shews, not that a miracle prior to this, during this return visit, has been passed over,—but that as the scene of this second was in Galilee, so that former one, to which “*second*” refers, must be sought in Galilee also. And then (2) *why* should this so particularly be stated? Certainly, it seems to me, on account of the part which this miracle bore in the calling out and assuring of faith by the manifestation of His glory, as that first one had done before. By that (ch. ii. 11), His disciples had been convinced: by this, one (himself a type of the weak and unworthy in faith) outside the circle of His own. By both, half-belief was strengthened into faith in Him: but in each case it is of a different kind.

It is an interesting question, whether or not this miracle be the same as the healing of the centurion’s servant (or *son*, Matthew?) in Matt. viii. 5: Luke vii. 1. Ireneus *appears* to hold the two narratives to be the same history (appears only; for his words are, “He healed the centurion’s servant when absent, saying, ‘Go thy way, thy son liveth:’” which remark may be simply explained by his having cited from memory, and thus either made this *nobleman* a centurion,—or, which is more probable, having understood the word in Matt. viii. to signify a *son*, and made our Lord there speak very similar words to those really uttered by Him, but which are in reality found here): so Eusebius also in his canons. Chrysostom notices, but opposes the view:—and it has never in modern times gained many advocates, being chiefly held by the interpreters of the Straussian

school. Indeed, the internal evidence is all against it: not only (Chrys) “in station, but also in the nature. of his faith,” does the man in one case differ from the man in the other. The inner kernel of the history is, in our case here,—*the elevation of a weak and mere wonder-seeking faith into a deep conviction of the personal power and love of our Lord*; in the other, the commendation of a noble confession of our Lord’s divine power, indicating great strength and grasp of faith, and inducing the greatest personal humility. And the external point brought out in the commendation there, “*I have not seen such faith, no, not in Israel,*” is not only different from, but stands in absolute contrast with, the depreciating charge here, “*Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*”

Olshausen well remarks, that this narrative may be regarded as a sequel to the foregoing one.

John: Chapter 5

CHAP. V.—XII.] Second great division of the Gospel. JESUS IN CONFLICT WITH THE JEWS. V., VI. JESUS THE LIFE. Beginning of the conflict.

V. 1–47.] Healing of a cripple at the pool of Bethesda, during a feast; and the discourse of Jesus occasioned by the persecution of the Jews arising thereupon.

1. After these things] Lücke remarks that when John wishes to indicate immediate succession, he uses “*after this*” (or “*that*”), ch. ii. 12; xi. 7, 11; xix. 28; when mediate, after an interval, “*after these things,*” ch. iii. 22; v. 14; vi. 1; vii. 1; xix. 38. So that apart from other considerations which would lead us to the same conclusion, we may infer that some interval has elapsed since the last verse of ch. iv.

a feast of the Jews] Few points have been more controverted, than the question, *what this feast was*. I will give the principal views, and then state my own conclusion. (1) Irenæus understands it to be the *second Passover of our Lord’s ministry*. Origen (whose commentary on this chapter is lost) mentions this view, but apparently does not approve it. This is the view of Luther, Grotius, Lightfoot, and others. (2) Cyril of Alexandria, Chrysostom, and others think it to be the *Pentecost*. This opinion prevailed in the Greek Church; and has found many defenders in modern times. (3) Kepler first suggested the idea that it might be the *feast of Purim*, (Esth. ix. 21, 26,) almost immediately preceding the Passover (the 14th and 15th of Adar). This has been the general view of the modern chronologists. (4) The *feast of Tabernacles* has been suggested by Cocceius, and is supported by one of our MSS., but of late date. (5) Kepler and Petavius thought it also possible that the *feast of Dedication* (see ch. x. 22) might be meant.

So that almost every Jewish feast finds some supporters. I believe, with Lücke, De Wette, and Tholuck, *that we cannot with any probability gather what feast it was*. Seeing as I do no distinct datum given in ch. iv. 35, nor again in ch. vi. 1, and finding nothing in this chapter to determine the nature of this feast, I cannot attach any weight to most of the elaborate chronological arguments which have been raised on the subject. It can hardly have been a Passover, both because it is called a feast, not **the** feast, as in ch. vi. 4, and because if so, we should have an interval of a whole year between this chapter and the next, which is not probable. Nor can it have been the Dedication, in the *winter*; for then the multitude of sick would have hardly been waiting in the porches of Bethesda. The feast of Purim would nearest agree with the subsequent events; and it seems as if our Lord did not go up to Jerusalem at the Passover next following (ch. vi. 4; vii. 1), so that no difficulty would be created by the proximity of the two feasts, unless, with De Wette, we believe that the interval was too little for what is related ch. vi. 1–3 to have happened. But it may be doubted, (1) whether it was a general practice to go up to Jerusalem at the Purim: (2) whether our Lord would be likely to observe it, even if it was.

No reason need be given why St. John does not name the feast; it is quite in accordance with his practice of mentioning nothing that does not concern his subject-matter. Thus the Passover is mentioned ch. ii. 13, because of the *buying and selling in the temple*; again, ch. vi. 4, to account for the *great multitude*, and as eminently suiting (see notes) the subject of His discourse there; the feast of Tabernacles, ch. vii. 2, because of the practice alluded to by our Lord in ver. 37; that of the Dedication, ch. x. 22, to account for His being in Solomon’s porch, because it was winter; but in this chapter, where there is nothing alluding to the time or nature of the feast, it is not specified.

Jesus] and probably His disciples: for the same expression is used ch. ii. 13, whereas we find, ch. iii. 22, that His disciples were with Him; compare also ch. vii. 10 and ch. ix. 2.

2.] The expression **there is** has been thought to import that St. John wrote his Gospel *before the destruction of Jerusalem*. But this must not be pressed. He might have spoken in the present without meaning to be literally accurate with regard to the moment when he was writing.

The locality given means, probably, **near the sheep-gate**,—mentioned by Nehemiah, see reff. The situation of this gate is

unknown;—it is traditionally supposed to be the same with that now called St. Stephen's gate; but inaccurately, for no wall existed in that quarter till the time of Agrippa. Eusebius, Jerome, and the Jerusalem Itinerary speak of a *sheep-pool*, as indeed the Vai. gate renders here.

Bethesda,—in Syriac, **the house** (place) **of mercy**, or **of grace**. Its present situation is very uncertain. Robinson established by personal inspection the fact of the subterranean connexion of the pool of Siloam (see ch. ix. 7 note) and that called the Fountain of the Virgin; and has made it probable that the Fountain under the grand Mosk is also connected with them; in fact that all these are but one and the same spring. Now this spring, as he himself witnessed, is an *intermittent* one, as indeed had been reported before by Jerome, Prudentius, William of Tyre, and others. There might have been then, it is obvious, some artificially constructed basin in connexion with this spring, the site and memory of which have perished, which would present the phenomenon here described.

I have received an interesting communication from a traveller who believes that he has identified Bethesda in the present pool of Siloam. It appears from his account: that there are still visible four bases of pillars in the middle of the water, and four corresponding ones in the wall, shewing that at one time the pool has been arched over by five equal porches. This pool is, as above noticed, intermittent, and is even now believed to possess a certain medicinal power. See the account of my informant. at length at the end of vol. i., edn. 5, of my Greek Testament.

The spot now traditionally known as Bethesda is a part of the fosse round the fort or tower Antonia, an immense reservoir or trench, seventy-five feet deep. But, as Robinson observes, there is not the slightest evidence that can identify it with the Bethesda of the N.T.

This pool is not mentioned by Josephus.

having five porches] Probably these were for the shelter of the sick persons, and were arches or porticos, opening upon and surrounding the reservoir: see above.

3. withered] Those who were afflicted with the loss of vital power in any of their limbs by stiffness or paralysis. Of this kind was the man on whom the miracle was wrought.

“*waiting for the moving of the water,*” and the whole of ver. 4.] The spuriousness of this controverted passage can hardly be questioned. See the critical considerations dwelt on in my Greek Test, I may mention that the Vatican, Paris, Cambridge, and Sinaitic MSS. omit it: while at the same time the Alexandrine MS. contains it, but with the important variation of “*an angel washed in*” instead of “*went down into*.”

5.] Observe, he had *been lame* thirty-eight years, not *at Bethesda* all that time.

6.] knew, namely, *within Himself*, as on other similar occasions. Our Lord singled him out, being conscious of the circumstances under which he lay there, by that superhuman knowledge of which we had so striking an example in the case of the woman of Samaria.

Wilt thou be made whole?] Some would supply, “*notwithstanding that it is the sabbath.*” But this is very improbable, see ver. 17. Our Lord did not thus appeal to his hearers’ prejudices, and make His grace dependent on them. Besides, the “*being made whole*” had in the mind of the man no reference to a healing such as there would be any objection to on the Sabbath; but to the cure by *means of the water*, which he was there to seek.

The question is one of those by which He so frequently testified his compassion, and established (so to speak) a point of connexion between the spirit of the person addressed, and His own gracious purposes. Possibly it may have conveyed to the mind of the poor cripple the idea that at length a compassionate person had come, who might put him in at the next troubling of the water. It certainly is possible that the man’s long and apparently hopeless infirmity may have given him a look of lethargy and despondency, and the question may have arisen from this: but there is no ground for supposing *blame* conveyed by it, still less that he was an impostor labouring under some trifling complaint, and wishing to represent it more important than it was.

7.] The man’s answer implies the popular belief that whoever stepped in immediately after the bubbling up of the water was made whole: no more than this. Bauer asks why the person who *brought him there every day*, could not have put him in? But no such person is implied. The same slow motion which he describes here, would suffice for his daily coming and going.

8.] The command, **Take up thy bed**, has been treated as making a difference between the man lame from his birth in Acts iii. 8, who *walked and leaped and praised God*; and this man, who, since sin had been the cause of his disease (ver. 14), is ordered to carry his bed, ‘a present memento of his past sin.’ Possibly; but our Lord must have had in his view what was to

follow, and have ordered it also to bring about this his first open controversy with the Jews.

10.] The Jews, never the *multitude*, but always those in authority of some kind, whom John ever puts forward as the representatives of the whole people in their rejection of the Lord.

it is not lawful] The bearing of burdens on the Sabbath was forbidden not only by the glosses of the Pharisees, but *by the law itself*. See Neh. xiii. 15–19; Exod. xxxi. 13–17; Jer. xvii. 21, 22. And our Lord does not, as in another case (Luke xiii. 15, 16), appeal here to the reasonableness of the deed being done on the Sabbath, *saving the sanctity of the Sabbath*, but takes altogether loftier ground, as being One greater than the Sabbath. The whole kernel of this incident and discourse is *not, that it is lawful to do works of mercy on the Sabbath: but that the Son of God (here) is Lord of the Sabbath*.

11.] The man's excuse is simple and sufficient; and for us, important, inasmuch as it goes into the depth of the matter, and is by the Jews themselves accepted. He who had power to make him whole, had power to suspend that law which was, like the healing, God's work. The authority which had overruled one appointment of Providence, could overrule another. I do not mean that this reasoning was *present to the man's mind*;—he very likely spoke only from intense feeling of obligation to One who had done so much for him;—but it lay *beneath the words*, and the Jews recognized it, by transferring their blame, *from the man, to Him who healed him*.

12.] Not, ‘who is he that *healed thee*?’ but they carefully bring out the unfavourable side of what had taken place, as malicious persons always do.

13.] Difficulty has been found here from the supposed improbability that some should not have told him, seeing that Jesus was by this time well known in Jerusalem. But this is wholly unnecessary. His fame had not been so spread yet, but that He might during the crowd of strangers at the feast pass unnoticed.

Jesus **passed on unobserved** by him: just spoke the healing words, and then went on among the crowd; so that no particular attention was attracted to Himself, either by the sick man or others. *The context requires this interpretation*: being violated by the ordinary one, that Jesus ‘*conveyed himself away*, because a multitude was in the place.’ for that would imply that attention had been attracted towards Him which He wished to avoid; and in that case He could hardly fail to have been known to the man and to others.

14.] The knowledge of our Lord extended even to the sin committed thirty-eight years ago, from which this long sickness had resulted, for so it is implied here. The **some worse thing**, as Trench observes, ‘gives us an awful glimpse of the severity of God's judgments;’—see Matt. xii. 45.

15.] The man appears to have done this partly in obedience to the authorities; partly perhaps to complete his apology for himself. We can hardly imagine ingratitude in him to have been the cause; especially as the words “*which had made him whole*” speak so plainly of the benefit received; compare ver. 11 and note.

17.] The *true keeping* of the rest of the Sabbath was not that idle and unprofitable cessation from even good deeds, which they would enforce: the Sabbath *was made for man*;—and, in its Jewish form, for man in a mere state of legal discipline (which truth could not yet be brought out to them, but is implied in this verse, because His people are even as He is—in the liberty wherewith He hath made them free); whereas He, the only-begotten of the Father, doing the works of God in the world, *stands on higher ground*, and hallows, instead of breaking the Sabbath, by thus working on it. “He is no more a breaker of the Sabbath than God is, when He upholds with an energy that knows no pause the work of His creation from hour to hour, and from moment to moment; ‘My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;’ My work is but the reflex of His work. Abstinence from outward work belongs not to the idea of a Sabbath, it is only more or less the necessary condition of it for beings so framed as ever to be in danger of losing the true collection and rest of the spirit in the multiplicity of earthly toil and business. Man indeed must cease from *his* work, if a higher work is to find place in him. He scatters himself in his work, and therefore he must collect himself anew, and have seasons for so doing. But with Him who is one with the Father, it is otherwise. In Him the deepest rest is not excluded by the highest activity.” (Trench on the Miracles.)

18.] The ground of the charge is now shifted; and by these last words (ver. 17), occasion is given for one of our Lord's most weighty discourses.

The Jews understood His words to mean nothing short of *peculiar personal Sonship*, and thus equality of nature wit!God. And that this their understanding was *the right one*, the discourse testifies. *All might in one sense, and the Jews did in a closer sense, call God their, or our, Father*; but they at once said that the individual use of ‘MY FATHER’ by Jesus had a totally distinct, and in their view a blasphemous, meaning: this latter especially, because He thus made God a participator in His crime of breaking the sabbath. Thus we obtain from the adversaries of the faith a most important statement of one of its highest and holiest doctrines.

19.] The discourse is a wonderful setting forth of the Person and Office of the Son of God in His Ministrations as the Word of the Father. It still has reference to the charge of working on the Sabbath, and the context takes in our Lord's answer both to this, ver. 17, and to the Jews' accusation, ver. 18. In this verse, He states that He cannot work any but the works of God: *cannot*, by his very relationship to the Father, by the very nature and necessity of the case;—the working **of himself** being an impossible supposition, and purposely set here to express one:—the Son *cannot* work of Himself, because *He is* the Son: His very Person presupposes the Father's will and counsel as His will and counsel,—and His perfect *knowledge* of that will and counsel. And this, because every *creature* may abuse its freedom, and will contrary to God: but THE SON, standing in essential unity with God, cannot, even when become Man, commit sin,—break the Sabbath; for His whole Being and Working is in and of God.

for what things soever...] This clause *converts* the former proposition, and asserts its truth when thus converted. ‘*For* it is the very nature of the Son to do whatever the Father doeth.’ Also, to do these works **in like manner**; after the same plan and proceeding, so that there can be no discord, but unity.

20.] For (this last is ensured by the fact, that) **the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him** (in this the Lord sets forth to us the unfolding of the will and purposes of the Father to [Mark xiii. 32: Acts i. 7] and by Him, in His Mediatorial office) **all things that himself doeth** (all the purposes of His secret counsel;—for with the Father, *doing* is *willing*; it is *only the Son who acts in time*); and this manifestation will go on increasing in majesty, that the wonder which now is excited in you by these works may be brought out to its full measure (in the acceptance or rejection of the Son of God—wonder leading naturally to the “honour” of ver. 23).

21.] It is very important to observe the distinction here between the working of the Eternal Son (in creation, e.g.) as He is “*in heaven*” with God, and His working in the state of His humiliation, in which the Father should by degrees advance Him to exaltation and put His enemies under His feet. Of the latter of these mention is made (ver. 20) in the *future*, of the *former* in the *present*. The former belong to the Son as His proper and essential work: the latter are opened out before Him in the process of His passing onward in the humanity which He has taken. And the unfolding of these latter shall all be in the direction of, and in accordance with, the eternal attributes of the Son: see ch. xvii. 6; resulting in His being exalted to the right hand of the Father. So here,—as it is the Father's essential work to vivify the dead (see Rom. viii, 11; 1 Sam. ii. 6 al.), so the Son vivifies whom He will: this last **whom He will** not implying any selection out of mankind, nor said merely to remove the Jewish prejudice that their own nation alone should rise from the dead,—but meaning, that in every instance where *His will is to vivify*, the result invariably follows.

Observe, this **quickeneth (maketh alive)** lays hold. of life in its innermost and deepest sense, and thus finds its illustration in the waking both of the *outwardly* and the *spiritually* dead.

22.] In the words **neither doth** is implied, that as the Father does not Himself, by His own proper act, *vivify* any, but commits all quickening power to the Son:—so is it with judgment also. And *judgment* contains eminently in itself the “*whom He will*,”—when the act of *quickening* is understood—as it must be *now*—of *bestowing everlasting life*. Again, the raising of the *outwardly dead* is to be understood as a sign that He who works it is appointed Judge of quick and dead, for it is a part of the office of that Judge:—*in the vivifying, the judgment is made*: see below, ver. 29, and Ps, lxxii. 1–4.

23.] This being so, the end of all is, *the honour of the Father in and by the Son*. He (the Son) is the Lord of life, and the Judge of the world;—all must honour Him with equal honour to that which they pay to the Father:—and whosoever does not, however he may imagine that he honours or approaches God, does not honour Him at all;—because *He can only be known or honoured by us as ‘THE FATHER wHO SENT HIS SON.’*

24.] What follows, to ver. 30 inclusive, is an expansion of the two assertions in vv. 21, 22,—the **quickenning** and the **judging**,—intimately bound up as they are together. There is a parallelism in verses 24 and 25 which should be noticed for the right understanding of the words. “*He that heareth my word*,” in the one, answers to “*the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God*” in the other. It is a kind of *hearing* which awakens to life,—one accompanied by “*believing Him that sent Me*.” And this last is not barely ‘Him who sent Me,’ but Him, the *very essence of belief in Whom is in this*, THAT HE SENT ME (see ch. xii. 44). And the expression **believeth Him** (not ‘on Him,’ which is quite unauthorized by the original) expresses that belief in the *testimony* of God that He hath sent His Son, which is dwelt on so much 1 John v. 9–12, where, ver. 10, we have the same expression, “*he that believeth not God*,” even in the A.V.

hath everlasting life: so 1 John v. 12, 13. The **believing**, and the **having everlasting life**, are *commensurate*:—where the faith is, the possession of eternal life is:—and when the one remits, the other is forfeited. But here the faith is set before us as an *enduring faith*, and its effects described in *their completion* (see Eph. i. 19, 20).

cometh not into judgment] *Judgment* being the *separation*,—the effect of which is to gather out of the Kingdom *all that*

offendeth;—and thus regarding especially the *damnatory* part of judgment,—he who believes *comes not into*, has no concern with, judgment. Compare Ps. cxlii. 2. The reckoning which ends with “*Well done, good servant,*” is not *judgment: the reward is of free grace*. In this sense, the believers in Christ will not be judged according to their works: they are justified before God by faith, and by God—*God is he that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?* Their ‘passage over’ from death into life *has already taken place*,—from the state of spiritual death into that *everlasting life*, which in their believing state they *have already*. It is to be observed that our Lord speaks in very similar terms of the unbelieving being *condemned already*, in ch. iii. 18.

The *perfect* sense of the word **hath passed** must not be weakened nor explained away.

25.] This verse continues to refer to *spiritual* awakening from the dead. The words **The hour is coming, and now is** are an expression used of those things which are to characterize the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, which was even now begun among men, but not yet brought (until the day of Pentecost, Acts ii.) to its completion. ‘*Thus it cometh*, in its fulness,—and **even now is begun**.

the dead,—in reference to the words “*out of death*” of the preceding verse—the *spiritually dead*:—see below on ver. 28.

the voice of the Son of God] His *call to awake*, in its widest and deepest sense;—by His own preaching, by His Apostles, His ministers, &c. &c. In all these He speaks to the spiritually dead. Not merely, “*and when they have heard it, they shall live:*” but, and **THEY WHO have heard it (or, who hear it) shall live**. *This determines the verse to be spoken of spiritual, not bodily awakening.*

they that have heard are the persons to whom the Lord cried so often “*he that hath ears to hear, let him hear:*”—the persons who stand opposed to those addressed in ver. 40.

shall live is explained in the next verse.

26, 27.] We have here again *vivifying* and *judging* bound together as the two great departments of the Son’s working;—the former, as substantiating the word “*shall live*” just uttered; the latter, as leading on to the great announcement of the next verse. But the two departments spring from *two distinct sources*, united in the Person of the Incarnate Son of God. The Father hath given Him to have life in Himself, as *He is THE SON OF GOD*. We have none of us *life in ourselves: in Him we live and move and have our being*. But He, as the Father is, is the *source of Life*. Then again the Father hath given Him power to pass judgment, because *He is THE SON OF MAN*; man is to be judged by Man,—by that Man whom God hath appointed, who is the inclusive Head of humanity, and to whom mankind, and man’s world, pertain by right of covenant-purchase. This *executing judgment* leads the thought to the *great occasion* when judgment shall be executed; which accordingly is treated of in the next verse. **28.] Marvel not at this**, as in ch. iii, 7, introduces a matter of even *greater* wonder to them;—the astounding proof which shall be given in the face of the universe that this is so.

the hour cometh, but not “*and now is*” this time,—because He is *now speaking* of the great day of the resurrection: when not merely “*the dead*,” but **all that are in the graves**, shall hear His voice, and “*they that have heard*” are not specified, because *all shall hear* in the fullest sense. Observe that here, as elsewhere, when the judgment according to *works* is spoken of, it is the great *general* resurrection of Matt. xxv. 31–46, which (and the notes) compare. So here we have not “*they that have believed*,” and “*they that have not believed*,” but the descriptions reach far wider, including indeed in this most general form the first resurrection unto life also—and the two great classes are described as *they that have done (wrought) good* and *they that have done (practised, see on ch. iii. 20, 21) evil (vain, worthless things)*.

Observe that *life* and *judgment* stand opposed here, as in ver. 24:—not that there is *no such thing* as a *resurrection of death*, but that *it is involved in this judgment*. Olshausen observes that this, and Acts xxiv. 15, are the only *direct* declarations in the N.T. of a *bodily resurrection of the unjust* as well as of the just. It is implied in some places, e.g. Matt. x. 28, and less plainly in Matt. xxv. 34 ff.: Rev. xx 5, 12, and directly asserted in the O.T., Dan. xii. 2. In 1 Cor. xv.,—as the object was to convince *believers in Christ* of the truth of the resurrection of *their bodies*,—no allusion is made to those who are not believers.

30.] Here begins the *second part of the discourse*,—but bound on most closely to the first (ver. 23),—treating of the *testimony by which these things were substantiated, and which they ought to have received*. This verse is, however, perhaps rather a point of transition to the next, at which the testimony is first introduced.

As the Son does nothing of Himself,—but His working and His judgment all spring from His deep unity of will and being with the Father,—this His great and last judgment, and all His other ones, will be just and holy (He being not separate from God, but one with Him); and therefore His witness given of Himself ver. 17, and called by them blasphemy, is true and holy also.

Observe, the discourse here passes into the *first person*, which was *understood* before, because He had called himself the Son of God,—but is henceforth used *expressly*.

31.] This assertion is not to be trifled away by an accommodation, or supposed to be introduced by ‘*Ye will say to Me:*’—see by all means ch. viii, 12–14 and notes.

The words are said in all earnestness, and are *strictly true*. If such a separation, and independent testimony, as is here supposed, *could take place*, it would be a falsification of the very conditions of the Truth of God as manifested by the Son, Who being the Word, speaks, not of himself, but of the Father. And in this sense ch. viii. 14 is eminently true also, the *light* being the “*brightness of the Father’s glory*.”

32.] This **other** can, by the inner coherence of the discourse, be no other than THE FATHER, of Whom so much has been said in the former part, but Who is hinted at rather than mentioned in *this* (the word “*Father*” in ver. 80 being spurious). *It cannot be John*,—from whom (ver. 34) our Lord *took not his testimony*. Similar modes of alluding to the Father occur ch. 50: see also ch. viii. 18, and Matt. x. 28 and parallel places.

and I know...] This is the Son’s testimony to the Father’s truth: see ch. (iii. 38) vii. 28; viii, 26, 55. It testifies to the full consciousness on the part of the Son, even in the days of his humiliation, of the righteousness of the Father: and (for the testimony of the Father to the Son is contained in the Scriptures) also to His distinct recognition and approval (Ps. xl. 6–8) of psalm and type and prophecy, as applied to Himself and His work.

33.] See ch. i. 19. The connexion is,—**another testifies of Me** (ver. 32)—‘not John only, although he, when sent to, did certainly testify to the truth; for’&c.

he bare witness unto the truth, not merely (Grot.) modestly said;—but *necessarily*. *Bare witness to Me* would have been asserting what the next verse denies.

34.] ‘I receive not my testimony (the testimony to Me of which I have spoken) **from man**, but I mention John’s testimony, that you may make the intended use of it, to be led to Me for salvation.’

35.] This **was** shews, as Stier rightly observes, that John *was now cast into prison*, if not executed.

the lamp] The article has been taken by some to point to the prophecies concerning John, But we have no passage in the O.T. which designates Elias in such terms. In Eccl. xlviii. 1 we read of him, “*Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp*,” which Stier thinks may be referred to here. We may, as indeed he also suggests, believe that those words represent or gave rise to a common way of speaking of Elias, as certain Rabbis were called ‘The candle of the Law,’&c. De Wette takes the article as meaning, ‘*the lamp which was to lead you*,’&c.

On John as the light *lighted* not *lighting*, see note, ch. i. 8.

and shining] The description sets forth the *derived*, and *transitory* nature of John’s light.

and ye....] See Ezek. xxxiii, 30, 32. ‘But you wished only to disport yourselves in his light for a time—came out to him in crowds at first,—and—like silly children who play with the fire till it burns and hurts them, and then shrink from and loathe it,—when he began to speak of deep repentance as the preparation for God’s Kingdom, and laid the axe to the root of the trees, you left him.’ No one cared, when he was imprisoned and put to death. And even those few who remained true to him, did not follow his direction to Christ. For the mass of the people, and their leaders, his mission was in vain.

36.] Literally, **I have my witness greater than John**; or, *than that of John*;—but perhaps this is not needed, for John himself was a testimony.

for the works, not *His miracles alone*, although those principally; but *the whole of His life and course of action*, full as it was of holiness, in which, and as forming harmonious parts of which, His miracles were testimonies of His divine mission. His greatest work (ch. vi. 29) was the awakening of faith, the *quickening* of which we have heard before, to which the miracles were but as means to an end.

the same works that I do] The repetition is to shew that His life and working was an exact fulfilment of the Father’s will. **The works which the Father hath given me to do, those very works which I am doing.... 37–39.]** The connexion of these verses has been much disputed. I believe it will be found to be this: ‘The works of which I have spoken, are only *indirect* testimonies; the Father Himself, who sent Me, has given *direct* testimony concerning Me. Now that testimony cannot be derived by you, nor any man, by direct *communication* with Him; for ye have never heard His voice nor seen His shape. (Or

perhaps,—have not heard His voice, as your fathers did from Sinai,—nor seen His visional appearance, as the Prophets did.) Nor (ver. 38), *in your case*, has it been given by that *inward witness* (ch. iii. 33 5 1 John iv. 13, 14) which those have (and had in a measure, even before the gift of the Spirit—see, among other places, Ps. li. 11), in whom His word abides; for ye have not His word abiding in you, not believing on Him whom He hath sent. Yet (ver. 39) there is a form of this direct testimony of the Father, accessible even to you;—“*Search the Scriptures*,”&c.’ Chrysostom and others understand the word **voice** to refer to *the voice at our Lord’s baptism*: but, as Lücke observes, the addition, **at any time**, forbids this. Observe that the testimony in the Scriptures is not the only, nor the chief one, *intended* in ver. 37, but the direct testimony *in the heart of the believer*;—which, as the Jews *have not*, they are directed to *another form* of the Father’s testimony, *that in the Scriptures*.

39.] The word **Search** may be *indicative*, **Ye search**: then the sense will be, ‘*Ye search the Scriptures, for ye believe ye have*&c., *and they are they that testify of Me: and (yet, ver. 40) ye will not come to Me that ye may have life:*’ or *imperative*, as in the text, in which case generally a period has been placed after me, and a fresh sentence begins at **And yet ye are not willing....** Authorities are very divided between these: the Greek Fathers, who should best understand their own language, took them (with one remarkable exception, Cyril of Alexandria) as *imperative*. And I believe the *imperative sense only* will be found to cohere with the previous verses:—see above, where I have given the context. And no other sense will suit the word **search**: which cannot be used, as in the indicative it would be, with blame attached to it,—‘*ye make nice and frivolous search into the letter of Scripture;*’ but implies *a thorough search* (see also 1 Pet. i. 11) *into the contents and spirit of Scripture*.

Ye (emphatic) imagine that in them (emphatic) ye have eternal life. We may find testimonies to this from the Rabbis: “*He who acquires the words of the law, acquires for himself eternal life,*”&c. But they, like all other secondary ordinances, have a spiritual end in view, and that end is to testify, from first to last (it is *their office*); *they are they that testify of ME*.

40.] I would connect these words with the former, and regard them as describing the inconsistency of those who think that they *have life* in the Scriptures, and yet will not come to Him of whom they testify, *that they may have life*.

Observe, this command to the Jews to *search* their Scriptures, applies even more strongly to Christians; who are yet, like them, in danger of idolizing a mere written book, believing that *in the Bible* they have eternal life, and missing the personal knowledge of Him of whom the Scriptures testify.

The words *Ye are not willing to come* here set forth strikingly *the free dom of the will*, on which the unbeliever’s condemnation rests: see ch. iii. 19.

41–44.] The connexion seems to be;—the standing-points of our Lord and of the Jews were not only *different*, but were *inconsistent with and exclusive of* one another. He sought not glory from below, from man’s praise or report: *the Father testified to Him*, in all the ways which have been specified; but this testimony they could not receive, nor discover Him in their Scriptures, because human regards and ambition and intrigue had blinded their eyes, and they had not the love of God (the very first command in their law, Deut. vi. 4, 5) in their hearts.

41.] I receive not, not merely, ‘*I do not desire*,’—but **I do not receive**;—‘no such praise nor testimony accrues to Me, nor has in Me that on which it can lay hold’ ‘My glory is altogether from another source.’

42.] But (nevertheless, howbeit) draws forcibly the distinction, setting Himself and them in strong contrast.

I know you] By long trial and bearing with your manners these many generations; and personally also.

The words are spoken, not of an ungodly mind in general, but of an absence of that love which God’s covenant people should have for Him, ‘They would none of Jesus: for they were not true Israelites.’ This love, if they had it, would teach them,—the whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength being given to God,—to seek honour *only from him*,—and thus to appreciate the glory which He hath given to His Son, and His testimony concerning Him.

43.] The first clause is clear. In the latter we have a prophetic declaration regarding the Jews in the latter days. This **another** is in strong contrast with the “*another*” of ver. 32. ‘The testimony of that Other, who is greater than I, ye will not receive; but if another come in his own name, him ye will receive.’ The words are perhaps spoken primarily of the false or Idol-Messiah, the Antichrist, who shall appear in the latter days (2 Thess. ii. 8–12); whose appearance shall be *according to the working of Satan (their father, ch. viii. 44), shewing himself that he is God*, 2 Thess. ii. 4;—and doubtless, *in that* their final reference, embrace also all the cases in which the Jews *have* more or less *received* those false Messiahs who have been foreshadowers of the great Antichrist, and indeed all the cases in which *such a spirit* has been shewn by them, even in the absence of false Messiahs.

44.] How can ye (emphatic) is grounded on “ye are not willing”—is the consequence of the carnal regards in which they lived.

from the only God, not ‘*from God only*’ (A. V.), which is ungrammatical: in contradistinction to the *idolatry of the natural heart*, which is ever setting up for itself other sources of honour, worshipping *man*, or *self*,—or even, as in the case alluded to in the last verse, *Satan*,—instead of God. The words “*the only God*” are very important, because they form the point of passage to the next verses; in which the Jews are accused of not believing the *writings of Moses*, the very pith and kernel of which was *the unity of God*, and *the having no other gods but Him*.

45.] The work of Christ is not **to accuse**, even as He is Judge;—but to *judge*, by the appointment of the Father. And therefore—though He has said so much of the unbelief of the Jews, and charged them in the last verse with breach of the central law of God—*He will not accuse them*; nay, it is not needful;—for Moses, whom they disbelieved, while vainly hoping in him (see above on ver. 39), “*making their boast in the law*,” Rom. ii. 17,—*already accused them*: see Deut. xxxi. 21, 26, and ch. vii. 19.

46. he wrote of me] ‘This is an important testimony by the Lord to the *subject* of the whole Pentateuch;—it is *concerning Him*. It is also a testimony to *the fact*, of Moses *having written those books*, which were then, and are still, known by his name.

47.] The meaning is: ‘men give greater weight to what is written and published, the letter of a book, than to mere word of mouth;—and ye in particular give greater honour to Moses, than to Me: if then ye believe not what *he* has written, which comes down to you hallowed by the reverence of ages,—how can you believe the words which are uttered by Me, to whom you are hostile?’ This however is not all:—*Moses leads to Christ*:—is one of the witnesses by which the Father hath testified of Him: ‘if then ye have rejected the *means*, how shall ye reach the *end*?’ If your unbelief has stopped the path, how shall ye arrive at Him to whom it leads?’

John: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. JESUS THE LIFE IN THE FLESH.]

1–15.] *Miraculous feeding of five thousand men.* Matt. xiv. 13–21. Mark vi. 30–44. Luke ix. 10–17, in each of which compare the notes throughout. Here we have another example of John relating a miracle with the view: of introducing a discourse, and that discourse carries on the testimony of Jesus to Himself. In the last, He was the SON OF GOD, testified to by the Father, received by faith, rejected by unbelief: here He is SON OF MAN, the incarnate Life of the world, and we have the unbelief of the Jews and His own disciples set in strong contrast with the feeding on and participating in Him as the Bread of Life.

1.] After these things gives us no fixed date;—see on ch. v. 1. As Lücke remarks, the words **went over the sea of Galilee**..., if connected with the preceding discourse, would be unintelligible,—and can only be understood by the fragmentary character of this Gospel as relates to mere narration, and the well-known fact being presupposed, that His Ministry principally took place in Galilee.

Matthew gives this passage over the lake in *connexion with the execution of John the Baptist*: Mark and Luke, *with the return of the Twelve from their mission*. (The Twelve were probably gathered, or their gathering finished, in the interval since ch. v. 47, during which time their mission also had taken place.)

which is the sea of Tiberias] The last appellation is probably inserted for the sake of Gentile readers, to whom it was best known by that name. It was more usually called, as by Josephus, Gennesar, or Gennesaritis: see also, 1 Mace. xi. 67.

2.] It is evident from this that a circuit in Galilee and works of healing are presupposed (see Matthew, ver. 13; Mark, ver. 33; Luke, ver. 11).

3.] the mountain, perhaps ‘the hill country’ on the shore of the lake: expressed in Matthew by “*a desert place apart*.” The expression is used by John only here and in ver. 15, but no inference can be drawn from that, for this is the only portion of the Galilæan Ministry related by him.

4.] This will account, not for so great a multitude *coming to Him*, but perhaps (?) for the circumstance that the people at that time were gathered in multitudes, ready to set out on their journey to Jerusalem. We must remember also that the reference of the following discourse to the Passover being so pointed, the remark would naturally be here inserted by the Evangelist: but I would not insist on this as the *only* reason for his making it.

5.] Here there is considerable difficulty, on account of the variation from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who relate that. the disciples came to the Lord after He had been teaching and healing the multitudes, and when it was now evening,—and asked Him to dismiss the multitudes, that they might buy food;—whereupon He commanded, ‘Give ye them to eat;’—whereas here apparently, on their first coming, the Lord Himself suggests the question, how they were to be fed, to Philip. This difference is not to be passed over, as it has usually been by English Commentators, without notice. Still less are we to invent improbable

and hardly honest harmonistic shifts to piece the two narratives together. There can be no doubt, fairly and honestly speaking, that the narratives, *in their mere letter*, disagree. But those who are not slaves to the mere letter will see here that inner and deeper accordance of which Augustine speaks in commenting on this passage sage: "From which general variety in the verbal narrative amidst agreement in the facts and sense, it is evident enough that we are wholesomely instructed that nothing is to be looked for in the words of Scripture but the general purport of those who spoke: to display which purpose should be the watchful care of all truthful narrators, whether relating concerning man, or angel, or God Himself." I repeat the remark so often made in this Commentary,—that if we were in possession of the facts as they happened, there is no doubt that the various forms of the literal narrations would fall into their places, and the truthfulness of each historian would be apparent:—but as we cannot at present reconcile them in this way, the humble and believing Christian will not be tempted to handle the word of God deceitfully, but to admire the gracious condescension which has given us the evidence of so many independent witnesses, whose very difference in detail makes their accordance in the great central truths so much the more weighty. *On every point of importance here, the four sacred historians are entirely and absolutely agreed.* That every minor detail related by them had its ground in historical fact, we fully believe; it is the *tracking it to* this ground in each case, which is now *beyond our power*; and here comes in the simplicity and reliance of faith: and the justification of those who believe and receive each Gospel as they find it written.

unto Philip] Why to *Philip*, does not appear; perhaps some reason lay in the words "*this He said to prove him,*" which is now lost to us. From his words in ch. xiv. 8, we cannot infer, as has been done by Cyril of Alexandria and others, that he was weaker in faith, or tardier in spiritual apprehension, than the rest. Of all the Apostles who appear in the sacred narrative, something might be quoted, shewing equal unreadiness to believe and understand. I would take the circumstance as simple matter of fact, implying perhaps that Philip was nearest to our Lord at the moment. We must not fall into the mistake of supposing that Philip being *of Bethsaida the city of Andrew and Peter* (ch. i. 45) throws any light on the question: for the Bethsaida near which our Lord now was, Luke ix. 10, was *another place*: see notes there.

Whence—‘from what store?’ Hence Philip’s answer.

6.] he knew:—by this St. John must be understood not only to rescue our Lord from the imputation of asking counsel of Philip, but to refer the miraculous act, on His part, to His purpose of exhibiting Himself as the Son of Man the Life of the World in the flesh.

7.] See notes on Mark.

8.] Meyer remarks, that the words **one of His disciples** may seem strange, seeing that Philip also was this: but that it has its value in the narrative, seeing that, Philip, having been asked in vain, one from among the circle of the disciples answers, and is afterwards specified as having been Andrew.

In the three other Gospels, the loaves and fishes appear as the disciples’ own;—and we have thus a very simple but very instructive instance of the way in which differences in detail arose. They were their own,—but not till they had bought them.

9.] barley loaves—this was the usual barley bread which formed the food of the lower orders.

10.] much grass, in accordance with the time of year, the latter end of spring, after the rainy season.

the men] Before, when our Lord commanded, as in A.V., “*make the men sit down,*” it was the general word, signifying both men and women indiscriminately. And I have therefore substituted in the margin, **people**. But now it is the word signifying *men*, as distinguished from women and children. And this is a particular touch of accuracy in the account of an eye-witness, which has not I think been noticed. Why in the other accounts should mention be made only of the *men* in numbering them? St. Matthew has, it is true, “*beside women and children,*” leaving it to be inferred that there was some means of distinguishing;—the others merely give “[about] five thousand men” without any explanation. But here we see how it came to be so—the *men alone* were arranged in companies, or alone arranged so that *any account* was taken of them: the women and children being served. promiscuously; who indeed, if the multitude were a paschal caravan (?), or parts of many such, would not be likely to be very numerous;—and here again we have a point of minute truthfulness brought out.

11.] On the process of the miracle, see notes on Matthew. St. John describes the distribution as being the act of the Lord Himself, and leaves the intervention of the disciples to be understood.

The *giving thanks* here answers to *blessing* in the other Gospels. It was the ‘*grace*’ of the father of the family; perhaps the ordinary one in use among the Jews. St. John seems to connect with it the idea brought out by St. Luke, “*He blessed them,*” i.e. *the loaves*: see ver. 23.

12.] Peculiar to John, The command, one intent of which was certainly to convince the disciples of the power which had

wrought the miracle, is given by our Lord a moral bearing also. They collected the fragments *for their own use*, each in his basket (*cophinus*), the ordinary furniture of the travelling Jew, to carry his food, lest he should be polluted by that of the people through whose territory he passed; see note on Matt. xv. 32. Observe, that here the 12 baskets are filled with the fragments of the *bread alone*: but in Mark, with those of the fishes also.

We must not altogether miss the reference to the 12 tribes of Israel, typifying the church which was to be fed with the bread of life to the end of time.

14.] On the prophet see note on ch. i. 21,— “*Art thou the prophet?*”

15.] After such a recognition, nothing was wanting but that the multitudes who were journeying to the Passover should take Jesus with them, and proclaim Him king of the Jews in the holy City itself.

The other three Evangelists, while they do not give any intimation of this reason of our Lord’s withdrawal, relate the *fact*, and St. Luke preserves in the very next verse *a trace of its motive*,—by the question ‘*Whom do the people say that I am?*’ and the answer, expressing the very confession of the people here.

16–21.] Jesus walks on the sea. Matt. xiv. 22–383. Mark vi. 45–52. Omitted by St. Luke. An important and interesting question arises, Why is this miracle here inserted by St. John? That he ever inserts for the mere purpose of narration, I cannot believe. The reason seems to me to be this: to give to the Twelve, in the prospect of so apparently strange a discourse respecting His Body, a view of the truth respecting that Body, that it, and the things said of it were not to be understood in a gross corporeal, but in a supernatural and spiritual sense. And their very terror, and reassurance, tended to impress that confidence in Him which kept them firm, when many left Him, ver. 66.

16.] even, here, will be during the time between the “*evening*” of Matt. xiv. 15, and that of the same, ver. 23. The Jews commonly reckoned two evenings: see the note on Matt. xxvi. 17, p. 182, bottom of col. 1.

went down] By the command of Jesus (Matthew, Mark).

17.] were going—denoting the unfinished action—**they were making for the other side of the sea, in the direction of Capernaum; “unto Bethsaida,”** Mark, which would be the same thing. It would appear as if the disciples were lingering along shore with the expectation of taking in Jesus: but night had fallen, and He had not come to them, and the sea began to be stormy (ver. 18). *Having therefore set out* (ver. 19), *and rowed, &c.* The word **So**, with which ver. 19 begins, seems to me to render this supposition necessary,—to bind their having rowed twenty-five or thirty stadia, with the fact that the Lord had not come, and it was dark, and the sea swelling into a storm. The lake is forty furlongs wide: so that, as we can hardly assume the passage to have been to a point *directly opposite*, they were somewhere about “*in the midst of the sea*,” Matthew, ver. 24.

18. was rising] was becoming thoroughly agitated.

19. walking on the sea] There surely can be no question in the mind of an unprejudiced reader, that it is John’s intention to relate a *miracle*;—nor again,—that there could be in the minds of the disciples *no doubt about* that miracle,—*no chance of a mistake* as to what they saw. I have treated of **on the sea** on Matthew, ver. 25.

They were afraid:—but upon being reassured by His voice, they were willing to take Him into the ship; and upon their doing so, the ship in a comparatively short time (or perhaps *immediately by miracle*, but I prefer the other) was at the land to which they had been going, viz. by the storm ceasing, and the ship making smooth way (“*the wind ceased*,” Matthew, Mark).

It seems to me that the above interpretation of “*they were willing therefore to receive Him*” is absolutely necessary to account for the **therefore**.

22–59.] The multitudes follow Jesus to Capernaum, where, in the synagogue, He discourses to them on Himself as the Bread of Life.

22–24.] These verses are involved and parenthetical in construction, but very characteristic of the minute care with which the Evangelist will account for every circumstance which is essential to his purpose in the narrative.

the multitude] We are not to understand *the whole multitude who were fed*,—but that portion of them which had remained on the coast over the night. Many had probably dispersed to the villages about, or perhaps taken up their night quarters more inland.

on the other side of the sea] i.e. on the east coast. We are supposed to be at Capernaum.

The **other boats** had perhaps brought some of them thither: or *the spot nigh unto the place where they ate the bread, &c.*, might have been some landing-place of merchandise.

25.] on the other side of the sea is *now the west bank*;—we have been crossing the sea with the multitude.

when? as Stier remarks, includes “*how?*” in its meaning. Our Lord leaves the question unanswered, because it was not for *a sign to these people* that He had miraculously crossed the lake.

26.] The seeking Him, on the part of these people,—to Him, who saw the hearts,—was merely a low desire to profit by His wonderful works,—not a reasonable consequence of deduction from His miracles that He was the Saviour of the world. And from this low desire of mere satisfaction of their carnal appetite, He takes occasion in the following discourse to raise them to spiritual desire after HIMSELF THE BREAD OF LIFE. The discourse forms a parallel with that in ch. iv. 27.

Work not for] The A.V., ‘*Labour not for*,’ does not give the sense. They had not laboured in this case for the *meat that perisheth*, but it had been furnished miraculously. A better rendering would be, **Busy not yourselves about,—Do not weary yourselves for**,—which they were doing, by thus coming after our Lord: but best of all, **Work not for**, because in the original the root of the word is the same in verses 27, 29, 30.

“*The meat whose nourishing power passes away,*” De Wette. Better literally, **which perisheth**, as in text:—the *useless* part of it, in being cast out;—the *useful*, in becoming part of the body which perishes (see 1 Cor. vi. 13).

but for that meat] It is important to bear in mind that the “*working for*” spoken of above, which also applies to this, was not a ‘*labouring for*,’ or ‘*bringing about of*’ but a following Christ in order to obtain. So the meaning will be, **but seek to obtain**, by following after Me....

which endureth unto everlasting life] See ch. iv. 14, If this “*meat*” remains to eternal life, it must be *spiritual food*.

which the Son of man shall give unto you] See eh. iv. ib.

which agrees with “*meat*,” not with “*life*.”

shall give, future, because the great Sacrifice was not yet offered: so in ch. iv.

the Son of man, emphatic here, and belonging to this discourse, since it is of His *Flesh* that He is about to speak.

for Him the Father sealed, even God] This rendering is made necessary by the grammatical form of the original.

sealed, by *undoubted testimony*, as at His baptism; and since, *by His miracles*, see ch. x. 36: not, ‘*stamped with the image of His Person*,’ which is altogether beside the present subject, and inconsistent with the meaning of the verb.

28.] The people understand His **working literally**, and dwell upon it. They quite seem to think that the food which is to endure for ever is to be spiritually interpreted; and they therefore ask this question,—referring the “*working*” to the works of the law.

the works of God must not be taken to mean ‘*the works which God works*,’ but, as in Jer. xlvi. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 58, **the works well pleasing to God**.

29.] The meaning is not,—that faith is *wrought in us* by God, is *the work of God*; but that the truest way of working the work of God is to believe on Him whom He hath sent.

work, not *works*, because there is but this one, properly speaking, and all the rest are wrapt up in it (see James i. 25).

This is a most important saying of our Lord, as containing the germ of that teaching afterwards so fully expanded in the writings of St. Paul. “I know not,” says Schleiermacher, “where we can find any passage, even in the writings of the Apostles, which says so clearly and significantly, that all eternal life in men proceeds from nothing else than faith in Christ.”

30, 31.] This answers to ch. iv. 12, “*Art thou greater than our father Jacob*,” &c. Ibis spoken in disbelief and opposition; not, as many have supposed, as a request for the Bread of Life, meaning *it* by the sign, but in the ordinary sign-seeking spirit of the Jews. Stier says well, “They have been hesitating between better and worse thoughts, till at last disbelief prevails.” The **sign** here demanded is the *sign from heaven*, the proof of the sealing by God; such a proof would be, in their estimation, compared

with His present miracles, as the manna (*bread from heaven*) was, compared to the multiplied loaves and fishes.

The manna was extolled by the Jews, as the greatest miracle of Moses. Josephus calls it “*a divine and wondrous food:*” see also Wisd. xvi. 20, 21. “They forgot that their fathers disbelieved Moses almost from the time when they began to eat the manna; and that the Psalm from which they quote most strongly sets forth this;—that they despised the manna, and preferred ordinary meat to it.” Stier.

Observe our **Lord’s believe on him** in ver. 29, and their **believe thee**. The former, the casting their whole hopes and faith on Him, is what He requires: but they will not even give the latter, common credence, to Him.

Their **what dost thou work?** Meyer remarks, is a retort of our Lord’s question, ver. 27. The stress, in these words, should be not on the **thou**, which is not expressed in the original, but on the **what**.

32.] Our Lord lays open the course of their argument. They have not *mentioned* Moses,—nor was the giving of the manna a miracle performed by Moses;—but He knew that the comparison between Moses and Himself was in their minds, and answers by exposing the error which represented Moses as the giver of the manna. Neither again was that the true bread from heaven. It was, in one sense, bread from heaven;—but not in *this* sense. It was a type and shadow of the true bread from heaven, **which my Father is giving** (or perhaps the abstract present,—signifying that it is His office to give it) **to you**. Our Lord does not here *deny*, but *asserts* the miraculous character of the manna.

33.] **the bread of God** answers to “*the bread which my Father giveth.*” The words **that which cometh down from heaven....** are the predicate of **the bread**, and do *not apply, in the construction of this verse, to Christ personally*, however truly they apply to Him in fact. The A.V. is here wrong: it should be, **The bread of God is that** (not *He*) **which cometh, &c.** *Not till ver. 35 does Jesus first say, ‘I AM the bread of life.’* The *manna* is still kept in view, which ‘when the dew fell on the camp....fell (the Greek word in the LXX is the same as here, **came down**) upon it,’ Num. xi. 9. And the present tense, here used in reference to the manna, is dropped when the Lord Himself is spoken of: see vv. 38, 41, 58, and especially the distinction between ver. 50 and ver. 51.

34.] ch. iv. 15 is exactly parallel. The Jews understand this bread, as the Samaritan woman understood the water, to be some miraculous kind of sustenance which would bestow life everlasting:—perhaps they thought of the heavenly manna, which the Rabbis speak of as prepared for the just in the future world;—see Rev. ii. 17.

evermore] emphatic:—not now only, but always.

35.] As in ch. v. 30, so here, our Lord passes from the indirect to the direct form of speech. Henceforward it is ‘I,’ ‘Me,’ throughout the discourse.

In the genitive **of life**, is implied, “*which came down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.*” So *living water* in ch. iv.

On the assurance of *never hungering or thirsting*, see note at ch. iv. 14. It is possible that our Lord placed the all-satisfying bread of life in contrast to the manna, which was *no sooner given*, Exod. xvi., *than the people began to thirst*, Exod. xvii.;—but I would not lay any stress on this.

he that cometh to me is in the same sense as in ch. v. 40—that of acceptance of and faith in Him.

36. I said unto you “When did He say this to them? perhaps it was said, but has not been recorded.” Euthymius. But perhaps the reference may be to ch. v. 37–44, and **unto you** may be said generally. Stier and others think that ver. 26 is referred to: but this is far-fetched.

We have instances of reference to sayings not recorded, in ch. x. 26; xii. 34.

have even seen] ‘Ye have seen the true Bread from heaven, the *sign* greater than the manna, *even Me Myself*: and yet have not believed.’

37.] The whole body of believers on Christ are spoken of by Him, here and in ch. xvii, *as given to Him by the Father*. But Bengel’s observation is very important: **‘all that which’**—a most significant expression, and, compared with what follows, most worthy of consideration. For in our Lord’s discourses, that, which the Father hath given Him, is spoken of in the singular number and neuter gender, “*all that which*,” whereas they who come to Him, the Son, are spoken of in the masculine gender, and sometimes also in the plural number: “*every man*,” or “*all they*.” The Father hath given to the Son as it were one mass, that all whom He hath given should be *one*: that whole mass the Son unfoldeth one by one in this following out of the Father’s design. Hence also that which we read in ch. xvii. 2, “*that all that which Thou hast given Him* (so literally), *to them He may*

give eternal life.” See also 1 John v. 4.

I will in no wise cast out does not refer here to the office of the Son of God *as Judge*; but is another way of expressing the grace, and readiness with which He will receive all who come to Him.

38, 39, 40.] His reception of men is not capricious, nor even of His own arbitrary choice; but as He came into the world to do the Father's will, and that will is that all who come to Him by faith shall have life, so He receives *all such*;—loses none of them;—and will raise them all up (here, in the *fullest and blessed sense*) at the last day. Olshausen remarks, that ‘in ch. iv. we had only the inexhaustible refreshing of the *soul* by the water of life; but this discourse goes further;—that not even death itself shall destroy the *body* of him who has been nourished by this bread of life.’

raise it up again refers to the only resurrection which is the completion of the man in his glorified state;—it does not set aside the “*resurrection of judgment*” (ch. v. 29), but that very term is a debasement of “*resurrection?*” its true sense is only “*resurrection of life.*”

Bengel has beautifully given the connexion of this last promise with what went before: “this is the end, beyond which there is no danger.” But there is much more than this in it. In this declaration (vv. 39, 40) is contained the key of the following discourse, vv. 44–59. The *end* of the work of God, as regards man, is the glorification of his restored and sanctified nature, —*body, soul, and spirit*,—in eternity. Without this,—salvation, restitution, would be incomplete. The adoption cannot be consummated without the redemption of the body. Rom. viii. 18–23. And the glorification of the body, soul, and spirit,—of the whole man,—cannot take place but by means of the *glorified Body of the second Adam*. ‘He who does not see this, will never understand either the Holy Communion, or this testimony of the Lord in its inner meaning.’ Stier.

The looketh on here is a different thing from the mere *seeing* of ver. 36. It is the awakening of the attention preparatory to faith, answering to the looking on the serpent of brass: *with the eyes of the soul*, as Euthymius says; but we must not make the *looking* equivalent to *believing*, to which it is only preparatory.

41.] Not different hearers, nor does the scene of the discourse here change: they were the same,—perhaps the principal among them, the official superintendents of the synagogue:—for St. John generally uses “*the Jews*” in this official sense,

42.] They rightly supposed that this **having come down from heaven** must imply some method of coming into the world diverse from ordinary generation. Meyer gathers from the word **we know**, that our Lord's reputed father was then still alive. But surely the verb will bear the sense of knowing, as matter of fact, *who they were*, and need not be confined to personal knowledge.

43.] Our Lord does not answer their objection, because it lay far from His present purpose to disclose aught of those mysteries which the answer must have indicated. It was not till the faith of the apostolic Christians was fully fixed on Him as the Son of God, and the outline of the doctrine of His Person was firmly sketched out, that the Spirit brought out those historical records which assure us of His supernatural conception.

44.] The connexion seems to be this: They were not to murmur among themselves because He had said this; for the right understanding of what He had said is only to be gained by being taught of God, by being drawn by the Father, who alone can give the desire to come to Christ, and bring a man to Him. That this ‘drawing’ is not *irresistible grace*, is confessed even by Augustine himself, the great upholder of the doctrines of grace. “If a man is drawn, says an objector, he comes against his will. (We answer) if he comes unwillingly, he does not believe: if he does not believe, he does not come. For we do not run to Christ on our feet, but by faith; not with the movement of the body, but with the free will of the heart... Think not that thou art drawn against thy will: the mind can be drawn by love.” Calvin and others understand *irresistible grace* to be here meant: “It is false and profane,” says Calvin, ‘to say that only the willing are drawn.’” The Greek expositors take the view which I have adopted above. Chrysostom says, “This expression does not remove our part in the coming, but rather shews that we want help to come.” See Article X. of the Church of England, at the end.

This *drawing towards Christ* may be exemplified in the legal dispensation, which was to the Jews a *schooling for Christ*. It now is being exerted on all the world,—in accordance with the Lord's prophecy ch. xii. 32 (see note there), and His command Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,—by Christian preaching and missions; but, after all, the *individual will* must be turned to Christ by the Father, Whose covenanted promise is, that He will so turn it in answer to prayer. “Art thou not yet drawn? pray that thou mayest be drawn.” Augustine. The same solemn and joyous *restrain*, as Meyer well calls it, follows, as in vv. 39, 40.

45.] in the prophets may be a general form of citation (Mark i. 2. Acts vii. 42; xiii. 40), or may mean that the sense is found in several places of the prophets: see especially Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. This clearly intimates the *kind of drawing* meant in the last verse:—the opening the eyes of the mind by divine teaching.

hath heard and **hath learned** are expansions of the word **taught** in the citation from the prophets.

cometh unto me] This is the final decision of the human will, acted on by the divine attraction to Christ. *The beginning* is, The Father draws him: *the progress*, he hears and Jearns—here is the consenting will—‘Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth:’—*the end*, he cometh to Christ—here is the will acting on the whole man.

46.] The connexion is: the mention of **hearing from the Father** might lead them to think of a personal communication from the Father to each man, and thus the necessity of the mission of the Son might be invalidated. This was the only way in which a Jew could misunderstand ver. 45; he could not dream of a seeing of the Father with bodily eyes.

he which is of God, is Jesus Himself; see ch. vii. 29. His knowledge of the Father is *complete* and immediate; ours, *partial*, and derived through Him only.

47.] Our Lord now recurs to the subject of their murmurs, and gives the answer for which He has been preparing the way, repeating nearly ver. 40 and adding,

48.] If so, (see ver. 47,) there is full reason for my naming Myself the Bread of Life.

49.] *That bread from heaven had no power to keep off death, and that, death owing to unbelief:*—our Lord by thus mentioning **your fathers** and their death, certainly hints at the *similar unbelief* of these Jews. And the same dubious sense of “dying” prevails in ver. 50. Death is regarded as being swallowed up in the glory of the resurrection, and the second death—which was hidden in the former term **died**—has over him who eats this Bread of Life, *no power*: nay, he is brought, even *here* into a resurrection state from sin and death; see Rom. vi. 1 ff. and Col. iii. 1 ff.

51.] the living bread; ‘containing life in itself,’ not merely supplying the waste of life with lifeless matter: see on ch. iv. 13, 14.

yea, and the bread that I will give] From this time we hear no more of bread: this figure is dropped, and the reality takes its place.

Some difficult questions arise regarding the sense and reference of this saying of our Lord. (1) Does it refer to HIS DEATH? and, (2) is there any reference to the ORDINANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER?

(1) In treating this question I must at once reject all metaphorical and side-interpretations, as, that the *teaching* of Christ is the Bread, and to be *taught by Him* is feeding upon it (so Grotius, and the modern rationalists): that the *divine Nature of Christ*, or His *sending of the Holy Spirit*, or His *whole life of doing good on earth*, can be meant: all such have against them the plain sense of the words, which, as Stier observes, are *very simple ordinary words*; the only difficulty arising, when we come to enquire into their application to His own Person. The Bread of Life is *Himself*: and, strictly treated, when we come to enquire *what*, of that body, soul, and spirit, which constituted Himself, this Bread specifically is, we have His answer that it is *His Flesh*, which He will give (for this will be the meaning, whether the words “*which I will give*” are to be regarded as part of the text or not) on behalf of the life of the world. We are then specifically directed to *His Flesh* as the answer.

Then, *what does that Flesh import?* The flesh of animals is the ordinary food of men: but *not the blood*. The blood, which is the life, is spilt at death, and is not in the flesh when eaten by us. Now this distinction must be carefully borne in mind. The *flesh* here, (see ver. 53,) and the *eating of the flesh, are distinct from the blood*, and the *drinking of the blood*. We have no generalities merely, to interpret as we please: but the terms used are *precise and technical*. It is then *only through or after the Death of the Lord*, that by any propriety of language, His Flesh could be said to be eaten.

Then another distinction must be remembered: The flesh of animals which we eat is *dead flesh*. It is already the prey of corruption; we eat it, and die (ver. 49). But *this Bread*, is *living Bread*; not dead flesh, but living Flesh. And therefore *manducation by the teeth materially is not to be thought of* here; but some kind of eating by which the *living Flesh of the Son of God* is made the *living sustenance* of those who partake of it. Now His Flesh and Blood were *sundered* by Death. Death was the shedding of His precious Blood, which (most probably) *He did not afterwards resume*: see ch. xx. 27, and Luke xxiv. 39. His Flesh is the glorified substance of His Resurrection-Body, now at the right hand of God. It is then in His *Resurrection form only* that His Flesh can be eaten, and be living food for the living man. I cannot therefore see how *any thing short of His Death* can be here meant. By that Death, He has given His Flesh for the *life of the world*: not merely that *they who believe on Him* may, in the highest sense, have life; but that **the world** may have life. *The very existence of all the created world* is owing to, and held together by, that Resurrection-Body of the Lord. In Him *all things* are gathered together and reconciled to God: “*by Him all things consist*,” i.e. “*hold together*,” Col..

(2) The question whether there is here any reference to the ORDINANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER, has been *inaccurately*

put. When cleared of inaccuracy in terms, it will mean, *Is the subject here dwelt upon, the same as that which is set forth in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper?* And of this there can surely be no doubt. To the *ordinance itself*, there is here *no reference*; nor *could* there well have been any. But the spiritual verity which underlies the ordinance is one and the same with that here insisted on; and so considered, the discourse is, as generally treated, most important towards a right understanding of the ordinance.

52.] The inference conveyed in the word **eat**, which word, be it noted, *first comes from the Jews themselves*, is yet a right one. If He is the Bread, and that Bread is His Flesh, we must *eat His Flesh*, though not in the sense here meant by them. They contended against one another, probably some having more insight into the possibility of a spiritual meaning than others.

53.] Our Lord not only ratifies their own word, **eat**, but adds to it a more wonderful thing; that they must also do that against which a prohibition might seem to have existed from Noah downwards,—*drink His Blood*. But observe, this Blood is not to be *eaten* in the Flesh, *which was the forbidden thing* (Gen. ix. 4: Levit. xvii. 10–16), in its strict literal form: but to be *drunk*, separate from the flesh: again *pres posing death*. Now as the Flesh of Ch (see above) is the Resurrection-Body which: He now has, and in which all things consist; so is His Blood (“the blood is the *life*,” Lev. xvii. 11, 14) the Life which He gave up, paid down, as the penalty for the sin of the world. By the shedding, pouring forth, of that Blood, is remission of sin.

It is quite impossible that these words should, as De Wette maintains, be merely an expansion of “*eating His flesh*.” Even had the idea of *drinking blood* been one familiar to the Jews, the construction would not have allowed such an interpretation;—but *new as it was, and abhorrent from their habits and law*, we must regard it as specially and purposely added.

But what is this eating and drinking? Clearly, not *merely faith*: for faith answers to the *hand reached forth for the food, but is not the act of eating*. Faith is a *necessary condition* of the act: so that we can hardly say with Augustine, “*believe, and thou hast eaten*,” but “*believe, and thou shalt eat*.” Inasmuch as Faith will necessarily in its energizing lead to this partaking, we sometimes incorrectly say that it is Faith: but for strict accuracy this is not enough. ‘To eat the flesh of Christ, is to realize, in our inward life, the mystery of His Body now in heaven,—to digest and assimilate our own portion in that Body.

To drink His Blood, is to realize, in our inward life, the mystery of His satisfaction for sin,—to digest and assimilate our own portion in that satisfaction, the outpouring of that Blood. And both these definitions may be gathered into one, which is: The eating of His Flesh and drinking of His Blood import the making to ourselves and using as *objectively real*, those two great Truths of our Redemption in Him, of which our Faith *subjectively* convinces us.

And of this realizing of Faith he has been pleased to appoint certain symbols in the Holy Communion, which He has commanded to be received; to signify to us the spiritual process, and to assist us towards it.

ye have no life in you] Ye have not in you that spring of life, which shall overcome death, and lead **54.]** to the resurrection in the true sense:’ see above, ver. 44, and notice again the solemn *refrain*.

55.] The sense is not here, ‘*My Flesh is the true meat&c.*,’ but **My Flesh is true meat**, i.e. *really TO BE EATEN*, which they doubted. The adverb, “*meat indeed*,” or “*drink indeed*,” as in A.V., falls short of the depth of the adjective. This verse is decisive against all explaining away or metaphorizing the passage. Food and drink, are not here mere metaphors;—rather are our common material food and drink mere shadows and imperfect types of this only real reception of refreshment and nourishment into the being.

56.] He who thus lives upon Me, abides in Me (see ch. xv. 5 and note);—**and I** (that living power and nourishment conveyed by the *bread of life*, which is the Lord Himself) **abide in him**.

57.] The same expanded further—see ch. v. 26. The two branches of the feeding on Christ are now united under the general expression, *eateth ME*.

because of expresses the *efficient cause*. ‘The Father is the Fountain of all Life: the Son lives in and by the Father: and all created being generally, lives (*in the lower sense*) in and by Him; but he that eateth Him, shall (*eternally and in the highest sense*) live by Him.

58.] forms the solemn conclusion of the discourse, referring back to the Bread with which it began and to its difference from the perishable food which they had extolled:—and setting forth the infinite superiority of its effects over those of that sustenance.

which came down,—past, *now*: because He has clearly identified it with *Himself*.

60–65.] *Murmuring of some of the disciples at the foregoing discourse, and the answer of Jesus to them.*

60.] It has been shewn by Lampe, that the word rendered **hard** signifies not so much *absurdity as impiety*. It seems clear that it was not the *difficulty*, so much as the *strangeness* of the saying, which scandalized them. It is the whole discourse,—the turn given to it,—the doctrine of the Bread of Life,—the giving His Flesh and Blood to eat,—at which they take offence.

who can hear it? i.e. **who can listen to it?**—‘Who can stay and hear such sayings as this?’ not, *Who can understand it?*

61.] in himself, by His divine knowledge.

62.] What then if ye see... not meaning ‘*will ye not then be much more scandalized*’ or, ‘*what will ye say (or do), then?*’—but appealing to an event which they should witness, as a *certain proof of one part of the “hard saying,”* with which indeed *the rest of it was bound up*,—His having *descended from heaven*. All attempts to explain this otherwise than of His ascent into heaven, are simply *dishonest*,—and spring from laxity of belief in the historical reality of that event. That it is not recorded by John, is of no moment here. And that none but the Twelve saw it, is unimportant; for how do we know that our Lord was not here speaking to some among the Twelve? To explain it of His *death*, as part of His going up where he was before, is hardly less disingenuous.

63.] spirit and flesh do not mean the *spiritual* and *carnal sense of the foregoing discourse*, as many Commentators explain them: for our Lord is speaking, not of *teaching* merely, but of *vivifying*: He is explaining the *life-giving principle* of which He had been before speaking. ‘Such eating of My flesh as you imagine and find hard to listen to, could profit you nothing,—for it will have ascended up, &c.; and besides, generally, it is only the *Spirit* that can vivify the spirit of man; the *flesh* (in whatever way used) can profit nothing towards this.’ He does not say ‘*My Flesh profiteth nothing*,’ but ‘*the flesh*.’ To make Him say this, as the Swiss anti-sacramentalists do, is to make Him contradict His own words in ver. 51.

the words that I have spoken] *viz. the words my flesh and my blood, above.* They are *spirit* and *life*:—spirit, not flesh only:—*living food*, not *carnal* and *perishable*. This meaning has been missed by almost all Commentators: Stier upholds it, and it seems to me *beyond question the right one*. The common interpretation is, ‘*the words which I have spoken*,’ i.e. ‘*My discourses*,’ are ‘*to be taken in a spiritual sense, ‘and are life’* But this is any thing but precise, even after the forcing of the meaning of the word “spirit.”

64.] ‘This accounts for your murmuring at what I said, that *ye do not believe.*’

For Jesus knew...] De Wette remarks, that the *foreknowledge* of our Lord with regard to Judas renders it impossible to apply the ordinary rules of moral treatment, as ‘Why did He then continue him as an Apostle? Why did He give him the charge of the purse, knowing him to be a thief?&c.’—to the ease: and it is therefore better not to judge at all on the matter.

The fact is, we come here to a form of the problem of *divine foreknowledge* and *human free-will*, which, in any of its endless combinations of expression, it is equally impossible for us to solve.

from the beginning, from their first coming to Him;—the first beginning of their connexion with Him.

65.] These unbelievers had not that *drawing to Christ*, which leads (ver. 44) to true coming to Him. Observe the parallelism between *it were given him here*, and *all that which the Father giveth me*, ver. 37. Both these gifts are in the Father’s power.

66–71.] Many of the disciples leave Him. The confession of the Twelve through Peter: and the Lord’s warning to them.

66. Upon this] The *temporal* meaning prevails, but does not exclude the *causal*. It was *upon this being said*, and it was also *because this had been said*.

many, *viz. of those that believed not*: but not all.

67.] The first mention of *the Twelve* by John. The question is asked in order to extract from them the confession which follows, and thus to bind them closer to Himself. We must not forget likewise, in the mystery of our Lord’s human nature, that at such a moment of desertion, He would seek comfort in the faith and attachment of His chosen ones.

68.] Peter answers quickly and earnestly for the rest, as in Matt. xvi. 16.

to whom shall we go?] What they had heard and seen had awakened in them the desire of being led on by some teacher towards eternal life; and to whom else should they go from Him who *had*, and brought out of His stores for their instruction, *the words* (see ver. 63) of eternal life?

69.] **we have believed** seems to be used absolutely, as in ver. 64: **we believe [in Thee], and have long done so.**

In the following words the readings vary; the common text having been to all appearance introduced from Matt. xvi. 16. The circumstance of the Lord not being elsewhere called the **Holy One of God** by John, is of course *in favour* of the reading: on the principle that an unusual expression was generally by the transcribers altered to a more usual one, not vice versa. ‘The idea however is found (ch. x. 36). I regard the coincidence with the testimony of the demoniacs, Mark i. 24 and parallel places, as a remarkable one. *Their* words appear to have been the first plain declaration of the fact, and so to have laid hold on the attention of the Apostles.

70.] The selection of the Twelve by Jesus is the consequence of the giving of them to Him by the Father, ch. xvii. 6,—in which there also Judas is included. So that *His selecting, and the Father's giving and drawing, do not exclude final falling away.*

a devil] It is doubtful in what sense this word should be taken, However we explain it, it will be an expression only once used in the N.T. In the dark act here prophesied, Judas was under the immediate instigation of and yielded himself up to Satan (compare our Lord’s reply to Peter, Matt. xvi. 23); and I would understand this expression as having reference to that league with and entertainment of the Evil One in his thoughts and purposes, which his ultimate possession by Satan implies. This meaning can perhaps hardly be rendered by any single word in another language. The A.V. ‘*a devil*,’ is certainly too strong; **devilish** would be better, but not unobjectionable. Compare “*The son of perdition*,” ch. xvii. 12.

71.] On the name Iscariot (here applied to Simon, Judas’s father), see on Matt. x. 4.

John: Chapter 7

CHAP. VII.—X.] JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. *The conflict at its height.*

VII. 1—52.] JESUS MEETS THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS AT JERUSALEM. *The circumstances* [verses 1—13].

1.] The chronology of this period is very doubtful. I have remarked on it in my note on Luke ix. 51. Thus much we may observe here, that **after these things** cannot apply emphatically to ch. vi., but must be referred back to ch. v., as indeed must the Jews seeking to kill Him, and the miracle alluded to in ver. 28. But it will not follow from this, that ch. vi. is not in its right place: it contains an independent memoir of a miracle and discourse of our Lord in Galilee which actually happened in the interval, and only serves to shew us the character of this Gospel as made up of such memoirs, more or less connected with one another, and selected by the Evangelist for their higher spiritual import, and the discourses arising from them. I would understand this verse as merely carrying on the time from ch. v. and ch. vi.,—and its contents as introductory to the account of Jesus not going up at first to the feast. Ch. vi. is in some measure presupposed in our ver. 3, as indicating that He had not constantly observed the festal journeys of late.

2.] See Deut. xvi. 13—17. Josephus calls this *the holiest and greatest feast*. It began on the 15th (evening of 14th) of Tisri (Sept. 28), and lasted till the evening of the 22nd (Oct. 6).

3—5.] Respecting the BRETHREN OF THE LORD, see note on Matt. xiii. 55. They seem to have had at this time a *kind of belief* in the Messianic character of Jesus, but of the very lowest sort, not excluding the harsh and scoffing spirit visible in these words. They recognized his miracles, but despised his apparent want of prudence and consistency of purpose, in not shewing himself to the world. In the words **that thy disciples also may see**, &c., there is perhaps a reference to the desertion of many of his disciples just before. Nay, more than this: the indication furnished by this verse of the practice of our Lord with regard to His miracles up to this point is very curious. He appears as yet to have made His circuits in Galilee, and to have wrought miracles there, in the presence of but a small circle of disciples properly so called; and there would seem to have been a larger number of disciples, in the wider sense, in Judæa, or to be gathered in Juda by the feast, who yet wanted assuring, by open display, of the reality of His wonderful works.

In ver. 5 (as well as by “*thy disciples*,” ver. 8), we have these brethren *absolutely excluded from the number of the Twelve* (see ch. vi. 69); and it is impossible to modify the meaning of the word “*believe*,” so as to suppose that they may have been of the Twelve, but not believers in the highest sense. This ‘verse also excludes *all* His brethren: it is inconceivable that John should have so written, if *any among them* believed at that time.

The emphatic expression, **for even his brethren**, &c., is a strong corroboration of the view that they were really and literally *brethren*;—see also Ps. lix. 8.

6—9.] **My time** can hardly be taken as directly meaning ‘*the time of my sufferings and death*,’—but as the same expression in

ch. ii. 4: ‘My time for the matter of which you speak, viz. manifestation to the world’ That (ch. xii. 82), was to take place in a very different manner. But *they*, having no definite end before them, no glory of God to shew forth, but being of the world, always had their opportunity ready of mingling with and standing well with the world. Then (ver. 7), ‘*you* have no hatred of the world in *your* way: but its hatred to Me on account of my testimony against it, causes me to exercise this caution which you so blame.’

In ver. 8, it is of little import whether we read **not** or **not yet**: the sense will be the same, both on account of the present, **go not up** (not ‘will not go up,’ which would express the disavowal of *an intention* to go up), and of “*not yet*,” which occurs afterwards. **I go not up** would mean, **I am not** (at present) **going up**. Meyer attributes to our Lord change of purpose, and justifies his view by the example of His treatment of the Syrophenician woman, whom He at first repulsed, but afterwards had compassion on. Matt. xv. 26 ff. The same Commentator directs attention to the emphatic term, “**this feast**,” as implying that our Lord had it in His mind to go up to some future feasts, but not to *this one*.

is not yet full come: see Luke ix. 51 and note.

10.] not openly, i.e. not in the usual caravan-company, nor probably by the usual way. Whether the Twelve were with Him, we have no means of judging; probably so, for they appear ch. ix. 2; and after their becoming once attached to the Person of our Lord as Apostles, we find no trace of His having been for any long time separated from them, except during their mission Matt. x., which was long ago accomplished.

11.] These Jews are, as usual, the rulers, as distinguished from the multitudes. Their question itself (**that man**) shews a hostile spirit.

12.] the multitudes (the different groups of which *the multitude* was composed) would include the Galilean disciples, and those who had been baptized by the disciples in Judæa,—whose view the words “*He is a good man*” would represent,—as expressed mildly in protest against His enemies.

he deceiveth the multitude, possibly in reference to the feeding of and then the discourse to the multitude, which had given so much offence.

13. no man spake openly of him] This was true only of the side who said “*He is a good man*:” *they* dared not speak their mind: the others spoke plainly enough. Here again “*the Jews*” are distinguished from the *multitudes*.

14–39.] Jesus testifies to Himself in the Temple.

15–24.] His teaching is from the Father.

14, 15. when it was now the midst of the feast] Probably *on a sabbath*. It appears to have been the first time that He *taught* publicly at Jerusalem;—whence (**therefore**) the wonder of the Jews, i.e. the rulers of the hierarchy.

letters] Particularly, **scripture-learning**,—perhaps because this was *all the literature* of the Jews. Probably His teaching consisted in *exposition of the Scripture*.

having never learned: never having been the scholar of any Rabbi. He was *taught of God*. These words are spoken in the true bigotry and prejudice of so-called ‘learning.’

These words of His enemies, testifying to matter of fact well known to them, are, as Meyer observes, decisive against all attempts of unbelievers to attribute our Lord’s knowledge to education in any human school of learning. Such indications are not without their value in these times.

16.] The words may bear two meanings:—either, ‘*the sense of Scripture which I teach is not my own, but that in which it was originally penned as a revelation from God*;’ or, **My teaching** (generally) **is not mine, but that of Him who sent me**. The latter is preferable, as agreeing better with what follows, and because the former assumes that He was expounding Scripture, which, though probable, is not asserted.

17.] The rendering of this verse in the A.V. is much to be deplored. The word signifying **be willing to** should not have been slurred over, for it is important.

If any man’s will be, to do His will,&c. As it now stands in the A.V., *a wrong idea is conveyed*: that the *bare performance of God’s outward commands* will give a man sufficient acquaintance with Christian doctrine:—whereas what our Lord asserts to the Jews is, that if the *will* be set in His ways, if a man be really anxious to do the will of God, and thus to fulfil this first

great commandment of the law, the singleness of purpose, and subjection to the will of God, will lead him on to faith in the promised and then apparent Messiah, and to a just discrimination of the divine character of his teaching.

18.] This gives us the reason why he, who wishes to do God's will, will know of the teaching of Christ: viz. because both are seeking one aim—the glory of God:—and the humility of him, whose will it is to do God's will, can best appreciate that more perfect humility of the divine Son, who speaks not of himself, but of Him that sent him,—see ch. v. 41–44, of which this verse is a repetition with a somewhat different bearing. In its *general* sense, it asserts that self-exaltation and self-seeking necessarily accompany the unaided teaching of man, but that all true teaching is from God. But then we must remember that, simply taken, the latter part of the sentence is only true of the Holy One Himself; that owing to human infirmity, purity of motive is no sure guarantee for correctness of doctrine;—and therefore in this second part He does not say “*the glory of God*,” which would generalize it to all men, but **his glory that sent him**, which: confines it to Himself.

19.] There is a close connexion with the foregoing. Our Lord now takes the *offensive* against them. The *being willing to do His will* was to be the great key to a tyme appreciation of His teaching: but of this there was no example among *them*:—and therefore it was that they were no fair judges of the teaching, but bitter opponents and persecutors of Jesus, of whom, had they been anxious to fulfil the law, they would have been earnest and humble disciples (ch. v. 46). The law was to be read before all Israel every seventh year in the feast of tabernacles (Deut. xxxi. 10–13):—whether this was such a year is uncertain: but this verse may allude to the practice, even if it was not.

Why seek ye to kill me?] In their killing the Lord of Life was summed up all their transgression of God's law. It was the greatest proof of their total ignorance of and disobedience to it.

20.] The multitude, not the rulers, replied this. Indeed their question, “*Who seeketh to kill thee?*” shews their ignorance of the purpose of their rulers, which our Lord had just exposed and charged them with. It would not now be *their* policy to represent Him as possessed.

21.] The **one work** was the sabbath healing in ch. v.

22.] The argument seems to be, **Moses on this account gave you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;** i.e. it is no part of the law of *Moses*, properly so called,—but was adopted by Moses, and thereby becomes part of his law. **Now you circumcise on the Sabbath, to avoid breaking the law of Moses, &c.** If our Lord had said these last words (in ver. 23) *merely*, the argument would not have been strict: they might have answered, that circumcision was not only a command of the law, but anterior to it; whereas ver. 22 takes this answer from them; reminding them that though they regarded its sanction as derived from Moses, it was in fact older,—and tacitly approving their doing it on the Sabbath. Then the argument is, *If this may be done on the Sabbath* if an ordinance strictly *Mosaic* (which the Sabbath in its Jewish mode of observance was) may be set aside by another, *Mosaic* also, but more ancient, and borrowed from a more general and direct command of God (for, as Grotius observes, circumcision was older than the enactment of strict rest on the Sabbath by the law), *how much more may it by a deed of mercy*, a benevolent exercise of divine power, the approval of which is anterior to and deeper than all ceremonial enactment?

23.] that the law of Moses should not be broken, viz. that which (after the fathers) ordains circumcision on the eighth day.

a man every whit whole] The distinction is between circumcision, which purified only part of a man, by which he received ceremonial cleanness,—and that perfect and entire healing which the Lord bestowed on the cripple.

25–31.] HE HIMSELF IS FROM THE FATHER.

25, 26.] The inhabitants of Jerusalem know better than the *multitude* the mind of their rulers towards Jesus; and suspect some change in their purpose, on account of His being thus permitted to teach freely.

27.] Perhaps they refer to the idea (see quotation from Justin Martyr in note on ch. i. 31) that the Messiah would not be known until anointed by Elias, when He would suddenly come forth from obscurity.

They may allude to Isa. liii. 8.

The *place* of the Messiah's birth was known, ver. 42.

At all events we see here, that the Jews regarded their Messiah not as a mere man, but one to be supernaturally sent into the world.

28, 29.] cried,—in the same open undisguised manner referred to in the words “*speaketh boldly*” above; but it was, in the

course of His teaching.

Ye both know me....] It has been questioned whether these words are to be taken ironically, interrogatively, or affirmatively. I incline to the latter view, for this reason:—obviously no very high degree of knowledge **whence He was** is implied, for they knew not Him that sent Him (see also ch. viii. 14, 19), and therefore could not know **whence He was**, in this sense. The answer is made *in their own sense*:—they knew that He was from Nazareth in Galilee, see ver. 41,—and probably that He was called the son of Joseph. In this sense they knew **whence He was**; but further than this they knew not.

and I am not come; and moreover—i. e. besides this.

The sense of true must be gathered from the context. **I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true—ye know Him not, but I know Him.—for I came from Him, and He sent Me.** The matter here impressed on them is the *genuineness*, the *reality* of the fact:—that Jesus was sent, and there was one who sent Him, though they knew Him not, and consequently knew not whence He was. The nearest English word would be **real**: but this would not convey the meaning perspicuously to the ordinary mind;—perhaps the A.V. **true** is better, provided it be explained to mean **really existent**, not ‘*truthful*.’

30.] they, namely, *the rulers*,—instigated by what had been above remarked by the people, vv. 25, 26. There was some secondary hindrance to their laying hands on Him,—possibly the fear of the people: but the Evangelist passes at once to the real cause;—that God’s appointed time was not yet come.

31.] The **But** here contrasts with what went before—**nay, many&c.**

32–36.] HE WILL RETURN TO THE FATHER.

32.] The wavering of the multitude appears to the Pharisees a dangerous sign: and the Sanhedrim (consisting of the Chief Priests and the Pharisees) send officers specially to lay hold on Him.

33, 34.] The omission or insertion of “*unto them*”? makes very little difference. The words were spoken, not to the officers only, but to all the people.

Yet a little while....] This appears to be said in reference to ver. 30, to shew them the uselessness of their attempting to lay hands on Him till His hour was come, which it soon would do.

unto him that sent me] It has been asked, ‘If Jesus thus specified where He was going, how could the Jews ask the question in ver. 35?’ but De Wette answers well, that the Jews knew not “*Him that sent Him*,” and therefore the saying was a dark one to them.

Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me] These words must not be pressed too much, as has been done by in any interpreters, who would make them mean ‘*Ye shall seek My help and not find it?* (viz. in your need, at the destruction of Jerusalem); for this would not be true even of the Jews, any one of whom might have at any time turned and looked on Him whom he had pierced, by faith,—and have been saved;—nor again must it be taken as meaning, ‘*Ye shall seek to lay hands on Me, and shall not be able*,’—which is vapid and unmeaning. Neither of these interpretations, nor any like them, will agree with the parallel place, ch. xiii. 33, where the same words are used to the *disciples*. The meaning is simply (as in reff.), ‘My bodily presence will be withdrawn from you; I shall be personally in a place inaccessible to you.’ see ch. xiii. 36.

where I am] We need not supply “*then*;” the present tense is used in the solemn sense of ch. i. 18, and ch. iii. 13, to signify *essential truth*.

Compare “*ye cannot*” addressed to the Jews, with “*hou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards*,” addressed to Peter, ch. xiii. 36, and it will be evident that the Lord had their *spiritual state* in view: ‘Ye cannot, as ye are now, enter there.’

On the whole, see Luke xvii. 22.

35, 36.] The Jews understood not *his death* to be meant, but some journey which He would take in the event of their rejecting him.

Their intent in this hypothesis, that He was going to the dispersed among the Greeks, is, to convey contempt and mockery. They do not however believe the hypothesis; but ask again, **What is this saying?**

37–52.] JESUS THE GIVER OF THE SPIRIT (37–39). CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISCOURSE (40–52).

37, 38.] It is not certain what is meant by this **last day, which was the great day of the feast.** The command, Levit. xxiii. 34, 35, was to keep the feast seven days; the *first* to be a solemn assembly and a feast-sabbath,—then on the *eighth* day another solemn assembly and a feast-sabbath:—so also ib. ver. 39. (But in Deut. xvi. 13 nothing is said of the *eighth* day.) In Neh. viii. 18 the feast is kept seven days, and on the eighth is a solemn assembly, ‘*according unto the manner?*’ In Num. xxix. 12–38, where minute directions are given for every day of the feast, the eighth day is reckoned in, as usual. Josephus, Antt. iii, 10. 4, gives a similar account. In 2 Macc. x. 6, we read “*eight days.... as in the feast of the tabernacles.*” But the eighth day was not properly one of the *feast days*; the people ceased to dwell in the tabernacles on the seventh day. Philo says of it, that it was the *solemn conclusion, not of that feast alone, but of all the feasts in the year, being the last day in the year.* And though this may be pure conjecture, it is valuable, as shewing *the fact* the reason of which is conjectured; viz. that the *eighth day was held in more than ordinary estimation.* The *eighth day* then seems here to be meant, and **the last of the feast** to be popularly used, as in some of the citations above. But a difficulty attends this view. Our Lord certainly seems to allude here to the custom which prevailed during the seven days of the feast, of a priest bringing water in a golden vessel from the pool of Siloam with a jubilant procession to the temple, standing on the altar and pouring it out there, together with wine, while meantime the *Hallel* (Ps. cxiii—cxviii.) was sung. This practice was by some supposed—as the dwelling in tabernacles represented their life in the desert. of old—to refer to the striking of the rock by Moses:—by others, to the rain, for which they then prayed, for the seed of the ensuing year:—by the elder Rabbis, to Isa. xii. 3, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit in the days of the Messiah. But it was almost universally agreed, that on the eighth day this ceremony did not take place. Now, out of this difficulty I would extract what I believe to be the right interpretation. It *was* the eighth day, and the pouring of water *did not* take place. But is therefore all allusion to the ceremony excluded? I think not: nay, I believe it is the more natural. For seven days the ceremony had been performed, and the *Hallel* sung. On the eighth day the *Hallel* was sung, but the outpouring of the water did not take place: something was missed, which took place on the other days. ‘*Then Jesus stood and cried, &c.*’ Was not this the most natural time? Was it not probable that He would have said it at such a time, rather even than while the ceremony itself was going on?

On the sense of our Lord’s words, see notes on ch. iv. 13, 14.

as the scripture hath said] These words must apply to the words “*out of his belly shall flow, &c.,*” since the words “he that believeth on me” could not form part of the citation. But we look in vain for such a text in the O.T., and an apocryphal or lost canonical book is out of the question.

I believe the citation to be intimately connected with the ceremony referred to, and that we must look for its place by consulting the passages where the *flowing out of water from the temple* (see above) is spoken of. The most remarkable of these is found in Ezek. xlvi, 1–12. There a river of water of life (see ver. 9 especially) *flows from under the threshold of the temple.* Again in Zech. xiv. 8, *living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.* I believe these expressions to be all to which the citation applies, and the words “*out of his belly*” to be the interpretation of the corresponding words in the prophecies. For the temple was symbolic (see ch. ii. 21) of the Body of the Lord; and the Spirit which dwells in and flows forth from His glorified Body, dwells in and flows forth from His people also, who are made like unto Him, Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 9–11; 1 Cor. iii. 16.

39.] The difficulties raised concerning this interpretation of the saying of our pont have arisen from a misapprehension. John does not say that the words were a prophecy of *what happened* on the day of Pentecost; but of *the Spirit*, which the believers were about to receive. Their *first reception* of Him must not be illogically put in the place of *all His indwelling and working*, which are here intended. And the symbolism of the N.T. is fully satisfied by the interpretation. Granted that the water is the *water of life*,—what is that life but the life of the Spirit? “*The mind of the Spirit, is life,*” Rom. viii. 6; and again, “*the Spirit, is life,*” ib. ver. 10.

was not yet] The additions “*given,*” “*upon them,*” as some authorities read,—and the like, are all put in by way of explanation, to avoid a misunderstanding which no intelligent reader could fall into. Chrysostom writes, “The Evangelist says, ‘for the Holy Ghost was not yet,’ i.e. was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified: meaning by the Glory, the Cross.” It is obvious that the word **was** cannot refer to the *essential existence* of the Holy Spirit, as this would be not only in flat contradiction to ch. i. 32, 33; iii. 5, 8, 34, but to the whole Old Test. in which the agency of the Spirit in the *outward world* is recognized even more vividly than in the N.T. The word implied is not exactly “*given,*” but rather “*working,*” or some similar word: **was not,—had not come in;** ‘*the dispensation of the Spirit was not yet.*’

glorified, through death. The glorified Body of the Lord is the temple from under whose threshold the Holy Spirit flows forth to us; see ch. i. 16; Rom. viii. 11; Col. ii. 9.

40.] the Prophet is here clearly distinguished from **the Christ:** see note on ch. i. 21, and Deut. xviii. 15.

41–43.] The mention of the question about Bethlehem seems to me rather to corroborate our belief that the Evangelist was

well aware how the fact stood, than, as some have said, to imply that he was ignorant of it. That no more remarks are appended, is natural. St. John had one great design in writing his gospel, and does not allow it to be interfered with by explanations of matters otherwise known. Besides, we may note that the so-called "*probability, that John knew nothing of the birth at Bethlehem,*" reaches much further than may appear at first. If St. John knew nothing of it, and yet the Mother of the Lord lived with him, the inference must be that *she* knew nothing of it,—in other words, that it never happened.

The word rendered **division** implies a *violent dissension*,—some taking up His cause, some wishing to lay hands on Him.

44.] These were from among the multitude. Those who wished to lay hands on Him were, as Euthymius remarks, *invisibly restrained*.

45–52.] *Return of the officers to the Sanhedrim; consultation on their report.*

Either these officers had been watching Jesus for some days, or the present section goes back a little from what has preceded. The latter is more probable.

49.] There is no intention to pronounce a formal ban upon the followers of Jesus;—the words are merely a passionate expression of contempt.

50.] The Jews had, since the sabbath-healing, condemned Jesus, and were seeking to kill him. But in Exod. xxiii. 1, 2; Deut. 1. 16, 17, justice is commanded to be done in the way here insisted on by Nicodemus. Observe the consistency, and development, of the character of Nicodemus; and see more on ch. xix. 39.

51.] See Deut. i. 16.

52.] They taunt him with being disposed to join those (mostly Galilaeans) who had attached themselves to Jesus. Whether we read **ariseth** or **hath arisen**, the assertion is much the same: for the expression "*no prophet*" cannot include the Prophet, or the Messiah. It was *not historically true*;—for two prophets at least had arisen from Galilee: Jonah of Gathhepher and the greatest of the prophets, Elijah of Thisbe; and perhaps also Nahum and Hosea. Their contempt for Galilee made them lose sight of historical accuracy.

[This passage is to be treated very differently from the rest of the sacred text. In the Alexandrine, Vatican, Paris, and Sinaitic MSS., the ancient Syriac Versions, and all the early fathers, it is omitted: the Cambridge MS. alone of our most ancient, authorities contains it. Augustine states, that certain expunged it from their MSS., because they thought it might encourage sin. But this will not account for the very general omission of it, nor for the fact that ch. vii. 53 is included in the omitted portion. Eusebius assigns it apparently to the apocryphal "Gospel according to the Hebrews." Other things to be noted respecting it are, (1) that in the MSS. which contain it, the *number of variations* is very much greater than in any equal portion of Scripture: so much is this the case, that there are in fact three separate texts, it being hardly possible to unite them into one. (2) That in the original, the style, and manner of narrating, are entirely different from those of our Evangelist. It is not merely that many words and idioms occur which John never uses, but that the whole cast and character of the passage is alien from his manner, in whichever of the existing texts we read it. (3) The great majority of those MSS. which contain the passage, place it *here*. Some however insert it after the end of Luke xxi., which certainly seems a more fitting place, seeing that the incidents evidently belong to the later part of our Lord's ministry. (4) I have adopted the plan also followed in the last edition of my Greek Testament, and have printed it beneath the text of St. John, which I have allowed to go on independently of the inserted passage. See the whole matter discussed and the authorities given, in my Greek Testament.

53.] The circumstance that this verse is included in the dubious passage is remarkable, and seems to shew, as remarked above, that the doubt *has not arisen from any ethical difficulty*, as Augustine hints,—for then the passage would have begun with ch. viii. 1. Nor can this verse have been expunged to keep up the connexion with ch. viii. 12—for that is just as good *with it*,—if understood, as usually, of the members of the Sanhedrim. We must now regard it as fragmentary, forming the beginning of the account of the woman taken in adultery. It is therefore not clear to what the words apply. Taken in conjunction with what follows (see on ch. viii. 5.), I should say that they indicate some time during the last days of the Lord's ministry, when He spent the nights on the Mount of Olives, as the date of the occurrence. Certainly the end of Luke xxi. seems to be its fitter place.

John: Chapter 8

CHAP. VIII. 1.] St. John *never elsewhere mentions the Mount of Olives* (not even in ch. xviii. 1): and when he introduces a new place, it is his habit to give explanations (see ch. 1. 45; xix. 13, 17). Stier, who says, "The simple answer to Alford's remark is, *that John here, and here only, mentions the Mt. of O.*," omits all allusion to this habit of the Evangelist, which *alone*

gives weight to my remark.

Most of the many differences from the style and expression of St. John must be gathered from the notes in the Greek Test., as they cannot be made clear to the mere English reader.

3.] St. John never mentions, “*the Scribes*” elsewhere, but usually calls the opponents of Jesus “*the Jews*,” or “*the rulers*.” “*The Scribes and Pharisees*” is a very common expression in the three Gospels.

The account gives no light as to the *capacity in which* these Scribes and Pharisees acted when they brought the woman. Probably, *only* as tempting Jesus, and not in the course of any legal proceedings against her. Such would have required (Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22) that the *man also* should have been put to death.

4.] The words “*s ay unto him, tempting him*” savour much more of the three Gospels than of John: see Mt. xvi. 1; xix. 3; xxii, 18, 35; Mk. viii. 11; x. 2; xii. 15, &c. Obviously our ch. vi. 6 is no example to the contrary. The difficulty is even greater than the last, to say, *in what sense this was a temptation, to lead to His accusation*. The principal solutions of it have been, (1) that the command of the law had fallen into disuse from the frequency of the crime, and to re-assert it would be contrary to the known mildness of Jesus. But what reason had any of His sayings,—who came to fulfil the Law, not to destroy it,—given them to expect such mildness in this case? And suppose He had re-asserted the law,—how could they have *accused Him*? (2) That some political snare was hereby laid for Him, whereby the Roman power might have been brought to bear against Him. But this does not in any way appear; for (a) the Romans certainly allowed to the Jews (by connivance) the power of putting to death according to their law,—as they did in the case of Stephen: (b) our Lord’s answer need not have been so worded as to trench upon this matter: and (c) the accusers would have been more deeply involved than Himself, if such had been the case, being by the law the prominent persons in the execution.

So that I leave the difficulty unsolved. Lucke observes: ‘Since Jesus seems to avoid every kind of decision on the question put. to Him, it follows that He found in it no reference to the great subjects of His teaching, but treated it as a purely civil or political matter, with which in His ministry He had no concern. *Some kind of civil or political collision* the question certainly was calculated to provoke: but from the brevity of the narration, and our want of more accurate knowledge of criminal proceedings at the time, it is impossible to lay down definitely, wherein the collision would have consisted.’

5.] I will just remark that the very fact of their questioning thus, ‘Moses commanded,... but what sayest *Thou*?’ belongs to the *last days* of the Lord’s ministry, and cannot: well be introduced chronologically where it here stands: nor does St. John any where introduce these questions between the law of Moses and Jesus; but the other Gospels often do.

The command here mentioned is not to be found, unless “putting to death” generally, is to be interpreted as *stoning*;—compare Exod. xxxi. 14; xxxv. 2, with Num. xv. 35, 36, in which the special order given by God would sanction such a view. But the Rabbis taught that every punishment of death in Scripture put absolutely, without specification, was to be understood as meaning *strangulation*. The passage Ezck. xvi. 38, 40 woman taken in adultery are forced and harsh. It was, say they, the early morning (ver. 2) and the sun was just rising, to which these words “*the light of the world*” allude,—and the walking in darkness is an allusion to the woman, whose

proves nothing, or proves too much; for it is added, ‘and thrust thee through with their swords.’ I would rather suppose that from Deut. xxii. 21, 23, 24, an inference was drawn *what kind of a death* was intended in ver. 22, the crime being regarded as the same; “*he hath humbled his neighbour’s wife*.” We have similar indefiniteness in ib. ver. 25, where evidently the same punishment is meant.

6. wrote on the ground] The habit was a usual one to signify pre-occupation of mind, or intentional inattention. The addition, “*as though he heard them not*,” is an explanatory gloss.

It does not follow that any thing was actually written. Stier refers to Jer. xvii. 13, but perhaps without reason.

This minute circumstance speaks strongly for the *authenticity* of the narration.

7.] The expression, “*without sin*,” is not here used in the general sense, meaning, *entirely sinless*, nor in the strictest, ‘*free from the crime of adultery*’ (it can hardly be that any of the Pharisees should have held themselves *sinless*,—or that *all* should have been *implicated in adultery*):—but—as the word “*a sinner*,” in Luke vii. 37,—of the *sin of uncleanness* generally. Stier, who contends strongly for the *genuineness* of this narrative *in this place*, finds in ver. 46 an allusion to this saying. I cannot say that his attempts to establish a connexion with the subsequent discourse are to me at all satisfactory: I am much more inclined to think with Luthardt, that the whole arrangement and plan of our Gospel is broken by the insertion of this passage.

The Lord Jesus was not sent to be a ruler and a judge in this or that particular case of crime, see Luke xii. 14; but the Ruler and

Judge of *all*: and His answer expresses this, by convicting them *all* of sin before Him. Some of our MSS. read, “*the stone:*” in that case, our Lord refers to the *first* stone, which by Deut. xvii. 7 the *witnesses* were to cast.

8.] Euthymius remarks that our Lord adopted this gesture, of again writing on the ground, in His goodness, to allow them to pass out without being specially observed by Him. One of our MSS. reads, ‘ ‘*He wrote on the ground the sins of each of them.*’ ’

9.] They had said, ver. 5, “*such women*”—they now perceive that they themselves were *such men*. There is no historical difficulty in this conduct of the Pharisees, as Olshausen finds;—they were struck by the power of the word of Christ. It was a case somewhat analogous to that in which His saying, “*I am he,*” struck His foes to the ground, ch. xviii. 6.

The variations of reading are very wide in the latter part of the verse. We can hardly (with some) lay any stress on “*beginning at the eldest,*” as indicating the *natural order* of conviction of sin. If the consciences of older sinners have heavier loads on them, deed of darkness had been detected in the night. But not to dwell on other objections to this view,—e. g. that such an allusion to the woman would be wholly out of character after our Lord’s previous treatment of her,—how come these Pharisees, who on the hypothesis of the above Commentators are *the same as those who accused the woman, to be again so soon present?* Was this at all likely? We cannot escape from this difficulty with Stier, by supposing a multitude of the people to have been witnesses on both occasions: the “*Pharisees*” of the one must surely extend through the other, if *this con-connexion* is to be maintained.

On the other hand, this discourse comes in very well after ch. vii. 52. The last saying of Jesus (ch. vii. 37, 38) had referred to a festal usage then just over; He now adds another of the same kind. It was the custom during the first night, if not during every night, of the feast of tabernacles, to light up two large golden chandeliers in the court of the women, the light of which illuminated all Jerusalem. All that night they held a festal dance by the light.

Now granted that this was on the first night only,—what is there improbable in the supposition that our Lord—standing in the very place where the candlesticks had been or perhaps actually were—should have alluded to that practice, as He did to the outpouring of water in ch. vii. 87, 38? Surely to say in both cases, as Lücke and De Wette do, that the allusion could not have been made unless the usage *took place on that day*, is mere trifling. *While the feast lasted*, and the remembrance of the ceremonies was fresh, the allusion would be perfectly natural. See on ch. i. 9, and xi. 9, 10. See also Isa. xlvi. 6; Mal. iv. 2; and on “*the light of life,*” ch. i. 4, and vi. 48.

13.] See ch. v. 31. The assertion *there was*, that His own *unsupported witness* (*supposing that possible*) would not be trustworthy, but that His testimony was supported by, and in fact coincident with, that of the Father. The very same argument is here used, but *the other side of it* presented to us. He *does* witness of Himself, because His testimony is the testimony of the Father;—He being the *Word of God*, and the Father *witnessing in Him*.

14.] **because I know**, &c.—see on ch. vii. 29. This reason binds His testimony to that of the Father; for He came forth from the

those of younger ones are more tender.

alone, i.e. with the multitude and the disciples; the woman standing between Him and the disciples on one hand,—and the multitude on the other.

10, 11.] The question is evidently so worded as it is, “*hath no man condemned thee?*” for the sake of the form of the answer, “*Neither do I condemn thee:*” but it expresses the truth in the depth of their hearts. The Lord’s challenge to them would lead to a condemnation by *comparison* with themselves, if they con-demned at all: which they had not done. The words of Jesus were in fact a far deeper and more solemn testimony against the sin than could be any mere penal sentence. And in judging of them we must never forget that He who thus spoke knew the hearts,—and what was the peculiar state of this woman as to penitence. We must not apply in all cases a sentence, which requires *His divine knowledge* to make it a just one.] Father, ch. xvi. 28, and was returning to Him.

“Light,” says Augustine, “demonstrates other things, and itself also... light gives testimony to itself: opens the eyes that are capable of beholding it, and is its own witness that *it may be known to be light.*”

Then again, he only who *knows* can witness: and Jesus only *knew* this.

Notice **I know whence I came**:—this goes back to the “*existence in the beginning*” of ch. i. 1; but ye know not whence I

come,— ‘do not recognize even My present mission.’

We must not, for a moment understand “*Though I bear witness*,” with Grotius, “*even though I Should bear witness*,” &c.: i.e. “*even though there were no previous testimonies to me of the prophets or of ‘John the Baptist?’*” Our Lord’s words do not suppose a case, but allows the fact.

15, 16.] There is no allusion to the foregoing history; the train of thought is *altogether another*.

‘The end of all *testimony*, is the forming, or pronouncing, of *judgment*. Ye do this by fleshly rules, concerning me and my mission: I judge no man, i.e. it is not the object nor habit of this My mission on earth; but even if I be called on to exercise judgment, my judgment is decisive:’ the word meaning not exactly *true* in its ordinary meaning, but rather, **genuine**; which a judgment can only be by being *true* and final; see ch. v. 30 and note.

17.] The word **your** seems to give this sense to the clause:— ‘So that if you will have the mere letter of the law, and judge my testimony by it, I will even thus satisfy you:’ **your** thus implying, ‘The law which you have made so completely *your own* by your kind of adherence to it.’

19.] Augustine and others imagine that the Jews thought of a *human Father*, in thus speaking. But surely before this, as Stier remarks, the Jews must have become too well accustomed to the words “my Father,” from our Lord, to mistake their meaning. It is rather a question asked in mere scorn, by persons who know, but will not recognize, the meaning of a word uttered by another.

if ye had known me] See ch. xiv. 9 ff. and note.

20. the treasury] See Luke xxi. 1, and note on Mark xii. 41, It was in the court of the women.

his hour was not yet come] See ch. vii. 8, 30.

21–59.] *Further discourses of Jesus. The Jews attempt to stone Him.*—This forms the great conclusion of the series of discourses to the Jews. In it our Lord testifies more plainly still to His divine origin and sinlessness, and to the cause of their unbelief; until at last their enmity is worked up to the highest pitch, and they take up stones to cast at Him. It may be divided into four parts: (1) vv. 21–24,—announcing to them the inevitable consequence of persistence in their unbelief, on His withdrawal from them: (2) vv. 25–29,—the things which He has to say and judge of them, and the certainty of their own future recognition of Him and His truthfulness: (3) vv. 30–47,—the first springing up of faith in many of them is by Him corrected and purified from Jewish pride, and the source of such pride and unbelief detected: (4) vv. 48–58,—the accusation of the Jews in ver. 48, gives occasion to Him to set forth very plainly His own divine dignity and pre-existence.

21.] The time and place of this discourse are not definitely marked; but in all probability they were the same as before. Only no stress must be laid on the **therefore** as connected with ver. 20, for it is only the accustomed carrying forward by the Evangelist of the great self-manifestation of Jesus.

ye shall seek me includes the idea ‘and shall not find me,’ which is expressed in ch. vii. 34, 36:—**ye shall continue seeking Me and shall die (perish) in your sin**] This sin is not *unbelief*, for, ver. 24, it is clearly distinguished from that: but, ‘*your state of sin, unremoved, and therefore abiding on you, and proving your ruin*’ (see on ver. 24).

The words do not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, but to *individual perdition*. In these discourses in John, the *public* judgment on the Jews is not prominently brought forward, as in the other Evangelists.

whither I go, ye cannot come, the *consequence*, not the *cause* (by any absolute decree) of their dying in their sins (see ch. vii. 34; xiii. 33). ‘This latter sense would have required the insertion of “for” before the clause.

22.] It is at least probable that they allude to the idea mentioned by Josephus, himself a Pharisee, in his speech at Jotapata, “As many as have laid violent hands on themselves, for their souls there is a darker Hades reserved.” Heracleon, as cited by Origen, gives this interpretation of their saying:— ‘and with the bitterest malice taunt Him with thus being about to go where they, the children of Abraham, could never come.’ De Wette thinks this too refined, and that such a meaning would, if intended, have been marked in our Lord’s answer.

23.] ‘Ye cannot come where I am going, because we both shall return thither whence we came: I to the Father from Whom (**from above**) I came: ye to the earth and under the earth (for that more awful meaning surely is not excluded) whence ye came’ (**from beneath**).

Then the term **this world** of course does not *only* imply ‘*this present state of things*, but involves the deeper meaning, of the origin of that state of things (see ver. 44) and its *end*, ver. 24.

24.] Since this (ver. 23) is the case,—**if ye do not believe that I am He**, the Deliverer,—and be renewed by Faith, **ye shall die in your sins** (plural here, as struck nearer home to their consciences, and implying individual acts of sin, the results of the carnal state).

25.] Their question follows on the words “*I am from above*,” ver. 23, and on the dubious elliptical expression *I am (he)* of the last verse. It is intended to bring out a plain answer on which their enmity might fasten.

Our Lord’s reply has been found very difficult, from reasons which can hardly be explained to the English reader. The A.V., “*even the same that I said unto you from the beginning*,” cannot well be right. The verb rather means to **speak** or **discourse**, than to *say*: the connecting particle cannot well be rendered “*even*:” and the word rendered “*from the beginning*” far more probably means “**essentially**,” or “**in very deed**.¹”

This being premised, the sentence must be rendered (literally) thus: **Essentially, that which I also discourse unto you**: or, **In very deed, that same which I speak unto you**. He is the Word—His *discourses are the revelation of Himself*. And there is especial propriety in this:—When Moses asked the name of God, ‘*I am that which I AM*’ was the mysterious answer; the hidden essence of the yet unrevealed One could only be expressed by self-comprehension; but when God manifest in the flesh is asked the same question, it is ‘*I am that which I SPEAK*?’ what He *reveals* Himself to be, that He *is* (see on next verse). The above sense is maintained by De Wette, and strikingly expanded and illustrated by Stier. See an account, and discussion, of other proposed interpretations, in my Greek Test.

26.] He is, that which He speaks; and that, He has received from the Father;—He has His definite testimony to give, and His work to do: and therefore, though He has much that He could speak and judge about the Jews, He does it not, but overlooks their malice,—not answering it,—that He may go forward with the *speaking unto the world*, the revelation of Himself: the **truth** of which is all-important, and excludes less weighty things. This verse is in the closest connexion with the foregoing.

27.] They did not identify “*him that sent me*” with “*my Father*.” However improbable this may be, after the plain words “*the Father that sent me*,” in ver. 18, it is stated as a fact; and the Evangelist certainly would not have done so without some sure ground:—“It is probable, that they questioned one with another, ‘Who is he that sent him?’” Euthymius. There is no accounting for the ignorance of *unbelief*, as any minister of Christ knows by painful experience.

28.] This connects (**therefore** being the continuation of the foregoing, see above on ver. 21) with ver. 26, and also with ver. 27, as the words **then shall ye know** shew, referring to the expression in that verse, “*They knew not*.” On **lifted up**, see ch. iii. 14. ‘When ye shall have been the instruments of accomplishing that death by which He shall enter into His glory:’ for the latter idea is clearly implied here.

then shall ye know] Perhaps, in different ways:—some, by the power of the Holy Spirit poured out after the exaltation of Christ, and to their own salvation; others, by the judgments which were to follow ere long, and to their own dismay and ruin.

The interchange of **do** and **speak** is remarkable. The construction is not elliptical, so that “*do and speak*” should be understood in both cases; but the declaration of ver. 25 is still in the Lord’s mind, His **doing** being all *a declaration of the Father*,—**a speaking forth** in the widest sense. Bengel says well: “Ye shall know by fact, that which ye now believe not by word.”

29.] left me not alone, referring to the *appointment* of the Father by which His work was begun, and which the continued presence of the Father (**he that sent me is with me**) carries on through that work: see ch. xvi. 32.

because I do always....; not ‘*for*,’ as if what follows were merely a *token that it is so*. The **doing always these things that please him** is the very essential being of the Son, and is the *cause why* the Father is ever with Him.

30.] They believed on Him with a higher degree of faith than those in ch. ii, 23, inasmuch as faith wrought by hearing is higher than that by miracles; but still wanted confirming.

31.] continue in my word means to “*abide in Me*,” ch. xv. 7, though that perhaps is spoken of a deeper entrance into the state of union with Christ. *Remaining in His word* is not merely *obeying His teaching*, but is the inner conviction of the truth of that revelation of Himself, which is *his word*. **ye are**, for probably they had given some outward token of believing on Him, e.g. that of ranging themselves among His disciples.

32.] In opposition to the mere *holding* of the truth. The *knowing* of the truth answers to the *feeding* on Christ;—is the inner realization of it in the man. And in the continuing increase of this comes true freedom from all fear and error and bondage.

33.] The answerers are *those that believed*, not some others among the hearers, as many Commentators have maintained;—see, as a proof of this, ver. 36, addressed to these same persons. They had not yet become disciples indeed, were not yet distinct from the mass of the unbelieving; and therefore, in speaking to them, He ascribes to them the sins of their race, and addresses them as part of that race.

We be Abraham's seed: see Matt. iii. 9. The assertion that they had **never been in bondage to any man** was so contrary to historical truth, that we must suppose some technical meaning to have been attached to the word *bondage*, in which it may have been correct. ‘The words cannot be meant. of *that generation only*, for the word **never** (**never yet at any time**, literally) connects with their assertion that they were Abraham’s seed, and generalizes it. As usual (see ch. iii. 4; iv. 11; vi. 52), they take the words of our Lord in their outward literal sense. Perhaps this was not always an *unintentional* misunderstanding.

34.] doeth sin, not merely “*sinneth*,” for that all do; but in the same sense as “*work iniquity*” is said, Matt. vii. 23. It implies **living in the practice of sin, doing sin**, as a habit: see reff. ‘he mere moral sentiment, of which this is the spiritual expression, was common among the Greek and Roman philosophers.

35.] I believe, with Stier and Bengel, the reference to be to Hagar and Ishmael, and Isaac: the *bond* and the *free*. They had spoken of themselves as the *seed of Abraham*. The Lord shews them that there may be, of that seed, *two kinds*; the *son*, properly so called, and the *slave*. The latter does not abide in the house for ever: it is not his right nor his position—‘Cast out the bondwoman and her son.’ ‘But the *son* abideth ever. For the application, see on following verses.

36.] Ye then, being in sin, are carnal: the sons of the bondwoman, and therefore need liberation. Now comes in the spiritual reality, into which the discourse passes from the figure. This liberation can only take place by means of Him of whom Isaac was the type—the Seed according to promise; those only who of His Spirit are born again, and after His image, are **free indeed**—truly sons of God, and no longer children of the bondwoman, but of the free. See by all means Gal. iv. 19 (where the subject really begins, not at ver. 21) to end, which is the best commentary on this verse. There neither is, nor can be here, any allusion either to the liberation of the sabbatical year, or to the subject of Heb. iii. 5, 6.

37.] ‘Ye are Abraham’s seed, according to the flesh and the covenant: but’—and here the distinction appears—’ ye *are doers of sin* by seeking to kill Me, because My word (see above on ver. 31) **gaineth no ground**—does not work (spread, go forward,—‘ne marche pas’) in you’ (not, *among you*).

38.] We have the same remarkable relation between *speaking* and *doing*, as in ver. 28: except that here the doing is applied to the Jews only; *speaking* being used in the same comprehensive sense as there.

But notice the distinction in the restored text between **I have seen with my father** and **ye heard from your father**. The possessive pronouns *my*, and *your*, are not expressed in the original; the term **father** is common to both sentences, and on it the stress should be laid in reading. The speaking and doing were in each case from the **father** of each. But Jesus was “*with God*,” in a relation of abiding unity with His Father: they were *sprung from their father the devil*,—he was the suggester of their course, the originator of their acts. Jesus was the **son**, who remains in the house and sees the father’s acts: they the **bond-slaves**, merely prescribed to, and under coercion.

The word **too** implies **accordingly,—by the same rule**.

39, 40.] There is a distinction between seed and children. The former our Lord grants that they were (ver. 37), but the latter (by implication; see below on the construction) He denies them. See Rom. ix. 6, 7, “*They are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.*”

41. We were not born of fornication] Stier remarks, that they now let fall Abraham as their father, being convicted of unlikeness to him. They see that a *spiritual* paternity must be meant, and accordingly refer to God as their Father. This consideration will rule the sense of the words **not born of fornication**, which must therefore be spiritual also. And spiritually the **children of fornication** (see Hos. ii. 4) are idolaters. Ishmael cannot well be alluded to; for they would not call the relation between Abraham and Hagar one of *fornication*. Still less can there be, as Origen thought, any allusion on the part of the Jews to our Lord giving Himself out as being miraculously born, but being in reality that which they would insinuate: for our Lord never proclaimed this of Himself. There may possibly be a reference to the *Samaritans* (ver. 48), who completely answered in the spiritual sense to the children of fornication: see Deut. xxxi. 16; Isa. i. 21; Ezek. xvi. 15 ff; xx. 30 al.

42.] ‘If you were the children of God, the *moral proof* of such descent would be, that you would love Me, who am specially the Son of God, and who am come by the mission, and bearing the character of God.’

am come conveys the result of **proceeded forth**, as Meyer; who also remarks that mere *sending* will not exhaust the term

proceeded forth, which must be taken in its deeper theological meaning, of the proceeding forth of the Eternal Son from the essence of the Father.

43.] to understand a man's **speech**,—as here used, is literally to *understand the idiom or dialect* in which a man speaks, his **manner of speech**;—see Matt. xxvi. 73, where the same word is used in the original. But this of course does not here refer to the mere outward expression of the Lord's discourses, but to the *spiritual idiom* in which He spoke, and which can only be spiritually understood. Then **my word** is the *matter* of those discourses, the Word itself. The connexion of the two clauses is, **Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot receive**, hear with the inner ear (see ch. vi. 60), **that which I say**. And the verification and ground of this *cannot*, is in the next verse.

44.] This verse is one of the most decisive testimonies for the *objective personality* of the devil. It is quite impossible to suppose an accommodation to Jewish views, or a metaphorical form of speech, in so solemn and direct an assertion as this.

ye like to do] The rendering of the A.V. here, as in several other places where the same expression is used in the original (compare for instance ch. v. 40; Matt. xi. 27; Luke xi. 31), is wholly inadequate and misleading. The words “*Ye will do*” convey to the mind of the reader a mere *future*, whereas the original means, **your will is to do, you love, or, are inclined, to do**. The expression indicates, as in ch. v. 40, the *freedom of the human will, as the foundation of the condemnation of the sinner*.

a murderer] The most obvious reference seems to be, to the murder of Abel by Cain:—see the Apostle's own comment on these words, 1 John iii. 12, 15. But this itself was only a result of the introduction of death by sin, which was the work of the devil: Adam and Eve were the *first* whom he murdered. But then again both these were only *manifestations* of the fact here stated by divine omniscience respecting him: that he was a *murderer*.

from the beginning, the author and bringer in of that hate which is *equivalent to murder*, 1 John iii. 15.

The mention of **murder** is introduced because the Jews went about to kill Jesus; and the typical parallel of Cain and Abel is certainly hinted at in the words.

The A.V. “*abode*,” is ungrammatical, the original word being *present* in sense. Still, it is not a *mere present*, but a *present dependent on and commencing with an implied past fact*. And that fact here is, the *fall* of the devil, which was not an insulated act, but in which state of apostasy from the truth he standeth,—it is his condition.

the truth is objective: the truth of God:—in this **he standeth not, because there is no truth** (‘*truthfulness*,’ subjective) **in him**. His *lie* has become his very nature, and therefore he is thoroughly alien from the truth of God. He shewed this when he spoke a lie to our first mother.

of his own, not, ‘*according to his character*,’—but ‘out of his own resources,’ ‘treasures’: see Matt. xii. 35.

the father thereof] i.e. either **of that which is false**,—the *lie*, implied in the word **liar**, which has just preceded,—or, of the *liar generally*. The former is *not the fact*,—for the devil is not the father of **that which is false**, but **of liars**, by being himself one whose very nature has become *a lie*. Certainly by this he has become the author, promoter, of falsehood among men; but this kind of paternity is not here in question: the object being to shew that he was the father of these lying Jews. I therefore hold the latter interpretation, with Bengel, Meyer, and Stier.

45.] And the very reason why ye do not believe *Me* (as contrasted with *him*) is, *because I speak the truth*;—you *not being of the truth*, but of him who is falsehood itself. This implies a charge of wilful striving against known and recognized truth. Euthymius fills up the context—“*If I told you lies, ye would have believed me, as speaking that which belongs to your father:*” see ch. v. 43.

46.] The meaning here of **sin** is to be strictly adhered to, and not softened into ‘*error in argument*,’ or ‘*falsehood*.’ This would be to introduce, in this most, solemn part of our Lord's discourse, a vapid tautology. The question is an appeal to His *sinlessness of life*, as evident to them all,—as a pledge for His truthfulness of word: which word asserted, be it remembered, that *He was sent from God*. And when we recollect that He who here challenges men to convict him of sin, never could have upheld *outward spotlessness* merely (see Matt. xxiii. 26–28), the words amount to a declaration of His absolute sinlessness, in thought, word, and deed. Or, the connexion may be as stated by Euthymius: “*If it is not because I speak the truth that ye disbelieve me, tell me, which of you convicts me of any sin done by me, on account of which you may have a pretext for disbelieving?*”

If I say the truth] and if it be thence (from the impossibility of convicting me of sin) evident, that **I speak the truth, why do ye not believe me?** (not “*believe on me*,” but simply **believe me, give credence to me**.)

47.] gives the answer to the previous question, and concludes the discourse with the final disproof of their assertion, ver. 41. This verse is cited 1 John iv. 6.

48.] The Jews attempt no answer, but commence reviling Him. These are now properly **the Jews**, in St. John's sense,—the principal among the Jews.

a Samaritan] So they called ‘outcasts from the commonwealth of Israel:’ and so afterwards they called the Christians. They imply, that He differed from their interpretation of the law,—or perhaps, as He had convicted them of not being the genuine children of Abraham, they cast back the charge with a senseless recrimination. There may perhaps be a reference to the occurrence related in ch. iv. 5 ff.; but it has been shewn that *Thou art a Samaritan* is found in the Rabbis as addressed to one whose word is not to be believed.

and hast a devil] ‘As in the first clause they sundered Him from the communion of Israel, so now from that of Israel's God.’ Stier. Or perhaps they mean the reproach more as expressing aggravated madness owing to dæmoniacal possession. The **Say we not well?** alludes probably to the charge twice brought against Him by the Pharisees, ‘of casting out devils by the prince of the devils.’ See Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24.

49.] The former term of reproach Jesus passes over, and mildly answers (1 Pet. ii. 23) the malicious charge of having a devil, by an appeal to his whole life and teaching (see ch. iv. 34), which was not the work of one having a devil. There is no *retort of the charge* in the emphatic **I** (it is not *I* but *you* that have a devil), as Cyril and Lücke imagine. At present the **I**, followed by **you**, both emphatic, only brings out the two parties into stronger contrast.

and ye do dishonour me] ‘Our mutual relation is not that which you allege, but this: that I honour Him that sent me, and ye, in dishonouring me, dishonour Him.’ It is the same contrast, the heig (sprung) “*of (from) God*” and “*not of God*,” as before, ver. 47, which lies at the root.

50.] ‘Ye dishonour me;—not that I seek my own honour, but His who sent me. There is One who seeketh my honour (ch. v. 23), and will have me honoured; and who judgeth between me and you, between truth and falsehood.’

Supply the words “*my glory*” after seeketh, but not after *judge*th.

51.] There is no pause (De Wette) between ver. 50 and this. This is the direct carrying on of the discourse, arising out of **judge**th in the last verse, and forming a new attempt of grace to plead with them, as Lampe calls it. Ye are *now* children of the devil, but if ye keep My word, ye shall be rescued from that *murderer*.

to keep my word, as “*to continue in my word*,” ver. 31, is not only outward obedience, but the endurance in, and obedience of faith.

to behold death, as to taste of death, is a Hebrew way of speaking for *to die*, and must not be pressed to mean, ‘shall not *feel* (the bitterness of) death, in a temporal sense, as Stier has done. The *death of the body* is not reckoned as *death*, any more than the *life of the body* is *life*, in our Lord's discourses; see ch. xi. 25, 26, and notes. Both words have a deeper meaning.

52, 53.] The Jews, not knowing what “*death*” really imports, regard the saying as a decisive proof of their surmise ver. 48. ‘Their misunder-standing (says De Wette) keeps to the well-known type (ch. iii. 4; iv. 11 ff.), but this time theocratic pride is added to carnal sensuousness:—“the Old Test. Saints died!”

54, 55.] The argument in these verses is: ‘The same God who is the God of Abraham, is my Father;—He it is who honours (glorifies) me, and it is His word that I keep. I was promised by Him to Abraham.’

If I glorify myself, i.e. ‘glorify myself to this high designation, of being able to deliver from death.’

of whom ye say] Whom you are in the habit of calling *your God*—i. e. the God of Israel. A most important identification, from the mouth of our Lord Himself, of *the Father*, with the *God of Israel* in the Old Test.

55.] The sense is, **of Whom ye say ‘He is our God,’ and** (not “*yet*” nor “*but*”) **know Him not.** Then what follows sets forth the contrast between them, the pretended children of Abraham, who know not Abraham's God (the *liars*), and Him who knows Him, and keeps His word, so that His word works in and by Him; yea, He is the *Word of God*. His *allowing their denial* of this state of knowledge and union would be *as great a lie in Him*, as their *assumption* of it was *in them*.

56.] The Lord does not deny them their *outward* title of children of Abraham:—it. is of spiritual things that He has been

speaking, in refusing them the reality of it.

rejoiced to see] literally, **rejoiced, that He should see.** The intent is to shew that Abraham did in his time keep Christ's word, viz. by a prospective realizing faith; and therefore that he, in the sense of ver. 51, *had not seen death*. This is expressed by **and he saw it, and was glad:** see below. But what is the meaning of **My day?** Certainly, the day of Christ's appearance in the flesh. *When that was over*, and the attention was directed to another and future appearance, the word came to be used of His *second coming*, 1 Cor. i. 8, &c. &c. But this, as well as *the day of His Cross*, is out of the question here;—and the word was used by the Rabbis for the time of the Messiah's appearance. So we have it, Luke xvii. 22, 26: but here, as there, the expression must not be limited *exclusively* to the former appearance. From the sense, it is evident that Abraham saw by faith and will see in fact, not the first coming only, but that which it introduces and implies, the second also. Technically however, in the form of the sentence here, the First is mainly in view. And to *see* that day, is to be present at, witness, it;—to have experience of it.

and he saw it, and was glad, viz. in his Paradisiacal state of bliss. And his 'seeing of Christ's day' was not *by revelation*, but *actual*—the seeing of a witness. 'Abraham then has not seen death, but lives through my word;—having believed and rejoiced in the promise of Me, whom he has now seen manifest in the flesh.'

57.] No inference can be drawn from this verse as to the age of our Lord at the time, according to the flesh. Fifty years was with the Jews the completion of manhood.

58.] As Lücke remarks, all unbiased explanation of these words must recognize in them a declaration of the essential præ-existence of Christ. All such interpretations, as '*before Abraham became Abraham*', i.e. father of many nations (Socinus and others), and as '*I was predetermined, promised by God*' (Grotius and the Socinian interpreters), are little better than *dishonest quibbles*. The distinction between **was made** (*or was born*) and **am** is important. The present, **I am**, expresses *essential existence*, see Col. i. 17, and was often used by our Lord to assert His divine Being.

In this verse *the Godhead of Christ is involved*; and this the Jews *clearly understood*, by their conduct to Him.

59.] Probably there were stones (for building) lying about in the outer court of the temple, where these words seem to have been spoken. The reason of the Jews' doing this is given by them on a similar occasion, ch. x. 33, *f or that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

There does not appear to be any *miraculous* escape intended here, although certainly the assumption of one is natural under the circumstances. Jesus was probably surrounded by His disciples, and might thus hide Himself (see ch. xii. 36), and go out of the temple.

John: Chapter 9

CHAP. IX. X.] JESUS THE LIGHT, FOR THE HEALING OF THE WORLD AND THE JUDGMENT OF THE JEWS.

IX. 1–41.] Manifestation of Jesus as the Light by a miracle. Judgment of the Jews by the healed man, and by Jesus.

1.] If the concluding words of ch. viii. in the ordinary text are genuine, this would appear to have happened on the same day as the incidents there related, which is hardly likely, for we should thus have the whole history from eh. vii. 37 (omitting ch. vii. 53–viii. 12), belonging to one day, and that day a sabbath (ver. 14). And besides, the circumstances under which Jesus here appears are too usual and tranquil to have succeeded immediately to His escape in ch. viii. 59. I would rather therefore suppose that there is a break before this verse: how long, we cannot of course say. Thus we have the commencement of a new narrative here, as in ch.

vi. 1, and vii. 1.

The blind man was sitting begging (ver. 8), possibly proclaiming the fact of his having been so born; for otherwise the disciples could hardly have asked the following question. The incident may have been in the neighbourhood of the temple (Acts iii. 2): but doubtless there were other places where beggars sat, besides the temple entrances.

2.] According to Jewish ideas, every infirmity was the punishment of sin (see ver. 34). From Exod. xx. 5, and the prevailing views on the subject, the disciples may have believed that the man was visited for the sins of his parents: but how could *he himself have sinned* before his birth? Beza and Grotius refer the question to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, that he may have sinned in a former state of existence; this however is disproved by the consideration adduced by Lightfoot, that the Pharisees believed that the *good souls only* passed into other bodies, which would exclude this case. Lightfoot, Lücke, and

Meyer refer it to the possibility of sin *in the womb*; Tholuck to *predestinated sin*, punished by anticipation: De Wette to the general doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, which prevailed both among the Rabbis and Alexandrians: see Wisd. viii, 19, 20.

The question may have been asked vaguely, without any strict application of it to the circumstances, merely taking for granted that *some sin* must have led to the blindness, and hardly thinking of the non-applicability of one of the suppositions to this case. Or perhaps, as Stier inclines to suppose, the question may mean, ‘this man, or, *for that is out of the question*, his parents?’

8.] Our Lord does not of course assert the absolute sinlessness of the man, or of his parents, but answers the question with reference to the reason why it was asked. Supply therefore after **his parents**, “*that he should be born blind*.” Also after **but** supply “*he was born blind*.” In the economy of God’s Providence, his suffering had its place and aim, and this was to bring out the **works of God** in his being healed by the Redeemer. De Wette denies this interpretation, and refers the saying merely to the view of our Lord to bring out his own practical design, to make use of this man to prove His divine power. But see ch. xi. 4, which is strictly parallel.

4.] Connected by the words, **work the works**, to the former verse. There certainly seems to be some reference to its being the sabbath; see the similar expressions in ch. v. 17. From ver. 5, it seems evident that the **day** is the appointed course of the working of Jesus on earth, and the **night** the close of it (see the parallel, ch. xi. 9, 10). It is true, that, according to St. John’s universal diction, the death of Jesus is *His* glorification; but the similitude *here* regards the *effect on the world*, see ver. 5; and the language of Rom. xiii. 12 is in accordance with it, as also Luke xxii. 53: John xiv. 30.

5.] This partly explains the *day and night* of the former verse, partly alludes to the nature of the healing about to take place. As before the raising of Lazarus (ch. xi. 25), He states that He is *the Resurrection and the Life*; so now, He sets forth Himself as the source of the archetypal spiritual light, of which the natural, now about to be conferred, is only a derivation and symbol.

6.] See Mark vii. 33; viii. 23. The virtue especially of the *fasting* saliva, in cases of disorders of the eyes, was well known to antiquity. In the accounts of the restoring of a blind man to sight attributed to Vespasian, the use of this remedy occurs. The use of *clay* also for healing the eyes was not unknown. No rule can be laid down which our Lord may seem to have observed, as to using, or dispensing with, the ordinary human means of healing. He Himself determined, by considerations which are hidden from us. Whatever the means used, the healing was not in *them*, but in Him alone. The ‘conductor’ of the miraculous power was generally the *faith* of the recipient: and if such means served to awaken that faith, their use would be accounted for.

7.] The *reason* of his being sent to Siloam is uncertain. It may have been *as part of the cure*,—or merely to wash off the clay. The former is most probable.

A beggar blind from his birth would know the localities sufficiently to be able to find his way; so that there is no necessity to suppose a partial restoration of sight before his going.

The situation of the fountain and pool of Siloam is very doubtful. On the subject of a recent suggestion respecting the identity of Siloam and Bethesda, see note on ch. v. 1.

which is interpreted] The reason of this derivation being stated has been much doubted. Some consider the words to have been inserted as an early gloss of some allegorical interpreter. But there is no external authority for this supposition, Euthymius says, “I suppose, on account of the blind man being then sent thither;” and Meyer takes this view. But it would be a violent transfer,—of the name of the fountain, to the man who was sent thither. I should rather regard the healing virtue imparted to the water to be denoted, as symbolical of *Him who was sent*, and whose mission it was to give the healing water of life.

came, i.e. **came back**;—apparently to his own house, by the next verse.

8.] **had beheld**, rather than “*had seen*.” The choice of the word implies attention and habit.

11.] The word rendered *received sight* is literally, **recovered sight**. Sight being natural to men, the deprivation of it is regarded as a *loss*, and the reception of it, though never enjoyed before, as a *recovery*.

13.] The neighbours appear to have brought him to the *Pharisees*, out of hostility to Jesus (see ver. 12); and ver. 14 alleges the reason of this:—or perhaps from fear of the sentence alluded to in ver. 22. The “*Pharisees*” here may have been the court presiding over the synagogue, or one of the lesser local courts of Sanhedrim. Lücke inclines to think they were an assembly of the great Sanhedrim, whom St. John sometimes names *the Pharisees*:—see ch. vii. 47; xi. 46: Meyer regards them as some

formal section of the *Pharisees*, as a body: but were there such sections?

14.] Lightfoot cites from a Rabbinical treatise on the Sabbath, that *it was forbidden even to put saliva on the eyelids*. But the *making the clay*, as a servile work, seems to be here prominently mentioned. Meyer notices,—and it is interesting, as a minute mark of accuracy,—that the man, in verses 11 and 15, only relates what he himself, as being blind, had felt: he says nothing of the spittle.

15.] **again** refers back to ver. 10. The enquiry was official, as addressed to the chief witness in the matter. We cannot hence infer that no one else was present at the healing but Jesus and His disciples.

16. **some..... others**] Among the latter party would be such as Nicodemus, Joseph, [Gamaliel?]; who probably (Joseph certainly, Luke xxiii. 51) at last withdrew, and left the majority to carry out their hate against Jesus.

17.] The question is but *one*, **What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened** (i. e. for having opened) **thine eyes?** The stress is on **thou**. ‘What hast *thou* to say to it, seeing we are divided on the matter?’ Both parties are anxious to have the man’s own view to corroborate theirs. a

a prophet, and therefore, *from God*.

18.] The hostile party (**the Jews**,—those in authority among these variously-minded Pharisees) disappointed at his direct testimony against them, betake themselves to sifting more closely *the evidence of the fact*. The parents are summoned as witnesses.

19.] The question is three-fold, and in strict legal formality: ‘Is this your son? Was he born blind? How is it that he now sees?’

21.] The pronouns in the latter part of the verse are emphatic: *who hath opened his eyes we know not: ask him: he is of age: he shall speak for himself*.

22.] It is not said when this resolution was come to; and this also speaks for an interval between ch. vii., viii., and this incident. It could hardly have been before the council at the conclusion of ch. vii.

put out of the synagogue] Probably the first of the three stages of Jewish excommunication,—the being shut out from the synagogue and household for thirty days, but without any anathema. The other two, the repetition of the above, accompanied by a curse,—and final exclusion,—would be too harsh, and perhaps were not in use so early. Trench regards the resolution not as a token that the Sanhedrim had pronounced Him a false Christ, but as shewing that they forbade a private man to anticipate their decision on this point by confessing Him. But perhaps this may be questioned.

24. **Give glory to God**] not, ‘Give God the praise’ (A. V.) i.e. ‘the glory of thy healing.’ for the Pharisees want to overawe the man by their authority, and make him deny the miracle altogether. The words are a form of *adjuration* (see Josh. vii. 19), *to tell the truth*, q.d. ‘Remember that you are in God’s presence, and speak as unto Him.’

25.] The man shrewdly evades the inference and states again the simple fact. We must render his words at the end of the verse, not “*whereas I WAS blind, now I see*,” as A.V.: but **being a blind man**, or as in text, **though a blind man, I now see**. The shrewd and naïve disposition of the man furnishes the key to the ænigmatical expression. He puts it to them as the problem, the fact of which he knows for certain but the reason of which it was for them to solve, that he, whom they all knew as a blind man, now saw.

26.] They perhaps are trying to shake his evidence,—or to make him state something which should bring out some stronger violation of the sabbath.

27.] **did not hear** must be in its special meaning of ‘did not heed it.’ The latter clause is of course ironical: ‘you seem so anxious to hear particulars about Him, that you must surely be intending to become His disciples.’

29.] God **hath spoken**, not *spake*, is important: it betokens the abiding finality of God’s revelation to Moses, in their estimation: as if they said, “*We stand by* God’s revelation to Moses.” **from whence**,—‘whether from God or not.’ But see ch. vii. 27, 28, where a very different reason is given for disbelieving Him to be the Christ. 30.] **Why herein is**, &c. This well expresses the sense of the original. The man takes what their words had conceded, and proceeds to argue upon it. **ye** is emphatic: *you*, whose business it is to know such things.

31.] He expresses a general popular conviction, that one who could do these things, must be a *pious man*: and (ver. 32) *very eminently so*, since this miracle was unprecedented.

33.] nothing, i.e.—nothing of this kind, much less such a thing as this.

34.] See on ver. 2.

altogether,—deeply and entirely, as thy infirmity proved. ‘They forget that the two charges,—one that he had never been born blind, and so was an impostor,—the other, that he bore the mark of God’s anger in a blindness that reached back to his birth,—will not agree together.’ Trench.

they cast him out: i.e. they excommunicated him: see on ver. 22. It cannot merely mean, ‘*they cast him out of the court*,’ as many, both ancient and modern, interpret it: see next verse, where it would hardly be stated that Jesus *heard of it*, unless it had been some public formal act.

35.] ‘Art thou he, whom our rulers have severely treated on account of thy belief in Jesus whom men call Christ? Dost thou, even after this treatment, believe on the Son of God?’ Lampe.

36.] This **Son of God** surpasses his present comprehension: and therefore, true to his simple and guileless character, he asks for further information about Him.

37.] These words, **Thou hast both seen him**, &c. serve to remind the man of the benefit he has received, and to awaken in him the liveliest gratitude: compare Luke ii. 30. They do not refer to a *former seeing*, when he was healed: this was the first time that he had *seen* his Benefactor.

39.] There seems to be an interval between the last verse and this, and the narrative appears to be taken up again at some subsequent time when this miracle became again the subject of discourse. The blind man had recovered sight in two senses,—bodily and spiritual. And as our Lord always treats of the spiritual as paramount, *including* the bodily, so here He proceeds to speak of spiritual sight.

‘We are all, according to the spirit of nature, no better than persons born blind; and to know and confess this our blindness, is our first and only true *sight*, out of which the grace of the Lord can afterwards bring about a complete *receiving of sight*. The “*becoming blind*,” on the other hand, is partly an ironical expression for remaining blind, but partly also has a real meaning in the increasing darkening and hardening which takes place through unbelief.’ Stier.

they which see here answer to “*they which are whole*,” and “*the righteous*” of Matt. ix. 12, 13; see note there.

40.] They ask the question, not understanding the words of Jesus in a bodily sense, but well aware of their meaning, and scornfully rejoicing, ‘Are then *we* meant by these blind, *we*, the leaders of the people?’

41.] The distinction in expression between the two clauses must be carefully borne in mind. Our Lord is referring primarily to the unbelief of the Pharisees and their rejection of Him. And He says, ‘If ye were really blind (not, ‘*confessed yourself* s blind’), ye would not have incurred guilt; but now ye say, “We see;” ye believe ye have the light, and boast that ye know and use the light; and *therefore* your guilt abideth, remaineth on you.’ Observe there is a middle clause understood, between ‘ye would never have incurred guilt,’ and ‘your guilt remaineth;’ and that is, ‘*ye have incurred guilt*;’ which makes it necessary to take the words, **ye say, we see**, as in a certain sense implying that they really *did* see: viz. ‘by the Scriptures being committed to you, by God’s grace, which ought to have led you to faith in me.’

John: Chapter 10

CHAP. X. 1–21.] *Of true and false shepherds, Jesus the good Shepherd.* This discourse is connected with the preceding miracle; and the conduct of the Pharisees towards the man who had been blind seems to have given occasion to this description of false shepherds, which again introduces the testimony of Jesus to Him-self as the true Shepherd. So that, as Meyer remarks, the paragraph should begin at ch. ix. 35. The more we study carefully this wonderful Gospel, the more we shall see that the idea of this close connexion is never to be summarily dismissed as imaginary, and that our Evangelist never passes without notice to an entirely different and disjointed occurrence or discourse. See on the whole subject of the parable, Jer. xxiii. 1–4; Ezek. xxxiv.; Zech. xi. 4–17.

These opening verses (to ver. 5) set forth the distinction between *false and true shepherds*. Then (vv. 7, 8, 9) He brings in *Himself, as the door*, by which both shepherds and sheep enter the fold. Then (ver. 10) He returns to the imagery of the first verses, and sets forth Himself as THE GOOD SHEPHERD; and the rest (to ver. 18) is occupied with the results and distinctions dependent on that fact. **1. the sheepfold**] The word thus rendered is described by the old writers as meaning a

space walled round and open to the air: just answering, except in this being a *per-manent* enclosure, to our term **fold**. This fold is the *visible Church of God*, primarily, as His people Israel were His peculiar fold; the possibility of there being *other folds* has been supposed to be alluded to in ver. 16: but see note there.

The terms in this first part are *general*, and apply to *all leaders* of God's people; in ver. 1, to those who enter that office without having come in by the door (i. e. Christ, in the large sense, in which the Old Testament faithful looked to and trusted in Him, as the covenant promise of Israel's God); and in ver. 2 to those who do enter this way; and whosoever does is the shepherd of the sheep (not emphatic—not, "*the Good Shepherd*," as below, ver. 11, but here it is merely predicated of one who thus enters, that he is the shepherd of that particular fold: it is the attribute of a shep-herd thus to enter).

The **sheep**, throughout this parable, are not the mingled multitude of good and bad; but the *real* sheep, the faithful, who *are*, what all in the fold *should be*. The false sheep (*goats*, Matt. xxv. 32) do not appear; for it is not the character of the *flock*, but that of the *shepherd*, and the relation between him and his sheep, which is here prominent.

3.] Perhaps the **porter** (**doorkeeper**): it is the same word as that used in ch. xviii. 16, Mark xiii. 31) should not be too much pressed as significant; but certainly *the Holy Spirit* is especially He who opens the door to the shepherds; see frequent uses of this symbolism by the Apostles, Acts xiv. 27; 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3;—and instances of the Holy Spirit shutting the door, Acts xvi. 6, 7.

the sheep hear his voice] The voice of *every such true shepherd* is heard (heeded, understood) by *the sheep* (generally): and he calls by name *his own* sheep, that portion of the great flock entrusted to him, and leads them out to pasture, as his office is.

This distinction between **the sheep** and **his own sheep** has given rise to mistakes, from not observing that *shepherd* here is still in its mere general sense, and not spiritually applied until ver. 7, or rather ver. 11 above. It has been imagined that *Christ* is here spoken of, and that therefore these two descriptions of sheep must be different, and so the whole exposition has been confused. Even Stier has fallen into this mistake.

4.] When he has led forth to pasture *all* his sheep (there shall not an hoof be left behind), he goes before them (see "The Land and the Book," p. 202, where there is an interesting description of this following the shepherd); in his teaching pointing out the way to them; they follow him, because they know his voice; his words and teaching are familiar to them. But observe that the expression here becomes again more general; not **his own** sheep, but **the sheep** as in ver. 8. *The sheep* know the voice of every true shepherd.

5.] So that the **stranger** is not *the shepherd of another section* of the flock, but an *alien*: the *robber* of ver. 1. Meyer takes it as merely meaning a *stranger*, one who is *not their shepherd*: but this hardly seems strong enough for the context.

6.] The word here rendered in the A.V. "*parable*" is not exactly what is commonly socalled: not properly a parable: but rather a parabolic allegory. The *parable* requires

narrative to set it forth; and St. John relates *no such*. The right word here would be **allegory**. The original term, in its etymology, signifies, any saying diverging from the common way of speech. We have other examples in ch. xv. 1 ff. and in Matt. ix. 37, 38.

7.] What follows is not so much an exposition, as an expansion of the allegory.

The key to this verse is the right understanding of what went before. Bear in mind, that verses 1–5 were spoken of *shepherds in general*. But these shepherds themselves go into and out of the fold *by the same door as the sheep*: and Christ *is that door*; THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP: the *one* door both for sheep and shepherds, into the fold, into God's Church, to the Father.

8.] I believe that the right sense of these words, **All that ever came before me**, has not been apprehended by any of the Commentators.

First, they can only be honestly understood of *time*; all who *came before me* (not, '*without regard to me*,' nor '*passing by me as the door*,' nor '*instead of me*:' nor '*pressing before me*,' (ch. v. 7,) which would have been "*come*," not "*came*:" nor "*before taking the trouble to find me, the door*:" nor any other of the numerous shifts which have been adopted).

What pretended teachers then came before Christ? Remember the connexion of these discourses. He has taught the Jews that Abraham and the prophets entered by *Him* (ch. viii. 56): but He has set in strong opposition to Himself and His, them (these Jews) and their father, *the Devil* (ib. ver. 44). *He* was, as Milton has it, '*the first thief who clomb into God's fold*;' and all his followers are here spoken of inclusively in the language of the allegory, as coming in by and with *him*. *His* was the first attempt to lead human nature, *before* Christ came; before the series of dispensations of grace began, in which pasture and life

is offered to man by Him.

Meyer understands the Pharisees, &c. who taught the people before Christ *appeared* as the Door of the sheep: but this does not seem to reach the depth of the requirements of the saying.

are, not *were*, because their essential nature as belonging to and being of the evil one is set forth, and the inclusion of these present Pharisees in their ranks.

but the sheep did not hear them...] This of course cannot be understood absolutely,—‘*the sheep never for one moment listened to them;*’ but, did not listen to them in the sense of becoming their disciples eventually. So that the fall of our first Parents would be no exception to this; whom of all men we must conclude, by the continuing grace and mercy of God to them after that fall, to have been of His real sheep. And since then, the same is true; however the sheep may for a while listen to these false shepherds, they do not *hear them*, so as to follow them. Those who do, belong not to the true flock.

9.] expands and fixes ver. 7. “There is no entrance for salvation into the church but by Me, whether it be for shepherd, or for sheep.” Erasmus. See Numb. xxvii. 16, 17. The sequel of the verse shaws that this combined meaning is the true one. Meyer, who understands it all of *shepherds alone*, finds great difficulty in the interpretation of the latter words: “shall go in and out before the sheep, and find pasture for them,” is certainly a forced meaning.

10.] the gracious intent of the Saviour in this;—to *give life*, and in *abundance*. This verse forms the transition from Him as *the Door*, to Him as *the Shepherd*. He is here set in opposition to *the thief* (see on ver. 8), and thus insensibly passes into the place of a *shepherd*, who has been hitherto thus opposed. Then the words, **that they might have life**, bind on to those in the last verse, “*shall find pasture*”—and **that they might have it more abundantly**: as if it had been said, not merely as a door to pass through, but actively, abundantly, to *bestow abundance of life*. We are thus prepared for—

11.] the announcement of Himself as THE GOOD SHEPHERD—the great antagonist of *the robber*—the pattern and Head of all good shepherds, as *he* of all thieves and robbers: the Messiah, in His best known and most loving office: cf. Ezek. xxxiv. 11–16, 23; xxxvii. 24, and Isa. xl. 11. But He is **the good Shepherd** in this verse, as having most eminently *the qualities of a good shepherd*, one of which is to *lay down His life* for the sheep. These words here are not so much a prophecy, as a declaration, implying however that which ver. 15 asserts explicitly.

12.] The imagery is here again somewhat changed. The false shepherds are here compared to hirelings, i.e. those who serve *merely for gain*; the *hireling* who fulfils the character implied by the word. The idea is brought in by the words “*layeth down his life for the sheep*,” which introduce the thought of a time of danger, when the true and false shepherds are distinguished.

the wolf] The purposes of this **wolf** are the same as those of the thief in ver. 10, and in the allegory he is the same;—*the great Foe of the sheep of Christ*. Lücke and De Wette deny this, and hold ‘any enemies of the theocracy’ to be meant;—but no deep view of the parable will be content with this,—see Matt. vii. 15, where the “*ravelling wolves*” are “*false prophets*,” the “*thieves and robbers*” of ver. 8;—and their chief and father would therefore be **the wolf**, just as our Lord is *the Shepherd*.

14, 15.] The knowledge of His sheep here spoken of is more than the mere *knowing by name*; it is a knowledge corresponding to the Father’s knowledge of Him;—i. e. entire, perfect, all-comprehensive: and *their* knowledge of *Him* corresponds to His of the Father,—i. e. is intimate, direct, and personal: both being bound together by holy and inseparable Love.

Beware of rendering the former clause of ver. 15, as in A.V., as an independent sentence, “*As my Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father:*” it is merely the sequel to ver. 14, and should stand as in margin, **as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father.**

the sheep] i.e. for those **my sheep**—not, for *all*; that, *however true*, is not the point brought out here: the Lord lays down His life strictly and properly, and in the depths of the divine counsel, *for those who are his sheep*.

16.] The other sheep are the *Gentiles*;—not the dispersion of the Jews, who were already in God’s *fold*. By these wonderful words, as by those in Acts xviii. 10, and by the conclusion of Matt. xxv. (see notes there), our Lord shews that, dark and miserable as the Gentile world was, *He had sheep even there*. Observe they are not *in other folds*, but scattered; see ch. xi. 52. Cf. also Eph. ii. 14 ff.

I must bring....] i.e. in the purpose and covenant of the Father. The Lord speaks of *His* bringing them, and their hearing *His* voice: meaning that His servants in His name and by His power would accomplish this work. Admirably illustrative of the converse method of speaking, which He employs Matt. xxv. 40, 45. The **one flock**, is remarkable—not **one fold**, as *characteristically, but erroneously rendered in A.V.*:—not ONE FOLD, but ONE FLOCK: no one exclusive enclosure of an outward church, but one flock, all knowing the one Shepherd and known of Him. On **one shepherd**, compare Heb. xiii. 20.

17.] *The speaking in allegories* is now over, and He speaks *plainly*,—**My Father.** In this wonderful verse lies the mystery of the love of the Father for the Son;—*because* the Son has condescended to the work of humiliation, and to earn the crown through the cross (see Phil. ii. 8, 9). The **that** here is strictly of the ultimate purpose, **in order that**. ‘Without this purpose in view,’ says Stier, ‘the Death of Christ would neither be lawful nor possible.’

18.] The truth of this voluntary rendering up was shewn by His whole sufferings, from the falling of His enemies to the ground in the garden (ch. xviii. 6) to His last words, *I commend* (render up) *my Spirit*, Luke xxiii. 46 (see note there). His resurrection also was eminently His own work, by virtue of the Spirit of the Father dwelling in and filling Him: the *power* in both these cases being the *commandment*, appointment, ordinance of the Father, from the counsel of whose will the whole mediatorial office of Christ sprung: see ch. xii. 49.

19–21.] The concluding words bind this discourse to the miracle of ch. ix., though not necessarily *in immediate connexion*.

22–39.] *Discourse at the Feast of Dedication.* It may be, that Jesus remained at, or in the neighborhood of, Jerusalem during the interval (two months) between the Feast of Tabernacles and that of the Dedication. Had He *returned to Galilee*, we should have expected some mention of it. Still, by the words **in Jerusalem**, it would seem as if a fresh period and a new visit began; for why should such a specification be made, if the narrative proceeded continuously? See on Luke ix. 51 ff.

22] This feast had become usual since the time when Judas Maccabæus purified the temple from the profanations of Antiochus. It was held on Chislev (December) 25, and seven following days: see 1 Mace. iv. 41–59; 2 Mace. x. 1–8.

it was winter] The notice is inserted to explain to Gentile readers the reason of our Lord’s walking in Solomon’s portico. This latter was on the east side of the temple, called also by Josephus, “*the Eastern porch.*” He says that it was an original work of Solomon, which had remained from the former temple.

25.] He had often told them, in unmistakeable descriptions of Himself: see ch. v. 19; viii. 36, 56, 58, &c. &c. But the great reference here is to His *works*, as in ver. 37.

26.] The difficulty of the words **as I said unto you** is considerable warrant for their genuineness: and they come much more naturally with this than with the following verse. I believe them to refer more to the *whole allegory*, than to any explicit saying of this kind; and this is shewn to my mind by the following words in ver. 27:—the link between the two, ‘*but ye hear not my voice,*’ being understood. This was an obvious deduction from the allegory, and thus it might be said, “as I said unto you.” This reference to the allegory some two months after it was spoken, has been used by the rationalists as an argument against the authenticity of the narrative. But, as Meyer observes, it in reality implies that the conflict with the Jewish authorities is here again taken up after that interval, during which it had not broken out.

27–29.] This leads to a further description of these sheep. The form of the sentence is a climax, rising through the words “**I give**” and “**out of my hand**,” to “**my Father which hath given them me**,” and “**out of my Father’s hand**.” Then the apparent diversity of the two expressions, “**out of my hand**” and “**out of my Father’s hand**,” gives occasion to the assertion in ver. 30, that Christ and the Father are ONE: one in *essence* primarily, but therefore also one in *working*, and *POWER*, and in *will*. Notice, **one** is *neuter* in gender, not masculine: the Father and the Son are not *personally* one, but *essentially*. That the Jews understood our Lord’s words to assert this essential unity, is plain from the next verse.

31.] i.e. as having spoken blasphemy, Levit. xxiv. 10 ff.

32.] See Mark vii. 37.

from my Father, because (cf. vv. 37, 38) He Himself proceeded forth from the Father, and the Father wrought in Him.

have I shewed you,—because they were part of the manifestation of Himself as the Son of God.

33.] makest thyself God is equivalent to “making himself **equal to God**,” ch. v. 18.

34.] The word **law** here is in its widest acceptation,—the whole Old Testament, as ch. xii. 34; xv. 25. The Psalm (lxxxii.) is directed against the injustice and tyranny of judges (not, the *Gentile rulers* of the world, nor, the *angels*) in Israel. And in the Psalm reference is made by “*I have said*” to previous places of Scripture where judges are so called, viz. Exod. xxi. 6; xxii. 9, 28.

35.] unto whom the word of God came, i.e. **to whom** God (in those passages) **spoke**.

The expression, **and the scripture cannot be broken** (which is not a parenthesis, but constructionally part of the sentence, depending on **if**), implies, ‘and if you cannot *explain this expression away*,—if it cannot mean nothing,—for it rests on the testimony of God’s word’—

36.] The argument is *from the greater to the less*. If in any sense *they* could be called **gods**,—how much more properly *He*, whom&c. They were only officially so *called*, only *called gods*—but *He*, the only One, sealed and hallowed by the Father, and sent into the world (the *time* referred to, in **sanctified** and **sent**, is that of the Incarnation), is essentially **God**, inasmuch as **He is the Son of God**. The deeper aim of this argument is, to shew them that the idea of *man and God being one*, was not alien from their Old Testament spirit, but set forth there in types and shadows of Him, the real God-Man. Observe **ye**, set in emphatic contrast to the authority of Scripture,—as “*he whom the Father sanctified*”... is to “*them to whom the word of God came*” above.

37, 38.] Having put the charge of *blasphemy* aside, our Lord again has recourse to the testimony of *His works*, at which He hinted ver. 32; and here, to their *character*, as admitted by them in ver. 33. ‘If they bear not the character of the Father, believe Me not: but if they do (which even yourselves admit), though ye may hate and disbelieve Me, recognize the unquestionable testimony of the works;—that ye may be led on to the higher faith of the unity of Myself and the Father.’

that ye may perceive and know] The former of these is the introductory act, the latter the abiding state, of the knowledge spoken of. See further in the notes in my Greek Test.

39.] The attempt to stone Him seems to have been abandoned, but (see ch. vii. 30) they tried again to take Him into custody: and, as before, He (miraculously?) withdrew Himself from them.

40–42.] *Jesus departs to Bethany beyond Jordan, and is there believed on by many.*

40.] On Bethany beyond Jordan, see ch. i. 28 and note.

41.] The locality reminds them of John and his testimony. The remark seems to have a double tendency:—to relate their now confirmed persuasion, that though John did not fulfil their expectations by shewing a sign or working miracles, yet he was a *true prophet*, and really, as he professed, the forerunner of this Person, who in consequence must be, what John had declared Him to be, the Messiah. And (ver. 42) the result followed;—*many believed on Him*. “The word **John** repeated ver. 42, belongs to the simplicity of the speech, which is reproduced literally as spoken, and expresses the honour paid by the people to the holy man whose memory still lived among them.” Meyer.

John: Chapter 11

CHAP. XI., XII.] JESUS, DELIVERED TO DEATH, THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE, AND THE JUDGMENT.

XI. 1–44.] *The raising of Lazarus.* On the omission of this, the chief of our Lord’s miracles, by the three other Evangelists, see the Introduction, ch. i. §v. 1.

1. But] This conjunction here is not merely a word of passage to another subject, but expresses a contrast to the sojourn in Peræa, and thus conveys the reason why our Lord’s retirement (see ch. x. 40) was broken in upon.

Bethany is designated as ‘*the village of Martha and Mary*,’ to distinguish it from that Bethany beyond Jordan, which has just been alluded to (not named, perhaps to avoid the confusion), ch. x. 40. Mary and Martha are mentioned as already well known from the current apostolic teaching (see Introduction, chap. v. §ii, 11).

2.] Another reference to a fact which, as our Lord prophesied, was known wherever the Gospel was preached. This reference containing, as it does, the expression **the Lord** or **our Lord**, implying, ‘as we all well know,’—is a striking illustration of that prophecy. St. John himself relates the occurrence, ch. xii. 3, being necessary for the course of his narrative.

3.] The message (see vv. 21, 32) evidently was *to request the Lord to come and heal him*: and implies that the sickness was of a dangerous kind.

4.] The only right understanding of this answer, and our Lord’s whole proceeding here is,—that *He knew and foresaw all from the first*,—as well the termination of Lazarus’s sickness and his being raised again, as the part which this miracle would bear in bringing about the close of His own ministry.

is not unto death] Its *result* as regards Lazarus will not be death (see Matt. ix. 24 and parallel places, and notes):—but (see ch.

ii. 11; ix. 3) it has a higher purpose,—the glory of God;—the glorification, by its means, of the Son of God. And this *glorification*—how was it accomplished? By *this miracle leading to His death*,—which in St. John's diction is so frequently implied in the word *glorification*. It need hardly be remarked, with Olshausen and Trench, that the glorifying of the Son of God in Lazarus *himself* is subordinately implied. Men are not mere tools, but temples, of God.

It is doubtful whether these words were the answer sent back to the sisters, or were said to the disciples. In either case, they evidently carried a double meaning, as again those in ver. 11.

5.] explains he **whom thou lovest** in ver. 3.

6.] therefore connects with ver. 4, 'Having then said this,—although He loved, &c., He abode,'&c.

In all probability Lazarus *was dead*, when He spoke the words ver. 4;—or at all events before the messenger returned.

7.] The question, why our Lord did not go immediately on receiving the message, is not to be answered by any secondary reasons, such as the trial of the faith of those concerned, or the pressing nature of His own ministry in Peraea,—but by referring back to ver. 4,—because, for the glory of God, He would have the miracle happen as it did and no otherwise.

9, 10.] Our Lord's answer is first general, vv. 9, 10,—then particular, ver. 11.

Are there not twelve hours in the day?] See on ch. ix. 4, where the same thought is expressed. But here it is carried further, —'I have a fixed time during which to work, appointed me by my Father; during that time I fear no danger, I walk in His light, even as the traveller in the light of this world by day: and (by inference) ye too are safe, walking in this light, which light to you is Myself,—walking with Me:—whosoever walks without this light,—without Me,—without the light of the divine purpose illumining the path of duty, stumbles,—because he has no light in him.' **In him**, for 'the light of the body is the eye,' and the light must be *in us* in order to guide us. Shut it out by blinding the eyes, and we are in darkness. So too of spiritual light.

The twelve-hour division of the day was common among the Jews by this time, being probably borrowed from Babylon. As the day in Palestine varied in length from 14h. 12m. in summer to 9h. 48m. in winter, these hours must also have varied considerably in length at the different seasons. I may remark that this verse refutes the fancy of Townson and others, that St. John adopts the so-called Asiatic method of reckoning time: see on ch. i. 40; iv. 6, al.

11.] The *special reason* for going, which the disciples appear not to have borne in mind, having probably supposed from ver. 4 that Lazarus would recover.

Our friend] Bengel notices, with what condescension our Lord shares the friendship with His disciples. And the word **our** gives a reason why *they* should go too.

This term, **is fallen asleep**, might have recalled to *three at least* of the disciples that other saying, Matt. ix. 24. But the former expression, "*is not unto death*," had not been understood,—and that error ruled in their minds.

12. if he is fallen asleep] They evidently understand the sleep announced to them by Jesus as a physical fact, and a token of a favourable crisis, and think that his recovery will probably be the result.

15.] "Notice that Jesus rejoices not over the sad event itself, but that *He was not there*, which might prove salutary to the disciples' faith." Meyer. The **intent**, [**that**] **ye may believe**, is not to be taken as the *great end* of the miracle (expressed in ver. 4), but the end as regarded *them*.

nevertheless breaks off the discourse, implying that enough had been said.

16.] The meaning of **Thomas**, in the Aramaic, which was the dialect of the country, is the same as that of the Latin *Didymus*, viz. **a twin**.

The remark means, **Let us also go** (with our Master), **that we may die with him** (not, with Lazarus, as Grot.). This is in exact accord with the character of Thomas, as shewn in ch. xiv. 5; xx. 25;—ever ready to take the dark view, but deeply attached to his Lord.

17.] Jesus remained two days after the receipt of the message: one day the journey would occupy: so that Lazarus must have died on the day of the messenger's being sent, and have been buried that evening, according to Jewish custom: see ver. 39, and Acts v. 6–10.

18.] The geographical notice is given, to account for the occurrence detailed in the next verse. A **furlong** or **stadium**, was $\frac{1}{8}$ of a Roman mile. Meyer remarks, that the use of *the past tense*, **was nigh**, does not necessarily imply that the places no longer existed when the Apostle wrote, but may arise from the word occurring in context: with a history which is past. But seeing that *St. John alone* uses this form of designation (compare ch. xviii. 1; xix. 41), and that he probably wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, it is more natural (as Meyer himself confesses) to explain the past tense by his regarding Jerusalem and its neighbourhood as laid waste at the time when he published his Gospel.

19.] Lightfoot gives an account of the ceremonies practised during the thirty days of mourning.

20.] The behaviour of the two sisters is quite in accordance with their character, Luke x. 38–42: and thus we have a most interesting point of connexion between two gospels so widely various in their contents and character. Stier thinks, as also Trench, that Mary *did not hear* of the approach of Jesus, and that we must not bring the characters to bear on this case. But this is at least questionable.

21.] This saying has evidently been the leading thought of the four days since their brother's death. Mary repeats it, ver. 32.

22.] She seems to express some expectation of the raising of her brother; but it is too great a thing for her to venture to mention:—possibly she had not dared to form the thought fully, but had some vague feeling after help, such as she knew He would give. I can hardly see, as some have done, an unworthy spirit in the form of her expression, in ver. 22. It was said in the simplicity of her faith, which, it is true, was not yet a fully ripened faith: but it differs little from our Lord's own words, ver. 41. The repetition of the word **God** is to be noticed, as expressive of her faith in the unity of purpose and action between Jesus and God.

23.] I believe these words of our Lord to contain no allusion to the *immediate* restoration of Lazarus; but to be designedly used to lead on to the requisite faith in her mind.

24.] She understands the words rightly, but gently repels the insufficient comfort of his ultimate resurrection.

25, 26.] These words, as Stier observes, are the *central point* of the history; the *great testimony to Himself*, of which the subsequent miracle is *the proof*. The *intention* of the saying seems to have been, to awaken in Martha the faith that He could raise her brother from the dead, in its highest and proper form. This He does by announcing *Himself* (it is the expressed emphatic personal pronoun,—**I, and no other...**) as ‘THE RESURRECTION’ (meaning,—that resurrection in the last day shall be only *by my Power*, and therefore I can raise now as well), and more than that, THE LIFE ITSELF: so that **he that believeth in me** (i. e. Lazarus, *in her mind*), **even though he have died, shall live; and he that liveth** (physically;—‘is not yet dead’) **and believeth in me, shall not die for evermore**: i.e. ‘faith in Me is the source of *life*, both here and hereafter; *and those who have it, have Life, so that they shall NEVER DIE;*’ *physical death* being overlooked and disregarded, in comparison with that which is really and only *death*. The word **liveth** must be (against Lampe, Olshausen, and Stier) taken of *physical life*, for it stands opposed to **though he have died**.

he that believeth in me is the subject of both clauses; in the former it is said that he “*though he have died, shall live:*” in the second, that he “*living and believing, shall never die.*” Olshausen’s remark, that *living and dying*, in the second clause, must *both* be physical, *if one is*, is wrong; the antithesis consisting, in both clauses, in the reciprocation of the two senses, physical and spiritual; and serving in the latter clause, as a key hereafter to the condition of Lazarus, when *raised* from the dead.

There can hardly be any reference in ver. 26 to *the state of the living faithful at the Lord’s coming* (1 Cor. xv. 51),—for although the Apostle there, speaking of believers primarily and especially, uses the first person,—the saying would be equally true of unbelievers, on whose bodies the change from *the corruptible* to *the incorruptible* will equally pass, and of whom the “*shall never die*” here would be equally true,—whereas the saying is one setting forth an exclusive privilege of the man *that liveth and believeth on me*. Besides, such an interpretation would set aside all reference to Lazarus, or to present circumstances.

27.] Her confession, though embracing the great central point of the truth in the last verse, does not enter fully into it. Nor does she (ver. 40) seem to have adequately apprehended its meaning. “That He spoke great things about Himself, she knew: but in what sense He spoke them, she did not know: and therefore when asked one thing, she replies another.” Euthymius.

I—emphatic: I for my part: and the word **believe** is in the original in the perfect tense, “*have believed and continue to believe:*” i.e. ‘*have convinced myself, and firmly believe*’

28.] Her calling her sister is characteristic of one who (as in Luke x. 40) had not been much habituated herself to listen to his instructions, but knew this to be the delight of Mary. Besides this, she evidently has hopes raised, though of a very faint and

indefinite kind.

secretly] “Lest the Jews who were present should know it, and should perhaps give information against Him to those who were conspiring against His life.” Euthymius. This fear was realized (ver. 46).

calleth thee] This is not recorded. Stier thinks that the Lord had not actually asked for her, but that Martha sees such an especial fitness for her hearing in the words of vv. 25, 26, that she uses this expression. But is it not somewhat too plainly asserted, to mean only *calling by inference*? Surely, we must regard Martha’s words as proving it to have been a fact.

31.] to weep there—as is the custom even now in the East: see an affecting account in Lamartine’s Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, English translation, vol. ii. pp. 76–78.

32.] The words of Mary are fewer, and her action more impassioned, than those of her sister: she was perhaps interrupted by the arrival of the Jews: cf. ver. 33.

33.] In explaining this difficult verse, two things must be borne in mind: (1) that the word rendered by the A.V. “*groaned*” can bear but one meaning,—the expression of *indignation* and *rebuke, not of sorrow*. This has been here acknowledged by all the expositors who have paid any attention to the usage of the word. (2) That both from the words, “*When Jesus saw her weeping,*” &c.,—from the expression “*he troubled himself,*” and from ver. 35,—the feeling in the Lord was clearly one of *rising sympathy*, which vented itself at last in tears. These two things being premised, I think the meaning to be, that Jesus, with the tears of sympathy already rising and overcoming His speech, *checked them, so as to be able to speak the words following*. I would understand the words as expressing the temporary check given to the flow of His tears,—*the effort used to utter the following question*. And I would thus divest the self-restraint of all stoical and unworthy character, and consider it as *merely physical*, requiring indeed an act of the will, and a self-troubling,—a complication of feeling,—but implying no deliberate disapproval of the rising emotion, which indeed immediately after is suffered to prevail. What minister has not, when burying the dead in the midst of a weeping family, felt the emotion and made the effort here described? And surely this was one of the things in which He was made like unto His brethren. ‘Thus Bengel: “Jesus for the present austerely repressed his tears, and presently, ver. 38, they broke forth. So much the greater was their power, when they were shed.”

Meyer’s explanation deserves mention; that our Lord was indignant at seeing the Jews, His bitter enemies, mingling their hypocritical tears with the true ones of the bereaved sister. But, not to say how unworthy this seems of the Person and occasion, the explanation will find no place in ver. 38: for surely the question of the Jews in ver. 37 is not enough to justify it. Still perhaps, any contribution to the solution of this difficult word is not to be summarily rejected.

in spirit, here, corresponds to “*within himself*,” ver. 38.

Indignation over unbelief, and sin, and death the fruit of sin, doubtless lay in the background; but to see it *in the words* (with Olsh., Stier, and Trench) seems unnatural.

troubled himself is understood by Meyer, and perhaps rightly, as describing an outward motion of the body,—**He shuddered:** and so Euthymius, “He trembled, as is usual with those who are thus affected.” Cyril’s comment is to the same effect: that it was His divinity, rebuking, and in conflict with, His human feelings, which caused His frame to shudder.

35–38.] It is probable that the second set of Jews (ver. 37) spoke with a scoffing and hostile purport: for St. John seldom uses **but** as a mere copula, but generally as expressing a contrast: see vv. 46, 49, 51.

It is (as Trench remarks) a point of accuracy in the narrative, that these dwellers in Jerusalem should refer to a miracle so well known among themselves, rather than to the former raisings of the dead in Galilee, of which they probably may have heard, but naturally would not thoroughly believe on rumour only. Again, of *raising Lazarus* none of them seem to have thought, only of preventing his death.

This second *being greatly moved* of our Lord I would refer to the same reason as the first. “He wept, as allowing nature to manifest herself:.... there again he rebukes the affections.” Euthymius. Only he assigns a *didactic purpose, to teach us moderation in our tears*; I should rather believe the self-restraint to have been exercised as a preparation for what followed.

The caves were generally horizontal, natural or artificial,—with recesses in the sides, where the bodies were laid. There is no necessity here for supposing the entrance to have been otherwise than horizontal, as the word *cave* would lead us to believe. Graves were of both kinds: we have the vertically sunk mentioned Luke xi. 44. Compare Isa. xxii. 16; 2 Chron. xvi. 14; 2 Kings xxiii. 16.

Probably, from this circumstance, as from ‘the Jews’ coming to condole,—and the costly ointment (ch. xii. 3),—the family

was wealthy.

39.] The corpse had not been embalmed, but merely ‘wrapped in linen clothes with spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury,’—see ch. xix. 40, and ver. 44 below. The expression, **the sister of him that was dead**, as Meyer remarks, notes the natural horror of the *sister's heart* at what was about to be done.

There is no reason to avoid the assumption of the plain fact (see below) stated in **by this time he stinketh**. I cannot see that any monstrous character (as asserted by Olshausen and Trench) is given to the miracle by it; any more than such a character can be predicated of *restoring the withered hand*. In fact, the very *act* of death is the beginning of decomposition. I have no hesitation, with almost all the ancient, and many of the best modern Commentators, in assuming her words as *expressing a fact*, and indeed with Stier, believing them to be spoken *not as a supposition, but as a (sensible) fact*. The entrances to these vaults were not *built up*,—merely defended, by a stone being rolled to them, from the jackals and beasts. of prey.

40.] I can hardly think she supposed merely that Jesus desired to *look on the face of the dead*;—she expected *something* was about to be done, but in her anxiety for decorum (Luke x. 40) she was willing to avoid the consequence of opening the cave, This feeling Jesus here rebukes, by referring her to the plain duty of simple faith, insisted on by Him before (in verses 25, 26? or in some other teaching?) as the condition of beholding the glory of God (not merely in the event about to follow,—for that was seen by many who did not believe,—but in a deeper sense,—that of the unfolding of the *Resurrection and the Life* in the personal being).

41, 42.] In the filial relation of the Lord Jesus to the Father, all power is *given* to Him: the Son can do nothing of Himself:—and during His humiliation on earth, these acts of power were done by Him, not by that glory of His own which He had laid aside, but by the mighty working of the Father *in Him*, and in answer to His prayer: the difference between Him and us in this respect being, that His prayer *was always heard*,—even (Heb. v. 7) that in Gethsemane. And this, **Thou hast heard me**, He states here for the benefit of the standers-by, that they might know the truth of His repeated assertions of His mission from the Father. At the same time He guards this, ver. 42, from future misconstruction, as though He had no more power than *men* who pray, by **I knew that Thou hearest me always**;—‘because Thou and I are One.’

When He prayed, does not appear. Probably in Peræa, before the declaration in ver. 4.

43.] Some suppose that the revivification had taken place before the previous thanksgiving of our Lord,—and that these words were *merely a summoning forth*. But this is highly improbable. The comparison of ch. v. 25, 28, which are analogically applicable, makes it clear that **they who have heard, shall live**, is the physical, as well as the spiritual order of things.

To **cry out**, *shout aloud*, was not His wont; see Matt. xii. 19. This cry signified *that greater one*, which all shall hear, ch. v. 28.

44.] The word rendered **grave-clothes** is explained to mean a sort of band, of rush or tow, used to swathe infants, and to bind up the dead. It does not appear whether the bands were wound about each limb, as in the Egyptian mummies, so as merely to *impede* motion—or were loosely wrapped round both feet and both hands, so as to hinder any free movement altogether. The latter seems most probable, and has been supposed by many. Basil speaks of the *bound man coming forth* from the sepulchre, as *a miracle in a miracle*: and ancient pictures represent Lazarus gliding forth from the tomb, not stepping; which apparently is right.

The napkin, or handkerchief, appears to have tied up his chin.

let him go, probably, to his home.

45–57.] THE DEATH OF JESUS THE LIFE OF THE WORLD. *Consequences of the miracle. Meeting of the Sanhedrim; and final determination, on the prophetic intimation of the High Priest, to put Jesus to death. He retires to Ephraim.*

46.] We must take care rightly to understand this. In the last verse, it is not *many of the Jews which had come*, but **many of the Jews**, viz. **those which had come**, “many... to wit, *those that came*.” All these believed on Him (see a similar case in ch. viii. 30 ff). Then, *some of them*, viz. of those which had come, and believed, went, &c. The **but** (see on ver. 37) certainly shows that this was done with a hostile intent: not in *doubt* as to the miracle, any more than in the case of the blind man, ch. ix., but with a view to stir up the rulers yet more against Him. This Evangelist is very simple, and at the same time very consistent, in his use of particles: almost throughout his Gospel the great subject, the manifestation of the Glory of Christ, is carried onward by **then**, or **therefore**, whereas **but** as generally prefaces the development of the antagonist manifestation of hatred and rejection of Him. If it seem strange that this hostile step should be taken by persons who *believed on Jesus*, we at least find in the passage above cited, ch. vii. 30 ff

48.] They evidently regarded the result of ‘all believing on Him,’ as likely to be, that Me would be *set up as king*: which would soon bring about the ruin here mentioned. Augustine understands it differently: that, all men being persuaded by Him to peaceful lives, they would have no one to join them in revolt against the Romans; but this seems forced: for no coming of the Romans would in that ease be provoked.

our place] not, *the temple* (the *holy* place, Acts vi. 13), but **our place**, as in reff.: i.e. our *local habitation*, and our *national existence*. Both these literally came to pass.

Whether this fear was earnestly expressed, or only as a covert for their enmity, does not appear. The word **our** is emphatic, detecting the real cause of their anxiety. Respecting this man’s pretensions, they do not pretend to decide: all they know is that if he is to go on thus, **THEIR** standing is gone.

49–52.] The counsel is given in subtlety, and was intended by Caiaphas in the sense of political expediency only. But it pleased God to make him, as High Priest, the special though involuntary organ of the Holy Spirit, and thus to utter by him a prophecy of the death of Christ and its effects. That this is the only sense to be given, appears from the consideration that the whole of verses 51, 52 cannot for a moment be supposed to have been in the mind of Caiaphas; and to divide it, and suppose the latter part to be the addition of the Evangelist, is quite unjustifiable.

high priest that year] repeated again, ch. xviii. 13. He was High Priest during the whole Procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, eleven years. In the words **that year**, there is no intimation conveyed that the High Priesthood was changed every year, which it *was not*: but we must understand the words as directing attention to ‘*that (remarkable) year*,’ without any reference to time past or to come. **THAT YEAR of great events** had Caiaphas as its High Priest. See on ver. 57.

Ye know nothing at all] Probably various methods of action had been suggested.

Observe **people** here, the usual term for the *chosen people*, and then *nation*, when it is regarded as a nation among the nations: compare also ver. 52.

not of himself] i.e. **not merely of himself**, but under the influence of the Spirit, who caused him to utter words, of the full meaning of which he had no conception.

being high priest... he prophesied] There certainly was a belief, probably arising originally from the use of the Urim and Thummim, that the High Priest, and indeed every priest, had some knowledge of dreams and utterance of prophecy. Philo the Jew says, “A true priest is *ipso facto* a prophet.” That this belief existed, y account for the expression here; however does not confirm it in all cases, but asserts the fact that the Spirit in *this case* made use of him as High Priest, for this purpose. This confirms the above view of the words **that year**, here again repeated. See on ver. 49.

that Jesus was about to die...] the purport (unknown to himself) of his prophecy. And the term **the nation**, is guarded from misunderstanding by what follows.

the children of God] are those who are called by the same name in ch. i. 12, the “*ordained to eternal life*” of Acts xiii. 48 (where see note), among all nations; compare ch. x. 16.

53.] The *decision*, to put Him to death, is *understood*: and from that day they plotted **that they might slay Him** (not, *how* they might slay Him).

54.] Observe the word **Jews** here, used as designating the official body. He was still among *Jews* at Ephraim. This city is mentioned 2 Chron. xiii. 19 in connexion with Bethel, as also by Josephus. It was near to the wilderness, i.e. to the desert of Judah. Its situation is at present unknown. Robinson supposes it to be the same with Ophrah (Josh. xviii. 23: 1 Sam. xiii. 17: not Judg. vi. 11, 24; viii. 27) and Ephron of the O.T. (2 Chron. xiii. 19), and the modern et-Taiyibeh, twenty Roman miles from Jerusalem.

55.] The words, **the country**, do not mean *that country*, spoken of in the last verse, but, *the country generally*. They went up thus early, that they might have time to purify themselves from any Levitical uncleanness, that they might be able to keep the P: over; see Num. ix. 10: 2 Chron. xxx. 17: Acts xxi. 24, 26; xxiv. 18.

57.] The verse depends on the insertion or omission of the “*both*” before “*the chief priests*.” *Without* it, the verse is merely an explanation of the people’s question, which was asked in consequence of the order having been issued by the chief priests&c.: *with* it, it would mean, ‘And besides, the chief priests’&c.; i.e. ‘not only did the people question, but’&c. The former is in my view most probable; for the command having been given would satisfactorily account for the questioning, and not be stated merely as co-ordinate with it.

John: Chapter 12

CHAP. XII. 1–36.] PROPHETIC ANTICIPATIONS OF THE LORD' S GLORIFICATION BY DEATH.

1–11.] The arrival, and anointing, at Bethany, according to the ordinary sense of the words, **six days before the passover**, was on the *eighth* of the month Nisan, if the passover was on the fourteenth. That day was a Sabbath; but this makes no difficulty, as we know not from what point our Lord came, or whether He arrived at the commencement of the Sabbath, i.e. sunset,—or a little after, on Friday evening, from Jericho.

2. they made him a supper] It is not said *who*. It was, from Matthew and Mark, in the house of *Simon the leper*. From Lazarus being there, and Martha serving, he may have been a near relative of theirs. See notes on Matthew.

Lazarus is mentioned throughout the incident, as forming an element in the unfolding of the hatred of the Jews which issued in the Lord's death: notice the climax, from mere connecting mention in ver. 1, then nearer connexion in ver. 2,—to his being the cause of the Jews flocking to Bethany in ver. 9,—and the joint object with Jesus of the enmity of the chief priests, in ver. 10.

3.] On **spike-nard**, see note on Mark.

anointed the feet of Jesus] His *head*, according to Matthew and Mark. See note on Luke vii. 38.

4.] For *Judas*, we have “*His disciples*,” Matthew,—“*some*,” merely, Mark. See note on Matthew, ver. 8.

The clause, **which was about to betray him**, is not inserted, nor are any such notices in St. John, without significance. It has a material connexion with the narrative in hand. Only one with thoughts alien from Jesus could have originated such a murmur. And on the other hand, it may well be, as some have supposed, that by the rebuke of the Lord on this occasion, the traitorous scheme of Judas, long hidden in his inmost soul, may have been stimulated to immediate action.

5. three hundred pence] Common (with the slight difference of the insertion of “*more than*”) to our narrative, and Mark. The sum is about 9*l.* 16*s.* of our money.

6.] The word rendered **bag** originally signified a box in which to keep the reeds, or *tongues*, of wind instruments:—thus, generally, any kind of pouch, or money-chest.

took away] The word *may* have the sense given in the A.V., “*bare*,” “*carried*:” but it seems hardly possible, with St. John use of the same word in the original in ch. xx. 15 before us (“*if thou have borne him hence*”), altogether to deny that the sense of *carrying off*, i.e. *purloining*, may be here intended. Of this sense we have examples; see my Gr. Test. And so this place was interpreted by Origen, Theophylact, and others.

7.] See note on Matt. xxvi. 12. To suppose that the ointment was a remnant from that used at the burial of Lazarus, is not only fanciful, but at variance with the character of the deed as apparent in the narrative. The common reading, “*against the day of my burying she hath kept this*,” seems to be an adaptation to Mark xiv. 8, in order to escape from the difficulty of understanding how she could *keep for His burial*, what she *poured out now*. Meyer understands the words to apply to the *remnant*: but Luthardt rightly observes, that the history clearly excludes the idea of a remnant. I understand the words, which, like all our Lord's anticipatory expressions, have something enigmatical in them, of her whole act, regarded as a thing past, but spoken of in the abstract, as to be allowed or disallowed: **Let her keep it for the day of my burial:** not meaning a *future* day or act, but the present one, as involving that future one.

8.] See note on Mark, vv. 7, 8.

9 ff.] Remember here, as elsewhere in John, the **Jews** are not *the people*, but the rulers, and persons of repute: the representatives of the Jewish *opposition* to Jesus.

10.] consulted, not, ‘*came to a (formal) resolution*,’ but **were in the mind,—had an intention:** see Acts v. 33; xv. 37.

The chief priests, named here and in ch. xi. 57, were of the sect of the Sadducees; and therefore disbelieved the *fact* of the raising of Lazarus; only viewing him as one whom it would be desirable to put out of the way, as an object of popular attention in connexion with Jesus.

11. were going away (to Bethany)]. The word contains in it the sense of *mere falling away*, viz. from under the hand and power of the chief priests.

12–19.] The triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Matt. xxi. 1–17. Mark xi. 1–11. Luke xix. 29–44. On the chronology, see note on Matt. xxi. 1. **12.] On the next day**, ie. on the *Sunday*;—see on ver. 1.

when they heard] From the multitude who had returned from Bethany, ver. 9. The order of the narrative seems to require that these people should have visited Bethany late on the Sabbath, after sunset, and the anointing.

13. the branches of the palm trees] The articles shew that the palm trees were on the spot: or perhaps that the custom was usual at such festivities.

14–16.] The Evangelist seems to suppose his readers already acquainted with the circumstances of the triumphal entry, and therefore relates it thus compendiously.

The **having found** does not involve any discrepancy with the three Evangelists, but is a compendious term, implying their details.

15.] The prophecy is more fully cited by St. Matthew.

16.] Important, as shewing that this, and probably other prophetic citations under similar circumstances, were the effect of the light poured into the minds of the Apostles by the Holy Spirit after the Ascension.

they had done these things unto him] viz. the going out to meet Him, strewing clothes and branches in the way, and shouting ‘Hosanna’ before Him: also perhaps, the setting Him on the ass, implied in the concise narrative. Notice the thrice-repeated **these things** each time signifying “*this which was written by the prophet*,” “*the above citation*.”

17.] The testimony which they bore is given in Luke xix. 37, 38.

18.] I see no necessity for supposing this multitude distinct from that in the last verse. We have had no account of any multitude *coming from Bethany with Him*,—nor does this narrative imply it: and surely **the multitude** in the two verses must mean the same persons. The also here does not imply another *multitude*, but **And on this account the multitude also went out to meet Him:** i.e. their coming out to meet Him and their *testimony* on the Mount of Olives, had one and the same cause,—the raising of Lazarus.

19.] The term **gone away** can hardly be altogether without allusion to the fact, or likelihood, of *apostasy from Judaism*. It is used to signify entire devotion to Him whithersoever He might lead them: and thus implies *escape* and alienation from themselves.

20–36.] FUTURE SPREAD OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AMONG GENTILES FROM THE DEATH OF JESUS. *Some Greeks desire to see Jesus. His discourse thereupon.*

20.] These **Greeks** were not *Grecian Jews*,—who would not have been so called: but *Gentiles*, ‘proselytes of the gate,’ who were in the habit of coming up to the feast; see ch. vii. 35, and note: also Acts viii. 27.

21.] For what reason *Philip* was selected, it is impossible to say. ‘The form of his name is Greek, and may imply some connexion with Grecian Jews, who may have been friends or relatives of these Greeks. If they were from the neighbourhood of Bethsaida, they would indeed have been familiar with the person of Jesus:—but what they here requested was evidently a private interview.

22.] Andrew (ch. i. 45) was of the same city as Philip: and this reason of Philip conferring with him is perhaps implied in the words **which was from Bethsaida of Galilee**. Bengel remarks on this touch of nature: “when associated with his companion, he makes bold, and does it.”

23.] Did these Greeks see (i. e. speak with) Jesus or not? Certainly *not*, if I understand His discourse rightly. But they may have been present, at, and have understood it. The substance of His answer (made to Philip and Andrew, not to the Greeks) is, that the time was now come for His glorification, which should draw all nations to Him:—but that glorification must be accomplished by His Death. The very appearance of these Greeks is to Him a token that His glorification is at hand. Stier strikingly says, “These men from the West at the end of the Life of Jesus, set forth the same as the Magi from the East at its beginning:—but they come to the *Cross* of the King, as those to His *cradle*.” The rejection of the Jews for their unbelief is the secondary subject, and is commented on by the Evangelist, vv. 37–43.

24.] Meyer thinks, that our Lord begins His declaration with the *double asseveration verily, verily*, on account of the slowness of the mind of the disciples to receive the announcements of His Death. But St. John *always* uses “verily, verily.” The *grain of wheat* perishes, and is *not apparent* (as the seeds of dicotyledonous plants are) *in the new plant*:—see 1 Cor. xv. 36. The saying is more than a mere parabolic similitude: the divine Will, which has fixed the law of the springing up of the wheat-corn, has also determined the law of the glorification of the Son of Man, and the one in analogy with the other: i.e. both *through Death*. The symbolism here lies at the root of that in ch. vi., where Christ is *the BREAD of life*.

it abideth by itself alone, with its life uncommunicated, lived only within its own limits, and not passing on.

25.] And this same divine Law prevails for *the disciples*, as well as for their Master:—see Matt. x. 39 and note. But the saying here proclaims more plainly its true extent,—by its immediate connexion with ver. 24 and by the words, **unto life eternal**.

The word **soul** (or, *life*, but here better, *soul*) is not *really* in a double sense: as the wheat-corn retains its identity, though it die, so the soul: so that the two senses are, in their depth, but one. Notice, that the **soul** involves the *life* in both cases, and must not be taken in the present acceptation of that term.

26.] Connexion:—The ministering to, or intimate union with, Christ (the position of Philip and Andrew and the rest, and that into which these Greeks seemed desirous to enter) implies *following Him*,—and that, through tribulation to glory.

where I am] The word refers, not to the place of our Lord at that moment, but to His essential, true place, i.e. (ch. xvii. 24) in the glory of the Father.

him will the Father honour] By glorifying him in My glorification, ch. xvii. 24.

27.] Bengel observes that the horror of death and the ardour of obedience were in conflict. And to express both these *together* in human speech was impossible: therefore our Lord exclaims, **What shall I say?**

The following words, **Father, save me from this hour**, must not be taken interrogatively, as if our Lord were doubting whether to say them or not: for thus the whole sense is destroyed, besides the sentiment being most unworthy of Him who uttered it. The prayer is a *veritable prayer*; and answers to the prophetic Messianic prayers in the Psalms, which thus run—‘My soul is troubled; Lord, help me’ (Ps. lxxix. 1; xl. 12, 13; xxv. 17; vi. 3, 4, al.); and to that prayer afterwards in Gethsemane, Matt. xxvi. 39.

for this cause] The misunderstanding of these words has principally led to the erroneous punctuation just noticed. **for this cause** really means, “*in order that I may be saved from this hour:*” i.e. ‘I came to this hour for this very purpose,—*that I might be saved from this hour:*’ i.e. ‘*the going into, and exhausting this hour, this cup, is the very appointed way of my glorification.*’ This interpretation does not, as Luthardt says, *fall* if we give up the interrogative punctuation of the previous clause, but holds equally good when that is relinquished. The other interpretation of the words **for this cause**, that of Meyer and others, is, *that Thy Name may be glorified*. But surely this is to do violence to the order of thought. This particular does not come in till the next clause, and cannot without an improbable transposition be drawn into this.

28.] The glorifying *the Name* of the *Father* can only take place by the glorification of *the Son*; and this latter only by *His death*: so that this is the ‘ardour of obedience’ triumphant.

a voice from heaven] This ‘voice’ can no otherwise be understood, than as a plain articulate sound, miraculously spoken, heard by all, and variously interpreted. So all the ancients, and the best of the modern expositors. On the saying of the crowd (ver. 29) has been built the erroneous and unworthy notion, that it *was* only thunder, but understood by the Lord and the disciples to mean as here stated.

I have glorified it] In the manifestation hitherto made of the Son of God, imperfect as it was (see Matt. xvi. 16, 17); in all Old Testament type and prophecy; in Creation; and indeed before the world was made.

The word **again** here implies no mere repetition, but an intensification, of the glorification a **yet once more**: and this time fully and finally.

29.] Some *heard words*, but did not apprehend their meaning; others *a sound*, but no words. I should rather believe this difference to have been proportioned to each man’s inner relation to Christ, than fortuitous.

30.] The voice had been heard by those, who did not apprehend its meaning, *as thunder*. But the words, **this voice**, could not by any possibility have been said to them, *if it had only thundered*.

Our Lord does not say that the assurance was *not made* for *His* sake:—He had prayed, and His prayer had been answered:—but that it had not been thus *outwardly expressed* for *His*, but for *their* sake. This is likewise true in the case of all testimonies to Him; and especially of those two other voices from heaven,—at His Baptism and His Transfiguration.

Those addressed in the words, **for your sakes**, are the whole multitude, not merely the disciples. All heard, and all *might have* understood the voice: see ch. xi. 42.

31.] All this is a comment on the declaration, that **the hour was come**, ver. 23: and now a different side of the subject is taken up, and one having immediate reference to the occasion: viz. the drawing of the Gentile world to Him.

Now... now] He speaks of Himself as having actually entered the hour of His passion, and views the result as already come.

the judgment of this world is not, as Chrysostom, Augustine, and others think, ‘*the deliverance* of this world from the devil;’—nor, ‘*decision concerning this world*,’ *who* is to possess it (Bengel):—but (see ch. xvi. 11) **judgment**, properly so called, the work of the Spirit who was to come, on the world, of which it is said that “*the whole world lieth in wickedness (the wicked one)*,” 1 John v. 19.

the prince of this world] The “*prince of the age*” of the Jews, Satan, the “*god of this world*” of 2 Cor. iv. 4: see also Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12. Observe it is **shall be cast out**, not “*is cast out*,” because the casting out shall be gradual, as the *drawing* in the next verse. But after the death of Christ the casting out *began*, and its firstfruits were, the coming in of the Gentiles into the Church.

32. if I be lifted up] See the references. Here there is more perhaps implied than in either of those places: viz. *the Death, with all its consequences*. The Saviour crucified, is in fact the Saviour glorified; so that the exalting to God’s right hand is set forth by that uplifting on the Cross. There is a fine touch of pathos, corresponding to the feeling of ver. 27, in the words, **if I be lifted up**. The Lord Jesus, though *knowing that the lifting up would really take place*, yet in the weakness of His humanity, puts Himself into this seeming doubt, ‘*if is so to be:*’ cf. Matt. xxvi. 42. All missed by the shallow and unscholarlike rendering “*when I shall be lifted up*,” which the original will not bear.

will draw all men unto me] By the diffusion of the Spirit in the Church: manifested in the preaching of the Word mediately, and the pleading of the Spirit immediately. Before the glorification of Christ, the Father drew men to the Son (see ch. vi. 44 and note), but now the Son Himself to Himself. Then it was “no man can come except the Father draw him:” now the Son draws *all*. And, *to Himself*, as thus uplifted, thus exalted;—the great object of Faith: see ch. xi. 52.

33. by what manner of death] The words here can hardly point to more than the external circumstances of His death. Some have found in the expression the whole *consequences* and *character* of His Death; but see ch. xviii. 32.

St. John does not say that this was *all* that the “*lifting up*” meant, but that it was its first and obvious reference.

34.] In such passages as Ps. lxxxix. 36, and perhaps cx. 4; Dan. vii. 13, 14.

the law must be taken in its wider sense, as including the whole of the Old Testament: see ch. x. 34.

The actual words, **the Son of man must be lifted up**, had not been on this occasion used by Jesus; but in His discourse with Nicodemus, ch. iii. 14, and perhaps in other parts of His teaching which have not been recorded.

who is this Son of man?] They thought some other Son of Man, not the Messiah, was meant; because this lifting up (which they saw implied *taking away*) was inapplicable to their idea of the Messiah, usually known as the Son of Man.

35.] He does not answer them, but enjoins them to make use of the time of His presence yet left them.

while does not exactly express the sense of the conjunction in the original: it is rather, walk, according to your present state of privilege in possessing the Light: which indeed can only be done *while it is with you*.

the light, i.e. ‘Myself:’—see ch. vii. 33; viii. 12; ix. 4, 5.

This reference to the *light* is an easy transition from their question, if, as above supposed, Ps. lxxxix. 36 was alluded to: “*His (David’s) seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me.*”

Walk] i.e. *make use* of the Light, do your work in it, and by it.

knoweth not whither he goeth] Has no guide nor security, no principle to lead him.

36.] It is by believing on the Light, that men become sons of Light: see ch. i. 12.

Our Lord probably went on this occasion to Bethany, Luke xxi. 37.

37–50.] FINAL JUDGMENT ON THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS.

37–43.] *The Evangelist's judgment on their unbelief (37–41), and their half-belief (42, 43).* I do not regard these verses as forming the conclusion to the narrative of the public ministry of the Lord, on account of vv. 44–50 (where see note): but doubtless the *approaching close* of that ministry *gives occasion* to them, and is the time to which they refer.

37. they believed not] i.e. the *generality* did not;—they did not, *as a people*: see ver. 42.

38.] On the words **that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled** see note Matt. i. 22: beware of understanding them to mean merely “*so that the saying of Esaias was fulfilled*,” which the original will not bear.

39.] For this cause refers to the last verse, and **because** sets forth the reason more in detail: see ch. v. 16: 1 John iii. 1: Matt. xxiv. 44.

they could not believe] i.e. it was otherwise ordained in the divine counsels. No attempt to escape this meaning (as “*they would not believe*,” Chrysostom and others) will agree with the prophecy cited ver. 40. But the *inability*, as thus stated, is coincident with the fullest freedom of the human will: compare “*Ye have no mind to come to Me*,” ch. v. 40. Then, in what follows, a more special ground is alleged why they could not believe:—see above.

40.] The prophecy is freely cited, after neither the Hebrew nor the LXX, which is followed in Matt. xiii, 14 f. What God *bids* the prophet *do*, is here described as *done*, and by Himself: which is obviously *implied* in the Hebrew text.

41. because he saw] “This apocalyptic vision was the occasion of that prophecy.” Meyer.

his glory: i.e. *the glory of Christ*. The Evangelist is giving his judgment,—having (Luke xxiv. 45) had his understanding opened to understand the Scriptures,—*that the passage in Isaiah is spoken of Christ*. And indeed, strictly considered, the glory which Isaiah saw *could only* be that of the Son, Who is the *brightness* (shining forth) of *the glory* of the Father, Whom no eye hath seen. The last clause is independent of “*because*,” and contains another assertion,—**and he spake concerning Him.**

42] For example, Nicodemus, Joseph, and others like them. On the putting out of the synagogue, see note, ch. ix. 22.

43.] is a reference to ch. v. 44.

44–50.] *Proof of the guilt of their unbelief, from the words of Jesus Himself.* It was by the older Commentators generally thought, that these verses formed part of some other discourse delivered at this period. But this is improbable, from no occasion being specified,—from ver. 36,—and from the form and contents of the passage, and its reference to the foregoing remarks of the Evangelist. I take it—with almost all modern Commentators—to be a *continuation of those remarks substantiating them by the testimony of the Lord Himself*. The words are taken mostly, but not altogether, from discourses already given in this Gospel.

44, 45.] On the close connexion with the Father, see ch. v. 24, 38; viii, 19, 42; xiv. 10. The words are in logical sequence to ver. 41, in which the Evangelist has said that *the glory of Jehovah* and His *glory* were *the same*.

46.] See ver. 35; ch. viii. 12; ix. 5. The **may not remain in the darkness** here implies that all are *originally in darkness*,—as the same kind of expression in ch. iii. 36.

47.] See ch. iii. 17; v. 45; viii. 15.

48.] See ch. iii. 18, also v. 45 ff., and Heb. iv. 12.

49.] See ch. v. 30; vii. 16, 17, 28, 29; viii, 26, 28, 38. On the Father giving the Son commandment, ch. x. 18.

There does not appear to be any real difference here, though many have been suggested, between the words **say** and **speak**.

50.] See ch. vi. 63 (and note), 68.

his commandment is, results in, not as a means merely, but in its accomplishment and expansion, *eternal life*: see ch. iii. 15; v. 24; vi. 40.

Thus all who do not believe are without excuse;—because Jesus is not come, and speaks not, of Himself, but of the Father, se will and commandment respecting Him is, that He should be and give, Life to all. They who reject Him, reject Life, and (ch. iii. 19) prefer darkness to Light.

John: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII.—XX.] Third division of the Gospel. JESUS AND HIS OWN.

XIII.—XVII.] HIS LOVE, AND THE FAITH OF HIS OWN.

XIII. 1–30.] HIS LOVE IN HUMILIATION.

1–11. His condescension in washing their feet. On the chronological difficulties, see notes on Matt. xxvi. 17, and ch. xviii. 28.

There can be no reasonable doubt that this meal was the same as that at which the Lord's Supper was instituted, as related in the three Evangelists. The narrative proceeds without any break until ch. xvii. 26, after which our Lord and the disciples go to Gethsemane.

1. before the feast of the passover] *How long*, is not said: but probably, a very short time;—not more than one day at the most;—see ch. xviii. 28 and note. The words belong to the whole narrative following, not to **knowing** or **having loved**.

knowing] The view with which our Lord washed His disciples' feet, is shewn by the repetition of this word in verses 1, 3, and by the mention of His love for His disciples. The connexion is:—‘Jesus loved His own even to the end (of His life in the flesh), and gave them in the washing of their feet a proof of His love; and to this act He was induced by the knowledge that He must soon leave this world; and although this knowledge was united (ver. 3) with the highest consciousness of His divine mission and speedy glorification, yet this latter did not prevent Him from giving this proof of His self-humiliating love’ (De Wette).

his own which were in the world] See ch. xvii. 11.

2.] The sense is not, as A.V., ‘*supper being ended*,’ for (ver. 12) He *reclined again*, and in ver. 26, the supper is *still going on*:—but, **supper having begun** or **having been served**. See this shewn from the usage of the original in my Greek Test.

The verse may be otherwise read and rendered, **The devil having by this time suggested** (to Judas) **that Judas Iscariot the son of Simon** (i. e. **that he should betray Him**). Judas had before this covenanted with the Sanhedrim to betray Him, Matt. xxvi. 14 and parallel places, which must here be meant by *the devil having put it into his heart*:—the thorough self-abandonment to Satan which led to the actual deed, being designated ver. 27.

St. Luke (xxii. 3) expres: the steps of his treasonable purpose otherwise,—meaning the same. The fact is here stated, to enhance the love which Jesus shewed in the following action.

3.] See above. He did what follows with a full sense of the glory and dignity of His own Person. “The prefatory mention of His glory is as it were a protestation, lest it should be thought that the Lord did any thing beneath His dignity in washing the disciples' feet.” Bengel.

4. laid aside his garments] “viz. those which might hinder the act of washing.” Bengel. He put Himself into the ordinary dress of a servant. Or, which is far more probable, on the deepest grounds, did He not humble Himself so far as *literally* to divest Himself, and gird Himself merely, as the basest of slaves?

5.] the **bason**, viz. the vessel usually at hand for such purposes. The context seems to shew that He had washed the feet of one or more before the incident of the next verse: were it not so, the words, “**began to wash**,” might merely express His doing something unusual and unlooked for.

6.] And **so** (the **so** taking up the narrative again after the word **began**, as if it were said, ‘in pursuance of this intention’) He comes to Simon Peter; not *first*, as some have maintained, both with and without reference to the primacy of Peter:—for that would be hardly consistent (see on the preceding verse) with the context, which seems to require that the washing should have begun and been going on, before He came to Peter.

art Thou washing (intending to wash) **my feet?**] He thinks the act unworthy of the Lord; even as many think that great act of Love to have been, which was typified by it.

The word **my** is not emphatic. The having his feet washed is a matter of course: it is the Person who is about to do it that offends him.

7.] Hitherto our Lord had been silent. **He** emphasizes the **I** and **thou**, but so as to set forth Himself as the Master, Peter as the disciple, not wholly cognizant of His will and purpose, and therefore more properly found in subjection to it.

What I do! i.e. (1) *this washing itself*, as a lesson of humility and love, ver. 14. (2) Its *symbolical meaning*, vv. 9, 10. (3) The *great Act of Love*, the laying aside My glory, and becoming in the form of a servant, that the washing of the Holy Spirit may cleanse men.

afterwards] Taking up again the numbers used in the last note, (1) was known very soon, but (2) and (3) not till after the Spirit was given.

8.] The rash and self-opinionated Apostle opposes to our Lord’s **afterwards** his own **never** (literally, **no, not for ever**). In interpreting our Lord’s answer, we must remember, that He replies more to the *spirit* of Peter’s objection, than to his words. The same well-meaning but false humility would prevent him (and does prevent many) from stooping to receive at the hands of the Lord that spiritual washing which is absolutely necessary in order to have any part in Him, Rom. viii. 9, ‘*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me;*’ but the affirmative proposition, *that those who are washed, have a part in Jesus*, is not equally true; witness the example of Judas, who *was washed, but yet had no part* with Jesus. In the *spiritual sense* of washing, this is not so. Whoever is washed by Jesus, has part in Him. We are here in the realm of another and deeper logic: the act being no longer symbolic, but veritable.

9.] The warm-hearted Peter, upon learning that *exclusion* would be the consequence of not being washed, can hardly have enough of a cleansing so precious. There surely is implied in this answer an incipient apprehension of the meaning of our Lord’s words. The expression, **if I wash thee not**, has awakened in him, as the Lord’s presence did, Luke v. 8, a feeling of his own want of cleansing, his entire pollution.

10.] Reference appears to be made to the fact that one who *has bathed*, after he has reached his home, needs not entire washing, but only to have his feet washed from the dust of the way. This bathing, the bath of the new birth, but only yet in its foreshadowing, in the purifying effect of faith working by love, the Apostles, with one exception, had; and this *foot-washing* represented to them, besides its lesson of humility and brotherly love, their *daily need of cleansing from daily pollution, even after spiritual regeneration*, at the hands of their divine Master. See 2 Cor. vii. 1: James i. 21: Acts xv. 8, 9: 2 Pet. ii. 22.

n ye are clean, see note, ch. xv. 3.

12–20.] This act, a pattern of self-denying love for His servants.

12. Know ye what I have done to. you?] These words are uttered, not so much in expectation of an answer, as to direct their attention to the following.

14.] The command here given must be understood in the full light of intelligent appreciation of the circumstances, and the meaning of the act. Bengel remarks, that *one* intent of our Lord’s washing the feet of His disciples must necessarily be absent from any such deed on our part: viz. its *symbolic meaning*, pressed by our Lord on St. Peter, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.” The command will rather find its fulfilment in all kinds of mutual condescension and help, than in any literal observance. “In these times,” continues Bengel, “pontiffs and princes obey this injunction to the letter: but it would be a more wonderful thing to see a pontiff, for example, wash the feet of one equal, than of twelve poor beggars.” The custom of literally and ceremonially washing the feet in obedience to this command, is not found before the fourth century.

15.] Notice that our Lord commands us to do, not “*that which I have done to you,*” but “**as, in like manner as**, I have done to you.” Our Lord’s action was symbolical, and is best imitated in His followers by endeavouring, “if a man be overtaken in a fault, to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness:” Gal. vi. 1.

16, 17.] The proverbial expression, **There is no servant greater than his lord**, is used here in a different sense from that

which it has in ch. xv. 20. Here it is, “if the Master thus humbles Himself, much more should His servants and messengers;” see Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40; and on ver. 17, Luke xii. 47, 48. The *mere recognition* of such a duty of humility, is a very much more easy matter than the *putting it in practice*.

18.] I say it not (viz. the “*if ye do them*”) of you *all*: for there is one who can never be *blessed*. Our Lord repeats his words, “*but not all*,” of ver. 10, and the sad recollection leads to His trouble in spirit, ver. 21.

I know] The **I** is emphatic; and the reason of its emphasis is given in ver. 19.

Connexion: ‘It might be supposed that this treachery has come upon Me unawares; but it is not so: I (for my part) know whom I have selected (viz. *the whole twelve*; see ch. vi. 70, not only the true ones, as in ch. xv. 16, said when Judas was not present): but this has been done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, declared in the Scriptures.’

The words of the citation here are given freely, the LXX having, “*magnified the lifting up of the heel against me.*”

This is another instance of the direct and unhesitating application of the words of the Psalms by our Lord to Himself.

his heel] Bengel observes that this saying is pertinent to the *washing of the feet*, and also to the custom of *reclining in eating bread*. See on ver. 23.

19.] ‘Now, from this time, I announce it to you, that when it shall have happened, you may believe that I am (the Christ).’ See ch. xvi. 1, and above on “*I know,*” ver. 18.

20.] See Matt. x. 40. ‘The connexion is very difficult, and variously set down. It has been generally supposed that the words were to comfort the Apostles for the disgrace of their order by Judas, or in prospect of their future labours. But then would not the words “*whomsoever I send*” have been expressed by “*you*”? Another view is to refer back to vv. 16, 17, and suppose the connexion to have been broken by the allusion to Judas. But is this likely, in a discourse of our Lord? I rather believe that the saying sets forth the dignity of that office from which Judas was about to fall: q.d. ‘not only was he in close intercourse with Me (ver. 18), but invested with an ambassadorship for Me, and in Me, for the Father; and yet *he* will lift up his heel against Me.’ And the consideration of this dignity in all its privileges, as contrasted with the sad announcement just to be made, leads on to the *troubling of our Lord’s spirit* in the next verse.

21–30.] Contrast of the manifestations of love and hate. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 21–25. Mark xiv. 18–21. Luke xxii. 21–23.

21.] See above. This was one of those mysterious troublings of spirit, which passed over our Lord,—ch. xi. 33 and xii. 27.

The word **testified** implies the delivery of some solemn and important announcement. This was the first time He had ever spoken so plainly. All four Evangelists agree in the substance of the announcement.

22.] In Matthew and Mark they express their questioning in words. St. Luke’s *beginning to enquire among themselves* would appear to imply the same. We seem called on here to decide a much-controverted question,—*where, in St. John’s narrative, the institution of the Lord’s Supper is to be inserted?* I believe certainly *before* this announcement, as in Luke: and if before it, *perhaps before the washing of the disciples’ feet*: for I see no break which would admit it between our ver. 1 and ver. 21.

23.] Since the captivity, the Jews lay at table in the Persian manner, on divans or couches, each on his left side with his face towards the table, his left elbow resting on a pillow and supporting his head. Thus the second guest to the right hand lay with his head near the breast of the first, and so on.

whom Jesus loved] The disciple meant is John himself, see ch. xxi. 20; also designated thus, ch. xix. 26; xxi. 7 (see Introduction to John, §i. 6).

24–26.] See note on Matt. ver. 23. Peter characteristically imagines that John, as the beloved disciple, would know: but he, not knowing, asks of the Lord.

25. leaning back on Jesus’ breast] I understand it, that John, who was before lying *close* to the bosom of Jesus, now leaned his head absolutely *upon* His breast, to ask the question. This escaped the notice of the rest at the table:—see on Matt. as above.

26.] This represents Matt. ver. 23, Mark ver. 20.

the sop, probably a piece of the unleavened bread, dipped in the broth made of bitter herbs.

27.] Bengel observes that it was *after* the sop, not *with* it, that Satan entered into him. Observe the word **sop**, in this sentence, stands for the act in which it played a principal part. This *giving the sop* was one of the closest testimonies of friendly affection.

The

word then carries a graphic power and pathos with it: **at that moment**.

Satan entered into him] See ver. 2 and note. Satan *entered fully* into him, took full possession of him,—so that his will was not only bent upon doing the deed of treachery, but fixed and determined to do it *then and there*. The words must be understood literally, not as merely betokening the decision of his mind in the direction of the devil's counsels.

What thou doest (art doing)...] These words are not to be evaded, as being *permissive* or *Dismissive* (this latter view is taken by Chrysostom, who says, "The words are not to be taken as commanding or exhorting, but as reproaching, and intimating that there was in him the wish to act decidedly, but as he was undecided, the Lord permits him to depart and do it"). They are like the saying of God to Balaam, Num. xxii. 20,—and of our Lord to the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 32. The *course of sinful action is presupposed*, and the command to go on is but the echo of that mysterious appointment by which the sinner in the exercise of his own corrupted will becomes the instrument of the purposes of God. Thus it is not "*What thou art about to do,*" but—that **which thou art doing**, hast just now fully determined to put in present action, **do quickly**—reproving his lingering, and his pretending (Matt. ver. 25) to share in the general doubt.

28.] Not even St. John: who knew he was the traitor, but had no idea the deed was so soon to be done. Stier supposes St. John to *exclude* himself in saying "*no man at the table,*" and that *he* knew.

29.] The first supposition agrees with ver. 1,—that it was "*before the feast of the passover.*" Had it been the night of the passover, the next day being hallowed as a sabbath, nothing *could have been bought*. On the whole question see notes on Matt. xxvi. 17, and cy xviii. 28. On the *second* supposition, see ch. xii. 5. The gift to the poor might be, to *help them to procure their paschal lamb*.

30.] The remark, and it was night, seems to be added to bring the whole narrative from ch. xiii. 1 to ch. xviii. 3 into precision, as happening on one and the same night. It is perhaps fanciful to see, as many have done, an allusion to the *darkness* in Judas's soul, or to the fact expressed in Luke xxii. 53, "*this is your hour, and the power of darkness;*" though doubtless there the Lord alludes to its being *also night*: but I quite feel, with Meyer, that there is something awful in this termination—**it was night.** **31—XVI. 38.] HIS LOVE IS KEEPING AND COMPLETING HIS OWN.** And herein,

31—XIV. 31.] He comforts them with the assurance that He is going to the Father.

31—88.] Announcement of the fact—its effect on Peter. Here commences that solemn and weighty portion of the Gospel (ch. xiii. 81—xvii. 26) which Olshausen not without reason calls 'the most holy place' He beautifully remarks, 'These were the last moments which the Lord spent in the midst of His own before His Passion, and words full of heavenly meaning flowed during them from His holy lips:—all that His heart, glowing with love, had yet to say to His own, was com-pressed into this short space of time. At first the conversation with the disciples takes more the form of usual dialogue: reclining at the table, they mournfully reply to and question Him. But when (ch. xiv. 81) they had risen from the super, the discourse of Christ took a higher form: surrounding their Master, the disciples listened to the Words of Life, and seldom spoke (only ch. xvi. 17, 29). Finally, in the sublime prayer of the great High Priest, the whole Soul of Christ flowed forth in earnest intercession for His own to His Heavenly Father' Olsh. ii. 329.

31. Now is the Son of man glorified] It was not that the *presence of Judas*, as some have thought, hindered the great consummation imported by this *glorification*, but that the work on which he was gone out, was the **ACTUAL COMMENCEMENT of that consummation.** "Now at length," says Lampe, "as if an obstacle were broken down, the rushing rivers of grace flow from the lips of Jesus." It is true that Judas's presence hindered the *expression* of these gracious words. The glorification is spoken of by anticipation, as if accomplished, because the deed was actually in doing, which was to accomplish it. The glorifying spoken of here, and in ver. 32, is not the same. *This* is the glorifying of God by Christ on earth, in His course of obedience as the Son of Man, which was completed by His death ("he became obedient even unto death," Phil. ii. 8). And His death was the sition-point between God being glorified in Him, and He being glorified in God—manifested to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection, and received up to the Father, to sit at the right hand of God. This latter (ver. 32) is spoken of by Him here as future, but immediate (**straightway**) on His death, and leads on to the address in ver. 33.

32.] in himself is in God (the Father), not in Christ. The word **himself** reflects back on the *subject* of the sentence: and **in** does

not mean ‘*by means of*,’ but keeps its literal force;—by the resurrection of Him *into* that glory, which He had indeed before, but now has *as the Son of Man*, with the risen Manhood; so “*glorify thou me with thyself*,” ch. xvii. 5. Grotins compares 1 Sam. ii. 30, which stands in the LXX, “*them that glorify me I will glorify*.” Origen remarks, “The Father recompenses to Him more than the Son of

Man hath done.”

33. Little children] This term,—*here only* used by Christ,—affectingly expresses His not only brotherly, but fatherly love (Isa. ix. 6) for His own, and at the same time their immature and weak state, now about to be left without Him.

as I said unto the Jews] “He would not say this to his disciples before, but to those who rejected Him.” Bengel. But naturally the two clauses, ‘Ye shall seek Me and not find Me, and shall die in your sins,’ also spoken to the Jews (ch. vii. 33; viii. 21), are here omitted: and by this omission the connexion with ver. 34 is supplied;—‘Ye shall be left here: but, unlike the Jews, ye shall seek Me and shall find Me, and the way is that of Love,—to Me, and to one another—forming (ver. 35) an united Body, the Church, in which all shall recognize My presence among you as My disciples.’

34.] The *newness* of this commandment, consists in its *simplicity*, and (so to speak) *unicity*. The same *kind* of love was prescribed in the Old Test. (see Rom. xiii. 8):—‘as *thyself*’ is the *highest* measure of love, and it is therefore not in degree that the new commandment differs from the old, nor in *extent*, but in being the commandment of the new covenant,—the firstfruit of the Spirit in the new dispensation (Gal. v. 22); see 1 John ii. 7, 8 (and note), where the word **new** is commented on by the Apostle himself.

35.] all men,—all the world,—and the object is to be, not mere vain praise or display before the world, but that men may be attracted by the exhibition of the Spirit of Christ, and won over to Him. The world, notwithstanding this proof of His presence among them, shall hate them: see 1 John iii. 10–15. But among all men they themselves are also included—brotherly love is the true sign to them of being children of God, 1 John ii. 3–5.

36.] This announcement of Peter’s denial is probably the same with that in Luke xxii. 33 ff, where see notes: but distinct from that on the way to Gethsemane, Matt. xxvi. 34: Mark xiv. 30.

but thou shalt follow me afterwards] Alluding probably both to the future reception of His Apostle into His glory, and to the particular path by which he should come to that glory;—as in ch. xxi. 18, 19.

37.] Peter understands our Lord’s *death* to be meant as the time of his following;—see Luke, ver. 33.

38.] The question is not answered—but Peter’s boast solemnly questioned. See a somewhat similar question, ch. i. 51. There was at the same time a startling *inversion* of the subsequent facts, in this boast; to which our Lord, I think, alludes in His question, “*wilt thou lay down thy life for Me?*”

The words, **The cock shall not crow**, necessarily *imply*, as it *was night*, those also which follow in Matthew and Mark, “in this night,”—and bind the whole events of this chapter to ch. xviii.

John: Chapter 14

CHAP. XIV. 1–31.] This first division of the great discourse (see above on ch. xiii. 31) is spent in more directly comforting the disciples for their Lord’s departure, by the assurance of His going to the Father, and its consequences.

1–10.] HE, in his union with the Father, will take His own to Him.

1.] A pause has intervened; Peter is humbled and silent; the rest are *troubled in heart* on account of the sad things of which they had been hearing;—Judas’s treachery,—Peter’s denial,—the Lord’s departure from them.

The verb **believe** both times is imperative. Many (as in A.V. take the first as indic., the second as imper., ‘*Ye believe in God: believe also in me*.’) But this is inconsistent with the whole tenour of the discourse, which presupposes a want of belief in God in its full and true sense, as begetting *trust* in Him. Luther takes *both* as indicative. The command is intimately connected with ch. xiii. 31, 32—*faith in the glorification of Christ in the Father, and of the Father in Him*.

2.] This comfort—of being reunited to their Lord—is administered to them as “*little children*,” in forms of speech simple, and adapted to their powers of apprehension of spiritual things. The **house** spoken of is Heaven: Ps. xxxviii. 13, 14; Isa. lxiii. 15. In it are many (in number—it may be also in degree of dignity, but no such meaning is here conveyed) abiding-places; *room*

enough for them all. If not,—if they could not follow Him thither, He would not have concealed this from them. This latter assurance is one calculated to beget entire trust and confidence; He would not in any matter hold out vain hopes to them; His word to them would plainly state all difficulties and discouragements,—as indeed He does, ch. xv. 18; xvi. 1, 4. This *preparing a place for us* is that of which we sing,—‘When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Then didst open the Kingdom of heaven to all believers:’ see note on Luke xxiii. 43. And thus it is a **place**, not the *many mansions* that He is preparing:—*the place* as a whole, not *each man’s place* in it.

3.] In order to understand this, we must bear in mind what Stier well calls the ‘perspective’ of prophecy. The *coming again of the Lord* is not one single act,—as His resurrection, or the descent of the Spirit, or His second personal advent, or the final coming to judgment; but the *great summary* of all these, the result of which shall be, His taking His people to Himself to be where He is. This coming of His is *begun* (ver. 18) in His Resurrection—*carried on* (ver. 23) in the *spiritual life* (see also ch. xvi. 22 ff.), the making *them* ready for the place prepared;—*further advanced* when each by death is fetched away to be with Him (Phil. i. 23): *fully completed* at His coming in glory, when they shall for ever be with Him (1 Thess. iv. 17) in the perfected resurrection state.

4.] **And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know:** or, as in the various reading, **whither I go, ye know the way**, i.e. “ye know the way to the place to which I am going.” They might have known, and doubtless did know in some sense; but, as Lampe remarks, “sometimes we praise a man to put him in mind of his duty.” We use thus, ‘*you know*,’—leaving to be supplied, ‘*if you would give the matter thought*.’

whither, viz. *to the Father*; **the way**,—(in our Lord’s own case, of which *this* verse treats) *His death*.

5.] Thomas is slow of belief and apprehension. The answer to “*whither goest thou?*” ch. xiii. 37, which Peter seems to have apprehended, was not sufficient for him; see ch. xx. 25: “for he thought,” says Euthymius, “that it was some material place to which the Lord was going, and that the road thither was of the same kind.”

6.] Our Lord inverts the order of Thomas’s question, and in answering it practically, *for them*, speaks of ‘the Way’ first. *He* is THE WAY; not merely the Forerunner; which would imply on our part only an outward connexion with Him as His *followers*: but *the way*, in and on which we must go, having an inner union with and in Him (see Heb. x. 20).

the truth] more is implied in this title, than “that He ever *spoke truth*, and what He said was sure to come to pass,” as Euthymius explains it. It is another side of the same idea of *the Way*;—God being true, and only approached by and in truth. Christ IS THE TRUTH, in Whom only (Col. ii. 3) that Knowledge of Him is gained, which (ch. xvii. 3) is eternal life.

the life] not merely because “not even death shall separate you from Me,” Euthymius:—but as being THE LIFE (see ver. 19: Gal. ii. 20) of all His in Whom only they who live can come to the living Father (ch. vi. 57).

no man cometh unto the Father, but by me...] This plainly states *whither* He was going, and *the way* also: He was going *to the Father*: and the way was, *through Him-self*.

7.] See ch. viii. 19.

from henceforth] There is no difficulty, if we bear in mind the **now** of ch. xiii. 31. The **henceforth** is the future time, beginning with our Lord’s glorification, which was now at hand. Lücke remarks: ‘**Henceforth**[is not entirely future nor entirely present, but the moment of transition, the identification of the present and future. Christ speaks here by anticipation in reference to the hour of His glorification being come’ (ii. 598).

8.] Philip misunderstands the words **ye have seen him** to mean ‘*seeing in a vision*,’—and intimates that *one such sight of God* would set at rest all their fears, and give them perfect confidence.

9.] The Son is the only Exponent of the Father to men: see ch. xii. 44, 45; Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3; 1 Tim. vi. 16. This seeing of the Father in Him, is not only seeing His bodily presence, but *knowing* Him (**dost thou not know me?**).

10.] See ch. x. 30, 38, and for the latter clause ch. viii. 28, where the contrast is, as here, purposely inexact in *diction*,—words being placed in one member and *works* in the other; and, as there, **works** and **words** are taken as correlative and co-extensive;—all the working of the Lord Jesus being a speaking, a *revelation of the Father*. According to the probably genuine reading in the margin, it will be, **doeth his works**: they are not Mine, but His, done in and by Me: but **in Me** present and abiding, so that “he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”

11–24.] *Jesus will make proof of His abiding union with the Father, in His union with His own*: and this vv. 12–14, in *answering prayer*: vv. 15–17, in *the sending of the Spirit*: vv. 18 ff., as a *pledge of the completion of this union in His personal*

return. The Lord now unfolds out of these words, **the Father dwelleth in Me, doeth his works**, the great promise of the Paraclete or Comforter.

11. for the very works' sake] See ch. x. 38. The object here seems to be, to fix their attention on the *works* as a plain testimony even to such as could not simply believe so deep a thing on His assertion, and one which—**12.]** should become a matter felt and known in themselves hereafter,—by virtue of their living union with Him who is gone to the Father, and become the dispenser and channel of the Spirit. ‘He who *believes* Christ speaking concerning Himself, *believes on Christ.*’ Bengel.

greater works than these shall he do] This word is not to be evaded (so as to mean *greater in number*), but taken in its full strict sense. And the keys to its meaning will be found ch. i. 51; v. 20. *The works* which Jesus did, His Apostles also did,—viz. raising the dead, &c.;—*greater works than those*, they did—not in *degree*, but in *kind: spiritual* works, under the dispensation of the Spirit, which *had not yet come in*. But they did them *not as separate from Him*: but *in Him, and by Him*; and so (ch. v. 21) *He* is said to do them. The work which He did by Peter’s sermon, Acts ii., was one of these *greater works*—the firstfruits of the unspeakable gift.

This union of them with and in Him is expressed here by “*the works that I do, shall he do also.*” ‘He has sown, we reap; and the harvest is greater than the seed-time.’ Stier.

13.] I have retained the period at the end of ver. 12 (many editors place a comma only and connect this verse with the word **because** in the former), because the sense remains much the same, and the style is better preserved.

ye shall ask, viz. *the Father*: so ch. xv. 16; xvi. 23. But this does not exclude, but *distinctly includes*, prayer to Christ; so blended are these two (as the *seeing* ver. 9), that we have not “*that will He do*,” but, ver. 14, emphatically “*that will I do.*” He who prays to the Father, prays to the Son. This doing answers to the **doing** in ver. 12; *the reason why you shall do these greater works, is, on account of the all-powerful Spirit of grace and supplication which My going to the Father shall bring down upon the Church; in answer to which Spirit, I will do by you whatever in My Name (i. e. in union with Me, as being Mine, manifesting forth Jesus as the Son of God) ye shall ask, And the end of this is, that by these greater works, the wonders of grace and triumphs of the Spirit, the Father may be glorified* (His glory shewn forth) *in and by the Son.*

14.] solemnly repeats *as a promise*, what was incidentally asserted before: ‘For this is a truth, that whatever’&c. And besides, there is added in the original an emphatic **I; it is I myself that will do it:** shewing that the use of the first person before was emphatic. “This **I myself** already points to the glorification of Jesus.” Bengel.

15.] is a following out of the condition in the former verse, “*If ye shall ask any thing in my name:*” ‘That way of prayer is the way of *loving obedience*, in which the Spirit is ever found, and which is only trodden by His help:’—and also of the purpose stated there, “*that the Father may be glorified in the Son:*” ‘As the Father is honoured in the Son, so must the Son be honoured in you;’—see ch. xv. 10.

16.] And *then* the Spirit shall proceed forth upon you. The word rendered **I will pray** betokens, probably, a manner of asking implying *actual presence and nearness*,—and is here used of the mediatorial office in Christ’s *ascended state*.

Comforter—literally **Paraclete**. Olshausen remarks that the interpretations of this word range themselves in *two classes*, which again by no means exclude one another:—those of ‘COMFORTER,’ and those of ‘ADVOCATE.’ The etymology of the word requires the *latter* as its strict meaning, and in this strict meaning it satisfies 1 John ii. 1, “*we have an Advocate (Paraclete, as here) with the Father;*” but not so all the places where it is used of the *Holy Spirit*,—nor this verse, where of the Son and Spirit both. And therefore the other meaning,—**Comforter**, including as it does in its fulness (see Rom. viii. 26, where both, the *helping* and the *interceding*, are united) the *Advocate* also, has been both here and in Germany (Luther has the equivalent term) sanctioned by Christian usage as the most adequate rendering. Wycliff, from whom we have our word **Comforter**, often used ‘comfort’ for the Latin *comfortari*, which means to strengthen, as e.g. Luke xxii, 43; Acts ix. 19&c. Thus the idea of *help and strength* is conveyed by it, as well as of consolation. It was this office, of Comforter in this double sense, which Jesus had filled to His disciples while with them:—and which the *Holy Spirit* was to fill even more abundantly (and in a higher sense, because their state would be higher) on the removal of Jesus from them.

17.] This Comforter is, not ‘the true Spirit,’—but ‘THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH;’—the Spirit *Who is truth*, 1 John v. 6,—of Whom all truth comes, and who alone leads into *the whole truth*, the truth of God, ch. xvi. 13.

the world] equivalent to the “*carnal*” of 1 Cor. ii. 14 (where see note), those who live according to the desires of the flesh and the mind, and have no receptivity of the things of God.

beholdeth] This word **behold**, when used in a spiritual sense, is sometimes equivalent to **know**: but this cannot be so here,

because it is separated from **knoweth** by **neither**: ‘*recognizes not* in His operations, *nor knows:*’—**has neither sight nor knowledge of.**

ye know him] present, but spoken of their state as disciples opposed to the world,—and by anticipation, as before. They were even now not of the world (ch. xv. 19), and are therefore viewed in the completion of their state as opposed to it. **dwellet** (not *shall dwell*) is future in *signification*, as any present assertion of that which is to be permanent must necessarily be; **abideth**, as in ch. viii, 35. Euthymius understands **dwellet** with **you**, of the Spirit abiding

in Jesus, who was among them: but. wrongly.

is in you] This was perhaps corrected to the future, “*shall be*,” because, though their knowledge of the Spirit proper to their complete state, and His dwelling, remaining, among them, had in some inferior sense begun,—His dwelling in them had not. With the verb in the present, the speaking by anticipation is still stronger.

18.] The original word should be literally rendered, **orphans**, as indeed it is in the margin of the A.V.

The office of the Comforter is to connect the disciples with the Father: if therefore they had Him not, they would be *fatherless*. The expression is closely connected with “little children” ch. xiii. 33, and, as Euthymius says, springs from paternal compassion. This makes our Lord’s declaration, that He was coming to them, plain, as applying to the coming by the Spirit, who is one with Christ;—not only to the ultimate personal coming, which is but the last step of the Advent, nor only the bodily coming again to them and not to the world at the Resurrection, which was but a pledge of His lasting presence in the Spirit: see on ver. 3. The **coming** is (as there) the summary of these—the *great Revisitation*, in all its blessed progress. The absence of any connecting particle, as “*for*,” with this clause, arises from the depth of affection in the Lord’s heart.

19–21.] This **coming** is explained to consist in His presence among them by the life of His Resurrection, which is theirs; by (ver. 20) the witness of the Spirit in their hearts; and (ver. 21) their sanctification by the Spirit in love, and the consequent manifestation of Jesus to them.

Luthardt attempts to confine this **coming** (and the whole passage) to the last great Advent, 1 in spite of the plain sense of vv. 19, 20, relying on the analogy of Rev. xxii, 17, and saying that, on the common interpretation, the Church would have no cause to long for her Lord: and so Augustine and others. But manifestly the context is against them: and they must thus explain away many other pa: (e. g. Matt. xviii. 20). The presence Christ by the Spirit is none the less *real*, for being *incomplete*.

19.] The *immediate reference* of this, **ye behold me**, is to the forty days (see Acts x. 41)—but only as leading on to its wider and deeper reference to the spiritual life. **I live**, not “*I shall live*”—the principle of Life being immanent in Him. **ye shall live**, live in all fulness, including the most blessed sense of life,—the Life of the Spirit,—here and hereafter.

20.] **At that day, no particular day**: but ‘each of these periods, as its continually increasing light breaks upon you, shall bring increased knowledge of your unity in Me with the Father, and my dwelling in you by the Spirit’ If any particular day is to be thought of, it would naturally be the Pentecost.

21.] hath...and keepeth.—“that is,” says Augustine, “**hath**, in memory, and **keepeth**, in life:” or perhaps more accurately, ‘He who *has* my commandments, as being my disciple by outward profession (not thus only: but *holds* them, by the inner possession of a living faith), and *keeps* them:’ see Luke xi. 28, And this **keeping** is more of the inner *will* to keep them, than the absolute observance, which can only follow on high degrees of spiritual advancement.

I will manifest myself to him] by the Holy Spirit: see ch. xvi. 14. This (as Stier observes) is *the highest promise which can be made to man* (see ver. 23), and yet it is made to *every man* who *has and keeps* the commandments of the Lord Jesus. Compare EXOD. xxxiii. 13.

22.] Judas, **not Iscariot** is the same person as “*Judas the [brother] of James*,” in Luke vi. 16: see note on Matt. x. 3. Meyer remarks that the words **not Iscariot** are in reality superfluous, after ch. xiii. 30, but are added by St. John from his deep horror of the Traitor who bore the same name.

The question seems to be put with the Jewish idea, that the Messiah, the King and Judge of the nations, must necessarily *manifest himself to the world*.

[In reference to the reading in the margin, “**And how is it, &c.?**”, we may remark, that **and**, preceding an interrogation, expresses astonishment at what has just been said, and, assuming it, connects to it a conclusion which appears to refute or cast doubt on it.]

how is it that] literally, **What has happened, that...?**

28, 24.] These verses contain the answer to the question in both its parts:—“*how is it, that Thou wilt manifest Thy-self to us,*”—because love to Christ, leading to the keeping of His word, is the necessary condition of the indwelling and manifestation in man of the Father and the Son;—“*how is it, that Thou wilt not manifest Thyself to the world?*” because want of love to Christ, leading to neglect of His words, necessarily excludes from communion with the Father and the Son, and the Spirit, who reveals the Son in man. “The addition, **we will come unto him, and make our abode with him**, makes this incapacity still plainer and more deeply felt.” Meyer. For (**and** meaning,—hence you may infer what I am setting forth) **the word which ye hear** (and which the world *keepeth not*, but *neglects*),—**is not Mine, but the Father's.** On the gracious and wonderful promise of ver. 23, see Rom. viii. 15.

25–31.] His farewell, and the parting bequest of His Love.

25.] have I spoken is anticipatory, referring, as “*I said*” (ver. 26), to the futures, “*shall teach*,” and “*shall bring to remembrance*.” Meyer supposes that a *pause* took place here, and the Lord looks back on what He had said to them. But this does not seem so natural.

26.] But—as if He had said, ‘I know that ye do not understand them yet: but’&c.

the Holy Ghost] The Paraclete, or Comforter, is now more closely defined by this well-known Name,—and, by the words, **whom (which) the Father will send**, and the pronoun **He....**, designated *personally*, as One sent, and One acting on them.

in my name] not, ‘in My stead,’ but **in regard of me**—‘in answer to My prayer, and prayers in My name,—to those who hear My name,—and as a means of manifesting Me.’

shall teach you all things stands by itself, not with “ *whatsoever I have said unto you.*” **shall teach you all things**,—‘all that can and may be learnt by you, all that belongs to your work and life in Me.’

and bring all things to your remembrance] What is *not understood* is liable to be *forgotten*;—and therefore in this word is implied the giving them a right understanding of, as well as recalling, what Jesus had said to them: see ch. ii. 22; xii. 16.

It is on the fulfilment of this promise to the Apostles, that their sufficiency as Witnesses of all that the Lord did and taught, and consequently THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE, is grounded.

27.] This is introduced by ver. 25, which suggests the speedy close of the discourse. It was customary to take leave with wishes of peace:—so 1 Sam. i, 17: Luke vii. 50: Acts xvi. 36: 1 Pet. v. 14: 3 John 15. Also, to reassure by such words; see Gen. xlivi 23: Judg. vi. 23. But our Lord distinguishes *His* peace, *true* peace, ‘*the peace which I have and give*’ (see ch. xv. 11), from the mere empty word used in the world’s form of greeting. Peace (in general) He *leaves* with them;—*His* peace He *gives* to them, over and above that other. The words, **as the world giveth**, must refer, I think, to the world’s *manner* of giving, —not to the unreality of the world’s peace, of which, however true, there is no direct mention here. The world can only give peace in empty formulæ, saying ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace: Jer. vi. 14 al.

28.] The former part of the verse gives a reason why their heart should not be *troubled*;—then the rest of the verse removes all ground of fear, since it is an *exaltation* of Him whom they loved, which is about to happen; and therefore a ground of joy, and not of fear.

my Father is greater than I] And therefore the *going* of Jesus *to the Father* is an *advancement*. This word **greater**, as Luther well remarks, is not here used as referring to the *Nature or Essence of the Son as related to the Father*,—but as indicating that particular subordination to the Father in which the Lord Jesus then was,—and the cessation of the state of humiliation, and entering into His glory, which would take place on His being received up to the Father. So also Calvin: “Christ is not here comparing the Divinity of the Father with His own, nor His human nature with the divine essence of the Father, but rather His present state with the heavenly glory to which He was soon to be exalted.” And Cocceius: “The inferiority here is not to be understood as meaning, according to His human nature; for the words point to an inferiority which would be *laid aside*, *on His going to the Father*.” And this removes all reason for fear, as *they* will be exalted in *Him*.

The whole doctrinal controversy which has been raised on these words (especially by the Fathers against the Arians), seems not to belong to the sense of the passage. That *there is a sense* in which the Father is greater than even the *glorified* Son, is beyond doubt (see especially 1 Cor. xv. 27 f.); but as on the one hand that concession is no concession to Arianism, because it is not in the essential being of the Son, but in His Mediatorial office, that this His inferiority consists,—so on the other hand this verse implies in itself *no such* inferiority, the discourse being of *another kind*.

29.] **I have told you**—viz. ‘the prophecies of My Resurrection and Ascension,’&c.

ye may believe] See ch. xiii. 19, where the words “*that I am He*” are supplied. **That ye may believe**, in the fullest sense of the word. “Not that they did not previously believe Him to be the Son of God: but then, when that was fulfilled in Him, which He had before predicted,—this their faith, which now, when he was speaking to them, was small, and, when He died, was almost extinguished, revived and flourished.” Augustine. See 1 John v. 13.

30.] **I will no more talk much with you** :—then, as Stier remarks, He had *some* words more to say, and was not about to break off at ver. 31, as some have supposed. The necessity of the time broke off further words.

the prince of this world] i.c. Satan:—not, Satan in Judas, but *Satan himself*, with whom the Lord was in conflict during His passion: see Luke iv. 13 (and note), and xxii. 53.

hath nothing in me] i.e. as Augustine, “*findeth no sin in Me*.” This is the only true interpretation: **has nothing in Me**—no point of appliance whereon to fasten his attack. But Meyer well observes, that this is rather *the fact to be assumed* as the *ground* of what is here said, than the *thing itself* which is said. Tholuck, and many others render it, ‘*has no power over me*,’ or as Euthymius, *finds nothing worthy of death*.

31.] ‘But My Death is an act of voluntary obedience, that it may be known that I love and obey the Father—that the glory of the Father in and by Me may be manifested.’ The construction is elliptic: supply, ‘But (his power over Me for death will be permitted by Me) that,’&c. And the period should be at **so I do**, as in the text.

Meyer and others would put only a comma here, and carry on the sense, ‘*But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father commanded me, thus I do, arise, let us go hence.*’ I need only put it to the inner feeling of any who have learned to appreciate the majesty and calmness of our Lord’s discourses, whether a sentence so savouring of theatrical effect is likely to have been spoken by Him. We may notwithstanding safely believe that the words “*Arise, let us go hence,*” without *this connexion*, do undoubtedly express the holy boldness of the Lord in going to meet that which was to come upon Him, and are for that reason inserted by St. John.

Arise, let us go hence] These words imply a movement from the table to depart. Probably the rest of the discourse, and the prayer, ch. xvii., were delivered when now all were standing ready to depart. There would be some little pause, in which the preparations for departure would be made. But the *place* is clearly the same, see ch. xviii. 1, “*when Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth:*”—besides which, we can hardly suppose, as Grotius and others, discourses of a character like those in ch. xv. xvi. to have been delivered to as many as eleven persons, while *walking by the way*, and in a time of such publicity as that of the Paschal feast. Still less is the supposition of Bengel and Beausobre probable,—that ch. xiii. xiv. happened outside the city, and that between ch. xiv. and xv. the paschal meal takes place. Compare also ch. xiii. 30, which is decisive against this idea.

John: Chapter 15

CHAP. XV. 1-27.] *Injunction to vital union in love with Jesus and one another.*

1-11.] **Their relation to Him.** Various circumstances suggestive of this similitude, of the *vine and its branches*, have been imagined; but none of them are satisfactory. The vineyards on the way to Gethsemane,—the carved vine on the great doors of the temple,—a vine trained about the window of the guest-chamber,—are all fanciful, and the two first (see on ch. xiv. 31) inapplicable. The *cup*, so lately partaken, is certainly nearer,—see below. But I believe that most probably the Lord did not take the similitude from any outward suggesting occasion, but as a means of illustrating the great subject, *the inner unity of Himself and His*. Occasion enough was furnished, by the Old Test. symbolism of the vineyard and the vine,—Isa. v. 1 ff.; Jer. ii. 21; Ezek. xix. 10 ff., and especially Ps. lxxx. 8-19: by the intimate analogy of vegetable life (of which the tree bearing fruit is the highest kind, and of such trees the vine the noblest) with spiritual, and perhaps also by the **fruit of the vine** having been so recently the subject of their attention and the Lord’s prophecy, Luke xxii. 18 and the parallel places.

1.] The Vine and branches stand in a much nearer connexion than the Shepherd and the sheep, or the lord of the vineyard and the vines; and answer to the Head and members in Eph. v. 23, 30; Col. ii. 19, linked together by a common organization, and informed by one and the same life.

the TRUE vine] not only, ‘the vine by which prophecy is fulfilled:’ not only, ‘the vine in which the organism and qualities of the vine are most nobly realized,’ but, as in ch. i. 9, the **true**, i.e. the **original**, or *archetypal*: that which served for the pattern of all such afterwards. The material creations of God are only inferior examples of that finer spiritual life and organism, in which the creature is raised up to partake of the divine nature; only *figures of the true*, Heb. ix. 24; “*patterns* (i. e.

representations) of things in the heavens,” ib. 23; see ch. vi. 32.

the husbandman] Not only the tiller of the land, but the vine-planter and dresser; He who has originated the relation between the vine and branches by planting the Vine in this earth (the nature of man), and who looks for and ensures the bringing forth of fruit.

2.] The Vine contains *fruitful* and *unfruitful* branches. Who are these *unfruitful* branches? *Who are the branches?* Clearly, all those who, adopting the parallel image, are made *members* of Christ by baptism, Rom. vi. 3, 4; compare “*planted together,*” ib. ver. 5, also Rom. xi. 17 ff. The Vine is *the visible Church here*, of which Christ is the *inclusive Head*: the Vine *contains* the branches; hence the unfruitful, as well as the fruitful, are in Me.

Every such unfruitful branch the Father pulls off and casts away: and every one that beareth fruit He prunes, by cleansing it of its worthless parts, and shortening its rank growth, that it may ripen and enlarge its fruit better.

3.] **clean**, see ch. xiii. 10. In Eph. v. 26, we have both the *washing* by reason of the word, and the word itself, united. The *word* of Christ dwelling in them by Faith (see ver. 7) is the purifying principle (ch. xvii. 17). But the word **clean** here is not to be taken as equivalent to *cleansed*, or *pruned*, in the sense of ver. 2. The ad-verb **now** or **already** limits it to their present capacities and standing. There was more pruning at hand, when the sap should begin to flow,—when the Spirit should be shed abroad; and this future handling of the *husbandman* is indicated by the command, “*Abide in me.*”

4.] **And I in you** must not be taken as a *promise* (“*Abide in me, and then I will abide in you*”), which (see on ver. 2 above) would be contrary to the sense: but as a clause dependent on the former, ‘Take care that ye abide in Me and I in you:’ *both these* being necessary to the bringing forth fruit: see ver. 5, where the two are similarly bound together.

Here the natural strictness of the similitude is departed from. The branch cannot sever itself from the vine: but, *such a case supposed*, every one will see the inevitable consequence. Bengel says well, “This passage plainly shews the difference between what takes place in nature and what takes place in grace.” It is *the permitted free-will of the creature* which makes the difference between the branches in the two cases.

5.] The interpretation of the allegory which each mind was forming for itself, the Lord solemnly asserts for them. Notice the term **the same**—he and no other: “it is he, that beareth much fruit.”

The separation indicated in the last clause of the verse is more than ‘*without Me*,’ the words are best rendered **apart**, or **separate from Me**, from being in Me and I in you. The word **because** has respect rather to the sense, than to the words themselves: *because* union with Me is the sole efficient cause of fruit being produced, you having no power to do any thing, to bring any thing to perfection, to do any of those things which belong to that which ye are, separate from Me.

6.] This verse is a most important testimony against supra-lapsarian error, shewing us that *falling from grace is possible*, and pointing out the steps of the fall. Observe this is *not said of the unfruitful branch*, which the Father *takes away* (in judgment): but of one *who will not abide* in Christ, becomes separate from Him: (1) he is *cast out* (of the vineyard, or of the Vine) like a branch in such a case: (2) he becomes *dried up*, having lost the supply of life-giving sap (‘quenched the Spirit,’ 1 Thess. v. 19): (3) he is gathered up with other such (Matt. xiii. 40) by the angels at the great day: (4) is cast into the fire, as the result of that judgment; and finally (5) ‘burneth;’ not, ‘is burned,’ in any sense of being *consumed*; “*and must burn,*” as Luther renders it.

7.] All bringing forth fruit is the result of answered prayer for the assisting grace of God: and therefore the answer of all prayer is here promised to those who abide in Christ and have His word (Heb. vi. 5) abiding in them. The imperative is used by anticipation, of the future time. This not having been seen, it has probably been altered to the future, as in the A.V.: see ch. xiv. 13.

whatsoever ye will, in the supposed case, is necessarily *in the way of God’s will*, and as tending to *bearing much fruit*.

8.] **Herein** belongs to the following words, not the preceding: as in the text.

The **much fruit** is not merely ‘large success in the apostolic mission,’ but ‘individual advance in bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit.’

According to the reading cited in the margin, the Father’s glorification is continued by another result, and **that ye may become My (true) disciples**] “It is the *foundation* of being a Christian, to become a disciple of Christ: it is the *completion* of being a Christian, to be a disciple of Christ.” Bengel.

According to the reading with the verb in the future, the actual result of what precedes is stated: **and so ye shall become My disciples.**

9.] The Love between the Father and Christ is compared with that between Christ and His disciples. ‘As the Father hath loved the Son, so the Son His disciples.’

The words **my love** may be understood as meaning *the love of Me*;—but the sense is not good, and the expression is not parallel with the same expression in ver. 10; so that I prefer **my love**, *the love which I have towards you*; remain in it; do not cast yourselves out of it. The other sense is *implied* in this, but not expressed.

10.] The way thus to remain is prescribed; even that way of simple obedience to *His Will*, which He followed to the Will of the Father.

On the words **my love**, see above.

11. **have I spoken**] Again anticipatory, hastening to the end of the discourse, and treating it as ended.

my joy] not ‘joy concerning Me,’ nor ‘joy derived from Me,’ nor ‘My joy over you,’ but **My joy**, properly speaking (see 2 Cor. ii. 3, “*My joy is the joy of you all*”): “His own holy exultation, the joy of the Son in the consciousness of the love of God, of His Unity with the Father: see ver. 10.” (Lücke.)

and that your joy might be full] That their joy might, by the indwelling of that *His Joy*, be uplifted and ennobled even to fulness,—to the extreme of their capability and satisfaction,—and might remain so.

12–17.] *Union in love with one another enjoined on them.*

12.] That He may shew them that it is no rigid code of keeping commandments in the legal sense, ver. 11 is inserted, and now *the command-ment* (as including all others) is again explained (see ch. xiii. 34) to be, *mutual love*,—and that, after His example of Love to them.

13.] A difficulty has been unnecessarily found in this verse, because St. Paul, Rom. v. 6 ff, cites it as a nobler instance of love, that Christ died for us *when we were enemies*. But manifestly *here* the example is from common life, in which if a man did lay down his life, it would naturally be for his friends; and would be, and is cited as, the greatest example of love. Nor again is there any doctrinal difficulty: our Lord does not assert of himself, that He laid down his life *only* for his friends (as defined in the next verse), but puts forward *this side* of his Love as a great and a practical example for his followers. His own great Sacrifice of Himself lies in the background of this verse; but only in the background, and with but one side of it seen, viz. his Love to them. See 1 Tim. iv. 10, and compare 1 John iii. 16.

14.] parallel to ver. 10,—and like it, guarded, in vv. 15, 16, 17, from legal misinterpretation.

15.] Spoken, by anticipation, of the state in which He would place them under the Spirit. Nor is there any discrepancy with eh. xiii. 13, 16, and ver. 20 here, which are also spoken of their future condition: for in that sense both relations subsist together. It is the *lower sense* of the word rendered **servant** (signifying both *servant* and *slave*), which is brought out in this verse. The anticipatory character of the saying is clearly shewn in the words, “*Knoweth not what his lord doeth;*” for this was precisely their *present* condition, but was after His Ascension changed into light and knowledge. **I made known unto you**] Here again the allusion must be (see chi. xvi. 12) to their future state under the dispensation of the Spirit: nay, even to the fulness and completion of *it*, as Augustine remarks; compare the confession of one of the greatest Apostles, 1 Cor. 10. “As we look for immortality of the flesh and salvation of the soul in the future, although, having received the pledge of both, we are said to be already saved: so we should hope for in the future the knowledge of all things which the Only-begotten has heard from the Father, although Christ says He has already made them known to us.” Augustine.

16.] See 1 John iv. 10, 19. Further proof of His love, in his choosing His, when they had not chosen Him.

appointed] See Acts xili, 47: 1 Thess. v. 9, and reff. Chrysostom and others explain it as meaning “*planted*,” in reference to the similitude of the *vine*. But the parable seems to be no further returned to than in the allusion implied in *bearing fruit*. “*Ordained*,” in A, V., is objectionable, as conveying a wrong idea, that of *appointing to the Ministry*, which is not here present.

that ye should go and bear fruit] The word go probably merely expresses (see Matt. xvili. 15; xix. 21, and Luke viii. 14) the activity of living and developing principle; not the missionary journeys of the Apostles, as some have explained it. The fruit is not the Church, to be founded by the Apostles, and endure;—this is evident, for here the fruit is spoken of with reference to

themselves, and their ripening into the full stature of Christ. Much of their fruit will be necessarily the winning of others to Christ: but that is not the prominent idea here.

that your fruit should remain] See 2 John 8; Rev. xiv. 13.

that whatsoever ye ask...] This second that is parallel with the former one, not the result of it; the two, the bringing forth of fruit and the obtaining answer to prayer, being co-ordinate with each other; but (vv. 7, 8) the bearing fruit to God's glory is of these the greater, being the result and aim of the other.

17.] The expression **these things** refers (as almost always in John, see verses 11, 21; xvi. 1, 25, 33; xvii. 1; xviii. 1 al.) back to what has gone before. 'The object of my enjoining these things on you is (for all since ver. 12 has been an expansion of the words "*as I loved you*") that ye love one another' (see 1 John iv. 11). Then from the indefiniteness of this term, **one another**, our Lord takes occasion to forewarn them that however wide their love to one another, they cannot bring all within this category; there will be still **the world** outside, which will hate them.

18–27.] Their relation to the world: and vv. 18–21, *ground of the world's hatred*. On the connexion, see above.

18.] See ch. vii. 7.

The verb rendered in the A.V. "ye know," is most likely imperative, **know ye**. The *assertion* of their knowledge of the fact would in all likelihood have been otherwise expressed in the original. See more in the note in my Greek Test. The great proof of this hatred to Him was yet to come, but is viewed as past. This knowledge brings comfort, 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.

19.] not only explains this hatred, but derives additional comfort from it, as a sign that they were not (any longer) *of the world*; but chosen out of it by Him, and endued with a new life from above.

By the result being expressed in the words, **would love his** (its) **own**, not "*would love you*," we have the true practice of the world hinted at, and the false character of the world's love, as a mere *self-love*, set forth. In this 'loving their own,' the children of this world fall into hating one another. Meyer remarks the solemnity of **the world** thus repeated five times.

20.] Our Lord had said it to them in ch. xiii. 16, but with a different reference: the sense here being, 'Remember the saying, for it is true in this matter also;' see Matt. x. 24, where it is used in the same sense. **They**, i.e. *the world*—the persons constituting it.

A difficulty has been raised on the latter clause of this verse, because "*they*" did not im any sense "*keep*" Christ's word, whereas they did persecute Him: and an attempt has been made to give to the word "*keep*" the sense of *watching* with a hostile intent, which it will not bear. Nor is *irony* (Lampe, Stier) in this latter clause at all in keeping with the solemnity of the discourse. There is no real difficulty: the words simply mean, 'the keeping My word and the keeping yours are intimately joined, and when you find the world or any part of the world do the first, you may infer the other.' The issue of the condition, "*If they kept My saying*," was to be proved by their rejection and killing of the Lord Jesus.

21.] Howbeit—stronger than merely "*But*:"—nay, so far is this from being so, that it is on this very account, *because ye belong to Me*, that they will thus treat, you.

all these things—all that is im-plied in *hating* and *persecuting*.

It was on account of *bearing the Name of Christ* that the Christians were subjected to persecution in the early ages, and that, they are even now hated by those who know Him not: but this is to them comfort and joy, see Acts v. 41: 2 Cor. xii. 10: Gal. vi. 17: 1 Pet. iv. 14.

they know not] not, '*They know Him not as having sent Me*'—but **they know not Him who has sent Me**. Ignorance of God (not desiring the knowledge of His ways) is the great cause of hostility to Christ and His servants.

22.] The sinfulness of this hate. See ch. ix. 41 and note.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, i.e. **discoursed to them**, generally: not, *acquainted them with their sin*. The *sin* spoken of is, not the generally sinful state of the world,—nor the sin of unbelief in Christ, which they of course could not have committed, had He never come: but, *the sin of hatred to Him and His*, which might have been excused otherwise, but now that He had come and discoursed with them, had no excuse, since He had plainly shewn them the proofs of His mission from the Father.

Thus He shews that they embraced the side of evil of their own accord, and had no pretext of self-justification.

23.] See ch. xiv. 9. Human regards, whether of love or of hatred, towards Him who is the only manifestation of the Father to His creatures, are in fact directed towards the Father Himself; see Ps. lxix. 9, cited in Rom. xv. 3.

24.] He refers to the testimony of His *works* among them also, as leaving them again without excuse;—they had had ocular witness of His mission.

25.] But all this not as an *accidental* thwarting of My word and work among them, but as a matter predicted in Scripture.

in their law, ch. x. 34 and note. To suppose any irony in these words, as De Wette does (‘they are *true followers-out of their law*’), is manifestly against, the whole spirit of our Lord’s reference to the law. It is called ‘*their law*,’—“the law which they are ever turning over and vaunting themselves about,” as Bengel says,—as condemning them, though their boast and pride.

without a cause, as answering to “*they have no excuse for their sin*,” ver. 22.

The citation is probably from Psalm lxix., which treats of the rejection and sufferings of the Messiah.

26.] This assurance carries on the testimony concerning Christ,—which the world should see and hear, and yet reject and hate Him,—even to the end of time, by means of the Spirit of Truth: so that on the one hand this **seeing and hating** must not be expected to cease as long as the Spirit bears this witness,—and on the other, He, the Spirit of Truth, will never cease to overcome the hating world by this His testimony.

the Comforter (Paraclete)] See ch. xiv. 16 and note.

whom I will send] Stier dwells on the accurate division of the clauses here, “*the Comforter whom I will send*,”—but “*the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father*.” The first clause he regards as spoken with reference to the mediatorial dispensation, of the Spirit in His office as Paraclete, sent from the Father by the glorified Son (or, by the Father in the Son’s name, ch. xiv. 26), and bringing in the dispensation of the Spirit;—the second, in strictness of theological meaning, of the essential nature of the Spirit Himself, that He *proceedeth forth from the Father*. (And if from the Father, from the Son also,—see ch. xvi. 15, and those passages where the Spirit is said to be *His Spirit*, Rom. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 6; Phil. i. 19; 1 Pet. i. 11, also Rev. xxii. 1.) Perhaps however it is better to take the *whole* as spoken with reference to the mediatorial dispensation. Then the former description is *parallel with* the latter, and the procession from the Father *is* the sending by the Son. At all events, *this passage*, as Beza remarks, cannot be alleged either one way or the other in the controversy with the Greek church, which maintains that the Holy Spirit proceeds from *the Father alone*, not as we (see Nicene Creed) *from the Father and the Son*.

27.] The disciples are not, as some have supposed, here mentioned as witnesses *separate from and working with* the Holy Spirit. The witness is *one and the same*; the Spirit will witness in and by them: the introductory clause, **when the Comforter is come**, belongs to the whole; see Luke xxiv. 48, 49, where this is strongly expressed. This verse alludes to the historical witness which the Holy Ghost in the ministers and eye-witnesses of the word, Luke i. 2, should enable them to give,—which forms the *human side* of this great testimony of the Spirit of truth, and OF WHICH OUR INSPIRED GOSPELS ARE THE SUMMARY: the *Divine side* being, His own indwelling testimony in the life and heart of every believer in all time. But both the one and the other are given by *the self-same SPIRIT*;—neither of them inconsistent with, or superseding the other.

from the beginning, as in Luke i. 2, and in the sense of Acts i. 21;—‘from the beginning of the Lord’s ministry,’ The present tenses set forth the connexion between the being (continuing to be) witnesses, and the being (having been throughout) companions of the Lord in His ministry. Thus we have in 1 John iii. 8, “*the devil sinneth from the beginning*.”

John: Chapter 16

CHAP. XVI. 1–33.] *The promise of the Comforter expanded in its fulness.* And herein, vv. 1–15, *the conditions of His coming and His office.*

1.] **These things**, viz. ch. xv. 18–27,—not only the warning of the hatred of the world, but the promise of the testifying Spirit (Stier).

2.] **On putting out of the Synagogue**, see ch. ix. 22; xii. 42.

The word **yea** introduces a yet more grievous and decisive proof of their nature.

that he offereth a service to God] The verb in the original is the technical word for *offering a sacrifice*. The Rabbinical books say that “he who sheds the blood of an infidel is as one offering a sacrifice.” See 1 Cor. iv. 13, and note.

3.] See Luke xxiii. 34; ch. xv. 21; Acts iii. 17; and 1 Tim. i. 13.

4.] **Nevertheless** here indicates no contrast, but only breaking off the mournful details, and passing back to the subject of ver. 1. If we are to seek any contrast, it will be between the “*non-knowledge*” of the world, and the “*remembering*” of the church. The one know not what they are doing: the other know well what they are suffering.

their hour] i.e. the time of their happening.

The “I” before **told you of them** is emphatic, ‘I MYSELF:’—**that it was I MYSELF who told you**. A difficulty has been found in the latter part of the verse, because our Lord had repeatedly announced to them future persecutions, and that at least as plainly as here, Matt. v. 10; x. 16, 21–28, and elsewhere. And hence some Commentators find ground for supposing that the chronological order of the discourses has not been followed in the three first Gospels. But there is in reality no inconsistency, and therefore no need for such a supposition. This declaration, *as here meant*, was *not made before*, because He was with them. Then clearly it *is now made*, in reference to His immediate departure. And if so, to what will **these things** most naturally refer? To *that full and complete account* of the world’s motives, and their own office, and their comfort under it, which He has been giving them. This He had *never before done* so plainly, though occasional mention has been made even of the help of the Spirit under such trials; see Matt. x. 19, 20.

because I was with you] While the Lord was *with them* (compare Matt. ix. 15), the malice of the world was mainly directed against *Him*,—and they were overlooked: see ch. xviii. 8.

In this past tense, **I was**, we have the anticipatory character of the discourse again manifest. The Lord looks upon His earthly course as ended.

5.] This is occasioned by the foregoing, but in fact begins the new subject, *the condition of the Comforter’s coming*.

and none of you asketh me....] They had (see ch. xiii, 36; xiv. 5) asked this *verbally* before: our Lord therefore cites the question here in some other and deeper sense than they had used it there. I believe the meaning to be: ‘None of you enquires into the NATURE of My departure, so as to appear anxious to know what advantages are to be derived from it; but (ver. 6) you are all given up to grief on account of what I have said’

6.] ‘Grief has filled, entirely occupied, your heart (not “*your hearts*,” but singular, as common to all, see Rom. i, 21), to the exclusion of any regard of my object in leaving you.’ ‘These are the same disciples who afterwards, when their risen Lord had ascended to heaven,—without any pang at parting with Him, returned with great joy to Jerusalem, Luke xxiv. 52.’ Augustine remarks that “there is beneath this mild rebuke a tacit consolation. For while He blames them in that they neglected enquiring whither He was going, He virtually excuses this their negligence, in that it arose from their being overwhelmed with sorrow.”

7.] **Nevertheless** refers to the last clause,—notwithstanding that no one of you asks me, I *Myself* will tell you the real state of the case.

It is expedient for you, implies that the dispensation of the Spirit is a more blessed manifestation of God than was even the bodily presence of the risen Saviour.

Every rendering of this verse ought to keep the distinction between the two verbs which our Lord uses in speaking of His departure; which is not accurately done in the A.V. **Depart** and **go** seem to be the best words: the first expressing merely the *leaving them*, the second, the *going up* to the Father.

The I before **depart** is again emphatic: ‘that I, for my part, should leave you.’

This saying of our Lord, that the Comforter **will not come**, except He himself depart, is a convincing proof, if one more were needed, *that the gift of the Spirit at and since the day of Pentecost, was and is something TOTALLY DISTINCT from any thing before that time: a new and loftier dispensation*.

8–11.] We have here, in a few deep and wonderful words, *the work of the Spirit on the world* set forth. This work He shall begin **when He is come**,—come, that is, **to you**: not, however, merely ‘*by your means*,’ but personally: so that it is *not the work and witness of the Apostles* which is spoken of, except in so far as they are servants of the Holy Spirit, but *His own immediate personal working*.

8. will convict] It is difficult to give in one word the deep meaning of the original term: ‘convince’ approaches perhaps near to it, but does not express the double sense, which is manifestly here intended—of a *convincing* unto salvation, and a *convicting* unto condemnation:—‘reprove’ is far too weak, conveying merely the idea of an outward rebuke, whereas this reaches into the heart, and works inwardly in both the above-mentioned ways. See the whole question amply discussed in Archdeacon Hare’s “Mission of the Comforter,” vol. ii. note K.

Lücke’s comment is valuable: ‘The testimony of the Holy Ghost in behalf of Christ as opposed to the unbelieving world (ch. xv. 26) is essentially a *refutation*, a demonstration of its wrong and error. All the apostolic preaching, as addressed to the world, takes necessarily this polemical form (1 Tim. v. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 2; iii. 16; Titus i. 9, 13; ii. 15). And the more difficult was the disciples’ conflict, against the power of this world with only the Word for their weapon, the more comfort was it for them, that the power of God the Spirit working by this *refutation* was their help. In Matt. x. 19, 20; Luke xii. 11, 12, the apologetic side of their conflict, which was in close connexion with the polemical, is brought into view. In the word here used is always implied the refutation, the overcoming of an error, a wrong,—by the truth and the right. And when, by means of the “*refutation*” the truth detects the error, and the right the wrong, so that a man becomes conscious of them,—then arises the feeling of *guilt*, which is ever painful. Thus every such “*refutation*” is a chastening, a punishment. And hence this office has been called the *punitive* office of the Spirit. The *effect* of the “*refutation*” carried on by the divine Spirit in the world may be to *harden*: but its *aim* is the *deliverance* of the world. This term **the world**, in John, includes those who are not yet delivered (from the power of Satan to God) who *may be yet delivered*,—not the condemned. If the “*refutation*” of the world is a moral process, its result may just as well be conversion, as non-conversion. *Only thus* did the refutation carried on by the Spirit answer the end of Christ’s coming;—only thus could it be a cheering support to the Apostles. Certainly, the **judgment** with which it closes is *condemnation*, not however of the *world*, but of the *Prince of the world*.’

De Wette denies the *salutary* side of this convicting process—but he is certainly wrong: see below. These three words, **sin**, **righteousness**, **judgment**, comprehend the three great steps of advance in spiritual truth among men. Of itself the world does not know what *Sin* is, what *Righteousness* is, what *Judgment* is. Nor can either of these be revealed to any man, except by the Spirit of God working within him. Each man’s conscience has some glimmering of light on each of these; *some* consciousness of guilt, *some* sense of right, *some* power of judgment of what is transitory and worthless: but all these are unreal and unpractical, till the convicting work of the Spirit has wrought in him.

9.] And the great opening of *Sin* to the world is to shew them that its root and essence is, *unbelief in Christ as the Son of God*. UNBELIEF:—for, mankind being alien from God by nature, the first step towards their recovery must be to lay hold on that only safety which He has provided for them; and that laying hold is *faith*, and the not doing it, when revealed and placed before them, is *sin*. Beforetime, it was also *unbelief*;—’ The fool hath said in his heart, there is *no God*:’—but now,—for we can only believe as God has revealed Himself,—it is *unbelief in Christ the Son of God*,—the *having no desire to come to Him*: see this pointedly asserted 1 John v. 10–12. Remember, this *unbelief* is not a mere want of historical faith,—but *unbelief in its very root*,—the want of a personal and living recognition of Jesus as the Lord (1 Cor. xii. 3), which, wherever the Spirit has ‘opened His commission’ by the planting of the visible Church, is *the condemning sin* of the world. Of this He shall *convince* those who are brought out of the world, and ultimately *convict* those who remain in it and die in their sins (see Hare, “Mission of the Comforter,” vol. ii. note Q).

10.] The **righteousness** here spoken of cannot be *only* the righteousness of *Christ*, the mere conviction of which would only bring condemnation to that world which rejected and crucified Him: but as Stier remarks rightly, the conviction of the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment must be concerning a sin that is *theirs*, a righteousness that is (or, in the case of condemnation *might have been*) *theirs*, a judgment which is *theirs* (see below). Then *what is the world’s righteousness?* Not their own, but that of the accepted Man Christ Jesus standing at the right hand of God (seen by us no more, but by that very withdrawal testified to be the Son of God, THE RIGHTEOUS ONE), manifested in the hearts of men by the Spirit to be *their only* righteousness;—and thereby that righteousness, which they had of their own before, is demonstrated to be worthless, and as filthy rags. It is *His going to the Father* by which this righteousness is assured to us, and by the effect of which, the Spirit, the conviction respecting it is wrought in our hearts. The *condemnatory* side of this part of the Spirit’s work of conviction is,—that *remorse*, wherewith they whose day of grace is past shall look on the perfect righteousness which might have been theirs, and on the miserable substitute with which they contented themselves.

11.] As the **righteousness** spoken of was *the world’s righteousness*, and the convicting them of it was the manifesting to them how worthless it (their righteousness after its old conception) was of their own by nature, but how perfect and complete it (the same as now newly and more worthily apprehended) is in and by Christ,—so now the **judgment** spoken of is *the world’s judgment*:—on the one side, *their judgment* or estimate, or discrimination of things,—on the other side, *God’s judgment*, to which it is opposed. This their judgment by nature they form in subjection to the prince of this world, the Devil, of whose power they are not conscious, and whose existence they even deny: but the Spirit of God shall convict this judgment of wrong;—shall shew them how erroneous and destructive it is, and what a bondage they have been under;—shall detect to them the Prince of this world reigning in the children of disobedience, and give them *a better judgment*, by which they shall ‘not be ignorant of his devices’ (2 Cor. ii. 11). But this better judgment itself is that very truth of God manifested in the Lord

Jesus, by which (ch. xii. 31) *the Prince of this world is cast out*;—by which the follower of Christ is enabled to say, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan;’ by which the unbelieving world, and its Prince, are finally condemned in *the judgment* hereafter.

I have preferred giving pointedly what I believe to be the sense of this most important passage, to stringing together a multitude of opinions on it: seeing that of even the best Commentators no two bring out exactly the same shade of meaning, and thus classification is next to impossible. It will be seen that in my view the *subjective* (internal, acting in and on the mind of its *subject*) and *objective* (external, viewed from without, belonging to the *object* regarded, not to him who regards it) bearing of the three words are *both* to be kept in sight, and that the great convictive work of the Spirit is to bring man OUT OF HIMSELF INTO CHRIST, Who (in His objective manifestation) must be *made unto him* (subjectively), 1. *redemption*, 2. *righteousness*, 3. *wisdom* (the fourth, *sanctification*, not being here treated of, as being another part of the Spirit’s work, and on those who are no longer “*the world*,” see ch. xvii. 16, 17); and to condemn those who remain in the world finally, in all these points, as having rejected Christ. And this convictive work of the Spirit is a *complex* and *progressive* work; including the ministry of the Apostles, and every step taken towards divine truth in the history of the Church, as well as the conversion of individuals, and condemnation of the unbelieving.

12.] The **many things** which our Lord does not say to them are, the things belonging to “*all the truth*” in the next verse, which were gradually unfolded, after the Ascension, by the Spirit.

13.] **he**, emphatical, as in ver. 8: see note, ch. vii. 29.

all the truth] viz. on those points alluded to in ver. 12. The Lord had ever told them *the truth*, and *nothing but the truth*, in spiritual things,—but not yet *the whole truth*, because they could not bear it. This the Spirit should lead them into, open the way to it, and unfold it by degrees.

No promise of universal knowledge, nor of infallibility, is hereby conveyed; but a promise to them and us, that the Holy Spirit shall teach and lead us, not as children, under the tutors and governors of legal and imperfect knowledge, but as sons (Gal. iv. 6) making known to us the whole truth of God. This was in an especial manner fulfilled to *them*, as set to be the founders and teachers of the Churches.

for he shall not speak of himself] The Spirit does not, any more than the Son, work or speak of *Himself*: both are sent, the one from the Father, the other from the Father and Son: the one to testify “*whatsoever He shall hear*” of the Father, the other of the Father and the Son.

whatsoever he shall hear] from God, the Father and the Son.

he shall tell you the things to come] As the *direct* fulfilment to the *Apostles* of the leading into the whole truth was the unfolding before them those truths which they have delivered down to us in their Epistles,—so, though scattered traces of the fulfilment of *this part* of the promise are found in the Acts and those Epistles, its complete fulfilment was the giving of the Apocalypse, in which “*the things to come*” are distinctly the subject of the Spirit’s revelation, and with which His *direct* testimony closes: see Rev. i. 1; xxii, 6, 20. On the whole of this verse, see Eph. iv. 7–16.

14.] This is in connexion with ver. 12—and sets forth that the *Spirit guiding into* truth is in fact *the*

Son declaring the truth, for He shall shew forth the glory of Christ, by revealing the matters of Christ,—the riches of the Father’s love in him (ver. 15).

This verse is decisive against all additions and pretended revelations subsequent to and besides Christ; it being the work of the Spirit to testify to and declare THE THINGS OF CHRIST; not any thing new and beyond Him. And this declaration is coincident with inward advance in the likeness and image of Christ (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18), not with a mere external development.

15.] Here we have given us a glimpse into the essential relations of the Blessed Trinity. The Father hath given the Son to have life and all things in Himself (Col. i. 19; ii. 2, 3), the relation being, that the Son glorifies not Himself but the Father, by revealing the Father, whom He alone knows (Matt. xi. 27). And this Revelation, the Revelation of the Father by Christ—is carried on by the blessed Spirit in the hearts of the disciples of Christ; Who receives (i. e. whose Office it is to receive) of the things of Christ, and declares, proclaims, to them.

for this cause I (rightly) said.... i.e. ‘this was the ground of My asserting:’ not the reason *why it was said*, but the justification of it when said.

This verse contains the plainest proof by inference of the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

16–24.] *The Lord speaks of His withdrawal, and its immediate mournful, but ultimate (and those soon to begin) joyful consequences for His disciples.*

The connexion is: ‘Very soon will the Spirit, the Comforter, come to you: for I go to the Father, without any real cessation of the communion between you and Me.’ Lücke.

16.] The mode of expression is (purposely) enigmatical;—the **beholding**: and **seeing** not being co-ordinate;—the first referring merely to physical, the second also to spiritual sight. So before, ch. xiv. 19, where see note. It is important to observe the distinction between the two verbs, which the A.V. has obliterated by rendering both “see.” The “*beholding*” implies the long, constant, usual sight of Him which they then had in the flesh: the “*seeing*” the glimpses obtained by occasional appearances and visions, and the dimmer and more interrupted spiritual sight gained by faith.

The promise of seeing Him after a little while, *began to be fulfilled* at the Resurrection;—then received its *main fulfilment* at the day of Pentecost;—and shall have its *final completion* at the great return of the Lord hereafter. Remember again, that in all these prophecies we have a perspective of continually-unfolding fulfilments presented to us: see note on ch. xiv. 3.

17, 18.] The disciples are perplexed by this **little while**, as connected with what our Lord had before asserted ver. 10, “*I go to my Father.*” *That* seemed to them a long and hopeless withdrawal: how was it then to be reconciled with what he now said of a short absence? What was this **little while**? This connexion not being observed, has led to the insertion by the copyists of the clause **because I go to the Father** in ver. 16.

19.] The real difficulty being in the “*little while*,” our Lord applies himself only to this, not noticing the other part of the question: which confirms the view of the connexion taken above.

20.] The words **weep** and **lament** are to be literally taken: see Luke xxiii. 27. They would mourn for Him as dead:—see also ch. xx. 11.

ye, emphatic, as opposed to **the world**. And the joy of the world found its first exponent in the scoffs of the passers-by at the crucifixion.

ye shall be sorrowful] ‘This goes deeper than the weeping and wailing before: and plainly shews that the whole does not *only* refer to the grief while the Lord was in the tomb, but to the grief continually manifesting itself in the course and conflict of the Christian, which is turned into joy by the advancing work of the Spirit of Christ;—and, in the completion of the sense, to the grief and widowhood of the Church during her present state, which will be turned into joy at the coming of her Lord.

shall be turned into joy] not merely *changed for joy*, but **changed into** so as *itself to become*,—so that the very matter of grief shall become matter of joy; as Christ’s Cross of shame has become the glory of the Christian, Gal. vi. 14.

21.] The object of comparison is, *grief which is turned into joy*: but the comparison itself goes far beyond this mere similitude.

A woman] The original has the definite article, **the woman**. This is said by some Commentators to be in allusion to the frequent use and notoriety of the comparison. We often have it in the O.T.,—see Isa. xxi. 3; xxvi. 17, 18; xxxvii. 3; lxvi. 7, 8; Hos. xiii. 13, 14; Mic. iv. 9, 10.

when she is in travail] literally, **is bringing forth**.

The deeper reference of the comparison has been well described by Olshausen: ‘Here arises the question, how are we to understand this similitude? We might perhaps think that the suffering Manhood of Christ was *the woman in her pangs*, and the same Christ glorified in the Resurrection, *the Man born*; but the Redeemer (ver. 22) applies the pangs to the *disciples*: how then will the “*man*” who is born apply to them?’ Then, after condemning the shallow and unsatisfactory method of avoiding deep research by asserting that the details of parables are not to be interpreted, he proceeds: ‘Hence the proper import of the figure seems to be, that the Death of Jesus Christ was as it were an anguish of birth belonging to all Humanity, in which the perfect Man was born into the world; and in this very birth of the new man lies the spring of eternal joy, never to be lost, for all, inasmuch as through Him and His power the renovation of the whole is rendered possible.’ And indeed the same is true of every Christian who is planted in the likeness of Christ. His passing from sorrow to joy—till ‘Christ be formed in him,’ is this birth of pain. And the whole Church, the Spouse of Christ,—nay, even the whole Creation, travaileth in pain together (Rom. viii. 23) till the number of the elect be accomplished, and the eternal joy brought in.

22.] I will see you again—in the same manifold meaning as before noticed—**will see you**—at My Resurrection—by My Spirit—at My second Advent.

23.] that day, in its full meaning, cannot import *the forty days*: for, Acts i. 6, they did then ask the Lord *questions*—nor this present dispensation of the Spirit, during which we have only the firstfruits, but not the full understanding so as not to need to ask any thing; (for is not *prayer itself* an *asking*?)—but that great completion of the Christian's hope, when he shall be with his Lord, when all doubt shall be resolved, and prayer shall be turned into praise. The Resurrection-visiting, and the Pentecost-visiting of them, were but foretastes of this. Stier well remarks, ‘The connexion of the latter part of this verse is,—the way to asking nothing any more, is to ask and to pray the more diligently, till that day comes.’

It has been supposed wrongly that the words **me** and **the Father** are in opposition in this verse, and thence gathered that it is not lawful to address prayer to Christ. But such an opposition is contrary to the whole spirit of these discourses,—and *asking the Father in Christ's name*, is in fact *asking HIM*.

In the latter clause, notice the right reading, **He will give it you in my name**, He being the *element*, the *region*, of all communication between God and the Church. Compare Rom. i. 8, where *thanks* are offered **through Jesus Christ**.

24.] It was impossible, up to the time of the glorification of Jesus, to pray to the Father in His Name. It is a fulness of joy peculiar to the dispensation of the Spirit, to be able so to do, Eph. ii. 18.

ask, and ye shall receive] See Matt, vii. 7, and mark the difference between the command then and now,—that **in my name** is added.

25–33.] *Their present real weakness and imperfection, though fancied strength: their future high blessedness and share in His triumph, though in tribulation in the world.*

25.] The word used here signifies *literally*, as rendered in A.V., *a proverb*: but it is better for the English reader to render it **parable**, because *proverb* has the technical appropriated sense of a short pithy saying of concentrated wisdom, whereas this implies generally something dark and enigmatical—deep truth wrapped up in words, as in a parable.

This is true of the whole discourse—and of the discourses of the Lord in general, as they must then have seemed to them, before the Holy Spirit furnished the key to their meaning.

the hour cometh] viz. the same as that indicated in vv. 16 and 23;—but here again, not one *hour* only exclusive of all others, but to be understood of the several steps of spiritual knowledge.

Olshansen finely remarks, that all human language is a parable, or dark saying, only able to hint at, not to express fully, the things of God; and that the Lord contrasts the use of this weak and insufficient medium, with the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit. This inward teaching, because it is a real imparting of the divine Nature and Life, brings with it not only *prayer in the name of Jesus*, but a *free access to the Father Himself*. This *speaking plainly* however, he continues, is described here by the Lord in its ideal perfection (as it will hereafter be): and is only approximated to on earth; for, as long as the *old man* yet lives in us, we require still the Lord's intercessory prayer (ch. xvii. 15), daily washing from the pollution of the world; by which Intercession alone the faithful man, notwithstanding his imperfection, can enjoy in peace the grace of God vouchsafed to him.

26.] ‘The more knowledge, the more prayer in the name of Jesus,’ Lücke. ‘Knowledge begets prayer,’ Bengel. The approaching the Father through Him shall be a characteristic of their higher state under the dispensation of the Spirit

I say not unto you....] This has been variously understood. Grotius's rendering, “I pass by this, as a lesser thing than that which Tam about to mention,” comes I believe the nearest to the truth, though it does not express the whole meaning. The Lord is now describing the fulness of their state of communion with Himself and the Father by the Spirit. He is setting in the strongest light their reconciliation and access to the Father. He therefore says, **Ye shall ask the Father in My name: and I do not now say to you,—I do not now state it in this form,—as if there were no relation of love and mercy between the Father and yourselves:—(27) for the Father Himself** (i. e. of His own accord) **loveth you; why? Because ye love and believe on Me.**

The whole mind of the Father towards mankind is *Love*: both in Redemption itself (ch. iii. 16),—and then in an especial manner by drawing those who come to Christ (vi. 44),—and again by this fuller manifestation of His love to those who believe on and love Christ. The aim of this saying is, to shew them that His intercession (which is still going on under the dispensation of the Spirit, 1 John ii. 1) does not imply their *exclusion from access* to the Father, but rather *ensures that access*, by the especial love which the Father bears to them who believe in and love His Son: CHRIST being still the efficient cause of the Father's love to them, and the channel of that Love. No stress must be laid (Lücke) on **ye have loved** here coming before **ye have believed**, as to Faith coming after Love: probably “*ye have loved*” is placed first as corresponding to the word “*loveth*” just before:—and it might be said with just as much reason that the Faith contains the ground of the Love, as the converse.

28.] ‘And your belief is sound: for I did indeed come forth’.... see ch. xiii. 3.

29, 30.] The stress is on **Now**: as if they said, “Why announce that as *future*, which Thou art doing *now*?” The hour was not yet come for the *speaking plainly*: so that we must understand the disciples’ remark to be made in weakness, however true their persuasion, and heartfelt their confession. “They so little understand Him, that they do not even understand, that they did not understand. For they were as babes.” Augustine. “They are annoyed that they should be accounted by their Master as unskilful and not comprehending His discourses, and wanting another Teacher, the Spirit whom He promised. And thus they go so far as to contradict Christ and dispute His plain words, and deny that He was speaking enigmatically to them.” Lampe. But by the word **now** they probably only mean, in verses 26–28.

30.] ‘Thou hast spoken so clearly of our feeling towards Thee, and of Thyself, that we have no occasion to ask Thee any thing;—and this was what Thou didst announce would be;—we know therefore, by its being so, that Thou knowest the secrets of our hearts (**all things** by inference),—and hence believe that Thou camest forth from God.’ The whole being a understanding of what had gone before, vv. 23, 25.

31.] Our Lord does not clear up their misunderstanding, but leaves that for the coming day of the Spirit. He only assures them that their belief, though sincere and loving, was not so deeply grounded in knowledge of Him and His appointed course, as they imagined.

The opening words of our Lord’s answer are much better taken *not as a question*; for this very belief was by our Lord recognized and commended, see ch. xvii. 8, also Matt. xvi. 17, 18. And as Stier remarks, “it was the aim and purpose of the whole prophetic office of Jesus, to prepare some first disciples (not the Apostles alone) for the reception of the Spirit of Truth and the fruits of His Death, by grounding in them firm belief in His Person.” He therefore *recognizes* their faith; but shews them how weak it as yet was.

32.] See Matt. xxvi. 31, to which same prophecy the reference here is.

I am not alone] The Father can never leave the Son, even in the darkest hour of His human suffering:—the apparent desertion implied in the cry ‘Why hast Thou forsaken me?’ being perfectly consistent with this; see note, Matt. xxvii. 46.

33.] On the first clause, especially the words **in me**, see ch. xv. 7. This presupposes the return from the scattering in ver. 32,—the branches again gathered in the vine.

ye have tribulation] The words are spoken of their normal state in the world.

This **tribulation** is not only persecution *from the world*, but trouble, inward distress, *while we are in the world*,—ch. xvii. 11;—a comforting sign that we are not *of* the world.

And this latter idea is implied *between* the two clauses: ‘Be of good cheer; for ye belong not to the world, but to Me, who have (anticipation again,—by that which is now at hand) overcome the world, so that it shall have no power over you, externally by persecution, or internally by temptations and discouragements.’ See 1 Jolin v. 4, 5.

John: Chapter 17

CHAP. XVII. 1–26.] HIS LOVE IN THE GLORIFICATION OF THE SON OF GOD. *The parting prayer of the Lord Jesus:* and herein, *for Himself* (1–5): *for His disciples* (6–19): *for all believers, that they may be one* (20, 21),—*that they may be glorified in the completion of that unity* (22–24),—*for their abiding in the union of love, the perfection of divine knowledge* (25, 26). Bengel observes that this, of all chapters in Scripture, is the simplest in words, and the deepest in meaning. “Our Lord, the Only-begotten, and co-eternal with the Father, when in the form of a servant, might, from this His condition of humiliation, have prayed in silence, if He had need of prayer: but it was His pleasure so to shew Himself as a suppliant to the Father, as to be mindful that He was our Teacher. Accordingly, the prayer which He made *for us*, He made known also to us: such a Master taught His disciples not only by His discourses to them, but by His prayers to the Father for them. And if them, who were to hear these words, then us also, who were to read them when written.” Augustine.

1.] These words, the foregoing discourse.

St. John very seldom depicts the gestures or looks of our Lord, as here. But this was an occasion of which the impression was indelible, and the upward look could not be passed over.

to heaven] Nothing hereby is determined as to the locality. The guest-chamber no doubt was the place of this prayer. The eyes

may be lifted to heaven in doors, as well as out-of-doors; *heaven* is not the *sky*, but that upper region, above our own being and thoughts, where we all agree in believing God to be especially present; and which we indicate when we direct our eyes or our hands upward. The Lord, being in all such things like as we are, lifted up His eyes to heaven when addressing the Father (not His *hands*, for He prays not here as a suppliant—but as an intercessor and a High Priest, standing between earth and heaven, see ver. 24, where he says, **I will, that....**).

It is impossible to regard the following prayer otherwise than as the *very words of our Lord Himself,—faithfully rendered by the beloved Apostle in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Father] not, *Our Father*,—which He never could say,—nor, *My Father*,—which would be too great a separation between Himself and His for such a prayer (see Matt. xxv. [39,] 42, where He prays for Himself only)—but simply FATHER; that Great Name in which all the mystery of Redemption is summed up.

the hour is come] See ch. xii. 23, 28; xiii. 31, 32. The Glorification is—the exaltation by Death and Resurrection: He prays in the Manhood, and for the exaltation of the Manhood, but in virtue of His Godhead, ver. 5.

thy Son] He prays first as *concerning* Himself, in the third person, to set the great matter forth in all its majesty; then *from* Himself, in the first person, ver. 5, putting *Himself* into the place of “*thy Son*” here.

that thy Son also may glorify thee] “These words are a proof that the Son is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead. What creature could stand before his Creator and say, ‘Glorify Thou me, that I may glorify Thee?’” Stier.

This glorifying of the Father by the Son is, the whole great result of the glorification of the Son by the Father,—the manifestation of God to and in men by the Son through the Spirit.

2.] ‘The causal connexion expressed by **according as** is this, that the glorification, the *end*, must correspond to the *beginning*, to the sending, the preparation, and office of the Son.’ (Lücke.) We must also bear in mind that the ‘giving of power’ in this verse is the *ground and source*, as well as the *type and manner*, of the **glorification**: see Rom. i. 28; 1 Cor. i. 6.

all flesh is not only ‘all mankind,’ but (see Gen. vii. 15, 16, 21) *all that has life*, all that is subject to death, all that is cursed on account of sin. But of this all, *mankind* is the head and crown, and in the *full* blessings of the Lordship of Christ mankind only can participate. *All flesh* is given by the Father, from before the foundation of the world, to Christ; the *whole creation* is His to rule, His to judge, by virtue of His being, in the root of that human nature, to which sovereignty over the world was given, THE SECOND AND RIGHTEOUS ADAM.

But in this wide gift, there is a *more*

special gift,—whatsoever thou hast given him in the stricter sense,—*the chosen*, they who believe on Him. And to them, and them only, He imparts the further and ineffable gift consequent on union with Him their God in the Spirit,—viz. ETERNAL LIFE (compare ch. v. 26, 27; also vi. 37).

3.] See a similar definition of a term just used, in ch. iii. 19.

this IS life eternal, not *is the way to it*. The knowledge spoken of is no mere head or heart knowledge,—the mere information of the mind, or excitation of the feelings,—but that living reality of knowledge and personal realization,—that oneness in will with God, and partaking of His nature, which IS itself life eternal:—the knowledge, love, enjoyment, of Him who is infinite, being themselves infinite. “The beginning of life is the result of the participation of God: and participation of God is the knowing God and enjoying His goodness.” Irenaeus. The Latin Fathers, Augustine, Ambrose, and Hilary, anxious to avoid the inference unwarrantably drawn by some from this verse against the Godhead of Christ, tried to arrange it thus: “*that they might know Thee, and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send, (to be) the only true God.*” But this treatment of the original is inadmissible. Others, as Chrysostom and Euthymius, construing rightly, yet regarded Jesus Christ as included in the words “*the only true God.*” But all such violences to the text are unnecessary. For, first, the very juxtaposition of Jesus Christ here with the Father, and the *knowledge of both* being defined to be eternal life, is a proof, by implication, of the Godhead of the former. The knowledge of God and a creature could not be eternal life, and the juxtaposition of the two would be inconceivable. Secondly, the words **whom Thou didst**

send most distinctly express the *coming forth* from God, ver. 8—imply the *unity* expressed in ver. 22, and cannot, in connexion with what follows, possibly be understood in a Socinian, or an Arian sense. I do not scruple to use and preach on the verse as a plain proof of the co-equality of the Lord Jesus in the Godhead.

A difficulty has been found in the use of the name JESUS CHRIST by the Lord Himself,—and inferences have been hence

made that we have *St. John's own language* here:—but surely without any ground. He who said “*Thy Son*,” ver. 1, might well here, before the change to the first person in ver. 4, use that prophetic Name JESUS, which had been divinely given Him as the Saviour of men, and its weighty adjunct CHRIST, in which Names are all the hidden treasures of that knowledge of which He here speaks. And as to the later use of the two names together having led to their insertion here by the Apostle,—what if *the converse were the case*, and this solemn use of them by our Lord had given occasion to their subsequent use by the Church? This is to me much more probable than the other.

4, 5.] The past tenses are anticipatory. The past tenses are, in the original, inde-finite; **I glorified Thee... I finished...** Our Lord stands by anticipation at the end of His accomplished course, and looks back on it all as past, as historically gathered up in one act. In English we can hardly retain these indefinite past tenses. They admit with us of another meaning, seeming to refer to a period far removed, and not to one just completed. Wherever they *can* be retained in their proper force, I have done so.

the work which thou gavest me to do is not only the ministerial life of our Lord, but the *whole Life*, with all its appointed manifestations of humility and purity;—the perfect righteousness which by that life He has planted in our nature,—and His prophetic and declarative office, terminated by His Passion and Death.

5. glorify thou me] Notice the relation between **I have glorified Thee** before and **glorify Thou Me** now. The same Person who had with the Father glory before the world, also glorified the Father in the world, and prays to be again received into that glory. *A decisive proof of the unity of the Person of Christ*, in His three estates of eternal pre-existence in glory, humiliation in the flesh, and glorification in the Resurrection Body.

This direct testimony to the eternal præ-existence of the Son of God lias been evaded by the Socinian and also the Arminian interpreters, by explaining the word **had** to mean, “*possessed by Thy decree which destined it for Me.*” On the identity of the glory in ver. 22 with this glory, see note there.

before the world was] i.e. ‘before all creation.’

with thee] See ch. i. 1, 18.

6-19.] *He prays for His disciples.*

6.] This verse particularizes ver. 4, and forms the transition to the intercessory prayer.

thy name] Thy Name of FATHER, which was so constantly on the lips of our Lord;—and which derived its living meaning and power from His teaching; see Exod. xxiii. 21.

the men which thou gavest me] The Father gave them to Christ, by *leading* them to Christ, see ch. vi. 37, 44, 45.

thine they were—Israelites—Thy people before:—not only outwardly, but Israelites indeed, see ch. i. 48, and thus prepared to receive Christ. And thus the expression **out of the world** answers to the *taking to Himself a nation out of another nation*, Deut. iv. 34. But see the fuller sense below, on ver. 9.

they have kept thy word—walked in the path of Thy commandments;—see ch. viii. 51, 52; xiv. 23.

Stier understands their walking in the Old Test. ordinances blameless, as Luke i. 6,—and thus (compare ch. i. 42, 46) recognizing Christ as the Messiah when He came. But this is perhaps hardly likely to have been set at the *end* of the sentence, after “*Thou hast given them Me.*”

7.] all things whatsoever thou hast given me, ‘My whole words and works.’

On this their conviction, which however had not reached its ripeness yet, see ch. xvi. 30.

8.] I have given unto them the words..., and the similar sayings ch. xv. 15 al., seem to be a reference to Deut. xviii. 18, 19, where it is said that the Prophet ‘shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.’ The imparting to them of these “*words*” was the efficient cause of their faith:—see their confession ch. vi. 68, 69, where “*we have believed and know*” are connected as here.

On the two last clauses we may notice, that our Lord’s **coming forth from the Father** is with them more a matter of *conviction from inference*, and is therefore connected with **they knew** (see eh. iii. 2):—whereas the other side of the same **truth, thou didst send me**, the act of the Father unseen by us, is more a matter of *pure faith*,—and is therefore connected with

they believed. In the first, the expression **knew surely (truly)** stamps our Lord's approval on **their** knowledge, and distinguishes it from such knowledge as the bare assumption of knowing (John iii. 2) by Nicodemus and his colleagues.

9.] Stier remarks, that the Lord *here begins to fulfil His promise* Matt. x. 32.

I pray not for the world] The misconceptions which have been made of this verse, as implying a decree of exclusion for the vessels of wrath, may be at once removed by considering the usage of the term **the world** in this Prayer. The Lord *does pray* distinctly for *the world*, vv. 21, 23, that they may believe and know that the Father hath sent Him. He cannot therefore mean here that He does not pray (absolutely) for the world, but that He is not *now* asking for the world, does not pray *this thing* for the world. *These "whom Thou gavest me" have already* believed and known; the prayer for them is therefore a different one, viz. that in vv. 11, 15. The mistake would be at once precluded for English readers by the paraphrase, **I am praying for them; I am praying not for the world....**

for they are thine] in a fuller sense than "*they were Thine*," ver. 6. That was their *preparation* for Christ; this is their *abiding in Him*, which is abiding in the Father, see next verse.

10.] Compare ch. xvi. 15 and note. "It were not so much if He had only said, 'All Mine is Thine;' for that we may all say, that all we have is God's. But this is a far greater thing, that He inverts this and says, 'All Thine is Mine.' This can no *creature* say before God." Luther.

The A.V.,—'All Mine *are* Thine,' &c.—gives the erroneous impression that *persons* only are meant, whereas it is *all things*, in the widest meaning,—*the Godhead itself included*,—of which this is asserted.

I am glorified in them] not '*by their means*,'

but in them; by that "*In them*" of ver. 23, the life of the vine in the branches; so that the fruit of the branches is the glory of the vine, by the sap of the vine living in the branches. All this again is anticipatory.

11.] The *occasion*, and *substance* of His prayer for them.

I am no more in the world] This shews us that "*the world*" is not said of *place* alone, for the Lord Jesus is still *here*; but of state, the *state of men in the flesh*; sometimes viewed on its darker side, as overcoming men and bringing in spiritual death,—sometimes, as here, used in the most general sense.

and these are..] not *but*; it expresses the simultaneous state of the Lord and His, see ch. xvi. 32, and note.

Holy Father] *Holy*, as applied to God, peculiarly expresses that *penetration of all His attributes by LOVE*, which He only who here uttered it sees through in its length, breadth, and height:—which angels (Isa. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 8) feel and express:—which men are privileged to utter, but can never worthily feel:—but which devils can neither feel nor worthily utter (see Mark i. 24). They know His Power and His Justice only. But His Holiness is especially employed in this work of *keeping in His name* now spoken of.

in thy name] not '*through* Thine own Name,' as A.V., which yet renders the same expression '*in Thy Name*' ver. 12—but **in the NAME** of verses 6 and 12; see below.

thy name, which thou hast given me] Not only the best supported, but the *best* reading.

The *Name* of God is that which was to be *in the Angel of the Covenant*, Exod. xxiii. 21, see also Isa. ix. 6; Jer. xxiii. 6.

This Name,—not the essential Godhead, but the covenant name, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,—the Father hath *given to Christ*, see Phil. ii. 9; and it is the being kept in this, the truth and confession of this, for which He here prays. 'That which the Son has given to His disciples is no other than that which He himself has received from the Father, viz. the essential revelation of the Father.' Luthardt. Compare Matt. x. 27.

that they may be one, even as we are] The oneness here is not merely harmony of will or of love,—as some have interpreted it, and then tried to weaken the Oneness of the Godhead,—but oneness by the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, the gift of the Covenant (1 Cor. vi. 17), and ultimately (as the close union implied by **even as** requires) oneness of nature, 2 Pet. i. 4, where the expression "*whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises*" answers to the words "*thy name which thou hast given me*" here. The Lord does not say, "that they may be *one with us*," nor, "that *they and we* may be one," but "*that they may be one as we are*." Augustine.

12.] I kept them: see ch. x. 28–30. The Lord here, as Cyril remarks, compares *His* keeping of His own, to that by *the Father*,—in a way only accountable by both Persons being of equal Power and Dignity.

not one of them perished, but...] So that Judas was one of the number which were *given to Christ by the Father*, mentioned in ver. 9:—shewing us (1) the sense in which those words must be understood (see above); and (2) that of such persons it is true that there is for them no ‘irresistible grace,’ no ‘keeping in God’s Name’ independently of their ‘keeping God’s word,’ ver. 6, which Judas did not do.

the son of perdition] See 2 Thess. ii. 3. As the other disciples, by true keeping of the divine words given to them, rose from being natural men to be the children of God, so Judas, through want of the same, sunk from the state of the natural man to that of the lost—the children of the devil.

Remark, it is not “*I lost none, but the son of perdition.*”—*Christ* did not lose him (compare ch. xviii. 9, where there is no exception), but *he lost himself*. It may be well to notice, for the English reader, that in the original, the noun **perdition** is the derivative of the verb **perished**. None perished but the one who *should perish*; whose very state and attribute it was to perish.

the scripture] in which this was indicated, viz. the passages alleged by St. Peter, Acts i. 20; see ch. xiii. 18.

13.] But now.... opposed to “*While I was with them*”... ver. 12, implying, ‘But I shall be here to keep them no more. And therefore I pray this prayer in their hearing, that’&c.

On **my joy**, see ch. xv. 11; xvi. 24; also the reference to these words in 1 John i. 4.

14–16.] See ver. 8.

Ver. 14 contains the manner in which He **guarded them by giving them the Divine Word**;—and the reason of the *keeping* prayed for, viz. because they would be objects of hatred to the world: **I** and **the world** being opposed.

even as I am not of the world] See ch. xv. 18.

15. I pray not...] Said mostly for their sakes, for whom it was necessary that they should abide yet in the flesh, to do God’s work, and (ver. 17) to be sanctified by God’s truth.

Not ‘*from the evil*,’ as A.V.; but **from the evil one**: see the usage of our Apostle in 1 John ii. 13, 14, y. 18, and compare iii. 12.

16.] repeated, as the ground both of the *not praying* that they might be taken out of the world; for they are already not of the world, above the world, so that they need not be *removed from it* in order to distinction from it;—and of the *praying*, that they might be kept from the evil one,—for they are clean (ch. xiii. 10); ‘Keep them from the polluter.’ This leads on to

17–19.] *the process of sanctification through the knowledge of the truth imparted to them by Christ, and expanded in them by the Spirit.*

The word

sanctify, here and in ver. 19, carries the meaning, which unites the two uses, of *consecration to God*. (1) In *them*, this setting apart for Him was a long and gradual process, to be accomplished by conflicts, and the deeper sinking in of the Truth by the blows of affliction, and the purifying fire of the Spirit: in *them* it was strictly *sanctification*, the *making holy*: but (2) in **HIM** it was that pure and entire self-consecration by His submission to the Father’s holy will, the entire possession of His sinless Humanity with the living and speaking Truth of God, which should be at the same time the efficient cause of their sanctification and their Pattern. Such an High Priest *became us* (see Heb. vii. 26), who are to be ourselves priests unto God. Rev. xx. 6.

The A.V. is wrong in rendering **through Thy truth**; it should be, **in Thy truth**; see on ver. 11. The truth is the *element in which the sanctification takes place*.

thy word] Compare Acts xx. 32. Thy word, in its inner power on the heart.

Ver. 18. is anticipatory,—and received its fulfilment ch. xx. 21, He does not merely *leave* them in the world, but *sends* them into it, to witness to this same truth of God; see ch. xv. 16.

19.] See above on ver. 17. It is clear against all Socinian inferences from this verse, that all that part of the sanctification of the

Son of God implied in ch. x. 36 is here excluded: and only that intended, which is expressed Heb. ii. 10 by *making perfect through sufferings*. Of this, His Death was the crowning act, and was also the one to which the expression **for their sakes** most directly applies; but the whole is included. The confining the meaning to *His sacrifice*, and the purpose stated, **that they also... to their**

martyrdom, or their spiritual *self-offering*, Rom. xii. 1, is insufficient for the depth of the words.

sanctified in truth: *what truth*, is evident from ver. 17, viz. God's word and will, which is Truth, and *the Truth*.

20.] The connexion is with the words "*I sent them into the world*," ver. 18. The description, **them which believe** (not, "that shall believe," as in A.V.) expresses the *state* of faith in which all believers are found; the future would refer more to the act of belief by which that state is begun. But perhaps it is best to take the present tense as anticipatory. It is strikingly set forth here, that *all* subsequent belief on Christ would take place through the apostolic word: see Rom. x. 16, 17.

21.] The word that here hardly can regard the *subject-matter* of the prayer, ver. 20, but rather we should understand it as expressing the *object of the prayer* respecting both. The *subject-matter* of the prayer is, that they may be kept in God's name and sanctified in God's truth; and if this be so, their unity with the Son and the Father follows, 1 John i. 3. But here it is not merely 'with,' but in, the Son and the Father;—because the Spirit proceeds from *the Father and the Son*, and 'He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit:' see ver. 11. This unity has its true and only *ground* in faith in Christ through the Word of God as delivered by the Apostles; and is therefore not mere outward uniformity, nor can such uniformity produce it. At the same time its effects are to be real and visible, such that the world may see them.

that the world may believe] This clause is not *parallel* with the former, as if *the world believing* meant the same as *they all being one*, that all may be brought to believe. Nor again can the words mean that the *unbelieving and condemned world, at the end*, may be persuaded 'that Thou hast sent Me.' Such a rendering would surely be repugnant to the spirit of the prayer, and to the use of the word **believe** in our Gospel. Rather is it,—'that this their testimony, being borne by them all, and in all ages, may continue to convince the world, so that many in the world may believe,'&c.

The "*believing that thou didst send me*" implies belief in the whole Work and Office of Christ. Here our Lord certainly *prays for the world*,—see above on ver. 9.

See a remarkable parallel, Rev. iii. 9, where, as Stier truly remarks, the persons spoken of are *penitents*.

22, 23.] Grotius and others interpret this **glory** to mean, *the power of working miracles*, and refer to ch. ii. 11 and ch. xi. 40; but wrongly:—for if so, in the words **I have given them** our Lord must refer to *the Apostles only*, whereas it is distinctly referred to the believers *of all time*. The **glory** is *the glory of Christ as the only-begotten Son* (ch. i. 14), full of grace and truth (see ver. 5 and note), which by virtue of His exaltation and the unity of all believers in Him through the Spirit, has become (not, *shall be*) theirs, Eph. ii. 6; Rom. viii. 30; Eph. i. 18; not yet fully, nor *as it is His*. but as each can receive and shew it forth. The perfection of it is spoken of, ver. 24.

We have the same recurrences of **that** as in ver. 21, and the same dependence. The second of them here expresses not merely the similarity of their unity to that of the Son and Father,—but the *actuality of its subsistence*, in Christ abiding in them and the Father in Christ.

"*That the world may know*" here, parallel as it is to "*that the world may believe*" above, cannot be interpreted of a bare recognition, or of a recognition at the final judgment,—but must be taken to mean that salutary knowledge by which from time to time the children of the world are by God called to become the children of light. See the same words, and note, ch. xiv. 31, also ch. xiii. 35, and observe that in all three places the recognition is that of *love*;—in ch. xiii. 35, of the disciples one to another; in ch. xiv. 31, of Jesus to the Father; here, of the Father to believers, as perfected into unity in the Son of His love.

"Observe," says Meyer, "how the glance of the Intercessor reaches in these verses even to the highest aim of His work on earth, when the *world* shall be believing, and Christ Himself actually the Saviour *of the*

world, ch. iv. 42, cf. ch. x. 16."

24.

that which thou hast given me (see the text in margin)] The neuter gender has a peculiar solemnity, uniting the whole Church together as *one gift* of the Father to the Son: see ch. vi. 39, note. Then the words **that they also** resolve it into the great multitude whom no man can number, and come home to the heart of every individual believer with inexpressibly sweet

assurance of an eternity with Christ.

I will is not like in meaning to “we would” of ch. xii. 21 or ‘*I would*’ of 1 Cor. vii. 7, but more like the same word in Mark vi. 25,—an expression of will founded on acknowledged right: compare Luke xxii. 29.

Compare also his expression with ch. v. 21; vi. 44.

where I am] i.e. in the glorified state:—see ch. xii. 26 and note: also ch. xiv. 3.

that they may behold my glory] This is the completion of ver. 22,—the open beholding of His glory, spoken of 1 John iii. 2, which shall be coincident with our being changed into His perfect image.

This word **behold** includes *behold* and *partake*—the very case supposes it. No *mere spectator could behold* this glory. See Rom. viii. 17 end, and 2 Cor. iii. 18.

because thou lovedst me...] The most glorious part of this sight of glory will be, to behold the whole mystery of redemption unfolded in the glory of Christ’s Person,—and to see how, before the being of the creature, that eternal Love was, which gave the glory to Christ, of which all creation is but the exponent.

25, 26.] The epithet **righteous**, here applied to the Father, is connected with the final clause of ver. 24. The Righteousness of the Father is witnessed by the beginning of Redemption before the foundation of the world, and by the glorification of the elect from Christ; but also by the fact of *the world’s not knowing the Father*,—the final distinction made by His Justice between the world and His. The **making known**, here spoken of, is carried on by the whole work and testimony of the Spirit completed in the Kingdom of God. This promise has been in fulfilment through all the history of the Church. And the great result of this manifestation of the Father’s Name is, that the wonderful Love wherewith He loved Christ, may dwell in (not the Apostles merely—the future tense, **I will make it known**, has again thrown the meaning onward to the great body of believers) them,—i. e. the perfect, living knowledge of God in Christ, which reveals, and in fact is, this love. And this can only be by **I in them**—by Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, and renewing and enlightening them by His Spirit. He does not say, ‘*Thou in them*’—but ‘**I in them**,’ and ‘*Thou in Me:*’ see ver. 23.

John: Chapter 18

CHAP. XVIII.—XX.] FINAL MANIFESTATION OF JESUS AS THE LORD, IN REFERENCE TO THE NOW ACCOMPLISHED REJECTION OF HIM BY THE UNBELIEF OF ISRAEL, AND THE SORELTY TRIED BUT EVENTUALLY CONFIRMED FAITH OF HIS

OWN. And herein

XVIII. 1—XIX. 16.] His voluntary submission of Himself to His enemies and to the unbelief of Israel.

1—11.] His betrayal and apprehension.

1—3.] Matt. xxvi. 30—47. Mark xiv. 26—43. Luke xxii. 39—53. On the omission by St. John of the conflict of the Redeemer’s soul in Gethsemane, I would remind the reader of what has been said in the Introduction, on the character of this Gospel. The attempt to find in this omission a discrepancy between the setting forth of the Redeemer by St. John and the Three Gospels, is, as usual, unsuccessful. St. John presents us with most striking instances of the troubling of the human soul of Christ by the suffering which was before Him: see ch. xii, 23—27; xiii. 21. Compare notes on Matthew, ver. 36, and throughout the section.

1. the brook Cedron] The name given to this brook in the oldest text, **of the cedars**, seems to furnish an instance of the common practice of changing foreign, or unmeaning names, into other words bearing sense in the new language: the Hebrew word Ce-or Ke-dron signifying “*of cedars*” in Greek.

The ravine in the bottom of which flows the Kidron, is to the East of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives.

a garden] Lücke suggests that the owner of this garden may have been friendly to (or a disciple of?) Jesus. It was called Gethsemane,—Matthew, Mark.

Traditions as to its site are, as usual, various. A square plot of ground in the depth of the ravine is now usually pointed out, and seems to have been fixed on at the time when the empress Helena visited Jerusalem, A.D. 326. Eusebius says Gethsemane was *at* the Mount of Olives: Jerome, *at the foot* of the mount. The language of Luke xxi. 37 leads to a belief that it may have

been higher up the mount.

2.] **ofttimes**,—see Luke xxi. 37 [ch. viii. 1]. These accurate notices of our Evangelist are especially found in this last portion of his Gospel: cf. vv. 13, 24, 28; ch. xix. 14, 20, 41, &c.

3.] See, on this band of men, the note on Matthew ver. 47. Lanterns and torches were part of the utensils of military on a night march.

The latter of these appear to be strictly **torches**,—some blazing substance held in the hand;—and the former, **lights**, fed with oil.

The weapons were *swords* and *staves*,—Matthew, Mark. The fact of its being full moon did not make the lights unnecessary, as, in searching for a prisoner, they might have to enter dark places.

4-11.] Matt. xxvi. 48–56. Mark xiv. 44–52. Luke xxii. 48–53.

4.] On our Lord's foreknowledge of all that was to happen to Him, see Matt. xxvi. 45.

went forth] probably, from the shade of the trees into the moonlight; hardly, as De Wette and Lücke suggest, from some building in the garden.

Whom seek ye?) spoken,—as was the question to Judas in Matt. xxvi. 50, “*Friend, wherefore art thou come?*”—to carry reproof to the conscience of those addressed: and also to obtain for so solemn an act as the delivering Himself up to them, the formal declaration of their intention to take Him. “When men sought Him to make Him a king, He fled: now that they seek Him to put Him to death, He goes forth to meet them.” Stier.

5.] Some among them knew Him (Matt. xxvi. 55), others probably not. This answer may have been given by some one in authority among the Roman soldiers, who had it in command ‘to apprehend Jesus of Nazareth.’

Judas.... was standing with them] I believe these words to be the description of an eye-witness;—St. John detected Judas standing among them, and notices the detail, as is his constant habit, by way of enhancing the tragic character of the history. The narrative common to the three Gospels related the kiss which presently took place; but this self-tradition of our Lord was not related in it. St. John therefore adds this touch of exactness, to shew that the answer, **Jesus of Nazareth**, was not given because they were ignorant of His Person, so as *not to be able* to say ‘Thee;’—but because they *feared* to say it.

6.] The question on the miraculous nature of this incident is not whether it was a miracle *at all* (for it is evident that it *must* be regarded as one), but whether it were an act *specially intended* by our Lord, or a result of the superhuman dignity of His person, and the majestic calmness of His reply. I believe the latter alternative to be the right one. Commentators cite various instances of the confusion of the enemies of *innocent men* before the caltness and dignity of their victims: how much more was this likely to be the case when He in whom was no sin, and who spake as never man spake, came forth to meet His implacable foes as the self-sacrificing Lamb of God. So that I regard it rather as a miracle *consequent upon* that which Christ said and did, and the state of mind in which His enemies were,—than as one, in the strict sense, *wrought by* Him: bearing however always in mind, that to Him nothing was *unexpected*, or a *mere result*, but every thing foreknown. With this view what follows is also consistent, rather than with the other.

The distinction is an important one, as the view which we take of our Lord's mind towards His captors must enter, as an element, into our understanding of the whole of this scene, and indeed of the solemn occurrences which follow. Such incidents as this are not related by the Evangelists, and least of all by St. John, as mere astounding facts, but as grounds on which we are to enquire, and determine for ourselves, as to the “glory, full of grace and truth,” which was in Him, whom, not having seen, we love.

8.] Bengel strikingly says of this reply of our Lord, “He will say it once again hereafter.” And Augustine, “What will He do when He cometh to judge, who did this when He was to be judged? What will be His power when about to reign, who could do this when about to die?”

let these go their way] The band of soldiers, in their ignorance, appear to have been laying hands on the Apostles. This saying was sufficient to shew Peter and the rest what was the appointed course for them;—the command to *let them go* addressed to the band, is a command for *them to go*, when interpreted by the Apostles.

9.] See ch. xvii. 12. An unquestionable proof, if any were wanted, that the words of ch. xvii. are no mere description of the mind of our Lord at the time, nor free arrangement of His words, but His very words themselves.

On the *application* of the saying, we may remark that the words unquestionably had a much deeper meaning than any belonging to this occasion; but that the remarks so often made in this commentary on the fulfilment of prophecies must be borne in mind;—that to “*fulfil*” a prophecy is not to *exhaust* its capability of being again and again fulfilled:—that the words of the Lord have many stages of unfolding;—and that the temporal deliverance of the Apostles now, doubtless was but a part in the great spiritual safe-keeping which the Lord asserted by anticipation in these words.

10.] At this time took place the kiss of Judas, in accordance with the agreement entered into, and to assure the captors that the person thus offering himself was indeed Jesus of Nazareth, and no substitute for him: see note on Matt. ver. 49. The other view, that the kiss took place first, before the incidents of our verses 4–9, is to me quite inconceivable.

On Peter’s act, see Matt. ver. 51. The *names* of Peter and Malchus are only found *here*:—the fact that it was the *right* ear, only here and in Luke.

The (external) ear, though severed, was apparently still hanging on the cheek;—for our Lord is said in Luke xxii. 51, to have touched *his ear* in performing the healing.

11.] the sheath here is “*his* (its place)” in Matt., where see notes.

the cup] A striking allusion to the prayer in Gethsemane; for the image does not elsewhere occur in our Evangelist. See Matt. xx. 22, and the parallel places.

shall I not drink it?] literally, **Am I not to drink it?** for this, as Bengel remarks, was the tendency of Peter’s struggle against what was about to happen.

12–24.] Peculiar to John. *Jesus before the Jewish High Priests*:—see below.

12.] The **officers of the Jews** were those sent by the Sanhedrim. Luthardt remarks: “He before whose aspect, and whose declaration, **I am he**, the whole band had been terrified and cast to the ground, now suffers himself to be taken, bound, and led away. This contrast the Evangelist has in mind here. To apprehend and bind ONE, all gave their help: the cohort, the captain, and the Jewish officers. This the Evangelist brings prominently forward, to shew how deep the impression of that previous incident still was: only *by the help of all* did they feel themselves secure. And thus it was ordered, that the disciples might escape with the more safety.”

13.] On Annas, see note Luke iii. 2. The influence of Annas appears to have been very great, and Acts iv. 6, he is called *the High Priest*, in the year following this. The narrative evidently rests upon some arrangement with regard to the High Priesthood now unknown to us, but accountable enough by foreign influence and the deterioration of the priestly class through bribes and intrigues, to which Josephus and the Talmud sufficiently testify. This *hearing* is entirely distinct from that in the other Gospels. *There*, no questions are asked of Jesus about His disciples or doctrine (ver. 19): *there*, witnesses are produced, and the whole proceedings are after a legal form. That hearing was in a public court of justice, before the assembled Sanhedrim; this was a private and informal questioning. That Annas should be so often called ‘the High Priest,’ is no objection to this view: see on Luke as above: see also note on ver. 24. The two hearings are maintained to be *one and the same* by many, among whom are Grotius, Bengel, Tholuck, &c.:—the view here taken is maintained by Chrysostom, Augustine, Olshausen, Neander, and others.

14.] See ch. xi, 49–52 and notes; also on the words, **that year**, ver. 13.

15.] the other disciple is here mentioned for the first time. There is no reason to doubt the universal persuasion that by this name John intends *himself*, and refers to the mention in ch. xiii. 23 of a disciple whom Jesus loved. The idea that it was *Judas Iscariot*, is surely too absurd to need confutation. The details mentioned concerning him, that he *followed Jesus*, that he was known to the High Priest (as a matter of individual notice), and the whole character of the incident, will prevent any real student of St. John’s style and manner from entertaining such a supposition for a moment. *How John was known to the High Priest*, we have no means of forming a conjecture.

The palace of the High Priest was probably the dwelling of both Annas and Caiaphas.

16. her that kept the door] It was not unexampled to have female porters among the Jews. See Acts xii. 13.

17.] See the whole subject of Peter’s denials discussed in notes on Matt. vv. 69–75.

This first denial was to all appearance rashly and almost inadvertently made, from a mere feeling of shame. Lücke suggests

that Peter may have set himself among the servants of the High Priest *to bear out his denial*. The question, “*Art thou also one of this man’s disciples?*” (ver. 25,) as Luthardt remarks, implies that the other disciple had already been recognized as a follower of Jesus, and had escaped annoyance.

19.] This preliminary enquiry seems to have had for its object to induce the prisoner to criminate himself, and furnish matter of accusation before the Sanhedrim.

of his disciples] His party, or adherents, as the High Priest would understand His disciples to be; how many, and who they were, and with what object gathered together;—and what His customary teaching of them had been. Of *these*, Jesus says nothing: compare vv. 8, 9. But He substitutes for them “*the world*,” to which He had spoken plainly.

20.] I, emphatic: as if it had been said, **I am one, who...**

plainly (referring to the character of the *things said*): not *openly* (referring to the outward *circumstances under which* they were s#id), which the word will not hear.

the world here is equivalent to “*all the Jews*,” or perhaps rather, “*all who were there to hear*.”

in secret spake I nothing] Stier thinks there was an allusion in these words to Isa. xlvi. 19; xlviii. 16,—in the last of which places the Messiah is speaking.

21.] See ch. v. 31, which appears to have been a legal maxim.

behold, THESE know] Our Lord appeals to persons *there present* in court, pointing at or otherwise designating them. The word “*they*” in the A.V., makes it appear as if He meant “*those which heard Me*.” Bengel. The “*officers*” mentioned in ch. vii. 46 may have been present: see next verse.

22.] See Acts xxiii. 2.

one of the officers which stood by] This was probably one of the band who took Jesus, and had brought Him hither. It is not quite certain whether the word here used implies a blow with the hand, or with a staff. They had staves, and perhaps thus used them: see note on Matt. xxvi. 67. This blow was a signal for the indignities which followed.

23.] bear witness in a legal way.

but if well] This latter supposition has the force of an assertion, that it *was* well. It has been often and well observed, that our Lord here gives us the best interpretation of Matt. v. 39—that it does not exclude the remonstrating against unjust oppression, provided it be done calmly and patiently.

24.] From what has been above said, it will be seen that I cannot acquiesce in the *pluperfect* rendering of this word **sent**, to bring about which the opening particle, **So**, has apparently been omitted by the copyists. I believe the verse simply to describe what followed on the preceding—**So Annas (or Annas therefore) sent Him bound to Caiaphas the High Priest.** “Then,” says Chrysostom, “not being able even thus to make progress in their decision, they send Him bound to Caiaphas.” There is no real difficulty in this rendering, if Annas and Caiaphas lived in one palace, or at all events transacted public affairs in one and the same. They would naturally have different apartments, and thus the sending from one to the other would be very possible; as also would the incident related by Luke xxii. 61:—see the extract from Robinson, Matt. xxvi. 69, note. “The Evangelist had no need to relate the hearing before Caiaphas, for he has related ch. xi. 47 ff.: and we have ere this been familiarized with the habit of our Evangelist not to narrate any further the outward process, where he has already by anticipation substantially given us its result.” Luthardt.

25—27.] Matt. xxvi. 71—74. Mark xiv. 69—72. Luke xxii. 58—61:—see note on Matt. xxvi. 69.

Peter was in the court-yard of the house.

26.] This was about an hour after the former,—Luke, ver. 59. The “**I**” is emphatic in the original: as we say, *Did I not see thee with my own eyes?*

28—CHAP. XIX. 16.] *Jesus before the Gentile Governor.* Matt. xxvii. 2, 11—30. Mark xv. 1—19. Luke xxiii. 1—25. Before this comes in the section of Luke, ch. xxii. 66—71, containing the close of the examination before the Sanhedrim, which did not happen till the morning. This undesigned agreement between St. Luke and St. John further confirms the justice of the view respecting the *two*

hearings maintained above: see note on Luke, as above.

28–40.] Pilate's first attempt to deliver Him.

28. they themselves went not into the palace (literally, **the Prætorium**) I have already di ed the difficulties attending the subject of our Lord's last Passover, in the note on Matt. xxvi. 17–19. I will add here some remarks of Friedlieb's. “The Jews would not enter the Prætorium that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. For the entrance of a Jew into the house of a Gentile made him unclean till the evening. It is surprising, that according to this declaration of the Holy Evangelists, the Jews *had yet to eat the Passover*, whereas Jesus and His disciples had already eaten it in the previous night. And it is no less surprising, that the Jews in the early morning should have been afraid of rendering themselves unclean for the Passover,—since the Passover could not be kept till *evening*, i.e. *on the next day*, and the uncleanness which they dreaded did not, by the law, last till the next day. For this reason, the passage in John labours under no small exegetic difficulties, which we cannot altogether solve, from want of accurate knowledge of the customs of the time. Possibly the law concerning Levitical defilements and purifications had in that age been made more stringent or otherwise modified; possibly, they called some other meal, besides the actual Passover, by its name. This last we certainly, with our present knowledge of Hebrew antiquities, must assume: for the law respecting uncleanness will not allow us to interpret this passage of the *proper* Passover on the evening of the 14th of Nisan, nor indeed of any *evening meal* at all.”

The whole depends on this: can the words, **eat the Passover, mean any thing else besides eating the paschal lamb in the strict sense?** This is a question which in our day we have no power of answering. See the matter further discussed in the notes to my Greek Test. See note on ch. xix. 14. The tendency of what is there said is, to warn us, not to be rash in assuming a discrepancy between the Evangelists, where computations of time may have been so vague and various.

29.] Though Pilate, having granted the service of the *band of soldiers* to the Sanhedrim, must have been aware of the circumstances under which Jesus was brought before him, he demanded a formal accusation on which legally to proceed: “dissimulating his own information on the subject.”

30.] They do not mention the charge of blasphemy brought against Him by the Sanhedrim, for fear of the entire rejection of their cause, as by Gallio, Acts xviii. 16. The Procurators in such cases had a discretionary power. On what they did say, Grot. observes, “What was wanting to their proofs, they want to supply by an appeal to their own authority”

31.] This answer is best regarded as an ironical reproach founded on their apparently proud assertion in ver. 30—and amounting to this: ‘If you suppose I am to have such implicit confidence in your judgment concerning this prisoner as to take his guilt on your word, take him and put him to death (for so “**judge ye Him**” must be understood,—see below) according to your law;’ reminding them that the same Roman power which had reserved capital cases for his jurisdiction, also expected proper cognizance to be taken of them, and not that he should be the mere executioner of the Sanhedrim.

It is not lawful for us to put any man to death] From the time when Archelaus was deposed (A. D. 6 or 7), and Judæa became a Roman province, it would follow by the Roman law that the Jews lost the power of life and death. Josephus tells us, that it was not lawful to hold a court of judgment in capital cases, without the consent of the Procurator. Some have thought that this power was reserved to them in religious matters, as of blasphemy and sacrilege; but no proof has been adduced of this; the passages commonly alleged in Josephus, and Acts vii. 58, not applying (see note on Acts). The Talmud relates that this had taken place forty years (or more) before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Biscoe, on the Acts, argues at great length that the Jews had this power; and that the words here merely mean that they could not put to death *on the Sabbath*, which, according to the usual custom of executing the next day after judgment, would now have been the case. But this treatment of the words is unjustifiable. Can we suppose for a moment that this can have been meant, when there is not a word in the text to imply it? We may hope that the day for such forced interpretations is fast passing away.

Friedlieb gives the most consistent account of the matter. In the Roman provinces generally, the Proprætor or Proconsul conducted judicial proceedings. But Judæa, which belonged to the province of Syria, was an exception. There was there a Procurator with full powers, who exercised the right of judicial cognizance. Jerusalem however possessed the privilege of judging all lighter causes before the *three-and-twenty*, and heavier causes, with the sole exception of capital trials, before the great Sanhedrim: so that none but these reserved cases remained for the Procurator. Pilate seems to have judged these cases at his visits during the festivals; which would fall conveniently for the purpose, it being the custom in Jerusalem, to execute great criminals at the Feasts In other provinces the governors made circuits and held assizes throughout their jurisdictions.

32.] See Matt. xx. 19, and other places;—ch. xii. 32, 33. Had the Jews taken Him and judged Him, He would have been stoned, not crucified. And this whole section, vv. 28–32, serves to shew how the divine purpose was accomplished,

33.] This question probably arose out of what Pilate had previously heard, not from any charge to this effect being made between our vv. 31 and 34. Had such a charge been made, our Lord's question ver. 34 would be unnatural.

Pilate summoned Jesus in, who had been as yet outside with the Jews. This was the formal *reception* of the case before him;—the Roman soldiers must now have formally taken charge of Jesus, as servants of the Roman authorities: having previously, when granted by Pilate to the Chief Priests, acted as *their* police.

The judgments of the Romans were always public and in the open air, see ch. xix. 13;—but the enquiries and examinations might be private. In this case Pilate appears to have wished to obtain an account from Jesus apart from the clamours of the chief priests and the mob.

34.] On this whole interview, see note on Luke vv. 3, 4.

I regard this question, **Sayest thou this thing of thyself...** as intended to distinguish the senses of the word *King* as applied to Jesus: and of course not for the *information* of Him who asked it, but to bring out this distinction in Pilate's mind. If he asked *of*

himself, the word could certainly have but one meaning, and that one would be wrongly applied;—if from information derived from the Jews, this very fact would open the way to the true meaning in which He was King of the Jews. Stier and Ebrard think there may be some reference in the words **of thyself**, to a momentary earnestness in Pilate's own mind,—a suspicion that his prisoner *was* what he was charged with being (see ch. xix. 8, 12), from the mention of which he immediately (ver. 35) recoils, and implies the other side of the dilemma.

35.] Pilate at once repudiates the idea of *his* having any share in Jewish expectations, or taking any personal interest in Jewish matters: all his information he has derived from the public accusation of the people and chief priests. Then in the question, **What hast Thou done?**, is implied, ‘There is no definiteness in their charge: let me have thine own account, thy ex-part^ee statement, that I may at least know *something* definite of the case.’

36.] This answer goes to explain the injustice of the charge of “*perverting the nation*” (Luke xxiii. 2), and to shew Pilate something of the nature of the kingdom which Jesus really came to establish.

My kingdom is not of this world] i.e. **not belonging** to (ch. viii. 23; x. 16) **this world**; not springing from, arising out of, this world;—and therefore not to be supported by this world's weapons. There is no denial that His Kingdom is *over* this world; but that it is to be established by this world's power.

The words not only deny, they affirm: if not of this world, then *of another world*. They assert this other world before the representative of those who boasted of their empire, which they called ‘*orbis terrarum*,’ i.e. the globe of the earth. Notice the solemn repetition of the words **of this world**.

my servants] certainly not *angels* (as Stier) nor *angels and disciples* (as Lampe). This sentence is elliptical, and the fact of ‘*having servants*’ is included under the supposition introduced, that He was a King. ‘If&c.,—I should have had servants, and those servants would have fought.’

that I should not be delivered to the Jews] which was done by Pilate in ch. xix. 16.

now is my kingdom not from hence] The word now has been absurdly pressed by the Romanist interpreters to mean that at some time His Kingdom would be **from hence**, i.e. of this world: as if its essential character could ever be changed. But. **now** implies, ‘as the case now stands;’ it conveys an ocular demonstration, from the fact that no servants of His had contended or were contending in his behalf; see similar usages of **now**, ch. viii. 40; ix. 41; xv. 22, 24: Rom. vii. 16, 17.

37.] The word **thou**, in Pilate's question, is emphatic and sarcastic. “Art THOU, thus captured, bound, standing here as a criminal in peril of thy life, A KING?”

Thou sayest] A formula frequent in the Rabbinical writings: and conveying assent to the previous enquiry. It seems best, as in margin, to punctuate at **it**, and regard **for**, or **because**, as the reason for the affirmation conveyed in **Thou sayest it**. This agrees best with the continued affirmation which follows.

To this end have I been born...] Our Lord here preached the Truth of his mission, upholding that side of it best calculated to meet the doubting philosophic mind of the day, of which Pilate was a partaker. He declares the unity and outward reality of Truth:—and that Truth must come from above, and must come through a Person sent by God, and that that Person was

Himself.

"I," is both times emphatic, and majestically set (see above) against the preceding scornful **thou** of Pilate.

Our Lord implies that He was *born* a King, and that He was born with a definite purpose. The words are a pregnant proof of an Incarnation of the Son of God. This great truth is further expressed by what follows,— 'I have been born, but not therein commencing my being—I am (or, have) come into the world.' Thns certainly are the words to be understood, and not of His public appearance, nor as synonymous with His *having been born*. It is this saying which began the *fear* in Pilate, which the charge of the Jews, ch. xix. 7, increased.

He is come into the world, not merely to speak truth, but to bear witness **to the Truth**, in its outward reality:—see ch. xvii. 17, 19, of which deep saying this is the popular exposition for his present hearer.

The Lord, besides, sets forth here in the depth of these words, the very idea of all kinghood. The *King* is the representative of the truth: the truth of dealing between man and man;—the truth of that power, which in its inmost truth belongs to the great and only Potentate, the King of Kings.

Again, the Lord, the King of manhood and the world, the second Adam, came to testify to the *truth* of manhood and the world, which sin and Satan had concealed. This testimony to the Truth is to be the weapon whereby His Kingdom will be spread;— 'every one who is of the truth,' i.e. here in the most general sense, every one who is a true dealer with his own heart, who has *an ear to hear*,— 'of such are my subjects composed:—they hear my voice.' But for the putting this true dealing on its *proper and only ground*, see ch. viii. 47; vi. 44.

38.] To this number Pilate did not belong. He bad no ear for Truth. His celebrated question is perhaps more the result of indifferentism than of scepticism; it expresses, not without scoff and irony, a conviction *that truth can never be found*: and is an apt representative of the state of the polite Gentile mind at the time of the Lord's coming. It was rather an inability than an unwillingness to find the truth.

He waits for no answer, nor did the question require any. Nay, it was no real *question*, any more than any other, behind which a negation lies hid.

I find no fault in him] **I**, opposed to **you**, who had found fault in Him. Pilate mocks both—the Witness to the Truth, and the haters of the Truth. His conduct presents a pitiable specimen of the moral weakness of that spirit of worldly power, which reached its culminating point in the Roman empire.

39.] At this place comes in Matt. xxvii. 12–14;—the repeated accusation of Jesus by the chief priests and elders, to which He answered nothing;—and Luke xxiii. 5–16, the sending to Herod, and second proclamation of His innocence by Pilate,—after which he adopts this method of procuring His release (Luke, ver. 17).

ye have a custom] See note Matt. xxvii. 15, and compare, for an instructive specimen of the variations in the Gospel narratives, the four accounts of this incident.

40.] They have not *before* "cried out" in this narrative: so that some circumstances must be presupposed which are not here related: unless verses 30 and 11 be referred to.

Now Barabbas was a robber] In Mark xv. 7, Luke xxiii. 19, a rioter;—but doubtless also a robber, as such men are frequently found foremost in civil uproar. There is a solemn irony in these words of the Apostle—a *Robber!* See the contrast strongly brought out Acts iii. 14. Luthardt remarks on the parallelism with Levit. xvi. 5–10. Thus was Jesus 'the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, to be offered for a sin-offering.'

John: Chapter 19

CHAP. XIX. 1.] The reason or purpose of this scourging does not here appear; but in Luke xxiii, 21–23 we read that after the choice of Barabbas, Pilate asked them what should be done with Jesus? And when they demanded that He should be crucified, Pilate, after another assertion of his innocence, said "*I will chastise him, and let him go.*" Thus it is accounted for.

2, 3. and they approached him] This has been probably erased by the copyists, as not being understood. It was their mock-reverential approach, as to a crowned king: coming probably with obeisances and pretended homage. In the address, **Hail, King of the Jews**, they were insulting the Jews, as much as mocking Christ. See notes on Matt. vv. 27–30;—and on the

purple robe, Mark, ver. 17.

4.] The unjust and cruel conduct of Pilate appears to have had for its object to satisfy the multitude by the mockery and degradation of the so-called King of the Jews: and with that view he now brings forth Jesus. His speech is equivalent to—"See what I have done purely to please *you*—for *I* believe Him innocent."

5.] is the accurate and graphic delineation of an eye-witness, and intimately connected with the speech of Pilate which follows. For the cry, **Behold the man!** is uttered to move their contempt and pity;—‘See this man who submits to and has suffered these indignities—how can He ever stir up the people, or set Himself up for King? Now cease to persecute Him; your malice surely ought to be satisfied.’

6.] This had been cried before, see Matthew, ver. 22 and parallels. Possibly St. John may not have heard the cry. According as men have been in different parts of a mob, they will naturally report differently, as those nearest to them cried out.

Take him yourselves] The words of Pilate shew vacillation between his own sense of the innocence of Jesus and his fear of displeasing the Jews and their rulers. He now, but in ironical mockery, as before, ch. xviii. 31, delivers the matter entirely into their hands: perhaps after having received the message from his wife,-Matthew ver. 19.

7.] In consequence of this taunt, they now declare the cause of their condemnation of Him—see Levit. xxiv. 16—and their demand that, though found innocent by the governor, He should die.

8.] This charge served to increase the fear which Pilate had before: see note on ch. xviii. 37

The name **Son of God** served also to confirm the omen already furnished by the dream of his wife. That this fear was not a fear of *the Jews*, nor of *acting unjustly*, but of the Person of Jesus, is evident from what follows.

9.] He entered, taking Jesus with him.

Whence] i.e. not ‘from what province?’—for he knew this, Luke xxiii. 6, 7: nor, ‘of what parents?’—but **whence?** in reference to the name, **the Son of God**: *Whence is thine origin?* Observe that the fear of Pilate is not mere superstition, nor does it enter into the Jewish meaning of “*the Son of God*” but arises from an indefinite impression made on him by the Person and bearing of our Lord. We must not therefore imagine any fear of Him as being a ‘son of the gods,’ in Pilate’s mind: this gives a wrong direction to his conduct, and misses the fine psychological truth of the narrative.

Our Lord, in His silence, was acting according to His own precept, Matt. vii. 6. Notwithstanding Pilate’s fear of Him, he was not in earnest;—not determined to be led by his conscience, but had already given way to the unjust demands of the people; and He who saw his heart, knew how unworthy he was of an answer to so momentous a question. Besides, this silence was the most emphatic answer to all who had ears to hear it;—was a reference to what He had said before, ch. xviii. 37, and so a witness to His divine origin. Would any *mere man*, of true and upright character, have refused an answer to such a question, so put? Let the modern rationalist consider this.

10.] As in ch. xviii. 35, Pilate at once recoils from his better conscience into the state-pride of office. As Lampe remarks, this speech is directly contrary to his previous expression of fear. This very boast was a self-conviction of injustice. No just judge has any such power as this, to punish or to loose (see 2 Cor. xiii. 8); but only patiently to enquire and give sentence according to the truth.

unto me, emphatic: it perhaps being implied, ‘Thou hast, I know, refused to reply to others before.’ That Pilate should put the *releasing* first, as it stands in the most ancient authorities, seems most natural, as appealing most to the prisoner: the power of crucifying follows as the alternative in case the other is rejected.

11.] This last testimony of our Lord before Pilate is a *witness to the truth*: opening in a wonderful manner the secret of Pilate’s vaunted power, of His own humble submission, and the sinfulness of His enemies. This saying, observes Meyer, breathes truth and grace. The great stress is on the term **from above**, on which Grotius strikingly says, “*thence, that is, from whence I am sprung*,” so that it furnishes a remarkable answer to the above. We must not dream of any allusion to *Rome*, or the *Sanhedrim*, in this question “*Whence art thou?*” as the sources of Pilate’s power:—the word was not so meant, nor so understood: see ver. 12.

The word it does not refer to *power against me*, but embraces in itself the whole delegation from above, power included: and the words “except it were given thee from above,” are equivalent to *except by appointment from above*. Lampe remarks: “Our Lord concedes to Pilate 1) Power. He acknowledged the authority of a human court, because His kingdom was not earthly, destroying human magistrates: nor did He dispute the authority of Pilate and the Romans over the Jews. 2) He even amplifies

that power, as given from above. For this is the Christian doctrine, that all power is from God (Rom. xiii. 1, 2). 3) He acknowledges that that power extended even over Himself, since all concerning Him was being done by divine decree (Acts iv. 28)."

for this cause] viz. because of what has just been asserted, '*Thou wouldest have no power&c.*'

The connexion is somewhat difficult. I take it to be this: 'God has given to thee *power over me*;—not insight into the character which I claim, that of being the Son of God—but simply *power*: that insight belonged to others, viz. the Sanhedrim, and their president, whose office it was to judge that claim; *they* have judged against the clearest evidence and rejected me, the Son of God; thy sin, that of blindly exercising thy *power*, sin though it be, is therefore *less than theirs*, who being God's own people, and with God's word of prophecy before them (and the High Priest, with his own prophetic word before him,—see ch. xviii. 14), deliberately gave me over into thy hand.' It is important to this, which I believe to be the only right understanding of the words, to remember that Pilate, from ver. 6, was making himself simply their tool;—He was the sinful, but at the same time the blind instrument of their deliberate malice.

he that delivereth me unto thee] Beyond question, *Caiaphas*,—to whom the initiative on the Jewish side belonged; by whose authority all was done. At the same time the whole Sanhedrim are probably included under the guilt of their chief.

In this word **sin** is an implied reference to a higher Judge—nay, that Judge Himself speaks.

12.] Upon this: or from this time: but the words in the original hardly bear so much as this latter meaning. See ch. vi. 66, where the same correction has been made.

Pilate himself was deeply struck by these words of majesty and mildness, and almost sympathy for his own weakness; and he made a last, and, as this verse seems to imply, a somewhat longer attempt than before, to deliver Him.

Cæsar's friend] There does not seem to be any allusion to this name being bestowed as a title of honour (indeed, a good deal of fancy has been employed in making out the fact of such a title having been in use) any further than that the appellation would naturally arise and be accounted honourable. The meaning is, 'well affected to Cæsar.'

This was a terrible saying, especially under Tiberius, with whom, as Tacitus assures us, the undefined charge of disaffection to the person of the emperor was used to fill up all other accusations.

every one that maketh himself a king] This was true: their application of it to Christ, a lie. But *words, not facts*, ave taken into account by tyrants, and this Pilate knew.

13.] these words—viz. these two last remarks. "In such a perplexity, a man like Pilate could not long hesitate. As Caiaphas had before said, it were better that one even innocent man should die, than that all should perish: so now in like case Pilate decided rather to sacrifice Jesus though innocent, than to expose himself to so great danger." Friedlieb.

forth: see on ch. xviii. 33. The judgment seat, or *bema*, was in front of the *praetorium*, on an elevated platform called Gabbatha, which was paved with a tessellated pavement. Such a pavement, Suetonius informs us, Julius Cesar carried about on his expeditions.

14. the preparation of the passover] The signification, 'Friday in the Passover week,' has found many, and some recent, defenders. But this is not the natural meaning of the words, nor would it ever have been thought of in this place, but for the difficulty arising from the whole Passover question, which I have discussed on Matt. xxvi. 17–19, and on ch. xviii. 28.

This preparation day is '*the vigil of the Passover*', i.e. the day preceding the evening when the passover was killed. And so it must be understood here, especially when connected with ch. xviii. 28. See on the whole matter the notes above referred to.

about the sixth hour] There is an insuperable difficulty, as the text now stands. For St. Mark relates, ch. xv. 25, that the *crucifixion* took place at the *third hour*: and that it certainly was so, the whole arrangement of the day testifies. For on the one hand, the judgment could hardly have taken the whole day till noon: and on the other, there will not thus be time left for the rest of the events of the day, before the sabbath began. We must certainly suppose, as did Eusebius, Theophylact, and Severus, that there has been some very early erratum in our copies; whether the interchange of 3 and 6, which when expressed in Greek numeral letters, are not unlike one another (Γ and ζ), or some other, cannot now be determined.

We certainly may bring the two accounts nearer together by recollecting that, as the crucifixion itself certainly did not (see in Mark) take place *exactly* at the third hour, and as here it is **about the sixth hour**, some intermediate time may be described by both Evangelists. But this is not satisfactory: see note on Mark xv. 25. The solution given by Dr. Wordsworth, after Townson

and others, that St. John's reckoning of the hours is different, and like our own, so that the sixth hour would be 6 A.M., besides being unsupported by any authority (see ch. i. 39; iv. 6, 52; xi. 9, and notes), would leave here the difficulty that there must thus elapse three hours between the hearing before Pilate and the Crucifixion. Besides which, we may ask, is it possible to imagine St. John, with the other gospels before him as these expositors believe him to have had, adopting without notice an independent reckoning of his own which would introduce utter confusion into that history which (again on their hypothesis) he wrote his gospel to complete and clear up?

The words **Behold your King** seem to have been spoken in irony to the Jews—in the same spirit in which afterwards the title, was written over the cross:—partly perhaps also, as in that case, in consequence of the saying in ver. 12,—to sever himself altogether from the suspicion there cast on him.

15.] We have no king but Cæsar, was a degrading confession from the *chief priests* of that people of whom it was said, ‘The Lord your God is your King.’ 1 Sam. xii. 12. “They were so earnest in repudiating Jesus,” says Bengel, “that they repudiate their Messiah altogether.” However, the cry furthered the present purpose, and to this all was sacrificed, including truth itself; for the confession was not only degrading, but false in their mouths. Some of those who now cried this, died miserably in rebellion against Cæsar forty years afterwards.

16.] Here the scourging seems (Matthew, Mark) to have taken place, or perhaps to have been renewed, since the former one was not that customary before execution, but conceded by Pilate to the mob in hope of satisfying them.

17–42.] Jesus surrenders himself to death. Matt. xxvii. 31–61. Mark xv. 20–47. Luke xxiii. 26–56. Compare the notes on the Four throughout.

they took Jesus] viz. the chief priests.

17–22.] His Crucifixion.

17.] See on Matt. ver. 33.

19.] Matt. ver. 37.

20–22.] The same spirit of mockery of the Jews shewed itself in the title, as before, ver. 14. They had prevailed on Pilate by urging this point, that Jesus had set Himself up for a king; and Pilate is willing to remind them of it by these taunts. Hence their complaint, and his answer.

The Latin was the official language, the Greek that usually spoken,—the Hebrew (i. e. Aramaic) that of the common people.

What I have written I have written] The first perfect denotes the past action; the second that it was complete and unalterable.

23–30.] His death.

28, 24.] There were four soldiers, a *quaternion*, Acts xii. 4, and perhaps a centurion, for we read elsewhere of a centurion sent to see punishment inflicted.

The garments of the executed were by law the perquisite of the soldiers on duty.

The **coat** was the tunic. It reached from the neck to the feet, and was fastened round the throat with a clasp. It was properly a priest's garment, and was woven of linen, or perhaps of wool.

The citation is verbatim from the LXX.

25.] In Matt. xxvii. 55, 56, and the parallel places, we learn that two of these were looking on afar off, after Jesus had expired, with Salome. Considering then that St. John's habit of not naming himself might extend to his mother (he names his father, ch. xxi. 2), we may well believe that **his mother's sister** here represents *Salome*, and that *four* women are designated by this description. So Wieseler and Meyer, Luthardt opposing them. So also Ewald: and, which is no mean evidence, the ancient Syriac version, inserting *and* between, “*the mother's sister, and Mary....*” This Mary was wife of Klopas (Alphæus, see Matt. x. 3, and Introd. to Ep. of James, §i. 4), the mother of James the Less and Joses; Matt., Mark.

26. behold thy son] The relationship in the flesh between the Lord and His mother was about to close; hence He commends her to another son who should care for and protect her. Thus,—as at the marriage in Cana, when His official independence of

her was to be testified, so now,—He addresses her as **Woman**.

27.] The solemn and affecting commendation of her to St. John is doubly made,—and thus bound by the strongest injunctions on both. The Romanist idea, that the Lord *commended all his disciples, as represented by the beloved one, to the patronage of His mother*, is simply absurd. The converse is true: He did solemnly commend the care of her, especially indeed to the beloved disciple, but in him to the whole cycle of disciples, among whom we find her, Acts i. 14.

No certain conclusion can be drawn from this commendation, as to the ‘brethren of the Lord’ believing on Him or not at this time. The reasons which influenced Him in his selection must ever be far beyond our penetration:—and *whatever relations to Him we suppose those brethren to have been*, it will remain equally mysterious why He passed them over, who were so closely connected with His mother. Still the presumption, that they did not then believe on Him, is one of which it is not easy to divest one’s self; and at least may enter as an element into the consideration of the whole subject, beset as it is with uncertainty.

from that hour is probably to be taken literally,—**from that time**;—so that she was spared the pangs of witnessing what was to follow. If so, John returned again to the Cross, ver. 35,

The words, **he took her to his own home**, need not imply that John had a house *in Jerusalem*. The name would equally apply to his lodging during the feast; only meaning, that henceforth, wherever he was, she was an inmate with him; and certainly that his usual habitation was fixed, and was his own.

Ewald remarks, “It was for the Apostle in his later years a sweet reward to recall vividly every such minute detail,—and for his readers a sign that he alone could have written all this.”

28.] After this is generally, but not necessarily, immediate. Here we must suppose the “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani” to have been said meantime, and the three hours’ darkness to have taken place. Perhaps during some of this time John was absent: see above.

that the scripture might be accomplished] Various needless objections have been raised to the application of these words to the saying of the Lord which follows, and attempts have been made—having it in view to leave no pre-appointed particular of the circumstances of his suffering unfulfilled, thus: that all things were now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished: i.e. that all was now done in order to the accomplishment of Scripture. But it is much more natural to connect them with what follows, and to understand, that Jesus, speaking doubtless also in intense present agony of thirst, but only speaking because He so willed it, and because it was an ordained part of the course which He had taken upon Him, said this word, **I thirst**. “He would not have sought this alleviation of His sufferings, had He not known that this also pertained to the distinguishing signs of the Messiah as given in the Prophets. Whence this second motive is stated in addition: *that the Scripture might be accomplished.*” Lampe. Notice, it is not, *fulfilled*, which is always otherwise expressed in the original, but *accomplished*.

29.] The **vinegar** was the sour wine, or vinegar and water, the common drink of the Koman soldiers.

a stalk of hyssop] An aromatic plant growing on walls, common in the south of England and on the Continent, with blue or white flowers, and having stalks about 1½ foot long, which would in this case be long enough, the feet of the crucified person not being ordinarily raised above that distance from the ground. It was much used for sprinkling, Exod. xii. 22; Levit. xiv. 4&c.; Ps. li. 7.

30.] It is finished expresses the fulfilling of that appointed course of humiliation, obedience, and suffering, which the Lord Jesus had undertaken. That was now over,—the redemption of man accomplished,—and from this time ‘the joy that was set before Him’ begins. It is beyond the purpose of a note to bring out the many meanings of this most important and glorious word.

he bowed his head] We have the minuteness of an eye-witness, on whom every particular of this solemn moment made an indelible impression.

yielded up his spirit] viz. in the words given by St. Luke, **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit**—which was also the “*loud voice*” mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark. This “*yielding up His spirit*” was strictly a voluntary and determinate act—no *coming on* of death, which had no power over Him,—see ch. x. 18, and note on Luke xxiii. 46.

31–42.]

Jesus in Death: and herein,

31–37.] Proof of His Death.

31.] On the Jewish custom, see note, Matt. xxvii. 57.

that sabbath day was an high day, being as it was (see note on ch. xviii. 28, and Matt. xxvi. 17) *a double sabbath*: the coincidence of the first day of unleavened bread (Ex. xii. 16) with an ordinary sabbath.

that their legs might be broken] The *breaking of the legs* was sometimes appended to the punishment of crucifixion, but does not appear to have been inflicted for the purpose of causing death, which indeed it would not do. Friedlieb supposes that the term involved in it the ‘*coup de grace*,’ which was given to all executed criminals, and that the piercing with the spear was this death-blow, and was also inflicted on the thieves.

34.] The lance must have penetrated deep, for the object was to *ensure* death,—and see ch. xx. 27, probably into the *left* side, on account of the position of the soldier, and of what followed.

blood and water] The spear perhaps pierced the pericardium or envelope of the heart, in which case a liquid answering the description of **water** may have flowed with the blood. But the quantity would be so small as scarcely to have been observed. It is hardly possible that the separation of the blood into placenta and serum should so soon have taken place, or that, if it had, it should have been by an

observer described as *blood and water*. It is more probable that the fact, which is here so strongly testified, was a consequence of the extreme exhaustion of the Body of the Redeemer. The medical opinions on the point are very various, and by no means satisfactory. Meyer's view after all seems to be the safe and true one—that the circumstance is related as a miraculous sign, having deep significance as to the work of the Redeemer, and shewing Him to be more than mortal. It can be no reason against this, that St. John does not *here* dwell on any such typical significance: nor can I see how 1 John v. 6 ff. can be understood without reference to this fact: see note there.

35.] This emphatic affirmation of the fact seems to regard rather the whole incident, than the mere outflowing of the blood and water. It was the object of St. John to shew that the Lord's Body was a *real body*, and *underwent real death*. And both these were shewn by what took place: not so much by the phænomenon of the water and blood, as by the infliction of such a wound,—after which, even had not death taken place before, there could not by any possibility be life remaining.

The third person (**he that saw it....**) gives solemnity. It is, besides, in accordance with St. John's way of speaking of himself throughout the Gospel.

The usage of the word **believe** in St. John makes it probable that he lays the weight on the proof of the *reality* of the death, as above. The clause, **that ye may believe**, depends on the three preceding clauses, without any parenthesis, as the final aim of what has gone before: **in order that** your faith may receive confirmation.

36.] ‘For’—i. e. as connected with the true Messiahship of Christ, ‘these things were a fulfilment of Scripture.’ It is possible that Ps. xxxiv. 20 may be also referred to;—but no doubt the primary reference is to the Paschal Lamb of Exod. xii. 46: Num. ix. 12; see 1 Cor. v. 7.

37.] The prophecy, **they shall look on Him whom**

they pierced, does not refer to the *Roman soldiers*,—but to the repentant in the world, who, at the time the Gospel was written, had begun to fulfil the prophecy: and is not without a prophetic reference to the future conversion of Israel, who were here the real *piercers*, though the act was done by the *hand of wicked men*, Acts x. 28.

38–42.] His Burial.

38.] after these things—not immediately after this, but soon after. The narrative implies, though it does not mention (as St. Mark and St. Luke do), that Joseph himself took down the Body from the cross. Lücke thinks the soldiers would have done this: but their duty seems only to have extended to the ascertaining of the fact of death. The words of ver. 31, “*that they might be taken away*,” need not imply, ‘by their hands.’

It was customary to grant the bodies of executed persons to their friends.

On Joseph, and the other particulars, see notes on Matthew.

He came...—to Golgotha.

39.] St. John alone mentions Nicodemus. The Galilæan narrative had no previous trace of him, and does not recognize him here. Joseph bore too prominent a part not to be mentioned by all. Luthardt beautifully remarks on the contrast between these men's secret and timid discipleship before, and their courage now, "Their love to Jesus was called out by the might of His love. His Death is the Power which constrains men. And thus this act of love on the part of both these men is a testimony for Jesus, and for the future effect of His death. Hence also it appears why the Evangelist mentions the weight of the spices, as a proof of the greatness of their love, as Lampe observes,"

myrth,—the gum of an aromatic plant, not indigenous in Palestine but in Arabia Felix, see Exod. xxx. 23; Prov. vii. 17; Song of Sol. iii. 6.

aloes] The name of various sorts of aromatic wood in the East. Both materials appear to have been pulverized (the wood either by scraping or burning) and strewed in the folds of the linen in which the body was wrapped. The quantity, **about an hundred pound weight**, is large; but perhaps the whole Body was encased, after the wrapping, in the mixture, and an outer wrapper fastened over all. The proceeding was hurried, on account of the approaching Sabbath: and apparently an understanding entered into with the women, that it should be more completely done after the Sabbath was over, This plentiful application of the aromatic substances may therefore have been made with an intention to prevent the Body, in its lacerated state, from incipient decomposition during the interval.

40.] See ch. xi. 44. Little is known with any certainty, except from these passages, of the Jews' ordinary manner of burying.

41.] See note on Matthew, ver. 60. The words, **in the place where he was crucified**, are *so far* in favour of the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre, that Calvary and the Sepulchre are close together, under the roof of the same church, And those who have found an objection in that circumstance have forgotten this testimony of St. John.

a new sepulchre....] And therefore *given for the purpose*—so that the additional particular not here mentioned, that it *belonged to Joseph*, is almost implied. The *newness* of the tomb was important, that it should be seen that no one but Jesus had risen thence, and Jesus not by the power of another, as was once the case at the grave of Elisha: so that no room might be left for the CLES of unbelief

42.] **the Jews' preparation day** seems to indicate clearly the preparation of the *Passover*, as I have before maintained that the words mean; not the mere day of the week so called, which, as it was by the Christians also in the Apostles' time named *the preparation* (Parascévé), would not be qualified by the additional statement that it was "*the Jews'* preparation day."

The words **because the sepulchre was nigh at hand**, may certainly at first sight appear as if St. John were not aware that the tomb belonged to Joseph; but it is more likely that the thought of asking for the Body may have been originally suggested to Joseph by his possessing a tomb close to the place of crucifixion, and so the *nearness* of the tomb may have been the real original reason of the whole proceeding; and St. John, not anxious to record every particular, may have given it as such.

It is much better to keep the order of the original in rendering this verse. There is weight and pathos in the concluding words, as completing the great subject of this part of the narrative, which is lost by transposing as in A.V.

John: Chapter 20

CHAP. XX. 1-29.] JESUS ALIVE FROM THE DEAD. COMPLETION OF THE DISCIPLES' FAITH WROUGHT THEREBY. And herein,

1-18.] *Contrast between His former life, within the conditions of the flesh, and His present, in which His communion with His own partakes of his new relation to the Father.* Compare Matt. xxviii. 1: Mark xvi. 1: Luke xxiv. 1.

On the chronology of the events of the Resurrection, see note on Matt. xxviii. 1.

I attempt no harmony of the accounts:—I believe all such attempts to be fruitless;—and I see in their failure strong corroboration of the truth of the evangelic narratives. It is quite impossible that so astounding an event, coming upon various portions of the body of disciples from various quarters and in various forms, should not have been related, by four independent witnesses, in the scattered and fragmentary way in which we now find it. In the depth beneath this varied surface of narration, rests the great central fact of the Resurrection itself, unmoved and immovable. As it was THIS above all other things to which the Apostles bore their testimony, so, in their testimony to this, we have the most remarkable proof of each having faithfully elaborated into narrative those particular facts which came under his own eye or were reported to himself by

those concerned. Hence the great diversity in this portion of the narrative:—and hence I believe much that is now dark might be explained, were the facts themselves, in their order of occurrence, before us. Till that is the case, (and I am willing to believe that it will be one of our delightful employments hereafter, to trace the *true* harmony of the Holy Gospels, under His teaching of whom they are the record,) we must be content to walk by faith, and not by sight. We must also remember in this case, that our Evangelist is selecting his points of narration with a special purpose,—to shew us how the belief of the disciples was brought out and completed, after the unbelief of Israel: cf. vv. 30, 31.

1, 2. Mary Magdalene] She was not alone (Matthew, Mark, Luke). Does this appear in the plural verb, “**we know not where they have laid Him,**” below? This is not, as Meyer says, precluded by the use of “*I know not*” in ver. 13. Mary there speaks in her own person, which she might do, however accompanied. Still, probably not. She perhaps uses the plural, as involving all the disciples in her own feeling of ignorance and of consequent sorrow. So Meyer: and it is more natural to take it thus. One thing we may conclude for certain, that *she*, for some reason, *did not see* the vision related in the three other Gospels.

3.] St. Luke, ver. 12, speaks only of *Peter’s* going.

4–8.] Full of most interesting and characteristic detail. John, probably the younger, outruns Peter;—but when there, reverently (not *for fear of pollution*, as some have thought) abstains from entering the sepulchre. The ardent and impetuous Peter goes directly in—John follows—and *believes*. What can exceed the inner truth of this description? And what is *not* related is as full of truth as that which is. For, vv. 6, 7, we seem to hear the very voice of Peter describing to his companion the inner state of the tomb.

On **the napkin**, see ch. xi. 44 and note.

seeth represents the original word used of the cursory glance of John, who did not go in,—**beholdeth**, that which describes the exhaustive gaze of Peter, who did. Notice also that John, when he stooped and looked in, saw only the *linen clothes*, which seem to have been lying where the Feet were, nearer the entrance, whereas Peter, on going in, saw the *napkin*, which was perhaps deposited further in, near the place of the Head.

8. he saw, and believed] Nothing is said of Peter—did he *believe* too? I think *not*;—and that John modestly suppresses it. But what did John believe? Was it merely, *that the Body had been taken away, as Mary had reported* (Bengel and others)? Surely not; the facts which he saw would prevent this conclusion: nor does John so use the word **believe**. He believed *that Jesus was risen from the dead*. He received into his mind, embraced with his assent, THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION, for the first time. He did this, on the *ocular testimony before him*; for as yet neither of them *knew the Scripture*, so as to be previously convinced of the certainty that it would be so. But (see above) Peter does not seem to have as yet received this fact;—accounting probably for what he saw as Mary had done. Lampe beautifully says, ‘We conclude that from this moment, in the gloom of the sepulchre, the mind of John was enlightened by saving faith in the Resurrection of Jesus, as with a new ray of the risen Sun of Righteousness.’

10. went away again unto their own home] St. Luke, xxiii. 12, has the very same expression; see there in margin. This is remarkable, as he evidently has a fragment of the same incident.

11.] She had come with them, but more slowly.

12.] From what has been said above, my readers will not expect me to compare the angelic appearances in the four Gospels. What wonder, if the heavenly hosts were variously and often visible on this great day, when ‘the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?’ What can be more accurate in detail than this description of the vision of Mary? Every word was no doubt carefully related to the Apostle, and as carefully recorded. And all is significant: they are in *white*, because from the world of light: they *sit*, as not defending, but peacefully watching the Body: at the *Head* and the *Feet*, for the Body of the Lord was from head to foot in the charge of His Father and of His servants.

13.] Here again the finest psychological truth underlies the narrative. The other women (Mark, ver. 5. Luke, ver. 5) *were afraid* at the vision; but now Mary, having but one thought or desire, to recover the lost Body of *her Lord, feels no fear*.

The angels doubtless are proceeding further to assure her as they did the women before:—but this is broken off by the appearance of the Lord Himself, or perhaps by Mary’s turning away.

14.] **she turned herself back**—having her attention attracted by consciousness of some one being present near her—not perhaps by the approach of Jesus. Or it might be with intent to go forth and weep again, or further to seek her Lord. Chrysostom’s reason is very beautiful, but perhaps hardly probable, from the fact that Mary on turning round did not recognize our Lord: “It seems to me that while she was saying these words, the sudden appearance of Christ behind her struck the angels, who saw their Lord, with amazement: and that they immediately shewed, both by their posture and by their look,

that they saw the Lord: and this caused Mary to turn round and look behind her." We need not surely enquire too minutely, why she did not know Him. The fact may be psychologically accounted for—she did not expect

Him to be there, and was wholly preoccupied with other thoughts: or, as Dräseke says, 'Her tears wove a veil, which concealed Him who stood before her. The seeking after the Dead prevents us from seeing the Living.'

15.] The same kind of repetition by the Lord of what the angel had before said is found in Matt. xxviii. 7–10.

It is idle to enquire *why* she thought Him to be the gardener: but I may once for all observe that we must believe the clothing of His risen Body to have been *that which He pleased to assume*; not earthly clothing, but perhaps some semblance of it. Certainly, in this case, He *was clothed*;—or she must at once have recognized Him. But see on the words "*she turned herself*" below.

Sir] The Greek word rendered both "Sir" and "Lord" is one and the same throughout the New Test. We can only judge from the circumstances in each case, which it represents. Here there can be no doubt, seeing that she did not recognize her Lord, that it is merely the appellation of courtesy to an unknown person.

thou is emphatic.

I will take him away] She forgets her lack of strength for this, in the overbearing force of her love. (Meyer.)

16.] With one word, and that one word *her name*, the Lord awakens all the consciousness of His presence: calling her in that tone doubtless in which her soul had been so often summoned to receive divine knowledge and precious comfort.

She turned herself] seems to imply that she had not been looking full at Him before.

Rabboni may mean either **my Master**,—or only **Master**; which last appears to be the case here.

That she gives way to no impassioned exclamations, but pours out her satisfaction and joy in this one word, is also according to the deepest psychological truth. There is an addition found in some of our copies, "*and she rushed forward to touch Him*:" this is an explanatory gloss to the words "*Touch me not*"—but doubtless it represents what really was the fact. 'It was the former name, with which He called her: His former appellation, in which she replied; and now she seeks to renew the former intercourse.' (Luthardt.)

17.] The connexion between the prohibition and its reason is difficult, and has been very variously given. The sense seems to me to be connected with some gesture of the nature alluded to in the addition quoted above, but indicating that she believed she had now gotten Him again, never to be parted from Him. This gesture He reproves as unsuited to the time, and the nature of His present appearance. 'Do not thus—for I am not yet restored finally to you in the body—I have yet to ascend to the Father.' This implies in the background *another and truer touching*, when He should have ascended to the Father. "Thou desirest to touch Me, Mary, and to enjoy friendly intercourse with Me: but that may not be now, for I permit Myself to be seen only for a purpose connected with Mine Office, the confirmation of your faith. But when I shall have ascended to My Father, the time will come that thou mayst enjoy intercourse with the most perfect, not by earthly touch, but by such as befits that place,—heavenly and spiritual." Grotius. With this my view nearly agrees, not confining (as indeed neither does he) the latter enjoyment to *heaven* itself, but understanding it to have begun here below. Leo the Great interprets very similarly: see in my Greek Test.

but go....] Stier remarks that this was a far greater honour than that which had been forbidden her;—just as the handling of the Lord allowed to Thomas was a far less thing than the not seeing and yet believing.

to my brethren] By this term He testifies that He has not put off his humanity, nor his love for his own, in his resurrection state: see Heb. ii. 11.

my Father, and your Father] This distinction, **my...** and **your...**, when "*Our*" seems so likely to have been said, has been observed by all Commentators of any depth, as indicating an *essential difference in the relations*. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "**My** Father, by nature: **your** Father, by adoption." Similarly Augustine; adding, "Nor did He say *Our God*:" wherefore here also is a difference in the relation. "**My** God, in subjection to whom I am in my human nature, **your** God, between whom and you I myself am the Mediator." So that the **my** is the ground and source of the **your**: God is **His** God, directly and properly: but **our** God, through Him. And the words **my** God indicate that He is still Man: see Eph. i. 3, and often in the epistles: 1 Cor. iii. 23: and especially Heb. ii. 11. In the words **I ascend** is included His temporary stay which He was now making with them—**I am ascending**—i. e. 'I am on my way.'

19–23.] In the freedom of His spiritual and triumphant life, He appears to and commissions His own. Compare Luke xxiv. 36–49; Mark xvi. 14–18.

19.] The circumstance of the doors being shut is mentioned here and in ver. 26, to indicate *what sort of appearances* these were. Suddenly, unaccounted for by any approach,—the Lord rendered himself visible to his disciples. Nor did this affect the truth of that resurrection Body, any more than his occasionally withdrawing himself from mortal sight affected the truth of His fleshly Body. Both were done by that supernatural Power dwelling in Him, by which His other miracles were wrought. It seems to have been the normal condition of His fleshly Body, to be visible to mortal eyes:—of His risen Body, not to be. But both these He could suspend when He pleased, without affecting the substance or truth of either.

for fear of the Jews] This was natural enough;—the bitter hatred of the Jews (both people and rulers) to their Master,—and His own prophetic announcements,—would raise in them a dread of incipient persecution now that He was removed.

came Jesus] not, by ordinary approach; nor *through* the closed doors;—nor in any visible manner;—but the word describes that *unseen arrival among them* which preceded His becoming visible to them.

stood in (literally, into) the midst] Compare Luke, ver. 36. The **into** (see on ch. xxi. 4) denotes the *coming and standing, in one*—the standing *without motion thither*, which in ordinary cases would be standing as the *result of motion thither*.

Peace be unto you] See on Luke ver. 36, and ch. xiv. 27.

20.] answers to Luke, ver. 39.

Then were the disciples glad] ‘The first and partial fulfilment of ch. xvi. 20–22: see notes there.

The disciples seem to have *handled* Him: see Luke, ver. 39; 1 John i. 1, and below, ver. 25.

21.] ‘**Peace be unto you**’ is solemnly repeated, as the introduction of the sending which follows. The ministers and disciples of the Lord are messengers of *peace*. This view is more natural than that of Euthymius, “they were probably in excitement from their great joy, and He calms them, that they might listen to what He was about to say.”

as my Father hath sent me] He confirms and grounds their Apostleship on the present glorification of Himself, whose Apostleship (Heb. iii. 1) on earth was now ended, but was to be continued by this sending forth of them. This commission was not now first given them, but now first fully assured to them: and their sending forth by Him their glorified Head, was to be, in character and process, like that of Himself by the Father.

22.] To understand this verse as the outpouring of the Spirit, the fulfilment of the promise of the Comforter, is against all consistency, and most against St. John himself:—see ch. xvi. 7, and ch. vii. 39. To understand it rightly, we have merely to recur to that great key to the meaning of so many dark passages of Scripture, the manifold and gradual unfolding of promise and prophecy in their fulfilment. The presence of the Lord among them *now* was a slight and temporary fulfilment of His promise of returning to them; and so the imparting of the Spirit *now*, was a symbol and foretaste of that which they should receive at Pentecost:—just as, to mount a step higher, *that itself*, in its present abiding with us, is but the firstfruits and pledge (Rom. viii. 23. 2 Cor. i. 22) of the fulness which we shall hereafter inherit. ‘The relation of this saying to the effusion of the Spirit is the same which chap. iii. bears to Baptism, chap. vi. to the Lord’s Supper, chap. xvii. 1 to the Ascension,&c.’ (Luthardt.)

Further: this giving of the Spirit was not the Spirit’s personal imparting of Himself to them, but only a partial instilling of His influence. He proceeds forth in His work (as in His essence) from the Father and the Son: this breathing of His influence was an imparting of Him from the Son in His risen Body, but that Body had not yet been received up, without which union of the God-manhood of the Son to the glory of the Father the Holy Spirit would not come.

What was now conferred is plain from our ver. 23—whereby authority to discern spirits and pronounce on them is re-assured (see Matt. xviii. 18)—and from Luke, ver. 45, by which a discerning of the mind of the Spirit is given to them. We find instances of both these gifts being exercised by Peter in Acts i., in his assertion of the sense of Scripture, and his judgment of Judas. Both these however were only temporary and imperfect.

That *no formal gifts of Apostleship were now formally conferred, is plain by the absence of Thomas*, who in that case would be no apostle in the same sense in which the rest were.

he breathed on them] The very same word in the LXX version is that in Gen. ii. 7, expressing the act of God in the original infusion of the spirit of life into man. This act is now by God Incarnate repeated, sacramentally (so we have the words “Take,

Receive” [they are the same in the original], in Matt. xxvi. 26 and the parallels) representing the infusion of the new life, of which He is become by his glorified Humanity the source to his members: see Job xxxiii. 4; Ps. xxxiii. 6; 1 Cor. xv. 45.

23.] The present meaning of these words has been spoken of above. They reach forward however beyond that, and extend the grant which they reassure to all ages of the Church.

The words, closely considered, amount to this: that with the gift and real participation of the Holy Spirit, comes the conviction, and therefore the *knowledge*, of *sin*, of *righteousness*, and *judgment*;—and this knowledge becomes more perfect, the more men are filled with the Holy Ghost. Since this is so, they who are pre-eminently filled with His presence are pre-eminently gifted with the discernment of sin and repentance in others, and hence by the Lord’s appointment authorized to pronounce pardon of sin and the contrary. The Apostles had this in an especial manner, and by the full indwelling of the Spirit were enabled to discern the hearts of men, and to give sentence on that discernment: see Acts v. 1–11; viii. 21; xiii. 9. And this gift: belongs to the Church in all ages, and especially to those who by legitimate appointment are set to minister in the Churches of Christ: not by successive delegation from the Apostles,—of which fiction I find in the New Testament no trace,—but by their mission from Christ, the Bestower of the Spirit for their office, when *orderly and legitimately conferred upon them by the various Churches*. Not however to them exclusively,—though for decency and order it is expedient that the outward and formal declaration should be so:—but in proportion as *any disciple* shall have been filled with the Holy Spirit of wisdom, is the inner discernment, the “*judgment*,” his.

The word **retain** here corresponds to “*bind*” in Matt. xvi. 19 (see the distinction there); xviii. 18, and the word **remit** here to “*loose*” there.

24–29.] *He proves Himself to His own to be Lord and God, to be believed on by them, though not seen. Thomas’s doubt, and its removal.* Peculiar to John.

24.] was not with them—for what reason does not appear. Eutbymius says, “It is probable that he, since the scattering of the Apostles,... had not yet joined them.” But I incline, with Stier, to think that it could not have been accidentally (Lücke), nor because he was, as Grotius supposes, “occupied by some engagement.” On such a day, and in such a man, such an absence must have been *designed*. Perhaps he had abandoned hope;—the strong evidence of his senses having finally convinced him that the pierced side and wounded hands betokened such a death that revivification was impossible.

25.] He probably does not name the Feet, merely because the Hands and Side would more naturally offer themselves to his examination than the Feet, to which he must stoop. He requires no more than had been granted to the rest: but he had *their testimony in addition*, and therefore ample ground for faith to rest on. Olshausen calls him the ‘Rationalist among the Apostles.’

26.] There is not the least reason for supposing, with Olshausen, that this appearance was in Galilee. The whole narrative points out the same place as before.

The eight days’ interval is the first testimony of the recurring day of the resurrection being commemorated by the disciples:—but, it must be owned, a weak one;—for in all probability they had been thus assembled every day during the interval. It forms however an interesting opening of the history of THE LORD’S DAY, that the Lord Himself should have thus selected and honoured it.

27.] Our Lord says nothing of the “*marks of the nails*:”—He does not recall the malice of his enemies.

The words imply that the marks were no *scars*, but *the veritable wounds themselves*;—that in His side being large enough for a hand to be thrust into it. This of itself would shew that the resurrection Body was *bloodless*. It is “*reach hither and behold*” in the case of the *hands*, which were exposed—but merely “*reach hither and put*” in the case of the *side*, which was clothed. So Meyer: but it may be questioned, whether this was so.

be not faithless] not merely, ‘Do not any longer disbelieve in my Resurrection;’—but **Be not** (do not become)—as applied generally to the spiritual life, and the reception of God’s truth—**faithless, but believing**. That Thomas *did not* apply his finger or his hand, is evident from the reason given by our Lord for his faith below, being, not, “*Thou hast touched me*,” but, **Thou hast seen me**.

28.] The Socinian view, that these words, **My Lord and my God**, are *merely an exclamation*, is refuted, (1) By the fact that no such exclamations were in use among the Jews. (2) By the introduction to them, “*Thomas said to him*.” (3) By the impossibility of referring the words **my Lord** to another than Jesus: see ver. 13. (4) By the utter psychological absurdity of such a supposition: that one just convinced of the presence of Him whom he deeply loved, should, instead of addressing Him, break out into an irrelevant cry. (5) By the further absurdity of supposing that *if such were* the case, the Apostle John, who of

all the sacred writers most constantly keeps in mind the object for which he is writing, should have recorded any thing so *beside that object*. (6) By the intimate conjunction of the *seeing* and *believing* in our Lord's answer, which necessarily makes this his saying the *expression of his belief*:—see below. Dismissing it therefore, we observe that this is *the highest confession of faith which has yet been made*;—and that it shews that (though not yet *fully*) the meaning of the previous confessions of His being ‘*the Son of God*’ was understood. Thus St. John, in the very close of his Gospel (see on vv. 30, 31) iterates the testimony with which he began it—to the Godhead of the Word who became flesh: and by this closing confession, shews how the testimony of Jesus to Himself had gradually deepened and exalted the Apostles’ conviction, from the time when they knew Him only as “*the Son of Joseph*” (ch. i. 46), till now, when He is acknowledged as their LORD and their GOD. 29.] The reason, **because thou hast seen me**, blames the slowness and required ground of the faith: the assertion, **thou hast believed**, recognizes and commends the soundness of that faith just confessed. Wonderful indeed, and rich in blessing for us who have not seen Him, is this, the closing word (see below) of the Gospel. For these words cannot apply to the *remaining Ten*: they, like *Thomas*, *had seen and believed*. ‘All the appearances of the forty days,’ says Stier, ‘were mere preparations for the believing without seeing.’ *On the record of them*, we now believe: see 1 Pet. i. 8.

30, 31.] FORMAL CLOSE OF THE GOSPEL (see notes on ch. xxi.).

30.] **Yea, and,—or, moreover:** meaning, ‘This book must not be supposed to be a complete account.’

signs] not, as many interpret the word, ‘proofs of His resurrection,’—but, as ch. xii. 37 and elsewhere in this Gospel, **miracles**, in the most general sense—these after the Resurrection included:—for St. John is here reviewing his whole narrative, **this book**.

31.] The mere *miracle-faith*, so often reproved by our Lord, is not that intended here. This is faith in *Himself*, as the Christ the Son of God: and the Evangelist means, that enough is related in this book to be a ground for such a faith, by shewing us His glory manifested forth (see ch. ii. 11).

that believing ye may have life] Thus he closes almost in the words of his prologue, ch. i. 4, 12.

in his name] These words (see Acts iv. 10; 1 Cor. vi. 11) describe the whole standing of the faithful man in Christ,—by which and in which he has life eternal.

John: Chapter 21

CHAP. XXI. 1–23.] THE APPENDIX. THE GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE. And herein,

1–8.] *The significant draught of fishes*. I reserve the remarks on this chapter to the end, thereby better to put the reader in possession of the evidence which I shall there gather up into one, but which will present itself as we go on. I will only state here, that whether written by St. John himself (of which I feel no doubt) or not, *it is evidently an appendix to the Gospel, which latter has already concluded with a formal review of its contents and object at ch. xx. 30, 31*.

1.] **After these things**, compare ch. v. 1; vi. 1, **at a subsequent time**.

manifested himself] This expression is nowhere else used by St. John of the Lord’s appearances, but only in Mark xvi. 12, 14. The use of the verb here indicates that the usual state of the Lord at this time was one not of manifestation, but of invisibility to them.

2.] Nathanael is named *by St. John only*: see ch. i. 46 ff.: Thomas also *by St. John only*, except in the catalogues of the Apostles.

the sons of Zebedee are *nowhere else named by John*;—they may however be here mentioned as in reminiscence of the *draught of fishes which occurred before*: see Luke v. 1 ff. **two other of his disciples**] Who these were does not appear. Probably (as Luthardt) some two not named in the Gospel, and therefore not specified in its appendix.

3.] The disciples returned to their occupation of fishing, probably as a means of livelihood, during the time which the Lord had appointed them in Galilee between the feasts of the Passover and Pentecost. This seems to be the first proposal of so employing themselves.

They went forth] from the house where they were together.

they caught nothing] as before, Luke v. 5. The correspondence of this account with that is very remarkable—as is also their

entire distinctness in the midst of that correspondence. The disciples must have been powerfully reminded of that their former and probably last fishing together. And after the “*fishers of men*” of that other occasion, the whole could not but bear to them a spiritual meaning in reference to their apostolic commission:—their powerlessness without Christ,—their success when they let down the net at His word. Their present part was not to go fishing of themselves, but “*to wait for the promise of the Father,*” Acts i. 4 (Luthardt).

4.] stood on

the shore—the preposition rendered by *on*

is here, as in ch. xx. 19, one of motion—He came and stood on the shore. A sudden appearance is indicated by the words.

5. Children] In ch. xiii. 33 we have the similar expression, “*little children.*”

have ye any fish?] This substantive is said to signify any thing eaten as an additament to bread, but especially *fish*. So that here the best rendering is as in margin.

6.] See Luke v. 6.

7.] The **therefore** here seems distinctly to allude to that former occasion in Luke v. 1 ff.—the similarity of the incident having led the beloved Apostle to scrutinize more closely the person of Him who spoke to them. “John is the more keen-sighted, Peter the more ardent. So John recognizes Him before Peter; but Peter goes forth to Him before John.” Euthymius.

He *put on* his fisher’s coat. or shirt for decorum: he *bound it round him*, to facilitate his swimming.

for he was naked] i.e. he was stripped for his fisher’s work;—some say, only without his upper garment. Some take it literally, that he was absolutely naked, which is more probable, and understand the putting on of the coat as above. Theophylact explains the word rendered “fisher’s coat” to be “a linen cloth which the Pheenicians and Syrians gird round them.”

8.] 200 cubits = 100 yards. The lake was about five miles broad, according to Josephus: according to Stanley, six in the widest part: according to Dr. Thomson, nine.

9-14.] The significant meal: see below, on ver. 14.

9.] The rationalist and semi-rationalist interpreters have taken great offence at the idea of a miracle being here intended. But is it possible to understand the incident otherwise? As Stier says, let any child reading the chapter be the judge. And what difficulty is there in such a fire and fish being provided, either by the Lord Himself, or by the ministry of angels at His bidding?

11.] went aboard into the boat, which apparently was now on the beach, in the shallow water.

an hundred and fifty and three] This enumeration is singular, and not to be accounted for by any mystical significance of the number, but as betokening the careful counting which took place after the event, and in which the narrator took a part.

was not the net rent: herein differing from what happened Luke v. 6, when it *was broken*.

12. Come and dine] The word used implies the *morning meal*:—see ver. 3, 4.

none of the disciples durst ask him] I take these words to imply that they sat down to the meal in silence,—wondering at, while at the same time they well knew, Him who was thus their Host. Chrysostom says, “for they no longer had their former confidence,... but in silence and much fear and reverence they sat down, looking on Him:... seeing His form changed and very wonderful, they were much amazed, and wanted to ask Him respecting it, but their fear, and their knowledge that it was no other than He himself, hindered them.”

The verb rendered **ask** signifies more:—to **question** or **prove** Him.

13.] cometh,—from the spot where they had seen Him standing, to the fire of coals, The words **taketh bread, and giveth them**, bear evident trace of the same words used on another occasion, (Matt. xxvi. 26 and parallels,) and remind us of the similar occurrence at Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 30.

14. This is now the third time] The number here is clearly not that of *all* appearances of Jesus up to this time, for that to Mary Magdalene is not reckoned; but only those *to the disciples*,—i. e. any considerable number of them together. This one internal trait of consistency speaks much for the authenticity and genuineness of the addition.

Without agreeing with all the allegorical interpretations of the Fathers, I cannot but see much depth and richness of meaning in this whole narrative. The Lord appears to His disciples, busied about their occupation for their daily bread; speaks and acts in a manner wonderfully similar to His words and actions on a former memorable occasion, when we know that by their toiling long and taking nothing, but at his word enclosing a multitude of fishes, was set forth what should befall them as fishers of men. Can we miss that application at this far more important epoch of their apostolic mission? Besides, He graciously provides for their present wants, and invites them to be His guests: why, but to shew them that in their work hereafter they should never want but He would provide? And as connected with the parable, Matt. xiii. 47 ff., has the net *enclosing a great multitude and yet not rent*, no meaning? Has the ‘taking the bread and giving to them, and the fish likewise’ no meaning, which so closely binds together the miraculous feeding, and the institution of the Lord’s Supper, with their future meetings in His Name and round His Table? Any one who recognizes the *teaching* character of the acts of the Lord, can hardly cast all such applications from him;—and those who do not, have yet the first rudiments of the Gospels to learn.

15–23.] The calling, and its prospect.

15. So when they had dined] There appears to have been nothing said during the meal. Surely every word would have been recorded. One great object of this appearance, observes Stier, certainly was the confirmation, and encouragement of the ‘fisher of men,’ in his apostolic office.

Simon son of Jonas] A reminiscence probably of his own name and parentage, as distinguished from his apostolic name of honour, Cephas, or Peter, see ch. i. 43. Thus we have the same address, Matt. xvi. 17, connected with the mention of his natural state of flesh and blood, which had not revealed to him the great truth just confessed—and Luke xxii. 31, ‘Simon, Simon,’ when he is reminded of his natural weakness. See also Mark xiv. 37, and Matt. xvii. 25, where the significance is not so plain.

more than these] more than these thy fellow-disciples, compare Matt. xxvi. 33; Mark xiv. 29, ‘Though *all* should be offended, yet not I.’ That St. John does not record this saying, makes no difficulty here; nor does it tell against the genuineness of this appendix to the Gospel. The narrator tells that which he heard the Lord say, and tells it faithfully and literally. That it coincides with what Peter is related to have said elsewhere, is a proof of the *authenticity*, not of the *connexion*, of the two accounts.

The word **these** has been strangely enough understood (Whitby, and others) of the *fish*, or the ‘employment and furniture of a fisherman.’—Olshausen sees a reference to the pre-eminence given to Peter, Matt. xvi. 19,—and regards the words as implying that on that account he really did love Jesus more than the rest;—but surely this is most improbable, and the other explanation the only likely or true one. Perhaps there is also a slight reference to his present just-shewn zeal, in leaping from the ship first to meet the Lord. ‘Has thy past conduct to Me truly borne out thy former and present warmth of love to Me above these thy fellows?’ “Wonderful is the wisdom of Christ, who in so few words makes Peter render account to Him whom He had denied, and to his brother-apostles, to whom he had made himself superior in love;—thus giving us an example for the exercise of church discipline.” Grotius.

Peter’s answer shews that he understood the question as above. He says nothing of the **more than these**—but dropping all comparison of himself with others, humbly refers to the Searcher of hearts the genuineness of his love, however the past may seem to have called it in question.

We may note that *two* Greek verbs, both signifying **to love**, are used in this conversation. The one (*agapain*) is applied to the ordinary love which men have to one another, or to the reverential love which is borne towards God and man by the child of God: the other (*philein*) to the closer love of a man for his own friend or his dearest relatives. The *former* word is used in ch. xi. 5, where it is said “Jesus *loved* Martha and her sister, and Lazarus;” the *latter* by the Jews in ch. xi. 37, when judging by the tears of Jesus for Lazarus, they exclaimed, “See how he *loved* him.” “Now in observing this conversation in the original, we notice, that the Lord’s *two first* questions contain the former word, while Peter’s answers have the latter and warmer one:—whereas, *the third time* the question and answer both have the warmer word (*philein*). This does not look like accident. Peter in his two answers uses a less exalted word, and one implying a consciousness of his own weakness, but a persuasion and deep feeling of personal love. Then in the third question, the Lord adopts the word of Peter’s answer, the closer to press the meaning of it home to him. The answer, **thou knowest**, the *two first* times, seems to refer to the Lord’s *personal* knowledge of Peter’s heart—in His having given him that name, ch. i. 43, Matt. xvi. 17; Luke xxii. 31, and the announcement of his denial of Him. The *last* time, he widens this assertion ‘Thou knowest me,’ into ‘Thou knowest *all things*,’ being grieved

at the repetition of a question which brought this Omniscience so painfully to his mind.

Feed my lambs] This, and the following answers of the Lord, can hardly be regarded as the *reinstating* of Peter in his apostolic office, for there is no record of his ever having lost it: but as a further and higher setting forth of it than that first one, Matt. iv. 18 ff.—both as belonging to all of them on the present occasion, and as tending to comfort Peter's own mind after his fall, and reassure him of his holding the same place among the Apostles as before, owing to the gracious forgiveness of his Lord.

Our Lord's three injunctions differ in their mode of expression. The first is, **Feed my lambs**. 'The second, **Keep, tend, or shepherd** (the same word is used in Acts xx. 28: 1 Pet. v. 2) **my sheep**. The third, **Feed my sheep**, but with this difference, that the word **sheep** is the diminutive, expressive of affection. Perhaps the *feeding of the lambs* was the furnishing the apostolic testimony of the Resurrection, and facts of the Lord's life on earth, to the first converts; the *shepherding* or ruling *the sheep*, the subsequent government of the Church, as shewn forth in the early part of the Acts: the *feeding of the sheep* (diminutive, the choicest, the loved of the flock), the furnishing the now maturer Church of Christ with the wholesome food of the doctrine contained in his Epistles. The notice of these distinctions, which only the cold and undiscerning will attempt to deny, may serve to shew the English reader, how entirely inadequate even the best version must be to represent the sense of Holy Scripture. For our language is quite unable to express its minute beauties and differences. But those must strangely miss the whole sense, who dream of an exclusive primatial power here granted or confirmed to this Apostle. A sufficient refutation of this silly idea, if it needed any other than the fact, that Peter was *grieved* at the question leading to the commission, is found in the "fellow-elder" (so in the original) of 1 Pet. v. 1, where he refers apparently to this very charge; see note on Matt. xvi. 17 ff.

17. Peter was grieved] not merely on account of the repetition of the question, but because of its being asked *the third time*, answering to the number of his own denials of Christ.

thou knowest all things] See above.

18.] The end of his pastoral office is announced to him:—a proof of the *knowledge of all things* which he had just confessed to be in his Lord;—a contrast to the denial of which he had just been reminded;—a proof to be hereafter given of the here recognized genuineness of that love which he had been professing.

When thou wast young] This may be said merely in contrast to **when thou shalt be old**. Or it perhaps includes his life up to the time prophesied of.

thou girdedst thyself] As in ver. 7, he had girt his fisher's coat to him: but not confined in its reference to that girding alone, — 'thou girdedst thyself up for My work, and wentest hither and thither—but hereafter there shall be a service for thee harder and more strictly confined.'

thou shalt stretch forth thy hands] 'but not as just now, in swimming;—in a more painful manner, on the transverse beam of the cross; and another—the executioner—shall gird thee,—with the cords binding to the cross.' Such is the traditional account of the death of Peter. Jerome says, that "he was crowned with martyrdom under Nero, being crucified with his head downwards and his feet upwards, because he alleged himself to be unworthy of being crucified in the same manner as his Lord."

shall carry thee] viz. in the lifting up after the fastening to the cross—or perhaps in making thee go the way to death, bearing thy cross.

whither thou wouldest not] "For," says Augustine, "who wishes to die? Truly no one: and so universal is this feeling, that it was said to St. Peter, Another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

19. Follow me] Not to be understood, I think, of any present gesture of the Lord calling Peter aside;—but, from the next verse, followed perhaps by a motion of Peter towards Him, in which John joined. The words seem to be a plain reference to ch. xiii. 36;—and the *following*,—a following through the Cross to glory;—see Matt. xvi. 24; Mark x. 21. Now, however, "*taking up the cross*" is omitted. He had made this so plain, that it needed not expressing. There was also a forcible reminding Peter of the first time when he had heard this command on the same shore, Matt. iv. 19.

20.] The details necessary to complete the narrative are obscure, and only hinted at in the background. It seems that Peter either was at the time of the foregoing conversation walking with Jesus, and turned round and saw John following,—or that he moved towards Him on the termination of it (but certainly not from a misunderstanding of the words "*Follow Me*," see ver. 21). I can hardly conceive Him *moving away* on uttering these words, and summoning Peter away in private. It seems in the highest degree unnatural. This description and identification of the disciple whom Jesus loved is evidently inserted to justify

his following, and is a strong token of St. John's hand having written this chapter; see ch. xiii. 23.

21.] Peter's question shews that he had rightly understood the Lord's prophecy respecting him. He now wishes to know what should befall his friend and colleague,—“giving him a return (for *his* similar service in ch. xiii. 23 just referred to), and, in the idea that he too might be desirous to ask about himself, but might lack the courage, Peter took up the enquiry.” Chrysostom. This was not mere *idle* curiosity, but that longing which we all feel for our friends. “Is *he* not to follow Thee too? is *he* not to go the same way of death with us?” Euthymius.

22.] The words **what is that to thee?** imply a rebuke;—not perhaps however so sharp a one as has been sometimes seen in them. They remind Peter of the distinctness of each man's position and duty before the Lord; and the subsequent command, **follow thou Me**, directs his view along that course of duty and suffering, which was appointed for him by his divine Master. In the original, both *thou* and *Me* are in emphatic positions: “*His* appointed lot is no element in *thy* onward course: it is *ME* that *thou* must follow.”

On the words, **if I will that he tarry till I come....**, three opinions have been held (for that which refers the words to John's remaining where he then was, on the shore, till the Lord returned from His colloquy with Peter, is not worth more than cursory mention): (1) that of Augustine and others (it being allowed on all hands, that **to tarry** means **to remain in this life**: see **abideth** (*the same word in the original*), ch. xii. 34), ‘If I will that he remain till I fetch him,’ i.e. by a *natural death*. But this is frigid, and besides inapplicable here. Peter's death, although by the hands of another, was just as much the Lord's ‘coming for him,’ as John's, and there would thus be no contrast. (2) That that ‘coming of the Lord’ is meant, which is so often in the three Gospels alluded to (see especially notes on Matt. xxiv.), viz. the establishment in full of the dispensation of the Kingdom by the destruction of the nation and temple of the Jews, This is the view of some mentioned by Theophylact, of Bengel, and others,—and is upheld by the similar place, Matt. xvi. 28. (3) That the Lord here puts a case only,—‘Even should I will that he remain upon earth till My last coming—what would that be to thee?’ This view is upheld by Trench; but I think must be rejected on maturer consideration of the character of the words of our Lord, in whose mouth such a mere hypothetical saying would be strangely incongruous, especially in these last solemn days of His presence on earth.

The second view seems then to remain, and I adopt it with some qualification. At the destruction of Jerusalem began that mighty series of events of which the Apocalypse is the prophetic record, and which is in

the complex known as the ‘COMING OF THE LORD,’ ending, as it shall, with His glorious and personal Advent. This the beloved Apostle alone lived to see, according to ancient and undoubted tradition.

23.] the brethren is an expression of later date than any usually occurring in the Gospels. It is however frequent in the Acts: e.g. ix. 30; xi. 1, 12; xii. 17; xv. 1, &c.

The following words are to me a proof that this chapter was written during St. John's lifetime. If written by another person after St. John's death, we should certainly, in the refutation of this error, have read, that St. John was dead and buried, as we do read of David in Acts ii. 29.

This notion of St. John's not having died, was prevalent in the early Church,—so that Augustine himself seems almost to credit the story of the earth of St. John's tomb heaving with his breath. ‘The English sect of the “seekers,” under Cromwell, expected the reappearance of the Apostle as the forerunner of the coming of Christ.’ Tholuck. The simple recapitulation of the words of the Lord shews that their sense remained dark to the writer, who ventured on no explanation of them; merely setting his own side of the apostolic duty over against that of Peter, who probably had already by following his Master through the Cross, glorified God, whereas the beloved disciple was, whatever that meant, to tarry till He came.

24, 25.] IDENTIFICATION OF THE AUTHOR, AND CONCLUSION. See remarks below.

24.] The words **these things** certainly refer to the whole Gospel, not merely to the Appendix—and are quite in St. John's style:—see ch. xii. 41; xx. 31.

25.] The purpose of this verse seems to be to assert and vindicate the fragmentary character of the Gospel, considered merely as an historical narrative:—for that the doings of the Lord were so many,—His life so rich in matter of record,—that in a popular hyperbole, we can hardly imagine the world containing them all, if singly written down; thus setting forth the superfluity and cumbrousness of any thing like a perfect detail, in the strongest terms,—and in terms which certainly look as if fault had been found with this Gospel for want of completeness, by some objectors.

The reader will have perceived in the foregoing comment on the chapter a manifest leaning to the belief that it was written by St. John himself. *Of this I am fully convinced.* In every part of it, his hand is plain and unmistakeable: in every part of it, his character and spirit is manifested in a way which none but the most biased can fail to recognize. I believe it to have been

added by him, some years probably after the completion of the Gospel; partly perhaps to record the important miracle of the second draught of fishes, so full of spiritual instruction, and the interesting account of the sayings of the Lord to Peter;—but principally to meet the error which was becoming prevalent concerning himself. In order to do this, he gives a complete account, with all minute details,—even to the number of the fish caught,—of the circumstances preceding the conversation,—and the very words of the Lord Himself: not pretending to put a meaning on those words, but merely asserting that they announced no such thing as that he should not die. Surely nothing can be more natural than this.

External evidence completely tallies with this view. The chapter is contained in *all the principal MSS.*; and there is no greater variety of reading than usual. In these respects it differs remarkably from John vii. 53—viii. 11, and indeed from even Mark xvi. 9—20. Internal evidence of style and diction is nearly balanced. It certainly contains several words and constructions not met with elsewhere in John (see these noticed in my Greek Test.); but, on the other hand, the whole cast of it is his;—the coupling particles are his;—the train of thought, and manner of narration. And all allowance should be made for the double alteration of style of writing which would be likely to be brought about, by lapse of time, and by the very nature of an appendix,—a fragment,—not forming part of a whole written continuously, but standing by itself. The last two verses, from their contents, we might expect to have more of the epistolary form; and accordingly we find them singularly in style resembling the Epistles of John.

On the whole, I am persuaded that in this chapter we have a fragment, both *authentic* and *genuine*, added, for reasons apparent on the face of it, *by the Apostle himself*, bearing evidence of his hand, but in a ‘second manner,’—a later style;—probably in the decline of life.

ACTS

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

On the title, see Introduction.

Acts: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1–3.] INTRODUCTION.

1. The former treatise....] The latter member of this sentence, **but the present one....** is wanting, and the Author proceeds at once to his narration, binding this second history to the first by recapitulating and enlarging the account given in the conclusion of the Gospel.

of all that Jesus....] Whatever latitude may be given to the word **all**, it must at all events serve to refute the notion that St. Luke had at this time seen the Gospels of Matthew or Mark, in which many things which Jesus did and taught are contained, which he had *not* related in his former treatise. On Theophilus, see notes, Luke i. 3.

that Jesus began both to do and teach] I cannot think **began** here to be merely superfluous. Its position here shews that it is *emphatic*, and the parallel cases (Matt. iv. 17: Mark i. 45: Luke xiii. 25; xxiii. 5) all point to a distinct and appropriate meaning for the word. That meaning here seems to be, that the Gospel contained the *beginnings*, the *outset*, of all the doings and teachings of our Lord, as distinguished from this second treatise, which was to relate their sequel and results. Meyer understands it—*which Jesus first of all men did, &c.* But this introduces a meaning irrelevant to the context, besides *not giving* the emphasis to the word **began**, which it must have by the arrangement of the original, but to the word **Jesus**. The position of emphasis given to the verb shews, that the *beginning* of the doing and teaching of Jesus must be contrasted with the *continuance* of the *same*, now about to be related.

2. he was taken up] The use of the verb in this abbreviated form, without the addition of “*into heaven*,” testifies to the familiarity of the apostolic church with the Ascension as a formal and recognized event in our Lord’s course.

had given commandments unto the apostles] See Luke xxiv. 48 ff., and ver. 4 below.

The words **through the Holy Ghost** may, in the original, be joined either with **had given commandments**, or with **had chosen**. There are ancient authorities both ways. In the *former* case, our Lord is said to have given His commands to the Apostles through, or in the power of, the Holy Ghost. Similarly He is said, Heb. ix. 14, “*through the Eternal Spirit* to have offered Himself without spot to God.” In the *latter*, He is said to have chosen the Apostles by the power of the Holy Ghost. Similarly, in ch. xx. 28, Paul tells the Ephesian elders, that the Holy Ghost had made them bishops in the Church of God. The former construction however appears much the best, as expressing not, as might at first seem, a mere commonplace, but the propriety of the fact,—that His last commands were given **in the power of** (see John xx. 22) **the Holy Ghost**.

3. by infallible proofs] See Luke xxiv. 31, 39, 43.

being seen of them forty days] It is hardly possible to give in English the exact force of the original, which implies that He was occasionally seen by them during a period of forty days. “He was not always with them as before the Resurrection,” says Chrysostom: for the “Evangelist does not say He was seen *for forty days*, but [*at times*] *during forty days*.” This is the only place where the duration of the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension is specified.

the things pertaining to the kingdom of God] What things these were, we are not told. Certainly, not future events in their detail,—as the next portion of the narrative shews us. I should rather believe them to have concerned the future founding and government of the Church: though even here the greatest Apostles were apparently left to the unfolding of the teaching of the Holy Spirit as years went on.

4–14.] THE LAST DISCOURSES AND ASCENSION OF THE LORD. RETURN OF THE APOSTLES TO JERUSALEM; RECAPITULATION OF THEIR NAMES.

4. being assembled together with them] so the original word imports, not “*eating together with them*,” which marginal reading of the A.V. originated in a mistake as to the etymology of the word.

that they should not depart from Jerusalem] See Luke xxiv. 49. “They are commanded to remain together, because they

were all to be endowed with one Spirit. If they had been dispersed, the unity of the Church would have been less manifestly known.” Calvin.

The ancient idea, that our Lord commanded the Apostles to remain at Jerusalem for *twelve years* after the Ascension, is sufficiently refuted by His own words here, and by the subsequent history: compare ch. viii. &c. That, in the main, they confined themselves to circuits in Palestine for some years, appears to be true; but surely would not be in compliance with such a command. **the promise of the Father**] See note on Luke xxiv. 49.

5.] The Lord cites these words from the mouth of John himself, Luke iii. 16 and parallels;—and thus announces to them that, as John’s mission was accomplished in baptizing *with water*, so now the great end of His own mission, the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, was on the point of being accomplished. Calvin remarks, that He speaks of the Pentecostal effusion as *being* the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, because it was a great representation, on the whole Church, of the subsequent continued work of regeneration on individuals: and was as it were a common baptism of the whole Church. I may add, also because it was the *beginning* of a new period of spiritual influence, totally unlike any which had preceded. See ch. ii. 17.

not many days hence] literally, **after these not many days**. This expression serves to bind on the time which should elapse to the day then current; as we say, ‘one of these days.’ Bengel observes, that the time was not precisely defined, for a trial of their faith.

6.] This **coming together** does not belong to another assembling, different from the former; but takes up again the “*assembling*” of ver. 4.

Lord, wilt thou restore] literally, **dost thou restore?** The stress of the question is in the words, which in the original are prefixed for emphasis, **at this time**. That the Kingdom was, *in some sense*, and *at some time*, to be restored to Israel, was plain; nor does the Lord deny this implication (see on ver. 8). Their fault was, a too curious enquiry on a point reserved among the secrets of God. Lightfoot’s idea, that the disciples wondered at the Kingdom being about to be restored to the ungrateful Jews, *at this time*, now that they had crucified Him, &c., would make our Lord’s answer irrelevant.—See Micah iv. 8.—Meyer would refer **at**, or **in this time**, to the interval designated by “*not many days hence*,” “during this time;” “wilt thou, during this time, restore?” But this does not seem natural. I should rather understand it, **at this present, period,—now**. The *present* tense, **dost thou restore** (see above), is often used in speaking with reference to matters of prophecy, importing fixed determination. So that we must not understand it, “Art thou restoring?” but “*wilt*,” or “*dost thou restore*?”

7.] This is a *general* reproof and assertion, spoken with reference to *men*, as forbidden to search curiously into a point which Omniscience has reserved—the times and seasons of the future divine dealings. But it is remarkable that not “*God*,” but **the Father** is here used; and this cannot fail to remind us of that saying (Mark xiii, 32), “But of that day or hour knoweth none, no not an angel in heaven, (so in our oldest MSS.,) *nor even the Son, but the Father*.” It may be observed however, that the same assertion *is not made here*: only the times and seasons said to be in the *power* of the Almighty Father, Who ordereth all things “*according to the counsel of His will*.” The *Knowledge of the Son* is not here in question, only *that of the disciples*. It is an enquiry intimately connected with the interpretation of the two passages, but one beyond our power to resolve, how far, among the things not yet put under His feet, may be this very thing, the *knowledge of that day and hour*.—Bengel attempts to evade the generality of the assertion **It is not for you to know....** “It was *not yet* for the Apostles to know these,” he says; “but they were afterwards signified by the Apocalypse.” But signified *to whom*? What individual, or portion of the Church, Than ever read plainly these *times or seasons* in that mysterious book?—There is truth in Olshausen’s remark, that the Apostles were to be less prophets of the future, than witnesses of the past; but we must not limit the word **you** to the Apostles, nor forget that the knowledge of times and seasons has very seldom been imparted by prophecy, which generally has formed a testimony to this very fact, that God has them in His foreknowledge, and, while He announces the events, conceals for the most part in obscurity the *times*.

times or seasons] The two do not signify the same thing: **times** being the wider term, applicable to any kind of portion or point of duration, whereas a season is always a definite, limited space of time, and involves the idea of transitoriness.| “As the best means of

8.] “As the best means of bridling their curiosity, Christ recalls them both to God’s promise and to His command.” Calvin.

Howbeit “marks the contrast between that which did belong to the disciples and that which did not: as also between that which was to happen at that time, and that which was reserved for the future.” Bengel.

ye shall receive power] *that power, especially*, spoken of ch. iv. 33, connected with their office of witnessing to the resurrection; but also all other spiritual power. See. Luke xxiv. 49.

ye shall be my witnesses] So they say of themselves, ch. v. 32, “*We are His witnesses of these things*.” This was the peculiar

work of the Apostles. See on verses 21, 22, and Introduction, ch. i. §3, paragraph 5.

both in Jerusalem.....] By the extension of their testimony, from Jerusalem to Samaria, and then indefinitely over the world, He reproves, by implication, their carnal anticipation of the restoration of the Kingdom to *Israel* thus understood. The Kingdom was to be one founded on *testimony*, and therefore reigning in the convictions of men's hearts; and not confined to Judæa, but coextensive with the world.—The Apostles understood this command only of Jews scattered through the world, see ch. xi. 19.—De Wette observes, that these words contain the *whole plan of the Acts: Ye shall receive power by the Holy Ghost coming upon you*, ch. ii. 1 to end; **the witnesses in Jerusalem**, ch. iii. 1—vi. 7; then the martyrdom of Stephen dispersed them *through Judæa*, vi. 8—viii. 3; they preach in *Samaria*, viii. 4–40; and, from that point, the conversion of the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, the vision of Peter, the preaching and journeys of Paul. In their former mission, Matt. x. 5, 6, they had been expressly forbidden from preaching either to Samaritans or Gentiles.

9.] This appears (see Introduction, ch. iv. §4, paragraph 2) to be an account of the Ascension furnished to St. Luke *subsequently to the publication of his Gospel*, more particular in detail than that found in *it*. He has not repeated here details found there; see Luke xxiv. 50–52. On the Ascension in general, see note on Luke, as above.

he was lifted up] We may understand this of the commencing ascent, when He was first lifted from the ground where they were standing: the next clause, a **cloud received him out of their sight**, describes the close of the scene, as far as it was visible to the spectators. There was a manifest propriety in the last withdrawal of the Lord, while ascending, not consisting in a *disappearance* of His Body, as on former occasions since the Resurrection; for thus might His abiding Humanity have been called in question. As it was, He went up, past the visible boundary of Heaven, the cloud,—*in human form*, and so we think of and pray to Him.

10.] as he went (or was going) up, not “*when He had gone up:*” implying that the cloud remained visible for some time, probably ascending with Him.

two men] These were evidently *angels*. See Luke xxiv. 4: John xx. 12.

11.] which (not only appeared but) **also said**. There is a propriety in the address, **Ye men of Galilee**. It served to remind them of their origin, their call to be His disciples, and the duty of obedience to Him resting on them in consequence.

in like manner as;—to be taken literally; as you beheld Him going, so shall He be seen coming: in the same human form, and in the clouds of heaven, Luke xxi. 27. His corporeal identity is implied in the words, **this same Jesus**. “Notice, it is not said that they who saw Him ascending should also see Him come again. Between the Ascension and the glorious Advent no exertion is interposed which can be put in comparison with either of them: and in consequence these two are placed together. It was then with reason that the Apostles, before the giving of the Apocalypse, looked to the day of Christ as very near. And it is agreeable to the Majesty of Christ, that He should be expected without intermission during the whole interval between the Ascension and His Advent.” Bengel.

12.] In so careful a writer (see Luke i. 3), there must be some reason why this minute specification of distance should be here inserted, when no such appears in the Gospel. And I believe this will be found, by combining the hint dropped by Chrysostom,—“It seems to me that these things must have happened on a Sabbath: for the Evangelist would not have thus stated the distance... except they had had their journey limited by its being the Sabbath day,”—with the declaration in the Gospel (xxiv. 50) that he led them out *as far as to Bethany*. This latter was (John xi. 18) *fifteen stadia* from Jerusalem, which is more than twice the Sabbath day's journey (2000 cubits = about six furlongs). Now if the Ascension happened on the Sabbath, it is very possible that offence may have arisen at the statement in the Gospel: and that therefore the Evangelist gave here the more exact notice, that the spot, although forming part of the district of Bethany, was yet on that part of the Mount of Olives which fell within the limits of the Sabbath day's journey. This of course must be a mere conjecture; but it will not be impugned by the fact of the Ascension being kept by the Church in after ages on a Thursday. This formed no hindrance to Chrysostom in making the above supposition: although the festival was certainly observed in his time. *Forty days* from the Resurrection is an expression which would suit as well the Saturday of the seventh week as the Thursday.—The distance of the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem is stated by Josephus at five stadia, in one passage,—at six stadia, in another; different points being taken as the limit. The present church of the Ascension rather exceeds the distance of six stadia from the city.

13. when they were come in] viz. ‘into the city.’

the upper chamber] The idea that this was a chamber in *the Temple* has originated in low literal-harmonistic views, St. Luke having stated (Luke xxiv. 53) that they were “*continually in the temple*.” As if such an expression could be literally understood, or taken to mean more than that they were there at all appointed times (see ch. iii. 1). It is in the highest degree improbable that the disciples would be found *assembled* in *any public* place at this time. The upper chamber was *perhaps* that in which the last Supper had been taken; *probably* that in which they had been since then assembled (John xx. 19, 26), but

certainly

one in a *private house*. Lightfoot shews that it was the practice of the Jews to retire into a large chamber under the flat roof for purposes of deliberation or prayer. Epiphanius relates that “when Hadrian came to Jerusalem, he found the whole city levelled with the ground, and the temple of God trodden down, with the exception of a few houses, and the church of God, which was but small, where the disciples, on their return, after the Saviour had been received up from the Mount of Olives, went up into the upper chamber. For there it was built, that is, in the region Zion; which survived the desolation.... even to the time of Bishop Maximus, and the Emperor Constantine: like a cottage in a vineyard, as it is written.” And Nicephorus says that the Empress Helena enclosed in her larger church the room where took place the descent of the Holy Spirit in the upper chamber.

where they were sojourning] not to be taken, as in A.V. ‘*where abode both Peter,’ &c.; which gives the idea that Peter, &c. were already in the chamber, and the rest joined them there:—but on entering the city, they went up into the upper chamber, where they (usually) sojourned* (not ‘dwelt:’ they did not all dwell in one house; see John xix. 27, note), **namely, Peter, &c.**—On the catalogue of the Apostles, see Matt. x. 2, note.

14. with the women] viz. those spoken of by St. Luke himself, Luke viii. 2, 3,—where, besides those named, he mentions *many others*. Some have proposed to render the phrase “*with their wives:*” but many of these were certainly *not wives of the Apostles*; and that those women who were ‘last at the Cross and earliest at the tomb’ should not have been assembled with the company now, is very improbable.

and Mary the mother of Jesus] The **and** gives eminence to *one* among those previously mentioned. This is the last mention of her in the N.T. The traditions, which describe her as (1) dying at the age of fifty-nine, in the fifth year of Claudius, or (2) accompanying St. John to Ephesus, and being buried there, are untrustworthy. Other accounts, with the authorities, may be seen in Butler’s Lives of the Saints, Aug. 15. The fable of the *Assumption* has *no foundation even in tradition*.

and his brethren] This clearly shews, as does John vii. 5 compared with vi. 67, 70, that *none of the brethren of our Lord were of the number of the Twelve*. When they were converted, is quite uncertain. See the whole subject discussed in note on Matt. xiii. 55, and in the Introduction to the Epistle of James.

15–26.] ELECTION OF A TWELFTH APOSTLE TO FILL THE ROOM OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

15. in those days] In the days between the Ascension and Pentecost: during which it appears that the number of the assembly had increased, not probably by fresh conversions, but by the gathering round the Apostles of those who had previously been disciples.

the number of names] that is, of persons: but the term would hardly be used except where the number is small. See Rev. iii. 4, and note.

an hundred and twenty] De Wette asks, ‘where were the 500 brethren of 1 Cor. xv. 6?’ We surely may answer, ‘not in Jerusalem.’

16.] We may enquire, by what change in mind and power Peter was able, *before the descent of the Spirit*, thus authoritatively to speak of Scripture and the divine purposes? The answer will be found in the peculiar gift of the Spirit to the Apostles, John xx. 21, 23; where see note.—The pre-eminency of Peter here is ‘the commencement of the fulfilment of Matt. xvi. 18, 19 (see note there).

17.] Because gives the reason of the previous assertion, viz. that Judas held, and had betrayed, that place of high trust of which the prophecy spoke. Thus it has reference to the *substance of the prophecy*, already in Peter’s mind, and serves to explain the words “*his habitation,*” and “*his bishoprick,*” which occur in the prophecy.

had obtained the lot] not literally, but inasmuch as the *lot* of every man is regarded as being cast and appointed by God.

18.] This verse *cannot be regarded as inserted by St. Luke*; for, 1. the place of its insertion would be most unnatural for an historical notice: 2. the form of its introduction in the original forbids the supposition: 3. the whole style of the verse is rhetorical, and not narrative, e.g. “*this man,*” “*the reward of iniquity.*”—The statement, that he *bought a field*, does not appear to agree with the account in Matt. xxvii, 6–8; nor, consistently with common honesty, can they be reconciled, *unless we knew more of the facts than we do*. If we compare the two, that of St. Matthew is the more particular, and more likely to give rise to this one, *as a general inference*

from the buying of the field, than vice versa. Whether Judas, as Bengel supposes, began the purchase, and so gave occasion for its being completed by the Chief Priests, we cannot say: such a thing is of course *possible*, but is certainly not

contemplated by St. Matthew's account, where the priests settle to buy the field, on deliberation, what they should do with the money. At all events we hence clearly see that *St. Luke could not have been acquainted with the Gospel of St. Matthew at this time*, or surely this apparent discrepancy would not have been found. The various attempts to reconcile the two narratives, which may be seen in most of our English commentaries, are among the saddest examples of the shifts to which otherwise high-minded men are driven by an unworthy system. A notable example occurs in a solution lately proposed, that as the Jews are said to have crucified our Lord when they were only the occasion of his being crucified, so Judas may be said to have bought the field when he only gave occasion to its being bought by the Chief Priests. I need hardly say to any intelligent and ingenuous reader, that this is entirely precluded here by the words **with the reward of his iniquity**, which plainly bind on the purchase to Judas as his personal act.

and falling headlong] The connexion of this with the former clause would seem to point to the death of Judas having taken place *in* the field which he bought. See also ver. 19.

falling headlong will hardly bear the meaning assigned to it by those who wish to harmonize the two accounts,—viz. that, having hanged himself, he fell by the breaking of the rope. It would rather point, as the word used is explained, to a sudden fall forward on the face by a stroke from God, or by an accident. Nor again is it at all probable that the Apostle would recount what was a *mere accident accompanying his death*, when that death itself was the accursed one of *hanging*. What then are we to decide respecting the two accounts? That there should have been a double account actually current of the death of Judas at this early period, is *in the highest degree improbable*, and will only be assumed by those who take a very low view of the accuracy of the Evangelists. Dismissing then this solution, let us compare accounts themselves. In this case, *that* in Matt. xxvii. is *general*,—*ours particular*. *That* depends entirely on the exact sense to be assigned to the word which we render “*hanged himself*:” whereas *this*

directly assigns the manner of his death, without stating any cause for the falling on his face. It is obvious that, while the general term used by Matthew points mainly at *self-murder*, the account given here does not preclude the catastrophe related having happened, in some way, as a divine judgment, *during the suicidal attempt*. Further than this, with our present knowledge, we cannot go. *An accurate acquaintance with the actual circumstances* would account for the discrepancy, but *nothing else*.—Another kind of death is assigned to Judas by Œcumenius, quoting from Papias: “Papias, the disciple of the Apostle John, relates, that Judas, as he walked about, was a great example of God's judgments on impiety in this world; for that he swelled up to a fearful size, and once on attempting to pass through (a gateway) at the same time with a waggon which left ample space, he was crushed by the waggon, so that his bowels gushed out.” This tradition may be in accordance with, and may have arisen from an exaggerated amplification of, our text. See more in the note in my Greek Test.

he burst asunder: the word implies bursting with a noise. It is quite possible that this catastrophe happening in the field, as our narrative implies, may have suggested its employment as a burial-place for strangers, as being defiled.

19.] It is principally from this verse that it has been inferred that the two verses 18, 19 are *inserted by St. Luke*. But it is impossible to separate it from ver. 18; and I am disposed to regard both as belonging to Peter's speech, but freely given by St. Luke, inserting *into the speech itself* the explanations, “*in their proper tongue*,” and “*that is to say, the field of blood*,” as if the speech had been spoken in Greek originally. This is much more natural, than to parenthesize these clauses; it is, in fact, what must be more or less done by all who report in a language different from that actually used by the speaker. The words and idioms of a mother tongue contain allusions and national peculiarities which never could have been in the mind of one speaking in a different language; but the ear tolerates these, or easily separates them, if critically exercised.

it was known....] See Luke xxiv. 18.

The field of blood] In Matt. xxvii. 8, the name ‘the field of blood’ is referred to the fact of its having been *bought with the price of blood*: here, to the fact of *Judas* having there *met with a signal and bloody death*. On the whole, I believe the result to which I have above inclined will be found the best to suit the phenomena of the two passages,—viz. that, with regard to the *purchase of the field*, the more circumstantial account in Matthew is to be adopted; with regard to the *death of Judas*, the more circumstantial account of Luke. The *clue which joins these has been lost to us*: and in this, only those will find any stumbling-block, whose faith in the veracity of the Evangelists is very weak indeed.

The field originally belonged to a potter, and was probably a piece of land which had been exhausted of its clay fit for his purposes, and so was useless. Jerome relates that it was still shewn on the South side of Mount Sion, in which neighbourhood there is even now a bed of white clay.

20.] For, the connexion being, ‘all this happened and became known,’ &c., ‘*in accordance with the prophecy*.’ &c. Ps. lxix. is eminently a Messianic psalm,—spoken in the first place of David and his kingdom and its enemies, and so, according to the universal canon of Old Testament interpretation, of Him in whom that kingdom found its true fulfilment, and of His enemies. And Judas being the first and most notable of these, the Apostle applies eminently to him the words which in the Psalm are

spoken in the plural of all such enemies. The same is true of Ps. cix., and there *one* adversary is even more pointedly marked out. See also Ps. iv.

bishoprick] not *necessarily* such, in technical accuracy: the word may signify any overseership, office, or charge. But, considering the usage of the word and its cognates, in this and the following books of the N.T., and in the church, I regard it as best to keep every where the literal rendering, leaving each passage to explain itself.

21.] Wherfore, since all this has happened to Judas, and since it is the divine will that another should take the charge which was his.

all the time] This definition of the necessary qualification of an apostle exactly agrees with our Lord's saying in John xv. 27: "And ye also are witnesses, because ye have been with me from the beginning." See Introduction, ch. i., §3, paragraph 5.

22.]

the baptism of John is mentioned as a well-known date, including of course the opening event of our Lord's ministry, *His own baptism by John*. That John continued to baptize for some time after that, can be no possible objection to the assignment of 'John's baptism' generally, as the date of the commencement of the apostolic testimony. We may notice, that from this point, *the baptism of John*, the testimony of the Evangelists themselves in their Gospels properly begins, Matt. iii. 1, Mark i. 1, Luke iii. 1, John i. 6.

a witness.... of his resurrection] This one event was the passage-point between the Lord's life of humiliation and His life of glory,—the completion of His work below and beginning of His work above. And to 'give witness with power' of the Resurrection (ch. iv. 33), would be to discourse of it *as being all this*: in order to which, the whole ministry of Jesus must be within the cycle of the Apostle's experience.—It is remarkable that Peter here lays down *experience of matters of fact*, not eminence in any subjective grace or quality, as the condition of Apostleship. Still, the testimony was not to be *mere* ordinary allegation of matters of fact: any who had seen the Lord since His resurrection were equal to this;—but belonged to *a distinct office* (see John xiv. 26: also ch. v. 31, note), *requiring the especial selection and grace of God*.

23. they appointed] *they, viz. the whole company, to whom the words had been spoken*; not the eleven Apostles.

Joseph....] The names Jose *ph* and Jose *s*, different forms of the same, are confused in the MSS., both here and in ch. iv. 36. But Barsabas and *Barnabas* are not to be confounded: they are different names (Barsabas is *son of Saba*: on Barnabas, see iv. 36, note); and Barnabas is evidently introduced in iv. 36 as a person who had not been mentioned before. Of Joseph Barsabas, nothing further is known. There is a Judas Barsabas mentioned in ch. xv. 22, whom some take to be his brother. Eusebius states, on the authority of Papias, that he drank a cup of poison Without being hurt.—In all probability both the selected persons belonged to the number of the Seventy, as it would be natural that the candidates for apostleship should be chosen from among those who had been already distinguished by Christ Himself among the brethren.—**Justus** (*the Just*) is a Roman second name, assumed according to a custom then prevalent. The name Justus seems to have been common: Schöttgen, on this place, gives two instances of Jews bearing it.

Matthias] Nothing historical is known of him, Traditionally, according to Nicephorus, he suffered martyrdom in Æthiopia; according to others, in Colchis: another account makes him preach in Judæa, and be stoned by the Jews.

24.] It is a question, *to Whom this prayer was directed*. I think all probability is in favour of the Apostle (for Peter certainly was the spokesman) having addressed *his glorified Lord*. And with this the language of the prayer agrees. No stress can, it is true, be laid on the word **Lord** being used: see ch. iv. 29, where unquestionably the Father is so addressed: but the expression, **thou hast chosen**, compared with **Did I not choose you twelve?** John vi. 70, seems to me almost decisive. See also ver. 2; Luke vi. 13; John xiii. 18, xv. 16, 19. The instance cited on the other side by Meyer, "*God made choice*"..., ch. xv. 7, is not to the point, as not relating to the matter here in hand; nor are the passages cited by De Wette, 2 Cor. i. 1; Eph. i. 1; 2 Tim. i. 1, where Paul refers his apostleship to *God*, since obviously all such appointment must be referred ultimately to *God*:—but the question for us is,—In these words, *did the disciples pray as they would have prayed before the Ascension, or had they Christ in their view?* The expression, **which knowest the hearts of all men** (used by Peter himself of *God*, ch. xv. 8), forms no objection: see John xxi. 17, also in the mouth of Peter himself. We are sure, from the words, *they worshipped Him*, Luke xxiv. 52, that even at this time, before the descent of the Spirit, the *highest kind of worship was paid to the ascended Redeemer*. Still I do not regard it as by any means *certain* that they addressed Christ, nor can the passage be alleged as convincing, in controversy with the Socinian.

The words are not, as in E.V., '*shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen*,' but **appoint one of these two**

[him] whom Thou hast chosen. The difference is of some import: they did not pray for a sign merely, to shew whether of the

two was chosen, but that the Lord would, by means of their lot, *Himself appoint* the one of His choice.

25.]

the place, instead of **part**, is from internal evidence, as well as MS. authority, the preferable reading. It has been altered to suit ver. 17.

ministry, implying the active duties; **apostleship**, the official dignity, of the office.

that he might go to his own place] With the reading **place** in the former part of the verse, I think these words may be interpreted two ways: 1. that Judas *deserted this our*

place, our office and ministry, *to go to his own place*, that part which he had chosen for himself, viz. the office and character of a traitor and enemy of God; 2. regarding the former word **place** as being selected to correspond to the more proper and dreadful use of the word *here*, that Judas *deserted* his appointed place, here among us, that he might go to *his own appointed place elsewhere*, viz. *among the dead in the place of torment*. Of these two interpretations, I very much prefer the second, on all accounts; as being more according to the likely usage of the word, and as more befitting the solemnity of such a prayer. At the same time, no *absolute sentence* is pronounced on the traitor, but that dark surmise expressed by the phrase **his own place**, which none can help feeling with regard to him. To understand “he” of Judas’s successor,—*that he* (the new Apostle) *might enter on his own place of dignity destined for him by God*, (1) is contrary to the form of the sentence in the original; (2) is inconsistent with the words, which are unexampled in this sense; (3) would divest a sentence, evidently solemn and pregnant, of all point and meaning, and reduce it to a mere tautology. It appears to have been very early understood as above; for Clement of Rome says of Peter, “Thus having borne a martyr’s testimony, he went to his appointed place of glory,” an expression evidently borrowed from our text. Lightfoot quotes from a Rabbinical work on Numb. xxv. 25, “*Balaam went to his own place*,” i.e. “*to hell*.”

26. they cast lots for them] These lots were probably tablets, with the names of the persons written on them, and shaken in a vessel, or in the lap of a robe (Prov. xvi. 33); he whose lot first leaped out being the person designated.

was voted in amongst the eleven apostles] The *lot* being regarded as the divine choice, the suffrages of the assembly were unanimously given (not in *form*, but by cheerful acquiescence) to the candidate thus chosen, and he ‘voted in’ among the eleven Apostles, i.e. as a *twelfth*. That St. Luke does not absolutely *say so*, and never afterwards speaks of the *twelve* Apostles, is **surely no safe** ground on which to doubt this.—Stier was disposed to question whether this step of electing a twelfth Apostle was altogether suitable to the then waiting position of the Church, and whether Paul was not in reality the twelfth, chosen by the Lord Himself. But I do not see that any of his seven queries touch the matter. We have the precedent, of all others most applicable, of the twelve tribes, to shew that the number, though ever *nominally kept*, was *really exceeded*. And this incident would not occupy a prominent place in a book where St. Paul himself has so conspicuous a part, unless it were by himself considered as being what it professed to be, the filling up of the vacant Apostleship.

Acts: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1-4.] THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE DISCIPLES.

1.] while the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled: “during the progress of that particular day:” necessitated by the pres. tense. In *sense*, it amounts to ‘*when the day of Pentecost was fully come*,’ as A.V.

the day of Pentecost] The *fiftieth*

day (inclusive) after the sixteenth of Nisan, the second day of the Passover (Levit. xxiii. 16),—called in Exodus xxiii. 16, ‘*the feast of harvest*,’—in Deut. xvi. 10, ‘*the feast of weeks*:’—one of the three great feasts, when all the males were required to appear at Jerusalem, Deut. xvi. 16. At this time, it was simply regarded as the feast of harvest: among the later Jews, it was considered as the anniversary of the giving of the law from Sinai. This inference was apparently grounded on a comparison of Exod. xii. 2 and xix. 1. Josephus and Philo know nothing of it, and it is at the best very uncertain. Chrysostom’s reason for the event happening when it did is probably the true one: “It was fitting that this should take place on the recurrence of a feast: that they who had been present at the cross of Christ might see this also.” The question, *on what day of the week* this day of Pentecost was, is beset with the difficulties attending the question of our Lord’s last passover; see notes on Matt. xxvi. 17, and John xviii. 28. It appears probable however that it was on the Sabbath,—i. e. if we reckon from *Saturday, the 16 th of Nisan*. Wieseler supposes that the Western Church altered the celebration of it to the first day of the week, in conformity with her observance of Easter on that day. If we take the second day of the Passover as *Sunday, the 17 th of Nisan*, which some have inferred from John xviii. 28, the day of Pentecost will fall on the *first day* of the week.

they were all together in one place] Not the Apostles only, nor the hundred and twenty mentioned ch. i. 15; but *all the believers in Christ*, then congregated at the time of the feast in Jerusalem. The former is manifest from ver. 14, when Peter and the eleven stand forward and allude to the rest **as these**: and the latter follows on the former being granted. Both are confirmed by the universality of the promise cited by Peter, ver. 17 ff. See Chrysostom below, on ver. 4.

together: the other but not so well supported reading, “*with one accord*,” implies more, viz. that their *purpose*, as well as their locality, was the same.

in one place] *Where?* evidently *not in the temple, or any part of it*. The improbability of such an assemblage, separate and yet so great, in any of the rooms attached to the temple,—the words “*all the house*” in ver. 2 (where see note),—the notice, that “*the multitude came together*,” ver. 6,—the absence of any mention of the temple,—all these are against such a supposition. Obviously no *à priori* consideration such as Olshausen alleges, that “thus the solemn inauguration of the Church of Christ becomes more imposing by happening in the holy place of the Old Covenant,” can apply to the enquiry. Nor can the statement that they were “*continually in the temple*,” Luke xxiv. 53, apply here (see above on ch. i. 13); for even if it be assumed that the hour of prayer was come (which it hardly could have been, seeing that some time must have elapsed between the event and Peter’s speech), the disciples would not have been assembled separately, but would, as Peter and John, in ch. iii. 1, have gone up, mingled with the people. See more below.

2.] The words of the description could not be better rendered than in A.V., **a sound as of a rushing mighty wind**. It was the sound as of a violent blowing, borne onward, which accompanied the descent of the Holy Spirit. To treat this as a natural phænomenon,—even supposing that phænomenon

miraculously produced, as the earthquake at the crucifixion,—is contrary to the text, which does not describe it as *a sound of a rushing mighty wind*, but *a sound as of a rushing mighty wind*. It was the *chosen vehicle* by which the Holy Spirit was manifested to their sense of hearing, as by the tongues of fire to their sense of seeing.

it filled all the house] Certainly Luke would not have used this word of a *chamber in the Temple*, or of the *Temple itself*, without further explanation. Our Lord, it is true, calls the Temple “*your house*,” Matt. xxiii. 38,—and Josephus informs us that Solomon’s Temple was furnished with thirty small *houses* (or rooms), and that over these were other *houses*; but to suppose either usage here, seems to me very far-fetched and unnatural,

3. cloven tongues like as of fire] They were *not of fire*, as not possessing the burning power of fire, but only as *it were of fire*, in appearance like that element.

it sat, viz. *the appearance*; not *the Spirit*, nor *the tongue*, but the *appearance* described in the preceding clause. I understand the word **sat** as usually interpreted, **lighted on their heads**. This also was no effect of natural cause, either ordinarily or extraordinarily employed: see on ver. 2.

4.] On the word **all**, Chrysostom says, “The Evangelist would not have said *all*, the Apostles being there, had not the rest also been partakers.”

began to speak with other tongues] There can be no question in any unprejudiced mind, that the fact which this narrative sets before us is, that the disciples began to *speak in VARIOUS LANGUAGES*, viz. *the languages of the nations below enumerated, and perhaps others*. All attempts to evade this are connected with some forcing of the text, or some far-fetched and indefensible explanation. This then being laid down, several important questions arise, and we are surrounded by various difficulties. (1) Was this speaking in various languages a gift

bestowed on the disciples for their use afterwards, or was it a *mere sign*, their utterance being only us they were mouth-pieces of the Holy Spirit? *The latter seems certainly to have been the case*. It appears on our narrative, **even as the Spirit gave them utterance**. But, it may be objected, in that case they would not themselves understand what they said. I answer, that we infer *this very fact* from 1 Cor. xiv.; that the speaking with tongues was often found, *where none could interpret what was said*. And besides, it would appear from Peter’s speech, that such, or something approaching to it, was the case in this instance. He makes no allusion to the *things said* by those who spoke with tongues; the *hearers alone* speak of their declaring the *wonderful works of God*. So that it would seem that here, as on other occasions (1 Cor. xiv. 22), tongues were for a sign, not to those that believe, but to those that believe not. If the first supposition be made, that the gift of speaking in various languages was bestowed on the disciples *for their after-use in preaching the Gospel*, we are, I think, running counter to the whole course of Scripture

and the evidence of the early fathers on the subject. There is *no trace whatever* of such a power being possessed or exercised by the Apostles (see ch. xiv. 11, 14) or by those who followed them. I believe, therefore, the event related in our text to have

been a sudden and powerful inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which the disciples uttered, not of their own minds, but as mouth-pieces of the Spirit, the praises of God in various languages, hitherto, and possibly at the time itself, unknown to them. (2) How is this “speaking with other tongues” related to the “speaking with tongues” (or, “with a tongue”) afterwards spoken of by St. Paul? I answer, that they are *one and the same thing*. See this further proved in notes on 1 Cor. xiv. Meantime I may remark, that the two are inseparably connected by the following links,—ch. x. 46, xi. 15,—xix. 6,—in which last we have the same *juxta-position* of *speaking with tongues* and *prophesying* as afterwards in 1 Cor. xiv. 1–5 ff. (3) *Who were those that partook of this gift?* I answer, the *whole assembly* of believers, from Peter’s application of the prophecy, vv. 16 ff. It was precisely the case supposed in 1 Cor. xiv. 23. The unlearned and unbelievers of that passage were represented by the **others** of our ver. 13, who pronounced them to be drunken, (4) I would not conceal the difficulty which our minds find in conceiving a person supernaturally endowed with the power of speaking, *ordinarily and consciously*, a language which he has never learned. But there is to my mind *no such difficulty*, in conceiving a man to be moved to utterance of sounds *dictated by the Holy Spirit*. And the fact is clearly laid down by St. Paul, that the gift of *speaking in tongues*, and that of *interpreting*, were *wholly distinct*. So that the above difficulty finds no place here, nor even in the case of a person *both speaking and interpreting*: see 1 Cor. xiv. 13.—On the question whether the speaking was necessarily *always* in a foreign tongue, we have no data to guide us: it would seem that it *was*; but the conditions would not *absolutely* exclude rhapsodical and unintelligible utterance. Only there is this objection to it: clearly, languages *were spoken* on this occasion,—and we have no reason to believe that there were two distinct kinds of the gift. (5) It would be quite beyond the limits of a note to give any adequate history of the explanations of the passage. A very short summary must suffice. (a) The idea of a gift of *speaking in various languages* having been conferred *for the dissemination of the Gospel*, appears not to have originated, until the *gift of tongues* itself had some time disappeared from the Church. Chrysostom adopts it, and the great majority of the Fathers and expositors. (b) Some, both in ancient and in modern times, have supposed that the miracle consisted in the multitude *hearing*

in various languages that which the believers spoke in their native tongue: that *one language was spoken, but many were heard*. To this it may be replied, as is done by Gregory Nazianzen, that “thus the miracle would be wrought, not on the speakers, but on the hearers.” This view, besides, would make a distinction between this instance of the gift and those subsequently related, which we have seen does not exist. On the courses taken by the modern German expositors, see note in my Greek Test.

even as (i. e. ‘*in such measure and manner in each case as*’) **the Spirit granted to them to speak** (bestowed on them utterance)] The words rendered **gave them utterance** have been supposed here to imply that they uttered short ejaculatory sentences of praise. But this seems to be unfounded: and our word to *utter*, to *speak out*, seems exactly to render it. Their utterance was none of their own, but the simple gift and inspiration of the Holy Spirit: see above.

5.] De Wette maintains that these **dwellers at Jerusalem** cannot have been persons sojourning for the sake of the feast, but **residents**: but see above on ver. 1. I see no objection to including *both residents and sojourners* in the term, which only specifies their *then* residence.

devout men] Not in reference to their having come up to the feast, nor to their dwelling from religious motives at Jerusalem, but stated as imparting a character and interest to what follows. They were not merely vain and curious listeners, but men of piety and weight.

out of every nation under heaven] Not perhaps used so much *hyperbolically*, as with reference to the significance of the whole event. As they were samples each of their different people, so collectively they represented all the nations of the world, who should hear afterwards in their own tongues the wonderful works of God.

6.] Whatever **this sound** (literally, **voice**) may mean, one thing is clear,—that it *cannot* mean, ‘*this rumour*’ (‘*when this was noised abroad*,’ A.V.): which would be unexampled. We have then to choose between two things to which the word **voice**, or **sound**, might refer:—(1) the “*sound as of a mighty rushing wind*” of ver. 2, which would hardly be used of a speaking which was *still going on* when the multitude assembled;—and (2) *the speaking with tongues* of ver. 4. To this reference, besides the objection just stated, there is also another, that the voices of a number of men, especially when diverse as in this case, would not be indicated by the singular number, **voice**, but by **voices**: comp. St. Luke’s own usage, even when the voices cried out *the same thing*, Luke xxiii. 23, “They were instant with loud *voices*, requiring that he might be crucified. And the *voices* of them and of the chief priests prevailed.” And when he uses the singular, he explains it, as in ch. xix. 34, “All with one voice... cried out.” So that we may safely decide for the *former reference*. The *noise of the rushing mighty wind* was heard over all the neighbourhood, probably over all Jerusalem.

the multitude] including the scoffers of ver. 13, as well as the pious strangers: but these latter only are here regarded in the description that they **were confounded**, and that **every man heard**&c. On these latter words, see above on ver. 4. Each one heard **them speaking**—i. e. either *various disciples speaking various tongues, each in some one only*: or *the same persons speaking now one, now another, tongue*. The former is more probable, although the latter seems to agree with some expressions in 1 Cor. xiv., e.g. ver. 18.

were confounded] The same word, both in the LXX and in our English version, is used in Gen. xi. 9.

7.] They were not, literally, *all* Galilæans; but certainly the greater part were so, and all the Apostles and leading persons, who would probably be the prominent speakers.

8-11.] As regards the *catalogue* here given,—of course it cannot: have been thus delivered as *part of a speech by any hearer on the occasion*, but is inserted into a speech expressing the general sense of what was said, and put, according to the usage of all narrative, into the mouths of all. The words **in our own tongue** (literally, *dialect*), **wherein we were born** are very decisive as to the nature of the miracle. The hearers could not have thus spoken, had they been *spiritually uplifted* into the comprehension of some *ecstatic language* spoken by the disciples. *They* were not spiritually acted on at all, but *spoke the matter of fact*: they were surprised at each recognizing, so far from his country, and in the mouths of Galilæans, his own native tongue.

9. Parthians] The catalogue proceeds from the N.E. to the W. and S. Mede notices, that it follows the order of the three great dispersions of the Jews, the Chaldæan, Asyrian, and Egyptian.

Medes] Media, W. of Parthia and Hyreania, S. of the Caspian sea, E. of Armenia, N. of Persia.

Elamites] in pure Greek, Elymæans, inhabitants of Elam or Elymais, a Semitic people (Gen. x. 22). Elam is mentioned in connexion with Babylon, Gen. xiv. 1; with Media, Isa. xxi. 2; Jer. xxv. 25; with, or as part of, Assyria, Ezek. xxxii. 24; Isa. xxii. 6; as a province of Persia, Ezra iv. 9; as the province in which Susan was situated, Dan. viii. 2. According to Josephus, the Elamæans were the progenitors of the Persians. We find scattered hordes under this name far to the north, and even on the Orontes near the Caspian.

Mesopotamia] the well-known district between the Euphrates and Tigris, so called merely as distinguishing its geographical position, between the rivers (so the word imports in Greek): it never formed a state. The name does not appear to be older than the Macedonian conquests. The word is used by the LXX and A.V. in Gen. xxiv. 10 to express the Hebrew “*Aram Naharaim*,” *Aram of the two rivers*.

Judæa] I can see no difficulty in Judæa being here mentioned. ‘The catalogue does not proceed by *languages*, but by territorial division; and Judæa lies immediately S. of its path from Mesopotamia to Cappadocia. It is not Jews by birth and domicile, but **devout men** who are spoken of; the **dwellers in Judæa** settled in Judæa. And even if born Jews were meant, doubtless they also would find a place among those who heard in their mother tongue the wonderful works of God.

Cappadocia] At this time (since the year of Rome 770) a Roman province embracing Cappadocia proper and Armenia minor.

Pontus] the former kingdom of Mithridates, lying along the S. coast of the Euxine (whence its name, from the Pontus Euxinus, the Euxine Sea) from the river Halys to Colehis and Armenia, and separated by mountains from Cappadocia on the S. It was at this time divided into petty principalities under Roman protection, but subsequently became a province under Nero.

Asia] i.e. here *Asia proper*, or rather the W. division of it, as described by Pliny, as bounded on the E. by Phrygia and Lycaonia, on the W. by the Ægean, on the S. by the Egyptian sea, on the N. by Paphlagonia. Ephesus was its chief city. See ch. xvi. 6, where the same appears to be intended.

10. Phrygia] It was at this time part of the Roman province of Asia.

Pamphylia] a small district, extending along the coast from Olbia, or Phaselis, to Ptolemais. It was a separate tributary district: we find it at one time classed with Galatia, and ruled by the same person.

Egypt] Having enumerated the principal districts of Asia Minor, the catalogue passes (see above on the arrangement, ver. 9) to Egypt, a well-known habitation of Jews, Two-fifths of the population of Alexandria consisted of them, and they had an Ethnarch, or governor, of their own.

the parts of Libya about Cyrene] By this expression is probably meant Pentapolis, where Josephus, quoting from Strabo, testifies to the existence of very many Jews,—amounting in Cyrene to a fourth part of the whole population. The Cyrenian Jews were so numerous in Jerusalem, that they had a special synagogue (see ch. vi. 9). Several were Christian converts: see ch. xi. 20; xiii. 1.

Roman sojourners (so *literally*)] ‘The Roman Jews dwelling (or then being) in Jerusalem.’

Jews and proselytes] This refers more naturally to the whole of the past catalogue, than merely to the Roman Jews. It does not take up a new designation, but expresses the classes or divisions of those which have gone before.

11. Cretans and Arabians] These words would seem as if they should precede the last.

13. Others] Probably native Jews, who did not understand the foreign languages. Meyer supposes,—persons previously hostile to Jesus and his disciples, and thus judging as in Luke vii. 34 they judged of Himself.

sweet wine] *Sweet wine*, not necessarily *new wine*: perhaps made of a remarkably sweet small grape, which is understood by the Jewish expositors to be meant in Gen. xl ix. 11; Isa. v. 2; Jer. ii. 21,—and is still found in Syria and Arabia. Suidas interprets it “that which oozes out of the grapes before they are pressed.”

14–36.] THE SPEECH OF PETER. “St. Luke gives us here the first sample of the preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles, with which the foundation of Christian preaching, as well as of the Church itself, appears to be closely connected. We discover already, in this first sermon, all the peculiarities of apostolic preaching. It contains no reflections nor deductions concerning the doctrine of Christ,—no proposition of new and unknown doctrines, but simply and entirely consists of the proclamation of *historical facts*. The Apostles appear here as the witnesses of that which they had seen: the Resurrection of Jesus forming the central point of their testimony. It is true, that in the after-development of the Church it was impossible to confine preaching to this historical announcement only: it gradually became invested with the additional office of building up believers in knowledge. But nevertheless, the simple testimony to the great works of God, as Peter here delivers it, should never be wanting in preaching to those whose hearts are not yet penetrated by the Word of Truth.” Olshausen. The discourse divides itself into two parts: 1. (vv. 14–21) ‘*This which you hear is not the effect of drunkenness, but is the promised outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh,*’—2. (vv. 22–36) ‘*which Spirit has been shed forth by Jesus, whom you crucified, but whom God hath exalted to be Lord and Christ.*’

14. with the eleven] Peter and the eleven come forward from the great body of believers. And he distinguishes (by the word “these” in ver. 15) not *himself* from the *eleven*, but *himself and the eleven* from the rest. De Wette concludes from this, that the Apostles *had not themselves spoken with tongues*, as being an inferior gift (1 Cor. xiv. 18 ff.); perhaps too rashly, for this view hardly accords with the word **all** which is the subject of the whole of ver. 4.

men of Judæa] the Jews, properly so called: native dwellers in Jerusalem.

all ye that dwell at Jerusalem] the sojourners (ver. 5) from other parts.

15.] these, see above.

the third hour of the day] the *first hour of prayer*: before which no pious Jew might eat or drink.—But perhaps we need not look further than the ordinary intent of such a defence—the improbability of intoxication at that hour of the morning. See Eccl. x. 16; Isa. v. 11; 2 Thess. v. 7.

16.] This prophecy is from the LXX, with very slight variations.

this is, i.e. ‘this is the fact, at which those words pointed.’ See a somewhat similar expression, Luke xxiv. 44.

17.] in the last days is an *exposition* of the words “*after these things*” in the LXX and Hebrew, referring it to the days of the Messiah, as Isa. ii. 2; Micah iv. 1, al. See also 2 Tim. iii. 1; Heb. i. 1. **saih God** does not occur in the verse of Joel, but at the beginning of the whole passage, ver. 12, and is supplied by Peter here.

18.] The Hebrew does not express the word **my** either time, but has, as in our English text, ‘*the servants and handmaids.*’ The words *and they shall prophesy* are not in the LXX nor in the Hebrew text.

19.] The words **above, signs, and beneath** are not in the LXX, nor in the Hebrew text.

blood, and fire,...] Not, ‘*bloodshed and wasting by fire*,’ as commonly interpreted:—not *devastations*, but **prodigies**, are foretold:—bloody and fiery appear:—pillars of smoke, as in the Hebrew.

20.] See Matt. 29.

the... day of the Lord] Not *the first coming of Christ*,—which interpretation would run counter to the whole tenor of the Apostle’s application of the prophecy but clearly, *His second coming*: regarded in prophetic language as following close upon

the outpouring of the Spirit, because it is the *next great event* in the divine arrangements.—The Apostles probably expected this coming very soon (see note on Rom. xiii. 11); but this did not at all affect the accuracy of their expressions respecting it. Their days witnessed the Pentecostal effusion, which was *the beginning of the signs of the end*: then follows the period, KNOWN TO THE FATHER ONLY, of waiting—the Church for her Lord,—the Lord Himself till all things shall have been put under His feet,—and then *the signs shall be renewed, and the day of the Lord shall come*. Meantime, and in the midst of these signs, the covenant of the spiritual dispensation is, ver. 21—‘*Whosoever* shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.’ The gates of God’s mercy are thrown open in Christ to all people:—no barrier is placed,—*no union with any external association or succession required*: the promise is to *individuals*, AS *individuals*: **whosoever**: which individual universality, though here, by the nature of the circumstances, spoken within the limits of the outward Israel, is afterwards as expressly asserted of Jew and Gentile, Rom. i. 17, where see note.

22. Ye men of Israel] This address binds all the hearers in *one term*, and that one reminds them of their covenant relation with God: comp. “*all the house of Israel*,” ver. 36.

of Nazareth] This title does not here seem to be emphatically used by way of contrast to what follows, as some have thought, but only as the ordinary appellation of Jesus by the Jews, see John xviii. 5, 7; ch. xxii. 8; xxvi. 9.

The words **of (by) God**, belong to **approved**, and denote the source whence the proof came. **approved** must be taken in its fuller and stricter meaning: viz. as importing,—**shewn to be** that which He claimed to be. The connexion of the passage is, that the Man Jesus of Nazareth was *by God* demonstrated, *by God* wrought in among you, *by God’s counsel* delivered to death, *by God* raised up (which raising up is argued on till ver. 32, then taken up again), *by God* (ver. 36), finally, made Lord and Christ. This was the process of argument then with the Jews,—proceeding on the identity of a man whom they had seen and known,—and then mounting up from His works and His death and His resurrection, to *His glorification*,—all THE PURPOSE AND DOING OF GOD.

which God did by him] This is not, as De Wette characterizes it, *a low view of the miracles wrought by Jesus*, nor is it inconsistent with John ii. 11; but it is in strict accordance with the progress of our Lord through humiliation to glory, and with His own words in that very Gospel (v. 19), which is devoted to the great subject, *the manifestation, by the Father, of the glory of the Son*. This side of the subject is here especially dwelt on in argument with these Jews, to exhibit (see above) the whole course of Jesus of Nazareth, as the *ordinance and doing of THE GOD OF ISRAEL*.

23. delivered] *by whom*, is not said, but was supplied by the hearers, The counsel and foreknowledge of God are not to be joined as in the A.V. to “*delivered*,” with “*by*,” as if they were the *agents*—the connexion in the original is that of *accordance and appointment*, not of agency. The same connexion is expressed in ch. xv. by “*after the manner of Moses*.” See 2 Pet. i. 21 and note.

by the hand of lawless men] viz. of the Roman soldiers. The same word is used by St. Paul to express those without law, to whom he became as without law, 1 Cor. ix. 21.

The **counsel** and **foreknowledge** of God are not the same: the former designates His Eternal Plan, by which He has arranged all things (hence the **determinate** counsel)—the latter, the **omniscience**, by which every part of this plan is foreseen and unforgotten by Him.

nailed up] The harshness and unworthiness of the deed are strongly set forth by a word expressing the mechanical act merely, **nailed up**, as in contrast with the former clause, in which the dignity and divine mission of Jesus are set forth.—Peter lays the charge on the multitude, *use they abetted their rulers*,—see ch. iii. 17, where this is fully expressed: not for the farfetched reason given by Olshausen, that ‘all mankind were in fact guilty of the death of Jesus:’ in which case, as Meyer well observes, Peter must have said ‘*we*,’ not ‘*you*.’

24.] On the difficulty, and probable account to be given of the expression **having loosed** the pains of death, see note in my Greek Test. They cannot well be explained to the English reader.

The assertion, **it was not possible that he should be holden of it**, depends for its proof on the “*For*” which follows.

25.] The xvith Psalm was not by the Rabbis applied to the Messiah: but Peter here proves to them that, if it is to be true in its highest and proper meaning of any one, it must be of Him. We are met at every turn by the shallow objections of the Rationalists, who seem incapable of comprehending the principle on which the sayings of David respecting himself are referred to Christ. To say, with De Wette, that Peter’s proof lies not in any historical but only in an *ideal* meaning of the Psalm, is *entirely beside the subject*. To interpret the sayings of David (or indeed those of any one else) ‘historically,’ i.e. *solely as referring to the occasion which gave rise to them*, and having *no wider reference*, would be to establish a canon of interpretation wholly counter to the common sense of mankind. Every one, placed in any given position, when speaking of

himself as in that position, speaks what will refer to others similarly situated, and most pointedly to any one who shall in any especial and pre-eminent way stand in that position. Applying even this *common rule* to David's sayings, the applicability of them to Christ, will be legitimized—but how much more, when we take into account the *whole circumstances of David's theocratic position, as the prophetic representative and type of*

Christ. Whether the Messiah were *present or not to the mind of the Psalmist*, is of very little import: in some cases He plainly *was*: in others, as here, David's words, spoken of himself and his circumstances, could only be in their highest and literal sense true of the *great Son of David* who was to come. David often spoke *concerning himself*: but THE SPIRIT WHO SPOKE IN DAVID, *concerning Christ*. The citation is almost word for word according to the LXX version, differing from the Hebrew original as noticed below.

that I may not be moved] In the Hebrew, and English Bible, this is, '*I shall not be moved.*'

26. my tongue] In the Hebrew, and English Bible, '*my glory:*' so in Ps. cviii. 1, where our prayer-book version renders "I will give praise with the best member that I have." Compare also Ps. lvii. 8.

28.] Thou hast made known: in the Hebrew, and English Bible, '*Thou wilt make known.*'

thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance is in the Hebrew, and English Bible, "*In (Heb. with) thy presence is fulness of joy.*" These two last clauses refer to the Resurrection and the Ascension respectively.

29. Brethren (literally "*Men, brethren*")] He implies, 'I am your brother, an Israelite, and therefore would not speak with disrespect of David' He prepares the way for the apologetic sentence which follows.

The title 'Patriarch' is *only here* applied to *David* as the progenitor of the kingly race:—Abraham and the sons of Jacob are so called in ch. vii. 8, 9, and in Heb. vii. 4. In the LXX, the word is used of chief men, and heads of families, with the exception of 2 Chron. xxiii. 20, where it represents "captains of hundreds." We learn from 1 Kings ii. 10, and Neh. iii. 16, that David was buried at Jerusalem, in the city of David, i.e. the stronghold of Zion, 2 Sam. v. 7.—Josephus gives an account of the high priest, Hyreanus, when besieged by Antiochus Eusebes,—and afterwards King Herod, opening the tomb and taking treasure from it. Dio Cassius mentions, among the prodigies which preceded Hadrian's war, that the tomb of Solomon (the same with that of David) fell down. Jerome mentions that the tomb of David was visited in his time; i.e. at the end of the fourth century.

30.] a prophet, iv the stricter sense, *a foreteller of future events* by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. **knowing that God had sworn]** See 2 Sam. vii. 12. The words in this case are not cited from the LXX, but rendered from the Hebrew.

31.] The term **seeing this before** distinctly asserts the prophetic consciousness of David in the composition of this Psalm. But of what sort that prophetic consciousness was, may be gathered from this same Apostle, 1 Pet. i. 10–12: that it was not a *distinct knowledge* of the events which the prophets foretold, but only a conscious reference in their minds to the great promises of the covenant, in the expression of which they were guided by the Holy Spirit of prophecy to say things pregnant with meaning not patent to themselves but to us.

32.] From ver. 25, the Apostle has been employed in substantiating the Resurrection as the *act of God announced by prophecy* in old time: now the *historical fact* of its accomplishment is affirmed, and the vouchers for it produced.

The word rendered "*whereof*" may also mean of **whom**: and this latter is the more probable; see ch. i. 8. It includes the other rendering. 'We are His witnesses,' implies, 'We testify to this His work,' which work implied the Resurrection.

we all,—first, and most properly, *the Twelve*: but, secondarily, the whole body of believers, all of whom, at this time, had probably seen the Lord since His Resurrection; see 1 Cor. xv. 6.

33.] Peter now comes to the *Ascension*—the exaltation of Jesus to be, in the fullest sense, Lord and Christ.

being by the right hand of God exalted] Some would render, "*being exalted to the right hand of God.*" But plausible as this seems, it is inadmissible. The great end of this speech is to shew forth (see above) the GOD OF ISRAEL as the *Doer* of all these things.

the promise] Christ is said to have received from the Father the promise above cited from Joel, which is spoken of *His days*. This, and not of course the declarations made by Himself to the same effect, is here *referred*

to, though doubtless those were in Peter's mind. The very expression, **shed forth**, refers to "*I will pour out*" above, ver. 17 (in the original they are the same word).

this: i.e. 'this influence,' **this** merely; leaving to his hearers the inference that *this*, which they saw and heard, must be none other than the promised effusion of the Spirit.

which ye now see need not imply, as Dr. Burton thinks, that "there was some visible appearance, which the people saw as well as the apostles;"—very much of the *effect* of the descent of the Spirit would be *visible*,—the enthusiasm and gestures of the speakers, for instance; not, however, the tongues of flame,—for then none could have spoken as in ver. 13.

34.] This *exaltation* of Christ is also proved from prophecy—and from the same passage with which Jesus Himself had silenced His enemies. See notes, Matt. xxii. 41 ff. The connexion is, **For David himself is not ascended into the heavens, —as he would be, if the former prophecy applied to him: BUT he himself says**, removing all doubt on the subject, &c.

36.] THE CONCLUSION FROM ALL THAT HAS BEEN SAID. The Apostle says, **let all the house of Israel know**, because all hitherto said has gone upon proofs and sayings belonging to *Israel*, and to *all* Israel. In the words **God hath made**, we have as before, the ground-tone of the whole discourse.

Lord, from ver. 34.

Christ, in the full and glorious sense in which that term was prophetically known. The same is expressed in ch. v. 31 by "*hath exalted*

[*to be*] *a Prince and a Saviour.*"—The final clause sets in the strongest and plainest light the fact to which the discourse testifies—ending with **whom ye crucified**,—the remembrance most likely to carry compunction to their hearts. "In the close of his discourse, he again reproaches them with His crucifixion, that they may be touched with the greater compunction of conscience, and may be eager to seek the remedy for their sin." Calvin. Bengel calls this "the sting at the end" of the discourse.

37-41.] EFFECT OF THE DISCOURSE.

37.] The compunction arose from the thought that they had rejected and crucified Him who was now so powerful, and under whose feet they, as enemies, would be crushed.—"St. Luke gives us the fruit of the discourse, that we may know that the power of the Spirit was put forth, not only in the diversity of tongues, but also in the hearts of the hearers." Calvin.

38. Repent] The word imports *change of mind*: here, change from thinking Jesus an impostor, and scorning Him as one crucified, to being baptized in His name, and looking to Him for remission of sins, and the gift of the Spirit.—The miserable absurdity of rendering this word by '*do penance*,'—so the Rheims (Roman-Catholic) Version,—or understanding it as referring to a *course of external rites*, is well exposed by this passage—in which the *internal change of heart and purpose* is insisted on, to be testified by admission into the number of Christ's followers.

be baptized every one of you] Here, on the day of Pentecost, we have the first mention and administration of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. Before, there had been the *baptism of repentance* for the remission of sins, by John, Luke iii. 3; but now we have the important addition, **in (or, on) the name of Jesus Christ, —in the Name**—i. e. *on the confession* of that which the Name implies, and *into the benefits and blessings* which the Name implies.—The Apostles and first believers were *not thus baptized*, because, ch. i. 5, they had received the BAPTISM BY THE HOLY GHOST, the *thing signified*, which superseded that by water, the *outward and visible sign*.—The *result* of the baptism to which he here exhorts them, preceded by repentance and accompanied by faith in the forgiveness of sins in Christ, would be, the *receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit*.

39.] your children, viz. as included in the prophecy cited ver. 17, **your little ones**: not, as in ch. xiii. 32, '*your descendants*', which would be understood by any Jew to be *necessarily implied*. Thus we have a providential recognition of Infant Baptism, at the very founding of the Christian Church.

to all that are afar off] i.e. **to the Gentiles**; see Eph. ii. 13. There is no difficulty whatever in this interpretation. The Apostles *always expected* the conversion of the Gentiles, as did every pious Jew who believed in the Scriptures. It was their conversion as *Gentiles*, which yet to be revealed to Peter. It is surprising to see Commentators finding a difficulty where all is so plain. The very expression, **as many as the Lord our God shall call**, shews in what sense Peter understood **those afar off**; not *all*, but as many as the Lord our God shall summon, to *approach to Him, —bring near, —which, in his present understanding of the words*, must import—*by becoming one of the chosen people, and conforming to their legal observances*.

40.] The words cited appear to be the concluding and inclusive summary of Peter's many exhortations, not only their general

sense: just as if ver. 36 had been given as the representative of his whole speech above.

The Apostle's command is improperly rendered in A.V. 'save yourselves' it is strictly passive,—**be saved**,—'let: us save you'—'let God by us save you.' In saying **this crooked generation**, St. Peter alludes to Deut. xxxii. 5.

41.] This *first baptism of regeneration* is important on many accounts in the history of the Christian Church. It presents us with two remarkable features: (1) It was conferred, *on the profession of repentance, and faith in Jesus as the Christ*. There was *no instruction in doctrine* as yet. The infancy of the Church in this respect corresponded to the infancy of the individual mind; the simplicity of faith came first,—the ripeness of knowledge followed. Neander well observes that, among such a multitude, admitted by a confession which allowed of so wide an interpretation, were probably many persons who brought into the church the seeds of that Judaizing form of Christianity which afterwards proved so hostile to the true faith; while others, more deeply touched by the Holy Spirit, followed humbly the unfolding of that teaching by which He perfected the apostolic age in the doctrine of Christ. (2) Almost without doubt, this first baptism must have been administered, as that of the first Gentile converts was (see ch. x. 47, and note), by *affusion or sprinkling, not by immersion*. The immersion of 3000 persons, in a city so sparingly furnished with water as Jerusalem, is equally inconceivable with a procession beyond the walls to the Kedron, or to Siloam, for that purpose.

42-47.] DESCRIPTION OF THE LIFE AND HABITS OF THE FIRST BELIEVERS, This description *anticipates*; embracing a period extending beyond the next chapter. 'This is plain from ver. 43: for the miracle related in the next chapter was evidently the first which attracted any public attention: vv. 44, 45, again, are taken up anew at the end of chap. iv., where we have a very similar description, evidently applying to the same period.

42.] the apostles' doctrine: compare Matt. xxviii. 20.

and in community] The living together as one family, and having things in common. It is no objection to this meaning, that the fact is *repeated* below, in ver. 45: for so is the *breaking of bread* in ver. 46, and the continuing in prayers. The meaning given in the A.V., "*in the Apostles' fellowship*," is not objectionable in itself, but still I conceive bears no meaning defensible in construction. See further in my Greek Test.

breaking of bread] or, **the breaking of the bread.** This has been very variously explained. Chrysostom, "In mentioning **bread** here he seems to me to signify *fasting*, and ascetic life: for they partook, not of luxuries, but simply of subsistence" And similarly Bengel: "The breaking of bread, that is, a frugal diet, common among them all." But on ver. 46 he recognizes a covert allusion to the Eucharist.—The interpretation of the **breaking of bread** here as *the celebration of the Lord's supper* has been, both in ancient and modern times, the prevalent one. Chrysostom himself, in another place, interprets it, or at all events the whole phrase, of the Holy Communion. And the Romanist interpreters have gone so far as to ground an argument on the passage for the administration *in one kind only*. But,—referring for a fuller discussion of the whole matter to the notes on 1 Cor. x. xi,—barely to render **[the] breaking of [the] bread** to mean the breaking of bread in the Eucharist, as *now understood*, would be to violate historical truth. The Holy Communion was at first, and for some time, till abuses put an end to the practice, *inseparably connected with the agapæ, or love-feasts*, of the Christians, and *unknown as a separate ordinance*. To these agapæ, accompanied as they were at this time by the celebration of the Lord's supper, the "*breaking of [the] bread*" refers,—from the custom of the master of the feast breaking bread in asking a blessing; see ch. xxvii. 35, where the Eucharist is out of the question.

in prayers] or, in the prayers:—the ap-pointed times of prayer: see ver. 46. But it need not altogether exclude *prayer among themselves* as well, provided we do not assume any set times or forms of *Christian worship*, which certainly did not exist as yet. See notes on Rom. xiv. 5; Gal. iv. 10.

43.] every soul, designating generally *the multitude*,—those who were not joined to the infant Church, This is evident by the words "*all that believed*," when the church is again the subject, ver. 44. They were filled with fear, dread, reverential astonishment, at the effect produced by the outpouring of the Spirit. On the anticipatory character of the latter part of the verse, see general remarks at the beginning of this section.

44.] If it surprise us that so large a number should be continually assembled together (for such is certainly the sense of **were together**, not that they were joined by brotherly love, as Calvin)—we must remember that#large portion of the three thousand were persons who had come up to Jerusalem for the feast, and would by this time have returned to their homes.

and had all things (in) common] i.e. *no individual property, but one common stock*: see ch. iv. 32. That this was literally the case with the infant church at Jerusalem, is too plainly asserted in these passages to admit of a doubt. Some have supposed the expressions to indicate merely a partial community of goods: contrary to the express assertion of ch. iv. 32. In order, however, rightly to understand this community, we may remark:

(1) *it is only Sound in the church at Jerusalem.* No trace of its existence is discoverable anywhere else: on the contrary, St. Paul speaks constantly of the rich and the poor, see 1 Tim. vi. 17; Gal. ii. 10; 2 Cor. viii. 13, 15; ix. 6, 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2: also St. James, ii, 1–5; iv. 18.—And from the

practice having at first prevailed at Jerusalem, we may partly perhaps explain the great and constant poverty of that church, Rom. xv. 25, 26; 1 Cor. 1–3; 2 Cor. viii. also ch. xi. 30; xxiv. 17.—The non-establishment of this *community* elsewhere may have arisen from the inconveniences which were found to attend it in Jerusalem: see ch. vi, 1.

(2) This community of goods was not, even in Jerusalem, enforced by *rule*, evident from ch. v. 4 (xii. 12), but, originating in free-will, became perhaps an understood custom, still however in the power of any individual not to comply with,

(3) It was not (as Grotius thought) *borrowed from the sect of the Essenes*, with whom the Apostles, who certainly must have sanctioned this community, do not appear historically to have had any connexion.

But (4) it is much more probable that it arose from a *continuation*, and application to the now increased number of disciples, of the *community in which our Lord and His Apostles had lived* (see John xii, 6; xiii. 29) before.—The practice probably did not long continue even at Jerusalem; see Rom. xv. 26, note.

45.] possessions probably mean *landed property*, ch. v. 1—**goods**, any other possession; *moveables*, as distinguished from land.

parted them, i.e. **their price**; see a similar way of speaking, Matt. xxvi. 9.

46. continuing daily with one accord in the temple] See Luke xxiv. 53. The words need ‘not mean, though they *may* mean, that they were assembled in Solomon’s porch, as in ch. v. 12—but most probably, that they regularly kept the hours of prayer, ch. iii, 1.

at home] i.e. privately, as contrasted with their public frequenting of the temple: not, ‘*from house to house*,’ as A V.:—the words *may* bear that meaning (see Luke viii. 1), but no have no trace of such a practice, or holding the *agapæ*, or love-feasts, successively at different houses,—The breaking of bread took place at their house of meeting, wherever that was: cf. ch. xii, 12.

did eat their meat] i.e. they **partook of food**: viz. in these *agapæ*, or breakings of bread.

singleness of heart] The word rendered **singleness** originally implies *freedom from stones or rocks*, and thus *simplicity, evenness, purity*.

47.] praising God does not seem only to refer to *giving thanks at their partaking of food*, but to their general manner of conversation, including the recurrence of special ejaculations and songs of praise by the influence of the Spirit.

more that were in the way of salvation: compare the Apostle’s command, ver. 40;—**those who were being saved**. Nothing is implied by this word, to answer one way or the other the question, whether all these *were finally saved*. It is only asserted, that they were *in the way of salvation* when they were added to the Christian assembly. Doubtless, some of them might have been of the class alluded to Heb. x. 26–29: at least there is nothing in this word to preclude it.

Acts: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1–10.] HEALING OF A LAME MAN BY PETER AT THE GATE OF THE TEMPLE.

1. the ninth hour] See ch. x. 3, 30. There were three hours of prayer; those of the morning and evening sacrifice, i.e. the *third* and *ninth* hours, and *noon*.

2.] The word is literally, **was being carried**. They took him at the hours of prayer, and carried him back between times.

the gate... which is called Beautiful] The arrangement of the gates of the Temple is, from the notices which we now possess, very uncertain. Three entrances have been fixed on for the “*Beautiful Gate*:”

(1) The gate thus described by Josephus: “Nine of the gates were covered with gold and silver, as were also the posts and lintels. But one gate, that outside the temple itself, was of Corinthian brass, and far surpassed the silver and gilt gates in splendour.” This gate was also called *Nicanor’s gate*, and lay on the Eastern side of the Temple, towards the valley of

Kedron. Josephus mentions it again, as “the Eastern gate of the inner enclosure, which is of brass,” and gives a remarkable account of its size and weight: adding, that when, before the siege, it was discovered supernaturally opened in the night, “this to unskilled persons seemed a most favourable omen: for they said, that God had opened to them the gate of prosperity.” But some find a difficulty in this. The lame man, they say, would not he likely to have been admitted so far into the Temple (but it appears that lepers used to stand at Nicanor’s gate): and besides, he would have taken up his station naturally at an *outer gate*, where he might ask alms of *all* who entered. These conditions suit better

(2) the gate *Susan*; as does also the circumstance mentioned ver. 11, that the people ran together to *Solomon’s porch*; for this gate was op the east side of the court of the Gentiles, and close to Solomon’s porch. Another suitable circumstance was, that by this gate the market was held for sheep and cattle and other offerings, and therefore a greater crowd would be attracted.

(3) Others again refer the epithet “Beautiful” to two gates opening towards the city on the western side. So that the matter must remain in uncertainty.

4. Look on us] Calvin’s note is important: “Peter would not have thus spoken without being certain of the design of God; and his words command the man to look for some singular and unusual benefit. Yet we may enquire, whether the Apostles had the power of working miracles when it pleased them. I answer, that their ministration of divine influence: did not empower them to attempt any thing of their own will or motive, but the Lord wrought by them when He saw it expedient. Hence it arose, that they healed one, not all without distinction. So that in this, as in other things, they had God’s Spirit for their guide and direction. Therefore, Before Peter orders the lame man to rise, he cast and fixed his eyes on hin. That look was not without the express prompting of God’s Spirit, And hence it was that he spoke with such certainty of the waning miracle, The Apostle suramonel the lame man by this command to receive the gift of God: be for his part looked for nothing but an alms.”

6.] “There is no doubt, that it **was** the custom to give alms even to those who were not of the community of the faithful, but Peter then either had nothing about hisn, going as he was to the temple, or he could not bestow enough to help the poor man’s need. Notice the Apostles moderation in his discharge of so important a stewardship: compare ch. ii. 45 iv. 35.” Bengel. But perhaps it is more simple to conclude that Peter spoke here of *his own station and means* in life—‘I am no rich man, nor have I silver or gold to give thee,’

7.] “Thus also did Christ: He often cured by a word, often by an act; often also He put forth His hand, when the objects were weak in faith,—that the healing might not seem to take place of itself.” Chrysostom.

he took him by the right hand... his feet and ankle-bones received strength] Luke, the physician, had made himself acquainted with the peculiar kind of weakness, and described it accordingly.

8.] leaping up describes his first joyous liberation from his weakness: as soon as he felt himself strengthened, he leapt up, for joy. No suppositions need be made, such as that perhaps he was trying the experiment (Chrysostom): or that it was from ignorance how to walk (Bloomfield). His joy is quite sufficient to explain the gesture, and it is better to leave the narrative in its simplicity.

11–26.] THE DISCOURSE OF PETER THEREUPON.

11.] The lame man was **holding** Peter and John, physically: not spoken of mental adhesion, but of actual holding by the hand or arm, that he might not be separated from them in the crowd, but might testify to all, who his benefactors were.

the porch that is called Solomon’s] See John x. 23, note.

12.] answered, viz. to their expressions of astonishment implied in the following verse. See a similar usage of “*answered*,” Matt. xi. 25; ch. v. 8. This second discourse of St. Peter may be thus divided: *This is no work of ours, but of God for the glorifying of Jesus*, vv. 12, 13:—*whom ye denied and killed, but God hath raised up*, vv. 13–15:—*through whose name this man is made whole*, ver. 16:—*y e did it in ignorance, but God thereby fulfilled His counsel*, vv. 17, 18. *Exhortation to repent, that ye may be forgiven, and saved by this Jesus Christ at His coming*, vv. 19–21: *whose times have been the subject of prophecy from the first*, ver. 21. *Citations to prove this*, vv. 22–24: *its immediate application to the hearers, as Jews*, vv. 25, 26. There the discourse seems to be broken off, as ch. iv. 1 relates.

why marvel ye] Their error was not the wonder itself,—though even that would shew ignorance and weakness of faith, for it was truly no wonderful thing that had happened, viewed by a believer in Jesus,—but their wondering at the Apostles, as if they had done it by their own power. “Thus we see,” says Calvin, “that our wonder is wrong, when it stops at human agency.”

power,—such as magical craft, or any other supposed means of working miracles: **godliness, meritorious efficacy with God**, so as to have obtained this from Him *on our own account*. ‘The distinction is important:—‘holiness’ of the A.V., is not

expressive of the word, which bears in it the idea of *operative cultive* piety, rather than of *inherent character*.

13. The God of Abraham, &c.] “An appellation more frequent in the Acts than in the other books of the New Testament, and suitable to that period of time.” Bengel. “See,” says Chrysostom, “how he is always connecting God with their ancestors, that he may not seem to be introducing any new doctrine. Before (ch. ii.) he brought in the patriarch David, and now he introduces Abraham.”

glorified] Not, as A.V., ‘*hath glorified*,’ implying, by *thus honouring His name*: it is the historic past tense, **glorified**, viz. by His exaltation through death—see John xii. 23; xvii. 10.

Not ‘*His Son*’, but **His Servant**: *servant*, however, in that distinct and Messianic sense which the same expression bears in Isa. xl.—lxvi. The above meaning is adopted by all the best modern Commentators.

in the presence of Pilate, or, perhaps, **to the face of Pilate**. when he was determined to let him go: see Luke xxiii. 20; John xix. 4, 12.

14. the Holy One and the Just] Not only in the higher and divine sense present to St. Peter’s mind, but also by Pilate’s *own verdict*, and the testimony of the Jews’ consciences. ‘The sentence is full of antitheses: the “*Holy One and the Just*” contrasts with the *moral* impurity of “a murderer,”—“*the Prince of life*,” with the destruction of *life* implied in “*murderer*,”—while “*ye killed*” again stands in remarkable opposition to “*the Prince of life*? This last title given to our Lord implies, as the Vulgate renders it, “*the Author of life*.”—It is possible, that the words “*Prince of life*” may contain an allusion to the great miracle which was the immediate cause of the enmity of their rulers to Jesus. But of course St. Peter had a higher view in the title than merely this.

16.] The A.V. is right; **through**, or better, **on account of, faith in his name**. ‘The meaning, *for the sake of* (i. e. of awakening in you, and in the lame man himself) *faith in his name*, though grammatically justified, seems against the connexion with the Apostle’s profession, “*whereof we are witnesses*,” just before. It is evident to my mind, that the faith in His name, here spoken of, is the faith of these witnesses themselves. **His name** (the efficient cause), **by means of**, or **on account of** (our) **faith in his name** (the medium), &c.

yea, the faith which is [wrought] by him—not ‘*faith in Him*;’ which is an inadmissible rendering. Peter’s own words (1 Pet. i. 21) are remarkably parallel with, and the best interpreters of, this expression: “*who by Him do believe in God that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God*.” Some of the Commentators are anxious to bring in *the faith of the lame man himself* in this verse. Certainly it is according to analogy to suppose that *he had such faith* from and after the words of Peter:—but, as certainly, there is *no allusion to it in this verse*, and the thread of Peter’s discourse would be broken by any such, It is the firm belief in His name *on the part of us His witnesses*, of which he is here speaking, as the medium whereby His name (the Power of the great dignity to which He has been exalted, the authorship of life) had in this case worked.

17.] now, introducing a new consideration: see 2 Thess. ii. 6. Here it softens the severer charge of ver. 14: sometimes it intensifies, as ch. xxii. 16; 1 John ii. 28:—especially with “*behold*,” ch. xiii. 11; xx. 22. No meaning such as ‘*now that the real Messiahship of Him whom ye have slain is come to light*’ (Meyer) is admissible.

brethren, still softening his tone, and reminding them of their oneness of blood and covenant with the speaker.

through ignorance] There need be no difficulty in the application of the term “*ignorance*” to even the rulers of the Jews. It admits of all degrees—from the unlearned, who were implicitly led by others, and hated Him because others did,—up to the most learned of the scribes, who knew and rightly interpreted the Messianic prophecies, but from moral blindness, or perverted expectations, did not recognize them in our Lord. Even Caiaphas himself, of whom apparently this could least be said, may be brought under it in some measure: *even he could hardly have delivered over Jesus to Pilate with the full consciousness that He was the Messiah, and that he himself was accomplishing prophecy by so doing*. *Some degree of ignorance* there must have been in them all.

18. of all the prophets] See Luke xxiv. 27 and note. There is no hyperbole, nor adaptation to Jewish views. The assertion of the Rabbinical books, “All the prophets together prophesied not but of the days of the Messiah,” was *not merely a Jewish view, but the real truth*.—The prophets are here regarded as *one body*, actuated by *one Spirit*: and the sum of God’s purpose, shewn by their testimony, is, that **HIS CHRIST should suffer**.

19. that your sins may be blotted out] The faith implied in the command, “Be converted,” has for its aim, is necessarily (by God’s covenant, see John iii. 15, 18) accompanied by, the wiping out of sin.

that the times of refreshing may come] This passage has been variously rendered and explained. To deal first with the rendering,—that of the A.V.,—“when the times... shall come,”—is entirely unjustifiable, and alien from the meaning of the words. They can have but one sense,—that given in the marginal reading. This being so, *what are the times* (for such is the right reading, and not “times” only) of refreshment? What is refreshment? Clearly, from the above rendering, *some refreshment, future*, and which *their conversion was to bring about*. But hardly, from what has been said, refreshment *in their own hearts*, arising from their conversion: besides other objections, the following words, *may come from the presence of the Lord*, are not likely to have been used in that case. No other meaning, it seems to me, will suit the words, but that **of the times of refreshment**, the great season of joy and rest, which it was understood the coming of the Messiah in His glory was to bring with it. That this should be connected by the Apostle with the conversion of the Jewish people, was not only according to the plain inference from prophecy, but doubtless was one of those *things concerning the kingdom of God*, which he had been taught by his risen Master. The same connexion holds *even now*. If it be objected to this, that thus we have the conversion of the Jews regarded as *bringing about* the great times of refreshment, and those times consequently as *delayed by their non-conversion*, I answer, that, however true this may be in fact, the other is fully borne out by the manner of speaking in Scripture: the same objection might lie against the efficacy of *prayer*, See Gen. xix. 22; xxxii. 26; Mark vi. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 12.

from the presence of the Lord (the Father), who has reserved these *seasons* in His own power. When they arrive, it is by His decree, which goes forth from His presence. Compare the expression “*there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus*,” in Luke ii. 1.

20.] and that he may send (see above), *literally*,—not figuratively, by the Spirit:—even if the word **send** be nowhere else applied to the second coming of the Lord, there is no reason why it should not be here: the whole ground and standing-point of these two orations of Peter are peculiar, and the very mention of the ‘times of refreshment’ *proceeding forth from the presence of the Father* would naturally lead to the position here assigned to the Son, as one *sent* by the Father. See below, on ver. 26.

who was before appointed] before appointed, as apparently in ch. xxii. 14 (marginal reading).

unto you,—as your Messiah.

21. whom the heaven must receive] The words thus translated admit of a double rendering: (1) ‘*Whom the heaven must receive.*’ (2) ‘*Who must possess the heaven*’ Of these the former is in my view *decidedly preferable*, both as best suiting the sense, and as being the natural rendering, whereas the other is forced. The reason given by Bengel for rejecting the right rendering, “To be received, i.e. contained, shut into, the heaven, is a violent interpretation, and seems to imply, that the heaven is *greater than Christ*, and to detract from His exaltation above all heavens,” is best answered by himself, “Yet there is a sense, in which it may be said that the heaven *receives Christ*, viz. that it admits Him, as a throne its proper King;” only I would rather understand it *locally*, and recognize a parallel expression with that in ch. i., also *local*, “a cloud *received Him* out of their sight.” And so far from seeing in it any derogation from the Majesty of Christ, it seems to me admirably to set it forth: it behoves the *heaven* (which is *his*, obeying his will) to *receive Him* till the time appointed.

until] Not *during*, as the advocates of the *present spiritual sense* of the passage wish to render it, but **until**; see below. The key both to the construction and meaning here, is our Lord’s saying, Matt. xvii. 11, “*Elias truly first cometh, and shall restore all things.*” From this we see that **the restoration of all things** stands alone: and that **which does not belong to “all things.”** Next, what is this **restoration**? According to the usage of the word, it cannot be applied to the works of the Spirit in the hearts of men, but must be understood of the *glorious restoration of all things*, the **regeneration** (Matt. xix. 28), which, as Peter here says, is the theme of all the prophets from the beginning.—No objection can be raised to this from the meaning of the word **times**: see ch. vii. 17, and St. Peter’s own language, 1 Pet. i. 20, “*in the last times.*”—On the testimony of the prophets, see ver. 18 note.

22.] This citation is a free but faithful paraphrase of the text in Deuteronomy.—That the words, as spoken by Moses, seem to point to the whole line of prophets sent by God, is not any objection to their being applied to Christ, but rather necessitates, and entirely harmonizes with, that application. See the parable Matt. xxi. 33–41, And *none* of the whole prophetic body entirely answered to the words **like unto me, but Christ**. The Jews therefore rightly understood it (though not always consistent in this, comp. John i. 21 with vi. 14) of the Messiah.

24.] See ver. 18, note.—St. Peter’s aim is to shew the unanimity of *all the prophets in speaking of these times*.—Samuel is named, more as being the *first great prophet after Moses*, than as bearing any part in this testimony. The prophetic period of which David was the chief prophet, *began in Samuel*.

these days] i.e. these days now present, not the times of restoration, as some understand: which would require “*those days.*” ‘*These days*’ are, in fact, *connected with* the times of restoration, as belonging to the same dispensation and leading on to

them; and thus the Apostle identifies the *then time* with this preparation for and expectation of those glories: but to make “*these days*” *identical* with the *times of refreshing* and the *times of restitution*, is to make him contradict himself.

25.] He applies this to *them* as being inheritors of the promises. They were descendants, according to the flesh, and fellow-partakers, according to the spirit.—For a full comment on this promise made to Abraham, see Gal. iii. 16.

26.] first: implying the offer to the Gentiles (but as yet, in Peter’s mind, only *by embracing Judaism*) afterwards: see ch. xiii. 46; Rom. i. 16.—It is strange how Olshausen can suppose that the Spirit in Peter overleapt the bounds of his subsequent prejudice with regard to the admission of the Gentiles:—*he never had any such prejudice*, but only against their admission uncircumcised, and *as Gentiles*.

raised up, not ‘*from the dead*:’ but as in ver. 22.

Again, not *His Son*, but **His Servant**: see note, ver. 13.

sent him, indefinite, of the sending in the flesh; it does not apply to the *present time*, but to God’s procedure in raising up His Servant Jesus, and His mission and ministry: and is distinct from the *sending* spoken of in ver. 20. This is also shewn by the present participle, **blessing you**, ingeniously, but not quite accurately rendered in the A.V. ‘*to bless you*’ He came **blessing you** (His coming was an act of blessing)—**in** (as the conditional element of the blessing)—**turning every one from your iniquities**: thus conferring on you the best of blessings. The word **blessing** is chosen in allusion to the terms of the prophecy, ver. 25. The application to the *present time* is made by inference:—‘*as that was His object then, so now*:’—but the discourse is unfinished.—It did not come to a final conclusion as in ch. ii. 36, because it was *interrupted by the apprehension of the Apostles*.

Acts: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1–4.] APPREHENSION AND IMPRISONMENT OF THE TWO APOSTLES.

1.] the priests, i.e. the officiating priests, as soon as they were released from their duties.—The **captain of the temple** was the chief officer of the Levitical guard of the temple. In 2 Macc. iii. 4, we hear of the **governor of the temple**, who appears to have been the same officer.

the Sadducees] see note on Matt. iii. 7. Perhaps *they* on this occasion had moved the guard and the priests to notice the matter: for the statement in the next verse of the offence given by preaching the *resurrection*, seems only to refer to *them*. Compare also ch. v. 17.

2.] in Jesus,—not, as A.V., ‘*through* Jesus, but **in the person** (or example) **of Jesus**, alleging Him as an example of that which the Sadducees denied: preaching by implication, inasmuch as one resurrection would imply that of all, the resurrection of the dead. We have a similar use of “*in*,” 1 Cor. iv. 6, where “*in us*” means, in the case of myself and Apollos. ‘*The resurrection through Jesus*’ does not appear on the present occasion to have formed part of their preaching.

3.] it was now eventide, perhaps, from their adjourning the case till the next day, the *second* evening, beginning with the twelfth hour: see Matt. xiv. 15, and note.

4. the number of the men] The Greek word for “*men*” here is that which signifies males as distinguished from females. But it does not appear whether we are to take this strictly as masculine, or more loosely, as if it were the more general term. Meyer thinks the former: Olshausen, that as yet only *men* attached themselves to the church (but see ch. i. 14): De Wette objects to the stricter that St. Luke does not so reckon, ch. ii. 4 (see however Luke ix. 14, and cf. the parallel place in Matthew): but leaves it undecided. The laxer use of this stricter term occurs Luke xi. 31, and James i. 20. In ch. v. 14, *men* and *women* both are mentioned as being added to the Lord.

5–12.] THE APOSTLES EXAMINED BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM. PETER’S SPEECH.

5. their rulers, &c.] i.e. the rulers&c. of the Jews; a construction frequently used where there can be little chance of mistaking to whom or what the pronoun refers.

The rulers, elders, and scribes together make up the *Sanhedrim*, or great council: see Matt. ii. 4; xxvi. 59; ch. v. 21.

6. at Jerusalem] Why is this specified? I believe it merely implies that the meeting was not held *in the temple*, but *in the city*.

On Annas and Caiaphas, both called high priests, Luke iii. 2,—see note there.

7.] **By** (literally, in) **what** (manner of) **power?** of what kind was the enabling cause, the element in which, as its condition, the deed was wrought?—**by** (in, see above) **what** (manner of) name, spoken as a word of power: see ch. iii. 6, 16.

this,—not the *teaching* (as some think),—nor *both the miracle and the teaching* (as others), but the *miracle*: and that only.

8.] **filled with the Holy Ghost**, i.e. specially, for the occasion.

10.] **whom ye crucified, whom God raised...** the copula (*and*, or *but*) is omitted, to make the contrast more striking.

11.] See Matt. xxi. 42, note.

13–18.] CONSULTATION AND SENTENCE OF THE SANHEDRIM.

13.] **having previously known**, i.e. they did not then perceive it for the first time; this is stated as the reason for their wonder: not as the A.V.

they recognized them; their astonishment setting them to think, and reminding them that they had seen these men with Jesus:—**that they (once) were with Jesus.**

18.] **in** (literally, **upon**) **the name of Jesus**; i.e. so as to make *that Name* the *subject* (basis) of their discoursing.

19–22.] THE APOSTLES' ANSWER AND DISMISSAL.

21.] **when they had further threatened them;**—i. e. with threats super-added to the inhibition of ver. 18.

finding no means] The difficulty with the Sanhedrim was, to find any means of punishing them which should not stir up the people.

22.] The circumstance of his being more than forty years old both gave notoriety to his person as having long resorted there, and made the miracle more notable, his malady being more confirmed.

23–31.] PRAYER OF THE CHURCH THEREUPON.

23.] **their own company**, i.e. the other Apostles, and possibly some others assembled with them. There is nothing in ver. 31 to mark that only the Apostles were present on this occasion.

24. **they lifted up their voice to God with one accord**] i.e. not, as Meyer supposes, literally all speaking together in a known formula of prayer, but led by some *one*, and all assenting; not “*their voices*,” but **their voice**: see note on ch. ii. 6.

thou art God, which hast made] It is an acknowledgment that it was the same God, who was now doing these things, that had beforetime prophesied them of Christ.

27.] The **for** implies an acknowledgment of the truth of God in the fulfilment of the prophecy: *Thou art the God who hast, &c., for* these events have happened accordingly.

The clause, **in this city**, which has been excluded from the text on account of its apparent redundancy, answers to the clause “*on his holy hill of Zion*,” Ps. ii, 6. See also Matt xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 33. The parts of this verse correspond accurately to those of the prophecy just quoted.

The appellation here given to our Lord is not “child,” but **Servant**, as before, ch. iii. 26. Jesus, *the Servant* of Jehovah, is the antitype and completion of David, and of all other servants of the Lord: what is said of them only partially and hyperbolically, is said literally and entirely of Him.

28.] There is an ellipsis in the thought between the verb **to do**, and its object **whatsoever, &c.**: “*to do* [as they thought, their own counsel; but really] *whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined*.”

thy hand and thy counsel] **thy hand** indicates the *Power*, **thy counsel** the *Wisdom of God*. The Wisdom decreed, the Hand performed.

31.] As the first outpouring of the Spirit, so this special one in answer to prayer, was testified by an outward and visible sign: but not by the *same* sign,—for that, first baptism by the Holy Ghost, the great fulfilment of the promise, was not to be repeated. It was on every ground probable that the token of the especial presence of God would be some phenomenon which would be *recognized as such by those present*. The idea was not derived from profane sources, as some would have us believe, but from the Scriptures: see Ps xxix. 8; Isa. ii. 19, 21; xiii. 13; Ezek. xxxviii. 19 (especially); Joel iii. 16; Hagg. ii. 6. 7.

they were all filled with a fresh and renewed outpouring.

32–37.] THE STATE OF THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME. This passage forms the conclusion of this division of the history, and the transition to ch. v.

32.] “Where faith reigns, it conciliates men’s minds so that all will the same thing. For hence comes discord, because we are not ruled by this divine spirit of Christ.” Calvin. On the community of goods, see note at ch. ii. 45. We have the view there taken strikingly confirmed here by the expressions used **No one called** (reckoned) **any thing of his goods** (which were still “*his goods*,” not alienated) **[to be] his own**, No one *called* his possessions his own: this shews, says Bengel, that he had not altogether in reality renounced the possession of them.

33.] The Apostles were the specially appointed witnesses of the Resurrection, ch. i. 22: and this their testimony they gave *with power*, i.e. with a special gift of the Holy Spirit to enforce and illustrate, to persuade and dispute on, those facts of which their own experience (see ver. 20) informed them. That the Spirit did not inspire them with unbroken uniformity in *matters of fact*, our present Gospels, the remnants to us of this very testimony, sufficiently witness. Nor was this necessary: each man reported what he had heard and seen;—and it was in the *manner* of delivering this report that the great power of the Spirit was shewn. See, on the whole subject, Introduction, ch. i. §iii. 5 ff.

great grace, i.e. from God: this is better than to understand it “*great favour*,” i.e. from the people, which would hardly be so absolutely designated.

34.] For gives a proof of God’s grace working in them, in that they imparted their goods to the poor: see especially 2 Cor. viii. 7.

the things that were sold] Literally, **the things which were being sold**:—the process of selling, as regarded the whole church, yet going on, though completed in individual cases.

35. at the apostles’ feet] This expression is to be literally taken. The Apostles probably sat upon a raised seat, on the step of which, at their feet, the money was laid, in token of reverence.

36.] Barnabas, in Hebrew “*the son of prophecy*,”—and the interpretation has been generally made good by taking the word rendered by the A.V. “*consolation*,” in the sense of *exhortation*: see ch. xi. 23.

a Levite] The Levites might possess land at all times within the precincts of the Leitical cities: such was the case, for example, in Jer. xxxii. 7. At the division of the kingdoms, the priests and Levites all resorted to Rehoboam in Judah (and Benjamin), 2 Chron. xi. 13; from that time probably, but certainly after the captivity, when the Mosaic division of the land was no longer accurately observed. The possession of land by Levites seems to have been allowed. The whole subject is involved in some uncertainty: compare Levit. xxv. 32 ff.; Num. xxxv. 1–8; Dent. xii. 12; xviii. 8, al.

of the country of Cyprus] For the state of©at this time, see notes on ch. xi. 19; 4–7,

Acts: Chapter 5

CHAP. V. 1–11.] THE HISTORY OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA. This incident, though naturally connected with the end of the last chapter, forms an important independent narrative.

1.] Ananias signifies in Hebrew,—*The cloud of God*, or *The mercy of God*.

Sapphira is probably a Greek name for the precious stone *sapphire*.—The crime of these two is well described by Meyer: ‘By the sale of their field, and the bringing in of the money, they in fact professed to give the *whole price* as a gift of brotherly love to the common stock: but their aim was to get for themselves the credit of holy love and zeal by *one portion* of the price, whereas they had selfishly kept back the other portion for themselves. They wished to serve *two masters*, but to appear to serve only One.’

3.] The question implies the power of resistance to Satan, and is equivalent to, **Why hast thou allowed Satan to fill, &c.?**

4.] **Whiles it remained, did it not remain** (so literally) **thine own?** i.e. was it not in thine absolute power? **and when sold, was it not** (i. e. the price of it) **in thine own power,** to do with it what seemed good to thee?

why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? literally, **put this thing in thine heart,** Dan. i. 8; Mal. ii. 2. Satan suggested the lie, which Ananias ought to have repelled; instead of that, *he put it in his heart*,—placed it there where the springs of action are, and it passed out into an act.

thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God] This mode of expression, **not... but...** is not always an absolute and exclusive negation and assertion, see Mark ix. 37; John xii. 44. But here it seems to be so, and to imply, ‘Thine attempt to deceive was not to deceive *us*, men; but to deceive the Holy Ghost,—God, abiding in His church, and in us its appointed superintendents.’ This verse is of weighty doctrinal import, as proving the Deity of the Holy Spirit; unless it be held, that the Holy Spirit whom (ver. 3) Ananias attempted to deceive, and God to whom he lied, are *different*. Bengel says, “This is the meaning: Ananias lied to God and His Spirit, not to men and Peter. Dare if thou canst, O Socinian, to say, he lied not to the Holy Ghost and to Peter, but to God.”

5.] The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira were beyond question *supernaturally inflicted* by Peter, speaking in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the only honest interpretation of the incident. Many, however, and among them even Neander, attempt to account for them on natural grounds,—from their *horror at detection, and at the solemn words of Peter*. But, in addition to all other objections against this (see on ver. 9.),—it would make man and wife *of the same temperament*, which would be very unlikely. We surely need not require any *justification* for this judicial sentence of the Apostle, filling as he did at this time the highest place in the church, and acting under the immediate prompting of the Holy Spirit. If such, however, be sought, we may remember that this was the first attempt made by Satan to obtain by hypocrisy, a footing among Christ’s flock: and that however, for wise reasons, this may since then have been permitted, it was absolutely necessary in the infancy of the church, that such attempt should be at once, and with severity, defeated. Bengel remarks: “That severity of punishment wage was inflicted on them in the body, *might* perhaps have been spared their souls.”

and great fear came...] “*They that heard these things*” can hardly be those *present*, who not only *heard*, but saw: the remark is anticipatory, and is in fact equivalent to that in ver 11.

6.] Were these **young men** a class *in the congregation* accustomed to perform such services,—or merely the younger men, from whom they would naturally be expected? Some maintain the former: some the latter. We can hardly assume, as yet, any such official distinctions in the congregation as would mark off younger men from the *elders*, which latter are first officially mentioned ch. xi. 30. Besides which, we have no such ecclesiastical class as *these younger men*. And the use of a different word in the original, “*the youths*,” in ver. 10, as applying to these same persons, seems to decide that, they were *merely the younger members* of the church, acting perhaps in accordance with Jewish custom,—perhaps also on some hint given by Peter.

wound him up] So Ezek. xxix. 5; Tobit xii. 13; Eccl. xxxviii. 16, **wrapped the body up**,—probably in their own mantles, taken off in preparing to carry him out. The context will not permit any more careful enfolding of the body to be understood.—The speedy burial of the dead, practised among the later Jews, was unknown in earlier times, see Gen. xxiii. It was grounded on Num. xix. 11 ff. The practice was to bury before sunset of the same day. The *immediate* burial in this case adds to the probability that the young men obeyed an intimation from the Apostle.

8.] **answered unto her**, perhaps *to her salutation*: but more probably to that which he knew to be her intent in entering in before him.

so much, naming the sum: or perhaps pointing to the money lying at his feet.

9.] To try the omniscience of the Spirit then visibly dwelling in the Apostles and the church, was, in the highest sense, *to tempt the Spirit of God*. It was a saying in their hearts ‘There is no Holy Spirit:’ and certainly approached very closely to a sin against the Holy Ghost. Peter characterizes the sin more solemnly this second time, because by the wife’s answer it was now proved to be no *individual lie* of a bad and covetous man, but a preconcerted scheme to deceive God.

the feet of them...] Not that Peter heard the tread of the young men outside (they were probably barefooted), but it is an expression common in the poetical or lively description of the Hebrews, and indeed of all nations (see Isa. lii. 7; Nah. i. 15; Rom. x. 15); making the member whereby the person acts, the actor. I take the words to mean, that the time was just at hand for their return: see James v. 9. The space of three hours was not too long: they would have to carry the corpse to the burying-ground at a considerable distance from the city, and when there, to dig a grave, and bury it.

shall carry thee out] This word, spoken *before her death*, decisively proves that death to have been not a *result* merely of her detection, but a judicial infliction.

10.] when they came in: not implying that they immediately entered, but leaving room for some interval of time: see above.

12–16.] PROGRESS OF THE FAITH; MIRACULOUS POWER, AND DIGNITY, OF THE APOSTLES.

12.] they were all, i.e. the Apostles only, not *all the Christians*. It does not follow from the word all referring to *all the believers* in ch. ii. 1 (see note there), that it necessarily refers to the same here also. The Apostles are *the subject of the paragraph*: and it is to set forth *their* unanimity and dignity that the description is given. They are represented as distinct from all others, believers and unbelievers (both which I take to be included under the term “*the rest*”): and the Jewish people itself magnified them. The further connexion see on ver. 14.

Solomon's porch] See ch. iii. 11; John x. 23, note.

13.] the rest: i.e. **all else**, whether believers or not: none dared to *join himself to*, as being one of, or equal to, them: *but* (so far was this from being the ease) **the very multitude magnified them**.

14.] And (these clauses are not parenthetical, but continue the description of the dignity of the Apostles) the result of this was, that **believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes of men and women**.

15.] This verse now takes up afresh the main subject of vv. 12 and 13, the glorification of the apostolic office, **insomuch that...** It is connected not only with the multitude magnifying them, but also with ver. 12.

into the streets] literally, **down [the] streets**, i.e. *in the line of the streets*.

the shadow of Peter] As the greatest, in pre-eminence and spiritual energizing, of the Apostles. Now especially was fulfilled to him the promise of Matt. xvi. 18 (see note there):—and even the shadow of the *Rock* (Isa. xxxii. 2, Heb., and E.V., spoken primarily of His divine Master) was sought for. We need find no stumbling-block in the fact of Peter's *shadow* having been believed to be the medium (or, as is surely implied, *having been* the medium) of working miracles. Cannot the ‘Creator Spirit’ work with any instruments, or with none, as pleases Him? And what is a hand or a voice, more than a shadow, except that the analogy of the ordinary instrument is a greater help to faith in the recipient? Where faith, as apparently here, did not need this help, the less likely medium was adopted.—See, on the whole, ch. xix. 12, and note: and remark that only in the case of our Lord (Luke viii. 46 and parallel places) and His two great Apostles in the New Test.,—and of Elisha in the Old Test., have we instances of this *healing virtue in the mere contact with or accessories of the person*. But what a fertile harvest of superstition and imposture has been made to spring out of these scanty examples!

16.] Observe, that the sense is, that ‘the multitude, &c., was coming together to Jerusalem, bringing, &c.,—and all such were healed:’ viz. when the next incident, which forms a contrast to this waxing prosperity of the Church, happened.

17–42.] IMPRISONMENT, MIRACULOUS LIBERATION, EXAMINATION BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM, AND SCOURGING OF THE APOSTLES.

17. the high priest] Annas,—ch. iv. 6, and note on Luke iii. 2.

rose up is not redundant, but implies being excited by the popularity of the Apostles, and on that account commencing a course of action hostile to them. “He thought he ought to be quiet no longer.” Bengel. ‘He was roused to action by what had been done.’ Chrysostom. To suppose that the High Priest ‘rose up’ *after a council* held is far-fetched, and against the following words, which point to the kindling zeal of men first stirred up to action.

they that were with him: (see ch. iv. 13; xix. 38; xxii. 9.)—Not *the members of the Sanhedrim*: but *the friends and kindred* (ch. iv. 6) *of the High Priest*: see ver. 21.

which is the sect of the Sadducees] which is implies more than **who were**:—the movement extended through *the whole sect*. On **the sect of the Sadducees**, see Matt. iii. 7, note. Josephus also shews that the family of Annas, if not he himself, were connected with the sect of the Sadducees. They (see ch. iv. 1, note) were the chief enemies of the Apostles, for teaching the resurrection.

20.] all the words of this life, an unusual expression, seems to refer to the peculiar nature of the enmity shewn towards them by the Sadducees, for preaching the resurrection unto life: as if it were said, “all the words of *this LIFE*,” which they call in question. Or perhaps the expression may import, that the religion of Jesus had its issue in life. A similar expression, “*the word*

of this salvation," occurs ch. xiii. 26. See also Rom. vii. 24. The deliverance, here granted to all the Apostles, was again vouchsafed to Peter in ch. xii., and is there related more in detail. It is there a minute touch of truth, that he should *mistake for a dream* (ver. 9) what he saw: having lain so long in prison, and his mind naturally dwelling on *this his former* miraculous liberation.

21.] at the break of day: see Luke xxiv. 1, margin.

The high priest came to the ordinary session-chamber in the Temple, on the south side of it, and therefore if the Apostles were teaching in *Solomon's porch* (ver. 12), not in their immediate vicinity. Perhaps the words, which imply that the summons was not issued till *after the arrival of the High Priest and his friends*, may point to a meeting of the Sanhedrim hurriedly and insufficiently called, for the purpose of 'packing' it against the Apostles. If so, they did not succeed, see ver. 40: perhaps on account of the arrival of some who had been listeners to the Apostles' preaching.

all the senate] Probably the *elders*, including perhaps some who were not members of the Sanhedrim: the well-known foes of Jesus and his doctrine. The expression, **the senate of the children of Israel**, common in the LXX, is perhaps translated from the form of words in which they were summoned.

24.] the priest, if genuine (and the varieties of reading seem to have arisen from the difficulty it has occasioned), must designate the *High Priest*; not that the word itself can bear the meaning (compare 1 Macc. xv. 1 and 2), but that the *context* points out *the priest* thus designated to be the *Iigh Priest*. On *the captain of the temple*, see note ch. iv. 1. He appears to have been summoned to meet the Sanhedrim, perhaps as the offence had taken place within his jurisdiction. But he was probably one of the *chief priests*. 'These latter were the *titular High Priests*, partly those who had served the office, partly the presidents of the twenty-four courses, partly the kindred of the High Priest (see Matt. ii. 4).

concerning them] i.e. 'concerning the Apostles', the persons mentioned in ver. 22; not '*these words*,' as would appear at first sight.

whereunto this would grow, i.e. **to what this would come**, is the correct translation of the original: not, as some have maintained, '*how this had come about*.' nor, '*what was the meaning of this*.'

26.] The clause, **lest they should have besn stoned**, depends upon "*brought them without violence*," not upon "*for they feared the people*."

23.] "They ought to have enquired first, How did ye escape? But as if nothing had happened, they ask them, saying&c." Chrysostom. "The same shyness of open allusion to the names or facts connected with Jesus and the spread of his doctrine may be traced in the words "*this name*," and "*this man's blood*," and is a strong mark of truth and circumstantiality—"The High Priest will not name Jesus: Peter names and celebrates Him." Bengel.

to bring this man's blood upon us] Not meaning that *divine vengeance* would come on them for the murder of Jesus; but with a stress on *us*—that the *people* would be incited to take vengeance on *them*, the Sanhedrim, for that murder. The preceding clause, "*ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine*," shews this to be their thought. Compare the pointed address of Peter to the Sanhedrim, ch. iv. 8–12, and the distinction between them and the people in iv. 21.—This being so, the resemblance between this expression and the imprecation of the people in Matt. xxvii. 25 must not be too closely pressed, though the coincidence is too striking to escape notice.

29.] Peter, by word of mouth; **the Apostles**, as a body, by *assent*, implied in *his own utterance* and *their silence*. There is no occasion to insert "*other*," as done in the A.V.—This defence of Peter divides itself into the propositions of an ordinary syllogism—(1) *The statement of the general truth that we must obey God rather than men*: (2) *The reduction of the present circumstances under that general truth*, as being the work of the God of their Fathers—shewn in his having raised and glorified Jesus, for a definite purpose, to give, &c.—(3) *The identification of themselves with the course of action marked out by the duty of obeying God rather than men...* in that they were bearing witness to God's work, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit given them as men obedient to God.—The whole is a *perfect model of concise and ready eloquence, and of unanswerable logical coherence*; and a notable fulfilment of the promise "it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak" (Matt. x. 19).

We ought to obey] Much stronger than their former saying in ch. iv. 19, "*whether it be right... to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye*,"—as their conduct, in *persisting after prohibition*, had been more marked and determined. That: was a mere '*listening to*' the proposition then made to them; this a course of deliberate action, chosen and entered on.

to obey God—opposed to the words **your doctrine** of the High Priest; and to his designation of our Lord as **this man**. In the background, there would be the command of the angel, ver. 20: but it is not alleged: the great duty of preaching the Gospel of

Christ is kept on its highest grounds.

30. The God of our fathers] Thus binding on Christ and his work to the *covenant* whereof all present were partakers.

ye, emphatic: answering to the emphatic “*upon us*” of the High Priest.

on a tree (or, beam of wood)] Compare the similar contrast in ch. iii. 14, 15. The manner of death is described thus barely and ignominiously, to waken compunction in the hearers, to whom the expression was well known as entailing curse and disgrace on the victim.

31.] with (not to) his right hand, as in ch. ii. 33, where see note. The great aim here, as there, is to set forth God as the DOER of all this.

a Prince and a Saviour, not, ‘*to be* a Prince and a Savior;’ but the words are the predicate of **Him—as a Prince and a Saviour.**

a Prince] as in ch. iii. 15, which see.

and a Saviour] Jesus was to be King and Captain of Israel, and *also their Saviour*, The two offices, though inseparably connected in fact, had each its separate meaning in Peter’s speech: *a Prince*—to whom you owe obedience—*a Saviour*, by whom you must be saved from your sins.

for to give, in his Kingly prerogative; repentance and remission of sins, to lead to salvation hy him as a *Saviour*.—The key to this part of the speech is Luke xxiv. 47–49, where we have, in our Lord’s command to them, the same conjunction ‘*of repentance and re-mission of sins*,’—and immediately follows, as here, “*ye are witnesses of these things*,” appointing them to that office which they were now discharging,—and, parallel with the mention of the Holy Ghost in our text, there follows there, “*and behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you*.” By conjoining the Holy Ghost, as a witness, with themselves, —they claim and assert the promise of John xv. 26, 27: see also the apostolic letter of ch. xv. 28. When we remember how much of the apostolic testimony was given in *writing*, as well as by word of mouth, this declaration of Peter becomes an important element for judging of the nature of that testimony also. See a very similar conjunction, 1 John v. 9.—*They* were God’s witnesses, in the things which they had seen and heard as men: the *Holy Ghost in them* was God’s Witness, in purifying and enlarging by His inspiration that their testimony to facts, and in unfolding, from (and as inseparable from) these witnessed facts,—*the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard*. And in the *Scripture THESE SAME TESTIMONIES* are conjoined; *that of the Apostles*, holy men under the guidance and reminiscence of the Holy Spirit, faithfully and honestly reporting those things which fall under human observation: and *that of God the Spirit Himself*, testifying, through them, those loftier things which no human experience can assure, nor human imagination compass.

32. things] literally, **words:** meaning, histories, things expressed in words: see note on Luke i. 4.

to them that obey him] He does not say, “*to us*,” which might make an unreal distinction between the Apostles and the then believers, and an implied exclusion of the hearers from this gift,—but generally, to *all that obey Him*, by this word recalling the opening of the speech, and binding all together. So that the sense of the whole is, ‘We are acting in obedience to God, and for the everlasting good of our common Israel: and otherwise we cannot do.’ And a soleinn invitation is implied ‘*Be ye obedient likewise*.’ It is remarkable that a similar word, “*were obedient to the faith*,” is used of the multitude of converted priests, ch. vi. 7.

33.] When they heard that, they were cut asunder (so literally: i.e. in heart).

34.] Gamaliel (see Num. i. 10; ii, 20) is generally, and not without probability, assumed to be identical with the celebrated Rabban Gamaliel, also entitled “*the old man*,” one of the seven, to whom, among their Rabbis, the Jews give this title Rabban, a wise and enlightened Pharisee, the son of Rabban Symeon (traditionally the Symeon of Luke ii, 25) and grandson of the famous Hillel. His name often appears in the Talmud, as an utterer of sayings quoted as authorities. Ile died eighteen years before the destruction of the city. He was the preceptor of St. Paul (ch. xxii. 3). Ecclesiastical tradition makes him become a Christian, and be baptized by Peter and John, and in the Clementine Recognitions, he is stated to have been at this time a Christian, but secretly. The Jewish accounts do not agree, which make him die a Pharisee, with much more probability. Nor is the least trace of a Christian leaning to be found in his speech: see below on ver. 39. And considering that he was a Pharisee, opposing the prevalent faction of Sadduceism in a matter where the Resurrection was called in question,—and a wise and enlightened man opposing furious and unreasoning zealots,—considering also, that when the *anti-pharisaical* element of Christianity was brought out in the acts and sayings of Stephen, his pupil Saul was found the foremost persecutor,—we should, I think, be slow to suspect him of any favouring of the Apostles *as followers of Jesus*. (See particulars respecting Gamaliel collected in Conybeare and Howson’s St. Paul, edn. 2, vol. i.p. 69, f.) He does not here appear as the president of the

Sanhedrim, but only as a member.

to put the apostles forth, i.e. to cause them to withdraw. They are recalled in ver. 40.

35.] The words **as touching these men** may be joined either with **take heed to yourselves**, or with **what ye intend to do**. The latter would give the more usual construction: and seems the more probable of the two.

36.] A great chronological difficulty arises here. Josephus relates, that when Cuspius Fadus was Procurator of Judæa, an impostor named Theudas persuaded a very great multitude to break up their households and follow him to the Jordan, in expectation that he would divide the river for them to go over. He then relates how Fadus sent a squadron of horse against him, killing many of his followers, and taking many prisoners, and bringing his head to Jerusalem. But this was in the reign of Claudius, not before the year A. D. 44: and consequently at least twelve years after this speech of Gamaliel's. On this difficulty I will remark, that we are plainly *in no position* (setting all other considerations aside) to charge St. Luke with having put into the mouth of Gamaliel words which he could not have uttered. For Josephus himself, speaking of a time which would accord very well with that referred to by Gamaliel, viz. the time when Archelaus went to Rome to be confirmed in the kingdom, says, "Meantime numerous sedition movements took place among the Jews, many men feeding their own ambition by the enmity of the Jews against the Romans, and breaking out in acts of war." And among these there may well have been an impostor of this name. But all attempts to identify Theudas with any other leader of outbreaks mentioned by Josephus have failed to convince any one except their propounders. See them quoted in my Greek Test. The assumption of Josephus having *misplaced his Theudas* is perhaps improbable; but *by no means impossible*, in an historian *teeming with inaccuracies*. All we can say is, that such impostors were too frequent, for any one to be able to say that there was not one of this name, which was by no means uncommon, at the time specified. It is exceedingly improbable, considering the time and circumstances of the writing of the Acts, and the evident supervision of them by St. Paul, the pupil of Gamaliel, that a gross historical mistake should have been here put into his mouth.

about four hundred hardly agrees with Josephus's words above, "*a very great multitude*," which may mean even more, *the greatest part of the multitude*: and this confirms the idea that different events are pointed at in the two accounts. But the Jewish historian speaks very widely about such matters: see note on ch. xxi. 38.

37.] The decided words, **after this man**, fix beyond doubt the place here assigned to Theudas. 'The revolt of Judas, and the occasion of his revolt are related by Josephus. It arose on the mission of Quirinus to enroll the inhabitants of Judæa. They took it quietly at first, but afterwards rose in revolt under Judas as their leader. Ife says he was a Gaulonite, from a city named Gamala, and in returning to the mention of him as the founder of the fourth sect among the Jews, he calls him "*Judas of Galilee*"? From the above citation it is plain that this **enrolment** was that so called beyond all others, under Quirinus: see Luke ii. 2 and note. His revolt took a theocratic character, his followers maintaining, as Josephus tells us, *that God was the only ruler and master*. His end is not related by Josephus.

were dispersed] Strictly accurate—for they still existed, and at last became active and notorious again, under Menahem, son of Judas the Galilean, as Josephus also relates.

38.] if it be of men... if it is of God: implying by the first, perhaps, the manifold devices of human imposture and wickedness, any of which it might be, and all of which would equally come to nought,—and, on the other hand, the solemnity and fixedness of the divine purpose by the *indicative mood*, which are also intimated by the *present tense*, **ye cannot**.—Or perhaps the indicative mood is used in the second place, because that is the *case assumed*, and on which the advice is founded. At all events, the distinction ought to be prescribed, which it is not in our A.V.

this counsel] The whole plan—**the scheme**, of which this **work**, the fact under your present cognizance, forms a part.

39.] He warns them, lest they be found opponents not only to *them*, but *also to God*:—‘*even' in* A.V., does not give the sense.—As regards Gamaliel's advice we may remark that it was founded on a view of the issues of events, agreeing with the fatalism of the Pharisees: that it betokens *no leaning towards Christianity*, nor indeed very much even of worldly wisdom;—but serves to shew how low the supreme council of the Jews had sunk both in their theology and their political sagacity, if such a fallacious *laissez-aller* view of matters was the counsel of the wisest among them. It seems certainly, on a closer view, as if they accepted, from fear of the people (see ver. 26), this opportunity of compromising the matter, which Gamaliel had designedly afforded them.

40. when they had... beaten them] See Deut. xxv. 2,—for disobedience to their command.

41. the Name] Not "*his Name*," as A.V., nor "*this Name*" (as others), but **the Name, par excellence**, viz. of Christ. So the term "*the Name*" is used Levit. xxiv. 11, 16.

42.] On **in the houses** see note, ch. ii. 46.

Acts: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. 1-7.] ELECTION OF SEVEN PERSONS TO SUPERINTEND THE DISTRIBUTION OF ALMS.

1.] **But**, in contrast to the former entire unity of the church: introducing that great and important chapter in her history, of *Judaizing divisions*, which from this time onward disquieted her.

in these days] See ch. i. 15:—but not necessarily as there, ‘within a very few days:’ the expression is quite indefinite. Some time must have elapsed since ch. iv. 32.

The **Hellenists** were the *Grecian Jews*: not only those who were *themselves* proselytes, nor only those who *came of families* once proselytized,—but all who, on account of origin or habitation, spoke Greek as their ordinary language, and used ordinarily the LXX version.—The *Hebrews* were the *pure Jews*, not necessarily *resident in Palestine* (for example, St. Paul, who was “an Hebrew, descended from Hebrews,” Phil. iii. 5. See also 2 Cor. xi. 22),—nor necessarily of *unmixed Jewish descent*, else the words of St. Paul just cited would hardly have conveyed an additional distinction,—but rather distinguished by *language*, as speaking the Syro-Chaldaic, and using the Hebrew Scriptures.

were neglected] literally, **overlooked**. The use of this appropriate word shews, I think, that Olshausen’s supposition, that the term, **their widows**, implies *all their poor*, is not correct. Those poor who could attend for themselves and represent their case, were served: but the *widows*, who required more searching out at their own houses, were overlooked. And this because the Apostles, who certainly before this had the charge of the duty of distribution, being already too much occupied in the ministry of the Word to attend personally to it, had entrusted it apparently to some deputies among the *Hebrews*, who had committed this oversight. It has been shewn by Biscoe, that the Hellenistic Jews were held in low estimation by the Hebrews.

in the daily ministration] Some have argued from this, that there must have been ‘deacons’ before: and that those now elected (see below on their names) were only for the service of the Hellenistic Jews. But I should rather believe that the Apostles had as yet, by themselves or by non-official deputies, performed the duty. The **ministration** spoken of was the daily distribution of food: see on ver. 2.

2.] **the multitude of the disciples**,—i. e. ‘the *whole number* of disciples in Jerusalem:’ summoning a general meeting of the church. How many they were in number at the time, is not said. Clearly the 120 names of ch. i. 15 cannot be meant.

It is not our pleasure] Not, *it is not reasonable*, as Beza, Calvin, and the A.V. The meaning of the original word is always as above.

leave the word of God] For to this it would come, if the Apostles were to enquire into, and do justice in, every case of asserted neglect.

serve tables] It is a question, whether this expression import the service of distributing money—or that of apportioning the daily public meals. The latter seems to me most probable, both on account of the word “*daily*” above, and of the usage of the word *ministration*. That both kinds of tables may be meant, is possible: but hardly probable.

3. **look ye out**] The similarity to Gen. xli. 33 may be noticed, and seems to shew that the **look ye out** of the A.V. is the right rendering.

seven men] Some have supposed a reference to the number of nations of which the Hellenistic Jews would perhaps be composed: some, to 7000, to which number the believers would by this time amount: some, to the mystic number seven, so common in Jewish writings:—but the best remark is Lightfoot’s:—‘why seven were to be chosen, let him say, who has boldness to make the guess.’—Some present consideration of convenience probably regulated the number.

over this business (or duty)] The *duty* (see above) was, not that of ministering to the Hellenistic Jews only, but that of superintending the whole distribution.

4.] **the ministry of the word**, in opposition to the ministry, or serving, of tables. “This is the noblest portion of the work, which no bishop can delegate to another, as being himself occupied in more important matters.” Calvin.

5.] **full of faith**,—not in the lower sense of ‘truthfulness,’ but in the higher of **faith**, the root of all Christian virtues: see ch. xi. 24.—Of these seven, Stephen and Philip (ch. viii. 5, 26, 40; xxi. 8) only are elsewhere mentioned. On the idea of Nicolas

having founded the heretical sect of the Nicolaitans, Rev. ii. 6, 15, see note there. From his being called **a proselyte of Antioch**, some have argued that *he only* was a proselyte, and none of the rest: some that *all* were proselytes,—but the rest, of Jerusalem. But neither inference seems justified: rather I should say that the addition simply imports that he became better known than the rest, from the very circumstance perhaps of Antioch having been afterwards so important a spot in the Christian history (ch. xi, 19, note).—These names are all Greek: but we cannot thence infer that the seven were all Hellenistic Jews: the Apostles Philip and Andrew bore Greek names, but were certainly not Hellenists. There does appear however, in the ease of these two Apostles, to have been a connexion with Greeks of some sort, see John xii, 20–22. Possibly, though *Hebrews*, they may not have been *descended from Hebrews* (see above on ver. 1), but sprung from intermarriage with Hellenists. And so these seven may have been partly Hebrews, though their names seem to indicate, and their office would appear to require, that they were connected with Hellenists, and not likely to overlook or disparage them. The title of ‘deacons’ is nowhere applied to these seven in Scripture, nor does it occur in the Acts at all. In 1 Tim. iii. 8 ff. there is no absolute identification of the duties of deacons with those allotted to these seven, but at the same time nothing to imply that they were different. The universal consent of all Christian writers in regarding this as the institution of the office of deacons should not be overlooked: but at the same time we must be careful not to imagine that we have here the institution of the *ecclesiastical order* so named. The distinctness of the two is stated by Chrysostom plainly, whose opinion is that these are not to be confounded with any ecclesiastical order, but were merely appointed for the purpose then in hand. So also OEcumenius. But that the subsequent office of deacon was founded upon this appointment, is very probable. The only one of these seven who appears in the subsequent history (ch. xxi. 8) is called “*Philip the Evangelist*,” probably from the success granted him as recorded in ch. viii. 12. In these early days titles sprung out of realities, and were not yet mere hierarchical classifications.

6.] they had, viz. the Apostles. Their office of giving themselves to *prayer* is here specially exercised.—The *laying on of hands*, the earliest mention of which is connected with *blessing only* (Gen. xlvi. 14), was prescribed to Moses as the form of conferring office on Joshua, Num. xxvii. 18, and from that time was used on such occasions by the Jews. From its adoption by the Apostles, it has ever been the practice of the Christian church in *ordaining*, or *setting apart* her ministers. It was also used by the Apostles on those who, having been baptized, were to be fully endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit: see ch. viii. 17; xix. 6, and Heb. vi. 2.

7.] And, i.e. on this measure being completed; as would be the case, seeing that these seven were not only servants of tables, but men full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom: and we soon hear of the part. which Stephen bore in the work.

a great multitude of the priests] The number of priests who returned from Babylon, Ezra ii. 36–39, was 4289; and the number would probably have much increased since then. No evasion of the historian’s assertion is to be attempted, as has been done by some Commentators.—At this time was probably the *culminating point of popularity of the church at Jerusalem*. As yet, all seemed going on prosperously for the conversion of Israel. ‘The multitude honoured the Apostles; the advice of Gamaliel had moderated the opposition of the Sanhedrim: the priests were gradually being won over. But God’s designs were far different. At this period another great element in the testimony of the church is brought out, in the person of Stephen,—its *protest against Pharisaism*. This arrays against it that powerful and zealous sect, and henceforward it finds neither favour nor tolerance with either of the parties among the Jews, but increasing and bitter enmity from them both,

8–CH. VII. 60.] THE ACCUSATION, DEFENCE, AND MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.

8.] This is the first instance of any, *not an Apostle*, working signs and wonders. The power was perhaps conferred by the laying on of the Apostles’ hands; though, that having been for a special purpose merely, and the working miracles being a fulfilment of the promise, Mark xvi. 17, 18, to *believers*, I should rather refer the power to the *eminence of Stephen’s faith*.

full of grace, i. e. **divine grace** (not ‘favour with the people’): the effects of which, the miracles were called *gifts of Grace* (*charismata*, from *charis*, grace).

9.] The word **Libertines** is rightly explained by Chrysostom to mean, the *freedmen* of the Romans. Philo speaks of a large district of Rome beyond the Tiber as inhabited by Jews, who were mostly freedmen that had originally been brought in captivity to Italy. Tacitus relates under A.D. 19, that a decree of the senate passed, to banish to Sardinia four thousand libertines or freedmen, who were inf Jewish and Egyptian superstitions, and the rest were ordered either to abjure their religion or to leave Italy. In this Josphus agrees, relating a story as one of its causes, in which Ida, a freedwoman, was the agent of the mischief. Here then we have abundant reason for numbers of these Jews of libertine race having come to Jerusalem, being among *the rest*, who were ordered to quit Italy: and what place so likely a refuge for Jews as Jerusalem?—Those who find a difficulty in this interpretation suppose them to have been inhabitants of Libertum, a town in *proper* or *proconsular* Africa, from which we find a bishop of Libertum sitting in the synod of Carthage in 411. But none of their suppositions will bear examination, and the best interpretation is the usual one—that they were the descendants of Jewish freedmen at Rome, who had been expelled by Tiberius.—There is no difficulty in their having had a synagogue of their own: for there were 460 or 480 synagogues at Jeru-salem.

Cyrenians] See ch. ii. 10, note.

Alexandrians] Two of the five regions of Alexandria were inhabited by Jews. It was also the seat of the learning and philosophy of the Grecian Jews, which was now at its height. This metropolis of the Hellenists would certainly have a synagogue in Jerusalem. I understand *three* distinct synagogues to be meant, notwithstanding the somewhat equivocal construction,—and the words “*which is called*” only to apply to the unusual term “*Libertines*.”

Cilicia was at this time a Roman province, the capital being the free city of Tarsus, see note on ch. ix. 11.—**Asia**,—not exactly as in ch. ii. 9, where it is distinguished from Phrygia,—here and usually in the Acts implies *proconsular Asia*, a large and important Roman province, including Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and Phrygia—known also as “*Asia this side of the Taurus*.”

11.] Neander well remarks that this false charge, coupled with the character of Stephen’s apologetic speech, shews the *real character of his arguments with his opponents*:—that he seems to have been the first who plainly set forth the transitory nature of the law and temple, as compared with the permanence of the latter and better covenant, thus being in a remarkable manner the forerunner of St. Paul.

12.] the people, first,—that by means of the popular feeling they might act upon the **elders and scribes**, the members of the Sanhedrim.

came upon him] The same persons,—acting now by the authority of the Sanhedrim; Saul, among those from *Cilicia*, being, as is afterwards (ch. vii. 58) implied, among the foremost,—**came upon him, and seized him**.

13. false witnesses] The *falsehood* of their witness consisted, as in the similar case of our Lord, in taking Stephen’s words out of their context, and *misrepresenting* what perhaps in so many words he *had actually said*.

this holy place] The *temple*: see Matt. xxiv. 15; ch. xxi. 28.

15.] It is a question with regard to this verse, Does it relate any *supernatural appearance, glorifying the face of Stephen*,—or merely describe the calm and holy aspect with which he stood before the council? The majority of commentators suppose the latter: and certainly the foregoing description of Stephen would lead us to infer, that there was something remarkably striking in his appearance and demeanour, which over-awed his adversaries. But both from the plain language of our text, well understood among the Jews to signify supernatural brightness, and from the fact that in St. Luke’s own narrative we have supernatural brightness associated with angelic appearances more than once (see Luke ii. 9; ch. xii. 7), I should be inclined to think that the face of the martyr was *lighted up with a divine radiance*. That the effect on those present was not such as to prevent the examination proceeding, is no argument against this view: in the very mildness of the question of the High Priest which follows, I see the trace of some unusual incident exercising an influence over him. Chrysostom explains well the effect on the council: “God seems to me to have made him beautiful to look at, perhaps to prepare the way for his speech, and that he might immediately strike them with his look. For there is, yea there is, in faces full of spiritual grace that which is lovely to those that love them, and strikes awe and fear into those that hate them. Or perhaps the Evangelist mentions it to account for their tolerating his speech. For what answer does the High Priest make? Do you see, how mildly and unreproachfully he puts his question?”

Acts: Chapter 7

CHAP. VII. 1.] On the High Priest’s question, see Chrysostom just quoted.—It is parallel with Matt. xxvi. 62, but singularly distinguished from that question by its mildness: see above.

2–53.] STEPHEN’ S DEFENCE. In order to understand this wonderful and somewhat difficult speech, it will be well to bear in mind, (1) that the *general character* of it is *apologetic*, referring to the charge made against him: but (2) that in this apology, forgetting himself in the vast subject which he is vindicating, he every where mixes in the polemic and didactic element. A general synopsis of it may be thus given: (1) He shews (*apologetically*) that, so far from dishonouring Moses or God, he believes, and holds in mind, God’s dealings with Abraham and Moses, and grounds upon them his preaching; that, so far from *dishonouring* the temple, he bears in mind its history and the sayings of the prophets respecting it; and he is proceeding,—when (interrupted by their murmurs—or inattention? but see note, ver. 51) he bursts into a holy vehemence of invective against their rejection of God, which provokes his tumultuary expulsion from the council, and execution. (2) But simultaneously and parallel with this *apologetic* procedure, he also proceeds *didactically*, shewing them that a future Prophet was pointed out by Moses as the final Lawgiver of God’s people,—that the Most High had revealed His spiritual and heavenly nature by the prophets, and did not dwell in temples made with hands. And (3) even more remarkably still does the *polemic* element run through the speech. “*It is not I, but YOU, who from the first times till now have rejected and spoken against God.*” And this element, just appearing ver. 9, and again more plainly vv. 25–28, and again more pointedly still in ver. 35,

becomes dominant. in vv. 39–44, and finally prevails, to the exclusion of the apologetic and didactic, in vv. 51–53.—That other connected purposes have been discovered in the speech, as, for example, that so ably followed out by Chrysostom, of shewing that the covenant and promises were *before the law*, and sacrifice and the law *before the temple*,—is to be attributed to the wonderful depth of words uttered like these under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, presenting to us, from whichever side they are viewed, new and inimitable hues of heavenly wisdom. Many of these will be brought out as we advance.—The question, *from what probable source St. Luke derived his report of this speech*, so peculiar in its character and citations as to bear, even to the most prejudiced, decisive evidence of authenticity, can be only conjecturally answered: but in this case the conjecture can hardly be wrong. I have discussed the point in the Introduction to the Acts, ch. i. §ii. 12 (a).

2. Brethren (men who are brethren), **and fathers**] So Paul, ch. xxii. 1, before a mixed assembly of Jews. The **brethren** would embrace all: the **fathers** would be a title of respect to the members of the Sanhedrim, in *this case*, but hardly in ch. xxii. 1.

The God of glory] Not equivalent to *the glorious God*, **but the God of** (i. e. who possesses and manifests Himself by) **glory**, viz. the Shechinah, or divine appearance, see Exod. xxiv. 16, 17, and ver. 55.—The words **our father** decide nothing as to Stephen's genuine Hebrew extraction. Any Jew would thus speak.

before he dwelt in Charran] This was the Jewish tradition, though not asserted in Genesis. Thus Philo, having paraphrased the divine command, says, “For this reason Abraham is said to have made his first move from the land of the Chaldeans to that of the Charraeans.” But he accurately distinguishes between the *divine command*, which he obeyed in leaving Chaldea, and the *vision* afterwards, adding a reason after his manner, why God could not be seen nor apprehended by him while he was yet a Chaldean and an astrologer. The fact of his having left Ur by *some divine intimation* is plainly stated in Gen. xv. 7, and referred to in Neh. ix. 7. It was surely both natural and allowable to express this first command in the well-known words of the second.

Charran] So the LXX for Haran, Gen. xi. 31, &c.; 4 Kings xix. 12; Ezek. xxvii. 23. It is in Mesopotamia, and is celebrated in Roman history as Carrhae, where happened the defeat and slaughter of Crassus by the Parthians. It lay on an ancient road, in a large plain surrounded by mountains; it was still a great city in the days of the Arabian caliphs. **4. when his father was dead**] In Gen. xi. 26, we read that Terah lived 70 years and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran; in xi. 32, that Terah lived 205 years, and died in Haran; and in xii. 4, that Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. Since then 70 added to 75 makes 145, Terah must have lived about 60 years in Haran after Abram's departure.—It seems evident, that the Jewish chronology, which Stephen follows, was at fault here, owing to the circumstance of Terah's death *being mentioned* Gen. xi. 32, *before* the command to Abram to leave Haran;—it not having been observed that the mention is *anticipatory*. And this is confirmed by Philo having fallen into the same mistake, and stated the removal of Abraham from Haran, in almost these same words, to have been *after his father's death*. It is observable that the Samaritan Pentateuch, in Gen. xi. 32, for 205, reads 145, which has most probably been an alteration to remove the apparent inconsistency.—The subterfuge of understanding the *spiritual death* of Terah, who is, as a further hypothesis, supposed to have *relapsed into idolatry* at Haran, appears to have originated with the Rabbis, on discovering that their tradition was at variance with the sacred chronology. They have not been without followers in modern Christendom. See in my Greek Testament instances of unworthy treatment of the assertion in the text in order to evade the difficulty. The way in which it has been met by some commentators, viz. that we have no right to assume that Abram was born when Terah was 70, but may regard him as the *youngest* son, would leave us in this equally unsatisfactory position:—Terah, *in the course of nature*, begets his son Abram at 130 (205 minus 75); yet this very son Abram regards it as incredible that he himself should beget a son at 99 (Gen. xvii. 1, 17); and on the fact of the birth of Isaac being *out of the course of nature*, most important Scriptural arguments and consequences are founded; cf. iv. 17–21; Heb. xi. 11, 12. We may fairly leave these commentators with their new difficulty: only remarking for our instruction, how sure those are to plunge into hopeless confusion, who, from motives however good, once begin to handle the word of God deceitfully.

God removed him] In these words Stephen clearly recognizes the *second command*, to migrate from Haran to Canaan; and as clearly therefore made no *mistake* in ver. 2, but applied the expressed words of the second command to the first injunction. **5. gave him none inheritance in it**] There is no occasion here to wrest our text in order to produce accordance with the history. The field which Abraham bought for the burial of his dead surely did not come under the description of *an inheritance*, nor give him any standing as a possessor in the land.

6, 7.] A free citation from the LXX, with the words, “*and they shall worship me in this place*,” adapted and added from Exod. iii. 12. The shifts of some commentators to avoid this plain fact are not worth recounting: but again, the student who would not handle the word of God deceitfully should be here and every where on his guard against them.—The round number, 400 years, given here and in Genesis, is *further specified* Exod. xii. 40, as 430. (See Gal. iii. 17, and note.)

7.] said God is inserted by Stephen in passing from the narrative form (“*his seed*”) into the direct (“*I will judge*”).

8.] On the institution of circumcision, it is called a “*covenant*,” Gen. xvii. 10, and the immediate promise of that covenant is

contained in the same chapter, ver. 8.

so, i.e. ‘in this new covenant state;’—or, ‘in fulfilment of the promise of *seed* implied in the above words.’ In this word **so** lies hid the germ of the subsequent teaching of the Holy Spirit by St. Paul, Gal. iii.

9.] Here we have the first hint of the rebellious spirit in Israel, which the progress of the history brings out.

10.] Observe the simple coupling of the clauses by **and**, as characteristic of this speech.

favour and wisdom] **favour**, so that he was *acceptable* to Pharaoh (see *reff.*): and **wisdom**, so that Pharaoh consulted him, and followed his suggestion, especially in the important case recorded Gen. xli. 38.

he made him] viz. Pharaoh: a change of subject.

14. threescore and fifteen souls] In the Hebrew text, Gen. xlvi. 27; Exod. i. 5; Deut. x. 22, *seventy* souls are reckoned, viz. sixty-six born of Jacob, Jacob himself, Joseph, and his two sons born in Egypt. So also Josephus. But the LXX, whom Stephen follows, insert in Gen. xlvi. 20 an account of the children and grandchildren of Manasseh and Ephraim, five in number: and in ver. 27 read thus: “*And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt, were nine souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob, which entered with Jacob into Egypt, were seventy-five:*”—reckoning, as it appears, curiously enough, among the sons of Joseph, Joseph himself, and his wife Asenath; for these are required to make up the *nine*, according to their ver. 20. And similarly in Exod. i. 5, and in some copies in Deut. x. 22. With regard to the various attempts to solve the difficulty, see in my Greek Testament.

16.] were carried over, viz. *he and our fathers*, not the latter only,—as some commentators have suggested, to evade part of the difficulty of the verse.—The facts, as related in the Old Testament, were these: Jacob, dying in Egypt, was (Gen. i. 13) taken into the land of Canaan, and buried in the cave of Macpelah, before Mamré (on the rest of the verse see below); Joseph, dying also in Egypt, was taken in a coffin (Gen. l. 26) at the Exodus (Exod. xiii. 19), and finally buried (Josh. xxiv. 32) at Shechem. Of the burial of the other patriarchs the sacred text says nothing, but rather by the specification in Exod. xiii. 19, leaves it to be inferred that they were buried in Egypt. Josephus, Antt. ii. 8. 2, relates that they were taken and buried in *Hebron*, and adds, “of whom the graves are shewn even to my time in the fortress Hebron, of very beautiful marble, and sumptuously wrought.” The Rabbinical traditions report them to have been buried in *Sychem*: and Jerome, relating the pilgrimages of Paula to the sacred places, says, “She passed by Sychem, and turning aside there saw the sepulchre of the twelve patriarchs.” These traditions probably Stephen followed; and, in haste or inadvertence, classed *Jacob* with the rest.

that Abraham bought] The burying-place which Abraham bought was not at *Sychem*, bnt (Gen. xxiii. 3–20) at *Hebron*, and was bought of *Ephron the Hittite*. It was *Jacob* who (Gen. xxxiii. 19) bought a field where he had pitched his tent, near *Sychem*, of the *children of Hamor*, Shechem’s father: and no mention is made of its being *for a burying-place*. The two incidents are certainly here *confused*; and no ingenuity of the commentators has ever devised an escape from the inference. I have mentioned a few such attempts in my Greek Testament.

17.] **according as**, i.e. ‘in proportion as;’ not “when,” as A.V.

20. fair unto God (so literally)] The expression here seems borrowed from tradition: Josephus calls the infant Moses “*a child of divine beauty.*” Philo says, “The child at its very birth presented an appearance of beauty greater than that of ordinary men.”

22.] The word “*learned*,” in our A.V. here, is used in its older meaning of “*taught*,” as in the Prayer-book version of the Ps. cxix. 66, “Learn me true understanding and knowledge.” This meaning having now become obsolete, the word here is misunderstood to mean *learnéd*, i.e. *erudite, accomplished*. It should therefore be altered into “**instructed**.” That Moses was instructed in the wisdom of the Egyptians, is not found in the Old Testament, but derived from tradition, and following as a matter of course from his adopted station as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. This *wisdom of the Egyptians*, celebrated by so many ancient writers, consisted mainly in natural philosophy, medicine, and mathematics,—and its teachers were the priests.

mighty in words] So Josephus calls Moses *admirably persuasive in haranguing multitudes*, but late in his course, during the journey through the wilderness:—when the divine Spirit, as the book of Deuteronomy abundantly testifies, had turned his ‘slowness of speech’ into the most fervid eloquence. That he was so thus early, during his Egyptian course, was probably reported by tradition, but hardly seems to agree with Exod. iv. 10–16.

23. **full forty years old**] The text of Exod. ii. 11 has only “*when Moses was grown.*” The exact age was traditional.

24.] **the Egyptian**, from the history being so universally known, that the agent of the wrong would be readily supplied.

25.] Here we have again the *resistance to the Holy Spirit* hinted: see ver. 51, and note on ver. 2.

26.] **unto them**, *two of them*, taken as representing his brethren the children of Israel. Not, “**he would have set them at peace,**” as our A.V.: this explanation is not needed:—the act, *on Moses’ part*, was complete; but, **he set them at peace.**

27.] *The further progress of resistance to the Spirit* on the part of Israel.

29. **Madian (or-am)**] Winer supposes *this Midian* to have been a *nomad* detachment of the more settled Midianites,—which at that time was encamped in the neighbourhood of Sinai and Horeb. For Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, is not found there in Exod. xviii. 1 ff., but comes to visit Moses from a distance. See also Num. x. 29 ff.

two sons] Exod. ii. 22; iv. 20; xviii. 3.

30. **when forty years were expired**] This follows from the tradition of ver. 23, combined with Exod. vii. 7. The Rabbinical books said that “Moses lived in Pharaoh’s palace forty years, and in Midian forty years, and then ministered to Israel forty years.”

mount Sina] *Horeb*, Exo. iii. 1. But both were points of the same mountain range, and the names were convertibly used. In Exod., Levit., and Num., the law is said to have been given from *Sinai*; in Deut. from *Horeb*. ‘The desert of Mount Sina’ is the desert in which Mt. S. is situated. So

‘the Peak of Derbyshire,’ originally no doubt some single hill, has come to mean the whole district in which that hill is situated.

an angel] Here, as continually in the Old Testament, the angel bears the authority and presence of God Himself: which angel since God giveth not His glory to another, must have been the *great Angel of the covenant*, the “*Angel of the Face*” of Isa. lxiii. 9, “*the Angel of His Presence*,”—the SON OF GOD. See below on ver. 53.—Stier remarks, that this *second* appearance of God, to Moses (see ver. 2), introduces the *legal dispensation*, as the *first, to Abraham, the patriarchal*.

32.] The order of Exod. iii. 6, is here somewhat varied. The command to put off the shoe was given *on the approach of Moses*, and before these words were spoken.

33.] See Josh. v. 15. Putting off the sandals was a *mark of reverence*. The priests performed all their ministrations *barefooted*. The Arabs to this day continue the practice: they always enter their mosques barefooted.

34. **I have seen, I have seen** (literally, *seeing I saw*)] This is the emphatic way of expression in the Hebrew.

35.] The words, **this Moses**, are repeated emphatically again and again, to impress on them God’s choice of one whom they rejected.

whom they refused, ver 27. The rejecter of Moses there is regarded as the *representative of the nation*: see note on ver. 26. In this express mention of the rejection of Moses by the Jews, and his election and mission by God, the parallel of Jesus Christ is no doubt in Stephen’s mind, and the inference intended to be drawn, that *it does not follow that GOD REJECTS those whom THEY REJECTED*.—The difficulty of **hath God sent**: has caused it to be altered into the historic tense, “*did God send*.” But the perfect tense sets forth not only the fact of God’s sending Moses *then*, but the endurance of his mission till—**him hath God sent**: with a closer reference than before, to Him whom God had now exalted as the true *Ruler and Deliverer*, see ch. y. 31.

37.] See ch. iii, 22, notes. Our text has probably been altered to agree verbally with the former citation.

38.] That Moses conversed with both the Angel of the covenant and our fathers, implies that he was the *mediator between them*, as indeed the words, **who received the living oracles**, more plainly declare.

the word rendered **the church** means, probably, **the assembly** held (Exod. xix.) for the promulgation of the law at Mt. Sinai, not ‘*the Church*’ generally. Dr. Wordsworth observes on the meaning which the words “*the Church in the wilderness*” carry for the student of Christian prophecy, Rev. xii. 1–6.

living oracles, see reff. not ‘*life-giving*:’ still less to be understood ‘given *vivâ voce*.’

39.] Another instance, brought home again by the words **our fathers**, of *rejection of God’s appointed messenger and servant*.

they turned back in their hearts to Egypt: not ‘*they wished to return to Egypt*,’ of which in Exod. xxxii. there is no trace (but later, in Num. xiv. 4), and which would hardly suit the term **to go before us**; but ‘they apostatized in heart, to the Egyptian idolatries.’ The very title by which Aaron proclaims his idol, is, ‘These be thy gods, O Israel, which *brought thee up out of the land of Egypt*,’ Exod. xxxii. 4. See also Neh. ix. 18.

40. gods to go before us] As God had done in the pillar of the cloud and fire. The plural is not put for the singular, but is used categorically: not Perhaps without implying also, that the only two religions were, the worship of Jehovah, and that of *idols*, a multitude. The plural is used by Aaron, see above.—In the opprobrious term, this **Moses**, may be implied, as Meyer suggests, ‘who was the strong opponent. of idolatry.’

41. they made a calf] apparently in imitation of Apis, a bull worshipped at Memphis as the living symbol of Osiris. The *ox* was a common symbolic form of idols in the East; it was one of the cherubic forms, Ezek. i. 10; and the most recent discoveries at Nineveh have brought to light colossal bulls. Sir Gardiner Wilkinson thinks the golden calves of Israel to have been imitations of Mnevis, a bull kept at Heliopolis as a living symbol of the sun. Jeroboam afterwards set up golden calves at Bethel and Dan, and with the same proclamation: see 1 Kings xii. 28.

42. God turned] i.e. God, who had hitherto watched over them for good, *now provoked by their rebellion, changed*, and delivered them up to their own ways.

gave **them** up—not ‘*suffered them*:’ all these explainings away of the strong expressions of Scripture belong to the rationalistic school of interpreters (which is not modern merely; even Chrysostom has here “*He permitted them*”): it was a *judicial delivering up*, not a mere letting alone, see Rom. i. 24, 26, 28.

to worship the host of heaven] This fact is not mentioned in the Pentateuch, but may refer to the worship of Baal. In after-times we have frequent traces of star worship: see 2 Kings xvii. 16; xxi. 3, 5; xxiii. 4, 5; Jer. xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5. See also Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3; Job xxxi. 26.

The book of the prophets, regarded as a whole, contained this prophecy. The citation is from the LXX. I should take the question here as a

reproach, implying that God does not receive as offered to Him, sacrifices in which He has been made to share with idols:—**it is not true that ye offered to Me** (but no stress on Me) **sacrifices,&c.**, ‘I regard it as never having happened.’

43.] The answer by God himself: **Yea, ye took up, j.e. carried about with you**, (not *My* tabernacle as your sole or chief holy place, but) **the tabernacle** (literally the portable tent for the image. We read of the *sacred tent* in the Carthaginian camp) **of Moloch**&c. Stephen was *not the sole dishonourer*, if a *dishonourer*, of the holy place—their fathers had done it before.

Moloch] So the LXX: the Heb. has **Malchem**, ‘*of your king*’ Moloch was the Phœnician Saturn: his image was of brass with the head of an ox, and outstretched arms of a man, hollow; and human sacrifices (of children) were offered, by laying them in these arms and heating the image by fire kindled within. The rigid prohibitions of the worship of Moloch (Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2–5) were openly transgressed by Ahaz, 2 Kings xvi. 3; by Manasseh, ib. xxi. 6; see also xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31; xxxii. 35. In the kingdom of Israel this abomination had been long practised, see 2 Kings xvii. 17; Ezek. xxiii. 37. We find traces of it at Carthage among the Phœnicians, among the Cretans and Rhodians, and the Assyrian colonists at Sepharvaim, 2 Kings xvii. 31.

the star of your god Remphan] For this word, Rephan or Remphan the Hebrew has “*Chiun*,” but what the meaning of either this or Remphan (the word is very variously read in our MSS. Rempham, Rompha, Rofa, Reffa, Rephan, &c.) is, we have nothing but conjecture to inform us. The most likely opinion has been that of Kircher, who maintains it to be a Coptic word, signifying *the planet Saturn*, and answering to the Arabic ‘Kewan.’ The prophecy, both in the LXX and Hebrew, has **Damascus**. But the *fulfilment* of the prophecy would make it very natural to substitute that name which had become inseparably associated with the captivity.

44. the tabernacle of witness] In opposition to the *tabernacle* just mentioned: but also in pursuance of one of the great aims of the speech, *to shew that holiness is not confined to locality or building*. This part of his subject Stephen now enters on more particularly.—The words, “*the tabernacle of witness*,” are the LXX rendering of the word in Num. xvi. 18, 19&c., which the A.V. renders ‘the tabernacle of the assembly,’ or ‘congregation.’

the fashion] This is another contrast: it is the same word as that rendered “figures” in ver. 43.

45.] inheriting, succeeding to its custody and privileges.

at (or 'in') their taking possession] The term is used of that final and settled possession which Israel took of the land, not of that transitory possession from which the Gentiles or nations were driven out. The martyr combines rapidly a considerable period, during which this taking possession and this expulsion was taking place (for it was not complete till the time of David) in order to arrive at the next great event of his history, *the substitution of the temple of Solomon for the tabernacle*.

46. asked permission] See 2 Sam. vii. 2 ff., in which this request is made through Nathan the Prophet, and

at first conceded by Nathan, though afterwards, on a revelation made from God, denied:—not '*desired*,' as A.V. The vow (a species of prayer) Kere referred to, is defined by the expression "*find a tabernacle*," to be that mentioned Ps. cxxxii.

48.] But, though Solomon built Him an house, *we are not to suppose, for all that, that He is confined to earthly spots.*

as saith the prophet] We have in substance the same declaration by Solomon himself at the dedication of his temple, 1 Kings viii. 27: see also the beautiful prayer of David, 1 Chron. xxix. 10–19. The citation is freely from the LXX.—The student will not fail to be interested in observing the apparent reference to this declaration in Stephen's apology, by St. Paul, ch. xvii. 24.

51.] I do not think there is any occasion to suppose an *interruption from the audience* to have occasioned this outbreak of holy indignation. At each separate recital (vv. 9, 25, 35, 39 ff.) he has dwelt, with continually increasing fervour, on the *rebellions against and rejections of God by His people*. He has now brought down the history to the establishment of the temple worship. From Solomon's time to his own, he saw but a succession of apostasies, idolatries, rejection of God's a dark and loathsome catalogue, terminated by the betrayal and murder of the Just One Himself. It is not at all beyond probability, to believe that the zeal of his fervent spirit was, by the view of this, the filling up of the measure of their iniquities, kindled into a flame of inspired invective. I find that this is also Neander's view, in opposition to the generality of Commentators, as also that of Prof. Hackett, in his commentary on the Acts: and I cannot but think it far the most probable. "Henceforward he is borne along by vehemence in his discourse. His approaching death gave him great boldness of speech: for of this I believe him to have been fully aware." Chrysostom.

stiffnecked and uncircumcised] Words and figures familiar to the prophets in speaking of the rebellious Israel: see besides the references, Deut. ix. 6, 13; Neh. ix. 16:—Dent. x. 16; xxx. 6. See also Rom. ii. 29.

and ears] I should hardly think of any allusion to Ps. x1. 6,—because the LXX have rendered 'mine ears hast thou opened' by "*a body hast thou pre-pared me.*"

ye do always resist the Holy Ghost] Apparently reference to Isa. lxiii. 10. The instances as yet had been confined to *their fathers*: now he has arrived at their own times. The *two* are taken up again in the next verse. **52. Which of the prophets**] See Matt. xxiii. 34 ff.: 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16: where the same general expressions are used of their persecuting the prophets. Such sayings are not to be pressed to the letter, but represent the uniform attitude of disobedience and hostility which they assumed to the messengers of God. See also the parable, Matt. xxi. 35.

them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One] *The office of all the prophets*, see ch. iii. 18. The assertion is repeated, to connect them, by this title, with Him, whom they announced.

the Just One] This name was used by the Jews to designate the Messiah. See note on James v. 6.

betrayers] by Judas's treachery, of which the Sauliedrists had been the accomplices;

Matt. xxvi. 14–16:—**murderers**, by the hands of the Romans; ch. ii. 23, note.

53. at the injunction of angels] Many explanations have been given of these words. An enumeration and description of them may be seen in my Greek Testament. The key to the right understanding of them seems to be the similar expression in Gal. iii. 19, "*the law,... ordained by [means of] angels.*" The law was *given* by God, but *announced* by angels. The people received God's law then, **at the injunction of angels**.

54.] were cut to heart, see ch. v. 33, note.

55.] Certainly, in so far as the vision of Stephen was *supernatural*, it was not *necessary* that the *material heavens should have been visible* to him: but from the words *looked up steadfastly into [the] heaven*, it would seem that they *were*. We are not told where the Sanhedrim were assembled. It does not seem as if they were convened in the ordinary session room: it may have been in one of the courts of the temple, which would give room for more than the members of the Sanhedrin to be present, as seems to have been the case.

standing] A reason why the glorified Saviour was seen *standing* and not *sitting*, has been pleasingly given by Chrysostom, “Why *standing* and not *sitting*? that He may shew His attitude of help to the martyr. For of the Father also it is said, ‘Arise, O God.’” See also the collect for St. Stephen’s day. But not perhaps correctly: for ‘help’ does not seem here to be the applicable idea, but the *confirmation of his faith* by the ecstatic vision of the Saviour’s glory at God’s right hand.—I should be rather disposed to think that there was reference in the vision to that in Zech. iii. 1, where Zechariah sees “*Joshua [Jesus] the High Priest standing before the angel of the Lord.*” Stephen, under accusation of blaspheming the *earthly temple*, is granted a sight of the *heavenly temple*; being cited before the *Sadducee High Priest*, who believed neither angel nor spirit, he is vouchsafed a vision of the *heavenly HIGH PRIEST*, standing and ministering at the Throne, amidst the angels and just men made perfect.

56.] This is the only time that our Lord is by human lips called the SON OF MAN after His Ascension (Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14, are not instances). And *why here?* I believe for this reason. Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, speaking *now* not of himself at all (ver. 55), but entirely by the utterance of the Spirit, repeats the *very words*, Matt. xxvi. 64, in which Jesus Himself, *before this council*, had foretold His glorification;—and assures them that that exaltation of the SON OF MAN, which they should hereafter witness to their dismay, was *already begun and actual*.

58. cast him out of the city] See Levit. xxiv. 14. The Rabbinical books say, “The place of stoning was outside the city: for all walled cities were considered to correspond to the camp of Israel.” Compare also Heb. xiii. 12, 13.

and stoned him] An anticipation of the fact, the details of which follow. Stoning was the punishment of blaspheming, Levit. xxiv. 16. The question whether this was a legal proceeding on sentence, or a tumultuary one, is not easy to answer. It would appear from John xviii. 31, that the Jews had not legally the power of putting any man to death (see note there). Certainly, from the narrative before us, and from the fact of a bloody persecution having taken place soon after it, it seems that the Jews did, by connivance of, or in the absence of the Procurator, administer summary punishments of this kind. But here no sentence is recorded: and perhaps the very violence and fanatical character of the execution might constitute it, not an encroachment on the power of the Procurator, as it would have been if strictly in form of law, but a mere outbreak, and as such it might be allowed to pass unnoticed. That they observed the forms of *their own law*, in the place and manner of the stoning, is no objection to this view.

the witnesses] See Deut. xvii. 7, where it is enacted that the hands of the witnesses were to be first on the criminal to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people.

they laid down their clothes] They disengaged themselves of their loose outer garments, that they might be light and unimpeded in the throwing of the stones. They laid them at Saul’s feet that he might keep them in safety. Such notices are deeply interesting, when we recollect by *whom* they were in all probability carefully inserted. See ch. xxii. 19, 20, and note on ch. xxvi. 10:—from which it appears that Saul can certainly not have been less than *thirty* at this time. He was a member of the Sanhedrim, and soon after was despatched on an important mission with their authority.

59.] All attempts to escape from this being a direct prayer to the Saviour are vain, as I have shewn in my Greek Testament.

receive my spirit] The same prayer in substance had been made by our Lord on the Cross (Luke xxiii. 46) to His Father. To *Him* was now committed the key of David. Similarly, the young man Saul, in after years: “*I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.*” 2 Tim. i. 12.

60. lay not this sin to their charge] This again was somewhat similar (though not exactly, see note there) to our Lord’s prayer, Luke xxiii. 34.

he fell asleep] Not a Christian expression only: there are Jewish examples: and we have some even in Greek heathen poetry. But it became the *usual* Christian term for death. Its use here, when the circumstances, and the actors in them, are remembered, is singularly touching, from the contrast.

Acts: Chapter 8

CHAP. VIII. 1–4.] PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH BY SAUL, CONSEQUENT ON THE DEATH OF STEPHEN.

1. consenting] The same Greek word is rendered “*allow*” in Luke xi. 48: “*have pleasure*” in Rom. i. 32. Compare St. Paul’s own confession, ch. xxvi. 9–11. From this time, the narrative takes up Saul, and, at with considerable interruptions (ch. viii. x. xi. xii.), but after ch. xiii. 1 entirely, follows his history.

in that day, can hardly mean, as some would render it, on *that very day*, viz. when Stephen was stoned. For what follows,

"they were all scattered abroad"... cannot have happened on the same day, but would take some little time. We have the same expression used indefinitely, Luke vi. 23; John xiv. 20; xvi. 23, 26. In Luke xvii. 31, it has direct reference to a *day* just mentioned.

all] Not perhaps *literally*,—or some of them soon returned: see ch. ix. 26–30. It may describe the *general* dispersion, without meaning that every individual fled. **Samaria]** Connected with ver. 4: this word is not without importance, as introducing the *next step in the dissemination of the Gospel*, according to our Lord's command in ch. i.

except the apostles] Perhaps, from their exalted position of veneration by the people, the persecution did not extend to them: perhaps they remained, as possessed of superior firmness and devotion. But this latter reason is hardly applicable, after the command of our Lord ‘When they persecute you in one city, flee to another.’ Matt. x. 23. Stier refers their remaining to an intimation of the Spirit, to stay and strengthen those who were left. Mr. Humphry cites an ancient tradition, mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, and by Eusebius from the Apocryphal work called the Preaching of Peter, that the Apostles were ordered by our Lord to remain at Jerusalem twelve years. But this could not be the case, as we have Peter and John going down to Samaria, ver. 14.

2. devout men] Whether Jews or Christians, is not certain. Ananias is so called, ch. xxii. 12, and he was a Christian. Olshausen thinks that, if they had been Christians the term “*brethren*” would have been used: but this does not seem by any means certain: we can hardly reason so minutely from the diction of one section in the narrative to that of another, especially in the case of a section so distinct and peculiar as this one. Besides, “*brethren*” in this very general sense does not occur till ch. ix. 30. Probably they were pious Jews, not yet converts, but hearers and admirers of Stephen.

3. made havock of] The word so rendered is properly used of wild beasts or of hostile armies, devastating and ravaging.

4–12.] PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL IN SAMARIA BY PHILIP.

4.] So then resumes the subject dropped at the end of ver. 1, and determines this verse to be the opening of a new section, not the close of the former.

preaching the word] Here first we become acquainted with the missionary language so frequent in the rest of the book: and we have the word, an abbreviated expression very familiar among Christians when the book was written, for the fuller one which must have prevailed at first, “*the word of God*.”

5. Philip] *The deacon:* not *one of the Twelve:* this is precluded by vv. 1 and 14. And it is probable, that the persecution should have been directed especially against the colleagues of Stephen. Philip is mentioned again as *the Evangelist*,—probably from his having been the first recorded who preached (*evangelized*) the word,—in ch. xxi. 8,—as married, and having four daughters, virgins, who prophesied.

the city of Samaria] Verbatim as John iv. 5, in which case it is specified as being Sychar (Sichem). As the words stand here, seeing that *Samaria* (vv. 9, 14; ch. ix. 31; xv. 3) signifies the *district*, I should be inclined to believe that Syciem is here also intended. It was a place of rising importance, and in after-times eclipsed the fame of its neighbour Samaria, which latter had been, on its presentation by Augustus to Herod the Great, re-fortified and called Sebaste. It still, however, bore the name of Samaria.

them] The inhabitants, implied in the word *city*.

6. gave heed...] If this place was Syciem, the narrative in John iv. will fully account for the readiness with which these people received ‘*the proclamation of the Christ*’

7.] According to the reading in the genuine text, which is too strongly upheld by manuscript authority to be rejected for the easier ordinary one, the literal rendering is as follows: **For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they crying out with a loud voice, came out.** The A.V., though founded on a different reading, comes to the same.

9. Simon] Neander, in the course of some excellent remarks on this whole history (see further on ver. 14), identifies, and I believe with reason, this Simon with one mentioned as living from ten to twenty years after this by Josephus, and as having been employed by the procurator Felix to tempt Drusilla to leave her husband, and live with him. Simon is there called “a Jew, born in Cyprus, and held to be a magician.” The only difficulty seems to be, that Simon is stated by Justin Martyr, himself a Samaritan, to have been “a Samaritan, from a village called Gitton.” But it has struck me that either Justin, or perhaps more probably Josephus, may have confounded Ghittim with Chittim, i.e. Citium in Cyprus. The account in Josephus is quite in character with what we here read of Simon: not inconsistent with ver. 24, which appears to have been uttered under terror occasioned by the solemn denunciation of Peter.—Justin goes on to relate that he was worshipped as a god at Rome in the

time of Claudius Cæsar, on account of his magical powers, and had a statue on the island in the Tiber, inscribed ‘*Simoni Deo Sancto*’ (to Simon the Holy God). Singularly enough, in the year 1574, a stone was found in the Tiber (or *standing on the island in the year 1662*, according to Smith’s Dictionary of Biography and Mythology), with the inscription SEMONI SANCO DEO FIDIO SACRUM, i.e. sacred to the god *Semo Sancus*, the Sabine Hereules;—which makes it probable that Justin may have been misled.—The history of Simon is full of legend and fable. He is said to have studied at Alexandria, and to have originally been, with the heresiarch Dositheus, a disciple of John the Baptist. Of Dositheus he became first the disciple, and then the successor. Origen makes Dositheus also a Samaritan, His own especial followers (Simonian) had dwindled so much in the time of Origen, that he says there were at that day hardly thirty in the world. There are reports also of subsequent controversies between Simon Magus and Peter, of which the scene is laid at Cæsarea. According to some, he met with his death at Rome, having, during an encounter with Peter, raised himself into the air by the aid of evil spirits, and being precipitated thence at the prayer of Peter and Paul. I saw in the church of S. Francesca Romana, in the forum, a stone with two dents in it, and this inscription: “On this stone rested the knees of S. Peter, when the demons carried Simon Magus through the air.”—The fathers generally regard him as the founder of Gnosticism: this may be in some sense true: but, from the very little authentic information we possess, it is impossible to ascertain how far he was identified with their tenets. Origen distinctly denies that his followers were Christians in any sense.

using sorcery] viz. by exercising magic arts, such as then were very common in the East and found wide acceptance; impostors taking advantage of the very general expectation of a Deliverer at this time, to set themselves up by means of such trickeries as ‘some great ones.’ We have other examples in Elymas (ch. xiii.); Apollonius of Tyana; and somewhat later, Alexander of Abonoteichos; see these latter in Smith’s Dictionary of Biography and Mythology.

some great one] Probably not in such definite terms as his followers later are represented by Jerome as putting into his mouth: “I am the Word of God... I am the Paraclete, I am Almighty, I am all that is in God.”

10. the great power of God] Literally, according to the best MS. authorities, the power of God **which is called great**. Neander and Meyer think that they must have referred to the **Word**, the creating and governing manifestation of God, so much spoken of in the Alexandrine philosophy, and must have regarded Simon as an incarnation of the *Word*; so that their erroneous belief would form some preparation for the great truth of an incarnate Messiah, preached by Philip. But to this De Wette well replies, that we can hardly suppose the Alexandrine philosophy to have been so familiar to the mass of the people; and refers the expression to their popular belief of a *great angel*, who might, as the angels were called by the Samaritans the *powers of God*, be designated by these remarkable words.

11.] The rendering “*he had bewitched them*” is grammatically wrong. The word rendered “*bewitched*” (which is perhaps the best translation here) is “*amazed*” in Matt. xii. 23,— “*astonished*” in Mark v. 42, Luke xxiv. 22&c.

13.] “Simon saw his followers dropping off, and was himself astounded at the miracles wrought by Philip: he therefore thought it best himself also to acknowledge this superior power. He attached himself to Philip, and was baptized like the rest: but we are not, as the sequel shews, to understand that the preaching of the Gospel had made any impression on his heart, but that he accounted for what he saw in his own fashion. He was convinced, from the works which Philip did, that he was *in league with some powerful spirit*: he viewed baptism as the initiation into communion with that spirit, and expected that he should be able to make use of the higher power thus gained for his own purposes, and unite this new magical power to his own. All were baptized who professed belief in Jesus as the Messiah: there was therefore no reason for rejecting Simon, considering besides, that from the nature of the case he would for the time have given up his magical practices.” Neander. “It is plain,” says Calvin, “from this example of Simon, that the grace which is figured in Baptism is not conferred on all indifferently. It is a dogma of the Papists, that unless a man place the bar of mortal sin in the way, all receive, with the outward sign, the verity and effect of the Sacraments. Thus they attribute a magical force to the Sacraments, making them profitable without faith. But it is for us to know, that we are offered by God in the Sacraments whatever the promises annexed to them contain, and this in no empty words merely, provided we are led by faith to Christ, and seek from Him what the Sacraments promise. For though the reception of Baptism was of no profit to him, as the matter stood, yet if his conversion had followed afterwards, as some think it did, in that case its profit was not extinguished nor abolished. For it often happens that it is a long time before the Spirit of God works, and causes the Sacraments to begin to prove their efficacy.”

14–25.] MISSION OF PETER AND JOHN TO SAMARIA. A question arises on this procedure of the Apostles:—whether it was as a matter of course, that the newly baptized should, by the laying on of hands subsequently, receive the Holy Ghost,—or whether there was in the case of these Samaritans any thing peculiar, which caused the Apostles to go down to them and perform this act. (1) The only analogous case is ch. xix. 5, 6: in using which we must observe that there it is distinctly asserted that the *miraculous* gifts of the Spirit followed the laying on of Paul’s hands; and that by the expression “*when Simon saw*” in ver. 18, which must be taken literally, the same is implied here. And on this point the remarks of Calvin are too important to be omitted: “Here a question arises. He says that they were *only baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and consequently were not yet partakers of the Spirit. But either Baptism has no virtue and grace at all; or it has whatever efficacy it possesses from the Holy Spirit. In Baptism we are washed from sins: but Paul shews that this washing is the work of the Holy Ghost

(Tit. iii. 5). The water of Baptism is the symbol of Christ's blood: but Peter says that it is the Spirit by whom we are washed in the blood of Christ. In Baptism our old man is crucified that we may be raised into newness of life (Rom. vi. 6): whence is all this but by sanctification of the Spirit? So that Baptism will have nothing left, if it be dissociated from the Spirit. Therefore it must not be denied, that the Samaritans, who had duly put on Christ in Baptism, had been also invested with the Spirit (Gal. iii. 27). And indeed Luke here speaks, not of the ordinary grace of the Spirit by which God regenerates us as sons to Himself, but of those special gifts with which it was the Lord's will to endow some persons in the beginning of the Gospel for the furnishing of the Kingdom of Christ." And a little after: "The Papists, in their wish to extol their fictitious Confirmation, do not hesitate to go even so far as to utter this sacrilegious diction, that those are only half Christians, on whom hands have not yet been laid. It is intolerable that they should have fixed on the Church as a perpetual law, what was a mere temporal symbol... for even they themselves are obliged to confess, that the Church was only for a time adorned with those gifts." Whence it follows that the imposition of hands which the Apostles here performed, came to an end when its effect ceased." The English church, in retaining the rite of Confirmation, *has not grounded it on any institution by the Apostles*, but merely declared the laying on of hands on the candidates, to certify them (by this sign) of God's favour and goodness towards them, to be '*after the example of the holy Apostles.*' Nor is there any trace in the office, of the *conferring of the Holy Ghost* by confirmation; but a distinct recognition of the *former reception* of the Holy Spirit (at Baptism), and a prayer for the increase of His influence, proportioned to the maturer life now opening on the newly confirmed. (2) If then we have here *no institution of a perpetual ordinance*, something peculiar to the case before us must have prompted this journey. And here again we have a question: Was that moving cause in the Samaritans, or in Philip? I believe the true answer to the question will be found by combining both. Our Lord's command (ch. i. 8) had removed all doubt as to Samaria being a legitimate field for preaching, and Samaritan converts being admissible. (So also with regard to Gentile converts,—see ch. x., notes: but, as the church at this time believed, they must be *circumcised*, which the Samaritan already were,—and *keep the law*, which after their manner the Samaritans did.) The sudden appearance, however, of a body of baptized believers in Samaria, by the agency of one who was *not one of the Apostles*,—while it would excite in them every feeling of thankfulness and joy, would require their presence and power, as Apostles, to perform their especial part as the divinely appointed Founders of the Church. Add to this, that the Samaritans appear to have been credulous, and easily moved to attach themselves to individuals, whether it were Simon, or Philip; which might make the Apostles desirous to be present in person, and examine, and strengthen their faith. Another reason may have been not without its influence: the Jewish church at Jerusalem would naturally for the most part be alienated in mind from this new body of believers. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans was excessive and unrelenting. It would therefore be in the highest degree important that it should be shewn to the church at Jerusalem, that these Samaritans, by the agency of the same Apostles, were partakers of the same visibly testified gifts of the one Spirit. The use of this argument, which was afterwards applied by Peter in the case of the Gentiles, unexpected even by himself, ch. xi. 17,—was probably no small part of the purpose of this journey to Samaria.

14. Peter and John] Perhaps *two*, in accordance with their having been sent out two and two on their first missionary journey (Mark vi. 7): so Paul and Barnabas afterwards (ch. xiii. 2): and the same principle seems to have been adhered to even when these last separated: Paul chose Silas, Barnabas took Mark.—**PETER**,—because to him belonged, in this early part of the gospel, in a remarkable manner, the first establishing of the church; it was the fulfilment of the promise "*upon this rock I will build my church.*" It was he who had (in common with all the Apostles, it is true, but in this early period more especially committed to him) the keys of the kingdom of heaven,—who opened the door to the 3000 on the day of Pentecost,—now (as a formal and ratifying act) to the Samaritans,—and in ch. x. to the Gentiles. So far, is plain truth of Scripture history. The monstrous fiction begins, when to Peter is attributed a fixed diocese and successors, and to those successors a delegated power more like that ascribed to Simon Magus than that promised to Peter.——This is the last time that **JOHN** appears in the Acts. He is only once more mentioned in the New Testament (except in the Revelation), viz. as having been present in Jerusalem at Paul's visit, Gal. ii. 9.

15. prayed for them] So laying on of hands is preceded by prayer, ch. vi. 6; xiii. 3.

18. when Simon saw] Its effects were therefore *visible* (see above), and consequently the effect of the laying on of the Apostles' hands was not the *inward* but the *outward miraculous* gifts of the Spirit.

he offered them money] De Wette excellently remarks, 'He regarded the capability of imparting the Holy Spirit,—rightly, as something conferred, as a *derived power* (see Matt. x. 1), but wrongly, as one to be obtained by an *external method*, without an *inward disposition*: and, since in external commerce every thing may be had for gold, *he wanted to buy it*. This is the essence of the sin of *Simony*, which is intimately connected with unbelief in the power and signification of the Spirit, and with materialism.'—Clearly, from the narrative, Simon himself *did not receive the Spirit by the laying on of hands*. His nefarious attempt to treat with the Apostles was *before he himself had been presented to them for this purpose*.

20.] The solemn denunciation of Peter, like the declaration of Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 13, has reference to the perishableness of all worldly good, and of those with it, whose chief end is the use of it (see Col. ii. 22). 'Thy gold and thou are equally on the way to corruption:' *thy gold*, as its nature is: *thou with it*, as having no higher life than thy natural corrupt one: as being bound in the *bond of iniquity*. The expression of the same Peter, 1 Pet. i. 7, "*gold that perisheth*," is remarkably parallel with this (see

too 1 Pet. i. 18).

thou thoughtest] not ‘*thou hast thought*’, as A.V. The historic force of the tense is to be kept here: the Apostle uses it as looking forward to the day of his destruction, ‘Let thy lot be destruction, and that because thou thoughtest,’ &c.

to acquire, not passive, as A.V., ungrammatically.

21. neither part nor lot] The two words are apparently synonymous: the first being literal, the second figurative, but not without reference perhaps to the *inheritance* of the kingdom of God, the *incorruptible inheritance*, 1 Pet. i. 4.

this matter] i.e. **the matter now spoken of**,—‘to which I now allude.’

thy heart is not right,—sincere, single-meaning,—**in God's presence**, ‘as God sees it’ i.e. ‘seen as it really is, by God, is not in earnest in its seeking after the gospel, but seeks it with unworthy ends in view.’

22. if perhaps] The uncertainty refers, not to the doubt whether Simon would repent or not (see below): but as to whether or not his sin may not have come under the awful category of those unpardonable ones specified by our Lord, Matt. xii. 31, to which words this sentence seems to have a tacit reference. Peter does not pronounce his sin to have been such, but throws in this doubt, to increase the motive to repent, and the earnestness of his repentance. This verse is important, taken in connexion with John xx. 23, as shewing *how completely the Apostles themselves referred the forgiveness of sins to, and left it in, the sovereign power of God, and not to their own delegated power of absolution*.

23.] For gives the reason, not why it would be *difficult for forgiveness to take place, but why he had such extreme need of repentance and prayer*, as being tied and bound by the chain of sin.

the gall of bitterness] See Deut. xxix. 18; Lam. iii. 15,—‘the gall which is the very seat and essence of bitterness’—**a very gall of bitterness**. The poison of serpents was considered to be seated in their gall: so “*the gall of asps is within him*,” Job xx. 14.

24.] Simon speaks here much as Pharaoh, Exod. (viii. 28; ix. 28) x. 17,—who yet hardened his heart afterwards. It is observable also that he wishes merely for the *averting of the punishment*. The words, “that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me,” seem remarkably to set forth the mere terror of the carnal man, without any idea of the man becoming *another man* in thoughts and aims.

25–40.] Conversion of THE ÆTHIOPIAN EUNUCH BY PHILIP'S TEACHING.

25.] So then indicates (*see note on ver. 4*) that the paragraph should begin here, not at ver. 26 as commonly.

villages of the Samaritans] It is interesting to recall Luke ix. 52, where on their entering into a *village of the Samaritans, the same* John wishes to call down fire from heaven, and consume them. The gradual sowing of the seed further and further from Jerusalem is advancing: not only is this eunuch to carry it to a far distant land, but Philip is sent to a desert road, away from town or village, to seek him. The imperfect tenses, “*were returning* &c.,” are significant. They were on their way back to Jerusalem, and were evangelizing the Samaritan villages, when the angel spake to Philip.

26.] An angel, *visibly appearing*: not in a dream,—which is not, as some suppose, implied by the command to *arise*. The ministration of angels introduces and brings about several occurrences in the beginning of the church, see ch. v. 19; x. 3; xii. 7 (xxvii. 23). The appearance seems to have taken place in Samaria, after the departure of Peter and John. He would reach the place appointed by a shorter way than through Jerusalem: he would probably follow the high road (of the itineraries, see map in Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul) as far as Gophna, and thence strike across the country south-westward to join, at some point to which he would be guided, the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza.

GAZA] The southernmost city of Canaan (Gen. x. 19), in the portion of Judah (Josh. xv. 47), but soon taken from that tribe by the Philistines, and always spoken of as a Philistine city (1 Sam. vi. 17; 2 Kings xviii. 8; Amos i. 6–8; Zeph. iii. 4; Zech. ix. 5). In Jer. xlvi. 1, we have ‘before Pharaoh (Necho?) smote Gaza,’—implying that at one time it was under Egypt. Alexander the Great took it after a siege of five months, but did not destroy it, for we find it a strong place in the subsequent Syrian wars, see 1 Macc. ix. 52; xi. 61 f.; xiii. 43; xiv. 7; xv. 28; xvi. 1.—It was destroyed by the Jewish king Alexander Jannaens (96 A.C.), after a siege of a year, but rebuilt again by the Roman general Gabinius,—afterwards given by Augustus to Herod, and finally after his death attached to the province of Syria, Mela, in the time of Claudius, calls it ‘a vast city, and strongly fortified,’ with which agree Eusebius and Jerome. At present it is a large town by the same name, with from 15, 000 to 16, 000 inhabitants. The above chronological notices shew that it cannot have been “*desert*” at this time: see below.

this is desert] The words, I believe, of the *angel*, not of St. Luke. There appear to have been two (if not more) ways from Jerusalem to Gaza. But Robinson found, besides, an ancient road leading *direct* from Jerusalem to Gaza, through the *Wadi Musurr*, and over the Beit Jiibrin, which certainly *at present* is “desert,” without towns or villages. Thus the words will refer to the *way*: and denote, **the way of which I speak to thee is desert**. See in my Greek Test. further proofs of the inapplicability of the epithet “desert” to Gaza.

27. an eunuch] The very general use of eunuchs in the East for filling offices of confidence, and the fact that this man was minister to a female sovereign, makes it probable that he was literally an eunuch. If not so, the word would hardly have been expressed. No difficulty arises from Deut. xxiii. 1, for no inference can be drawn from the history further than that he may have been a proselyte of the gate, in whose case the prohibition would not apply.—Nay, the whole occurrence seems to have had one design, connected with this fact. The walls of partition were one after another being thrown down: the Samaritans were already in full possession of the Gospel: it was next to be shewn that none of those physical incapacities which excluded from the congregation of the Lord under the old covenant, formed any bar to Christian baptism and the inheritance among believers; and thus the way gradually to be paved for the great and as yet incomprehensible truth of Gal. iii. 28.

Candace (pronounced Candācé, not Candācē)] As *Pharaoh* among the Egyptians was the customary name of kings, so Candācé of the queens among the *Aethiopians* in upper Egypt, who dwelt in the island of Meroe, where Pliny relates that a queen reigned named Candace, and adds, “which name has now for many years passed from one queen to another.”

had come to Jerusalem for to worship...] This did not only Jews and proselytes, but also those pious Gentiles who adhered to Judaism,—the proselytes of the gate, see John xii. 20. Eusebius, taking for granted that this eunuch was a Gentile, calls him “the firstfruits of the Gentiles throughout the world.” There were (see below, ch. xi. 21) cases of Gentile conversion before that of Cornelius; and the stress of the narrative in ch. x. consists in the miscellaneous admission of all the Gentile company of Cornelius, and their official reception into the church by that Apostle to whom was especially given the power. We may remark, that if even the plain revelation by which the reception of Cornelius and his company was commanded failed finally to convince Peter, so that long after this he vacillated (Gal. ii. 11, 12), it is no argument for the eunuch not being a Gentile, that his conversion and baptism did not remove the prejudices of the Jewish Christians.

28. read Esaias] aloud, see next ver. Schöttgen quotes from the Rabbis: “He who journeyeth and hath no companion, let him study the Law.”—He probably read in the LXX, the use of which was almost universal in Egypt.

29.) This is the first mention of that *inner prompting* of the Spirit, referred to again

probably ch. xiii. 2, but certainly ch. x. 19; xvi. 6, 7. Chrysostom understands the words of *the appearance of an angel*, but the text hardly allows it.

30.) Yea, but....: i.e. “It is well, thou art well employed: but....?” The form of the question assumes, modestly, that he did not understand what he was reading.

31.] For (see margin) gives the reason of the negative which is understood. The answer expresses at once humility and docility.

32.] Perhaps it is best to render, **The contents of the (passage of) Scripture which he was reading were as follows.**

33.] This stands in the Hebrew ‘He was taken away by distress and judgment’ (so in the margin of the A.V.): i.e. as Lowth, ‘by an oppressive judgment.’

his generation] i.e. **the age in which he shall live**—‘the wickedness of his contemporaries.’ The fathers, and Bede and some modern Commentators, explain ‘*His generation*’ of His eternal Sonship and His miraculous Incarnation. But the Hebrew does not seem to bear this out.

34. answered] to the passage of *Scripture*, considered as the question proposed: not, to the question in ver. 30. We can hardly suppose any immediate reference in the words **some other man**, to Christ.

86. a certain water] Traditions about the situation of this spring are found in some ancient notes to Jerome. It is said to be near a place named Bethsur. Eusebius states it to be twenty miles south of Jerusalem in the direction of Hebron: and so it is set down in the ancient itineraries. Pocock found there a fountain built over, and a village called Betur on the left. Fabri describes the fountain as the head of a considerable brook, and found near it the ruins of a Christian church. There is no improbability in the tradition, except that, even supposing a way going across from Hebron straight to Gaza to be called *desert*, this would not be on that portion of it, but on the high road.

what doth hinder me to be baptized?] There is no reason for supposing Philip to have preached to him the necessity of baptism: his own acquaintance with Jewish practices, and perhaps his knowledge of the progress of the new faith in Jerusalem, would account for the proposition.

37.) The authorities against this verse are too strong to permit its insertion. It appears to have been one of those remarkable additions to the text of the Acts, common in some of even our earliest MSS., few of which, however, have found their way into the revised text. This insertion is found as early as Irenæus (Century II.), who quotes it. It appears to have been made to suit the formularies of the baptismal liturgies, it being considered strange that the eunuch should have been baptized without some such confession.

38. **he** (viz. the eunuch) **commanded**] Some of our MSS., whose text apparently Jerome followed, read here, ‘*the Spirit fell on the eunuch, and an angel of the Lord caught away Philip.*’ This is curious, and has probably arisen from a desire to conform the results of the eunuch’s baptism to the usual method of the divine procedure, and the snatching away of Philip to his commission, ver. 26. But the Spirit did not fall on the Samaritans after baptism by Philip.—The text clearly relates a supernatural disappearance of Philip: compare 2 Kings ii. 16; no interpretation of his being suddenly hurried away by the prompting of the Spirit, will satisfy the analogy of the above-cited passage, and of (see below) a parallel one in St. Luke’s own Gospel.

39. **saw him no more**] Not ‘never saw him from that day,’ though (see below) that meaning may be indirectly included:—but as in Luke xxiv. 31, “*He vanished from their sight,*” and as in the strictly parallel words of 2 Kings ii. 12, “*he saw him no more,*”—after the going up of Elijah. These last words in my view decide the question, that the departure of Philip was miraculous.

for he went on his way] This refers to *what follows*:—Philip was found at Azotus: if the eunuch had gone *that way*, he might have met with him again: but he did not, for he went from the fountain *on his own way*, which did not lead through Azotus. There has been some strange inadvertence in this verse on the part of the translators of the A.V. The Greek has plainly, **and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing:** and there is no variety of reading.

40.] The term “*was found*” again appears to refer to 4 Kings ii. ver. 17.—AZOTUS or ASHDOD (Josh. xiii. 3; 1 Sam. v. 5 al.) was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines, never, though nominally in Judah, thoroughly subjugated by the Jews: it was taken by Tartan the Assyrian general (Isa. xx. 1),—again by Psammethicus, Jer. xxv. 20,—again by Judas Maccabæus (1 Macc. v. 68) and Jonathan (1 Macc. x. 84), and the latter destroyed;—rebuilt by Gabinius, and belonged to the kingdom of Herod, who left it in his will to his sister Salome. At present it is a small village, retaining the name Esdud, but there are no remains.

all the cities] viz. Ekron, Jamnia, Joppa, Apollonia, on the direct road: or, if he deviated somewhat for the purpose, Lydda also (which seems implied ch. ix. 32).

Cæsarea] See note, ch. x. 1.

Acts: Chapter 9

CHAP. IX. 1–30.] CONVERSION OF SAUL.

1.] The narrative is taken up from ch. viii. 3, but probably with some interval, sufficient perhaps to cover the events of ch. viii.

We should perhaps hardly render the original word here, as the A.V., “breathing *out*,”—but **breathing**; his ‘spirit,’ inhaled or exhaled, being **threatenings and slaughter**.

the high priest] See table in Introduction to Acts;—it would be Theophilus,—brother and successor to Jonathan, who succeeded Caiaphas.

2. **letters**] of authorization: written by the high priest (in this case, but not always, president of the Sanhedrim) in the name of *the whole estate of the elders*, ch. xxii. 5.

to Damascus] DAMASCUS is probably the oldest existing city in the world. We read of it in Abraham’s time (Gen. xiv. 15; xv. 2); then no more till David subdued it (2 Sam. viii. 6); it became independent again under Solomon (1 Kings xi. 24 ff.), and from that time was the residence of the kings of Syria (1 Kings xv. 18; xx. 1 ff.), who were long at war with Israel and Judah, and at last were permitted to prevail considerably over Israel (2 Kings x. 32; Amos i. 3, 4) and to exact tribute from Judah (2 Kings xii. 17, 18, see also 2 Kings xiii. 3, 22, 25). Damascus was recovered to Israel by Jeroboam II. (about 825

A.C. 2 Kings xiv. 28). Not long after we find Rezin, king of Syria, in league with Pekah, king of Israel, against Ahaz (2 Kings xv. 37). Ahaz invited to his assistance Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, who took Damascus and slew Rezin, and led the people captive (2 Kings xvi. 5–9; Isa. viii. 4). From this time we find it subject to Assyria (Isa. ix. 11; x. 9; xvii. 1), then to Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. 2; Jer. xxxv. 11)—Persia, the Syrian Seleucidæ (1 Macc. xi. 62; xii. 32)—and from the time of Pompey (64 A.C.), to the Romans, and attached to the province of Syria. Many Jews were settled there, and the majority of the wives of the citizens were proselytes.—On its subjection to Aretas, see below, ver. 24, note. It was later the residence of the Ommiad Caliphs, and the metropolis of the Mahomedan world. At present it is a large city, with 250, 000 inhabitants, nearly 70, 000 of whom are Christians.—It is situated most beautifully, in a large and well-watered plain, on the river Chrysorrhœas (Barrada), which divides into many streams (see 2 Kings v. 12), and fertilizes the plain:—and is bounded on all sides by the desert. See a vivid description of Damascus in Conybeare and Howson's Life of St. Paul, vol. i. pp. 104–108.

to the synagogues] i.e. to the *presidents* of the synagogues, who would acknowledge the orders of the Sanhedrim, and could, under the authority of the Ethnarch, carry them out.

of the way] Not ‘of this way,’ A.V., which rendering should be kept for the places where the pronoun is *expressed*, as ch. xxii. 4—but **of the way**, viz. of ‘salvation,’ ch. xvi. 17, or ‘of the Lord,’ ch. xviii. 25. The expression ‘THE WAY’ had evidently become a well-known one among Christians (see in this edition ch. xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 14, 22); and it only was necessary to prefix the pronoun when *strangers* were addressed.—The special journey to Damascus presupposes the existence of Christians there, and in some numbers. This would be accounted for by the return of many who may have been converted at the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, and perhaps also by some of the fugitives from the persecution having settled there. This latter is rendered probable by Ananias's words, “*I have heard from many of this man,*” ver. 13.

3.] The journey from Jerusalem was probably made on the Roman road, i.e. that of the Itineraries, by Neapolis (Sichem) and Scythopolis, crossing the Jordan, south of the lake Tiberias,—Gadara, and so to Damascus. Or he might have joined,—either the Petra road, by Jericho and Heshbon, and so by Botsrah to Damascus,—or the Egyptian caravan-track, which passes to the north of the lake of Tiberias, and near Cæsarea Philippi. In either case the journey would occupy from five to six days, the distance being 130 to 150 miles.

there shined round about him...] It was (ch. xxii. 6) *about noonday*; and from ch. xxvi. 13, the light was *above the brightness of the sun*. These details at once cut away all ground from the absurd rationalistic attempt to explain away the appearance as having been *lightning*. Unquestionably, the inference is, that it was a bright noon, and the full splendour of the Oriental sun was shining.—His companions saw the light, and were also cast to the ground, ch. xxvi. 13, 14; xxii. 9: see below on ver. 7.

4. a voice saying unto him] in the Hebrew language, ch. xxvi. 14.

why persecutest thou me?] A remarkable illustration of Matt. xxv. 45. No stress should be laid on me; but the very lack of emphasis, assuming the awful fact, gives more solemnity to the question.

5.] That Saul *saw*, as well as heard, Him who spoke with him, is certain from Ananias's speech, ver. 17, and ch. xxii. 14,—that of Barnabas, ver. 27,—from ch. xxvi. 16 (“*I [have] appeared unto thee*”), and from the references by Paul himself to his having seen the Lord, 1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8. These last I unhesitatingly refer to this occasion, and not to any subsequent one, when he saw the Lord *in a trance*, ch. xxii. 17. Such appearances could hardly form the subject of the testimony of an eyewitness which should rank with that of the other apostles: this, on the contrary, was no *trance*, but the *real bodily appearance of the risen Jesus*; so that it might be adduced as the ground of testimony to His Resurrection.—On the words excluded from our text, as having been interpolated from ch. xxvi. 14, and xxii. 10, see note at xxvi. 14. It is natural that the account of the historian should be less precise than that of the *person concerned, relating his own history*. In ch. xxvi. 15–18, very much more is related to have been said by the Lord: but perhaps he there, as he omits the subsequent particulars, includes the revelations made to him during the three days, and in the message of Ananias.

7.] In ch. xxii. 9, we read, “*They that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid: but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.*” Two accounts seemingly (and certainly, in the *letter*) discrepant; but exceedingly instructive when their spirit is compared,—the fact being this: that the companions of Saul saw and were struck to the ground by the light, but saw *no person*:—that they stood (I should acknowledge the discrepancy here, and recognize the more accurate detail of ch. xxvi. 14, that they *fell to the ground*) mute, hearing the sound of the voice, but not the words spoken and their meaning. Compare John xii. 29, note. Two classes of readers only will stumble at this difference of the forms of narration; those who from enmity to the faith are striving to create or magnify discrepancies,—and those who, by the suicidal theory of verbal inspiration, are effectually doing the work of the former. The devout and intelligent student of Scripture will see in such examples a convincing proof of the simple truth of the narrative,—the absence of all endeavour to pare away apparent inconsistencies or revise them into conformity,—the *bonâ fide* work of holy truthful men, bearing each his testimony to things seen and heard under the guidance, not of the spirit of bondage, but of that Spirit of whom it is said, “*where the Spirit of the*

Lord is, there is liberty.'—I should not too hastily determine that this account *has not come from Saul himself*, on account of the above differences: they are no more than might arise in narrations at different times by the same person.

8.] When his eyes were opened (it would seem that he had closed them on the first disappearance of the vision), **he saw no one**. He explains it, ch. xxii. 11, "*when I could not see for the glory of that light.*" He had seen, what those with him had not seen, the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus. See below on ver. 18.

9. he neither did eat nor drink] There is no occasion to soften these words; the effect produced on him by the *heavenly vision* (ch. xxvi. 19), aided by his own deeply penitent and remorseful state of mind, rendered him indifferent to all sustenance whatever.

10.] Paul adds, ch. xxii. 12, with particularity, as defending himself before the *Jews*, that Ananias was "*a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there.*" saying nothing of the command received by him, *nor that he was a disciple*. In ch. xxvi., speaking before the Roman governor, *he does not mention him*.—Mr. Howson remarks on the close analogy between the divine procedure by visions here, and in ch. x. Here, Ananias is prepared for his work, and Saul for the reception of him as a messenger, each by a vision: and similarly Peter and Cornelius in ch. x. I may add, that in ch. viii., where the preparation of heart was already found in the eunuch, *Philip only* was supernaturally prepared for the interview.

11.] "We are allowed to bear in mind that the thoroughfares of Eastern cities do not change, and to believe that the 'straight street,' which still extends through Damascus in long perspective from the eastern gate, is the street where Ananias spoke to Saul." (Conybeare and Howson, p. 115.)

the house of Juda s] The houses of Ananias and Judas are still shewn to travellers. Doubtless they (or at least the former) would long be remembered and pointed out by Christians; but, in the long degradation of Christianity in the East, most of such identities must have been lost; and imposture is so easy, that it is hardly possible to cherish the thought that the spots now pointed out can be the true ones. And so of all cases, where we have not unalterable or unaltered data to go on. Still, true as this is, we have sometimes proofs and illustrations unexpectedly appearing, as research goes on, which identify as authentic, sites long pointed out by tradition. So that our way seems to be, to seek for all such elucidations, and meantime to suspend our judgment: but never to lose sight of, nor to treat contemptuously at first sight, a local belief.

of Tarsus] The first place where he is so specified.—TARSUS was the capital of the province of Cilicia, a large and populous city in a fruitful plain on the river Cydnus, which flowed through the midst of it, with a swift stream of remarkably cold water. Strabo speaks most highly of its eminence in schools of philosophy; and says that they excelled those even of Athens and Alexandria. He enumerates many learned men who had sprung from it. It was a "*free city*," i.e. one which, though under Rome, lived under its own laws and chose its own magistrates. This *freedom* was granted to it by Antony: and much later we find it a Roman *colony*. It is now a town with about 20, 000 inhabitants, and is described as being a den of poverty, filth, and ruins. There are many remains of the old town.

behold, he prayeth] This word would set before Ananias, more powerfully than any other, the state of Saul.

12. a man named Ananias] A man, whose name in the same vision he knew to be Ananias. The sight of the man and the knowledge of his name were both granted him in his vision.

13. thy saints] This is the first time that this afterwards well-known appellation occurs as applied to the believers in Christ.

14.] It could hardly fail to have been notified to the Christians at Damascus by their brethren at Jerusalem, that Saul was on his way to persecute them.

15. a vessel of choice] i.e. a chosen vessel: as we say, 'the man of his choice.' St. Paul often uses this word *vessel* in a similar meaning, see 2 Cor. iv. 7; 1 Thess. iv. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 21; and especially Rom. ix. 22, 23, &c., where it is used in illustrating God's sovereign power in election.

to bear, perhaps in reference to the metaphor in *vessel*.

nations] i.e. the Gentiles. This would hardly be understood at the time: it was afterwards on a remarkable occasion repeated to Paul by the Lord in a vision (see ch. xxii. 21), and was regarded by him as the specific command which gave the direction to his ministry, see Gal. ii. 7, 8.

kings] Agrippa, and probably Nero.

16. I will shew him...] The fulfilment of this is testified by Paul himself, ch. xx. 23, 25: see also xxi. 11.

17. and he filled with the Holy Ghost] I can hardly think that these words imply that the Lord had said to Ananias more than is above related: I would rather view them as a natural inference from what was said in ver. 15.—In ch. xxii. 14, where the command to Ananias is omitted, *his* speech contains much of the reason given in the command here. It is remarkable again how Paul, speaking there to an infuriated Jewish mob, gives the words spoken just that form which would best gain him a favourable hearing with them,—for example, “*the God of our fathers,*”—“*to see that Just One,*” “*all men,*” avoiding as yet the hateful word “*Gentiles.*” He there too gives, “*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord,*” as part of the exhortation of Ananias.

18. as it had been scales] The recovery of sight is plainly related as miraculous, the consequence of the divinely-appointed laying on of the hands of Ananias. And this scaly substance which fell from his eyes was thrown off in the process of the instantaneous healing.

was baptized] It has been well remarked by Olshausen, that great honour was here placed upon the sacrament of baptism, inasmuch as not even Saul, who had seen the Lord in special revelation and was an elect vessel, was permitted to dispense with this, the Lord’s appointed way of admission into His Church.

19. certain days] A few days; of quiet, and becoming acquainted with those as brethren, whom he came to persecute as infidels: but not to learn from them the gospel (for this he did not receive from man, neither was he taught it, Gal i. 12), nor was the time longer than to admit of **straightway** being used, ver. 20,—and indeed the same word is used of the whole space (including his *preaching* in our vv. 20, 21) preceding the journey to Arabia, in Gal. i. 16. See below.

20. he preached Jesus] The alteration to “*Christ*” has probably, as Meyer suggests, been made from doctrinal considerations, to fix on “**the Son of God**” the theological sense,—*that Christ is the Son of God*—instead of that which it now bears,—*that Jesus is the Son of God*, i.e. that Jesus of Nazareth, *as a matter of fact*, is the Son of God, i.e. the Messiah expected under that appellation.

21.] had come hither, implying the abandonment of the purpose.

22.] I regard the expression **Saul increased the more in strength**, as the *only words beneath which can lie concealed the journey to Arabia*. Paul mentions this journey (Gal. i. 17) with no obscure hint that to it was to be assigned the reception by him, in full measure, of the Gospel which he preached. And such a reception would certainly give rise to the great accession of power here recorded. I am the more disposed to allot that journey this place, from the following considerations. The omission of any mention of it here can arise only from one of two causes: (1) whether Paul himself were the source of the narrative, or some other narrator,—*the intentional passing over of it, as belonging more to his personal history* (which it was his express purpose to relate in Gal. i.) *than to that of his ministry*: (2) on the supposition of Paul not having been the source of the narrative,—*the narrator having not been aware of it*. In either case, this expression seems to me one very likely to have been used:—(1) if the omission was *intentional*,—to record a remarkable accession of power to Saul’s ministry, without particularizing whence or how it came: (2) if it was *unintentional*,—as a simple record of that which was observed in him, but of which the course was to the narrator unknown.

confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus] Chrysostom strikingly says, “Being learned in their law, he stopped their mouths and suffered them not to speak: they thought that they had got rid of such arguments in getting rid of Stephen, and behold they found another arguer more powerful than Stephen.”

23. many days] *In* Damascus, see above on ver. 19. The whole time, from his conversion to his journey to Jerusalem, was three years, Gal. i. 18.

took counsel to kill him] “The Jews again have recourse to the logic of force. They no longer seek for suborned men, and false accusers and false witnesses.” Chrysostom.

24.] In 2 Cor. xi. 32, St. Paul writes, “*In Damascus the governor under Arētas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me.*” A somewhat difficult chronological question arises respecting the subordination of Damascus to this Arētas. The city, under Augustus and Tiberius, was attached to the province of Syria: and we have coins of Damascus of both these emperors, and again of Nero and his successors. But we have none of Caligula and Claudius; and the following circumstances seem to point to a change in the rulership of Damascus at the death of Tiberius. There had been for some time war between Aretas, king of Arabia Nabatæa (whose capital was Petra), and Herod Antipas, on account of the divorce by Herod of Aretas’ daughter at the instance of Herodias, and on account of some disputes about their frontiers. A battle was fought, and Herod’s army entirely destroyed. On this Antipas, who was a favourite with Tiberius, sent to Rome for help: and Vitellius, the governor of Syria, was commissioned to march against Aretas, and take him, dead or alive. While on

his march, he heard at Jerusalem of the death of Tiberius (March 16, A.D. 37), and no longer being able to carry out his intended war, on account of the change of the supreme power from Tiberius to Caligula, abandoned his march, and sent his army into their winter quarters, himself returning to Antioch. This change of the supreme power brought about a great change in the situation of Antipas and his enemy. Antipas was soon (A. D. 39) banished to Lyons, and his kingdom given to Agrippa, his foe (Antt. xviii. 7. 2), who had been living in habits of intimacy with the new emperor. It would be natural that Aretas, who had been grossly injured by Antipas, should by this change of affairs, be received into favour; and the more so, as there was an old grudge between Vitellius and Antipas, of which Josephus says, he concealed his anger until the reign of Caligula, when he followed it up. Now in the year 38 Caligula made several changes in the East, granting Ituræa to Soæmus, Lesser Armenia and parts of Arabia to Cotys, the territory of Cotys to Rhæmetalces,—and to Polemon, the son of Polemon, his father's government. These facts, coupled with that of no Damascene coins of Caligula and Claudius existing (which might be fortuitous, but acquires force when thus combined), make it probable that about this time Damascus, which belonged to the predecessors of Aretas, was granted to Aretas by Caligula. This would at once solve the difficulty. The other suppositions,—that the Ethnarch was only visiting the city (as if he could then have guarded the city to prevent Paul's escape),—or that Aretas had seized Damascus on Vitellius giving up the expedition against him (as if a Roman governor of a province would, while waiting for orders from a new emperor, quietly allow one of its chief cities to be taken from him),—are in the highest degree improbable.

25.] Further particularized by the addition of “*through a window*,” 2 Cor. xi. 33. Such windows in the walls of cities are common in the East: see Josh. ii. 15: and an engraving of part of the present wall of Damascus in Conybeare and Howson's Life of St. Paul, i.p. 124.

in a basket] The word here is the same as in Matt. xv. 37, where see note.

26.] He went to Jerusalem *immediately*: the purpose of this journey was to become acquainted with Peter, Gal. i. 18: a resolution probably taken during the conspiracy of the Jews against him at Damascus, and in furtherance of his announced mission to the Gentiles: that, by conference with the Apostles, his sphere of work might be agreed on. And this purpose his escape enabled him to effect.

27.] It is very probable that Barnabas and Saul may have been personally known to each other in youth. “Cyprus is only a few hours' sail from Cilicia. The schools of Tarsus may naturally have attracted one who, though a Levite, was a Hellenist: and there the friendship may have begun, which lasted through many vicissitudes, till it was rudely interrupted in the dispute at Antioch (ch. xv. 39).” Conybeare and Howson, edn. 2, i.p. 127.

brought him to the apostles] Only to Peter and James the Lord's brother, Gal. i. 18, 19. Probably there were no other Apostles there at the time: if there were, it is hardly conceivable that Saul should not have seen them. On his second visit, he saw John also (Gal. ii. 9). Perhaps he never saw in the flesh any other of the Apostles after his conversion.

29. the Grecian Jews] See ch. vi. 1 and note. This he did, partly, we may infer, to avoid the extreme and violent opposition which he would immediately encounter from the Jews themselves,—but partly also, it may well be believed, because he himself in the synagogues of the Hellenists had opposed Stephen formerly.

30. Which when the brethren knew....] There was also another reason. He was praying in the temple, and saw the Lord in a vision, who commanded him to depart, for they would not receive his testimony:—and sent him from thence to the Gentiles: see ch. xxii, 17–21 and notes. His stay in Jerusalem at this visit was fifteen days, Gal. i. 18.

to Cæsarea] From the whole cast of the sentence, and the words **brought him down** and **sent him forth**, we should infer this to be Cæsarea Stratonis (see on ch. x. 1), even if this were not determined by the word *Cæsarea* used absolutely, which always applies to this city, and not to Cæsarea Philippi (which some believe to be meant: see Matt. xvi. 13 and note). From Gal. i. 21, it would appear that Saul about this time *traversed Syria* (on his way to Tarsus?). If so, he probably went by sea to Seleucia, and thence to Antioch. The expression **sent him forth**, looks more like a ‘sending off’ by sea, than a mere ‘sending forward’ by land. They sent him **towards**, ‘for,’ Tarsus. He was not idle there, but certainly preached the Gospel, and in all probability was the founder of the churches alluded to ch. xv. 23 and 41.

31.] FLOURISHING STATE OF THE CHURCH IN PALESTINE AT THIS TIME. Commencement of new section: compare note, ch. xi. 19. The reading **church**, instead of “*churches*,” can hardly (as Meyer) be an alteration to suit the idea of *the unity of the church*,—as in that case we should have similar alterations in ch. xv. 41; xvi. 5, where *no variations are found in the chief MSS.* More probably, it has been altered here to conform it to those places. This description probably embraces most of the time since the conversion of Saul. De Wette observes, that the attention of the Jews was, during much of this time, distracted from the Christians, by the attempt of Caligula to set up his image in the temple at Jerusalem, related by Josephus.

being built up, or *edified*: see Matt. xvi. 18. It probably refers to both external and internal strength and accession of grace. St.

Paul commonly uses it of *spiritual* building up: see 1 Cor. viii, 1; x. 23; xiv. 4, 17; 1 Thess. v. 11.

and was multiplied by the exhortation of (i. e. inspired by) **the Holy Spirit**] This is the only rendering which suits the usage of the words. See on the others which have been given, in my Greek Testament.

32–35.] HEALING OF AENEAS AT LYDDA BY PETER. This and the following miracle form the introduction to the very important portion of Peter's history which follows in ch. x.,—by bringing him and his work before us again.

32. as Peter passed throughout all....] These words are aptly introduced by the notice in ver. 31, which shews that Peter's journey was not an escape from persecution, but undertaken at a time of peace, and for the purpose of visiting the churches.—The word **all**, to which no substantive is supplied in the original, may be neuter, ‘all parts:’ but it is probably masculine, and “all the saints” or “all the brethren” are understood. As I have implied on ver. 31, this journey of Peter's is not necessarily consecutive on the events of vv. 1–30. But an alternative presents itself here; either it took place *before* the arrival of Saul in Jerusalem, or *after his departure*: for Peter was there during his visit (Gal. i. 18). It seems most likely that it was *before his arrival*. For (1) it is St. Luke's manner in this first part of the Acts, where he is carrying on several histories together, to follow the one in hand as far as some resting-point, and then go back and take up another: see ch. viii. 2 thus taken up from ver. 1: ver. 4 going back to the dispersion:—ch. ix. 1 taken up from viii. 3:—xi. 19, from viii. 4 again:—and (2) the journey of Peter to visit the churches which were now resting after the persecution would hardly be delayed so long as three whole years. So that it is most natural to place this section, viz. ch. ix. 32–xi. 18 (for all this is continuous), *before the visit of Saul to Jerusalem*, and during his stay at Damascus or in Arabia. See further on xi. 19.

Lydda] Called *Lod*, Neh. vii. 37.—A large village near Joppa (ver. 38), on the Mediterranean, just one day's journey from Jerusalem. It afterwards became the important town of Diospolis.

33. AEnēas] Whether a believer or not, does not appear; from Peter's visit being to the *saints*, it would seem that he was: but perhaps the indefinite term, **a certain man**, may imply the contrary, as also Peter's words, announcing a free and unexpected gift from One whom he knew not.

35. all that dwelt in L. and S. saw him;—which also (this is the literal rendering, and is equivalent to and they) **turned to the Lord]** A general conversion of the inhabitants to the faith followed.

Saron] Perhaps not a village, but the celebrated plain of that name [Sharon], extending along the coast from Cæsarea to Joppa, see Isa. xxxiii, 9; xxxv. 2; lxv. 10; Cant. ii. 1; 1 Chron. xxvii. 29. Mariti mentions a village Saren between Lydda and Arsuf (see Josh. xii. 18, marg. A.V.): but more recent travellers do not notice it.

36–43.] RAISING OF TABITHA FROM THE DEAD.

36. at Joppa] Joppa was a very ancient Philistine city, on the frontier of Dan, but not belonging to that tribe, Josh. xix. 46; on the coast (ch. x. 6), with a celebrated but not very secure harbour: (see 2 Chron. ii. 16; Ezra iii. 7; Jonah i. 3; 1 Macc. xiv. 5; 2 Macc. xii. 8)—situated in a plain (1 Macc. x. 75–77) near Lydda (ver. 38), at the end of the mountain road connecting Jerusalem with the sea. The Maccabean generals, Jonathan and Simon, took it from the Syrians and fortified it (1 Macc. x. 74–76; xiv. 5, 34). Pompey joined it to the province of Syria, but Caesar restored it to Hyrcanus, and it afterwards formed part of the kingdom of Herod and of Archelaus, after whose deposition it reverted to the province of Syria, to which it belonged at the time of our narrative. It was destroyed by Caius Cestius; but rebuilt, and became a nest of Jewish pirates, in consequence of which Vespasian levelled it with the ground, and built a fort there, which soon became the nucleus of a new town. It is now called Jaffa, and has about 7000 inhabitants, half of whom are Christians.

Tabitha] This name, in Aramaic, answers to Dorcas, in Greek, signifying a *gazelle*. It appears also in the Rabbinical books as a female name: the gazelle being in the East a favourite type of beauty. See Song of Sol. ii. 9, 17; iv. 5; vii. 3. Lightfoot remarks, that she was probably a Hellenist (i. e. a Grecian Jewess), and thus was known by both names.

39. all the widows] The widows of the place, for whom she made these garments.

made] i.e. **used to make** (i. e. weave): not ‘*had made*.’

40. put them all forth] After the example of his divine Master, see Luke viii. 54.

43. a tanner] From the extracts in Wetstein and Schöttgen, it appears that the Jews regarded the occupation of a tanner as a half-unclean one. In this case it would shew, as De Wette observes, that the *stricter* Jewish practices were already disregarded by the Apostle. It also would shew, in how little honour he and his office were held by the Jews at Caesarea.

Acts: Chapter 10

CHAP. X. 1-48.] CONVERSION (BY SPECIAL DIVINE PREARRANGEMENT) AND BAPTISM OF THE GENTILE CORNELIUS AND HIS PARTY. We may remark, that the conversion of the Gentiles was *no new idea* to Jews or Christians, but that it had been universally regarded as to take place by *their reception into Judaism*. Of late, however, since the Ascension, we see the truth that the Gospel was to be a Gospel of the *uncircumcision*, beginning to be recognized by some. Stephen, carrying out the principles of his own apology, could hardly have failed to recognize it: and the Cyprian and Cyrenæan missionaries of ch. xi. 20 preached the word to the *Grecians* (not the *Grecian Jews*) *certainly before the conversion of Cornelius*. This state of things might have given rise to a permanent schism in the infant church. The Hellenists, and perhaps Saul, with his definite mission to the Gentiles, might have formed one party, and the Hebrews, with Peter at their head, the other. But, as Neander admirably observes, ‘The pernicious influence with which, from the first, the self-seeking and one-sided prejudices of human nature threatened the divine work, was counteracted by the superior influence of the Holy Spirit, which did not allow the differences of men to reach such a point of antagonism, but enabled them to retain unity in variety. We recognize the preventing wisdom of God,—which, while giving scope to the free agency of man, knows how to interpose His immediate revelation just at the moment when it is requisite for the success of the divine work,—by noticing, that when the Apostles needed this wider development of their Christian knowledge for the exercise of their vocation, and when the lack of it would have been exceedingly detrimental,—*at that very moment*, by a remarkable coincidence of inward revelation with a chain of outward circumstances, the illumination hitherto wanting was imparted to them.’

1. Cæsarea] As this town bears an important part in early Christian history, it will be well to give here a full account of it. CÆSAREA (“of Palestine,” called “*by the sea*” [as we say, “*super mare*”] in several places in Josephus, or *Stratonis* [see below],—distinguished from Cæsarea *Philippi*, see note Matt. xvi. 13) is between Joppa and Dora, 68 Roman miles from Jerusalem according to the Jerusalem Itinerary, 75 according to Josephus,—36 miles from Ptolemais (a day’s journey, Acts xxi. 8),—30 from Joppa;—one of the largest towns in Palestine, with an excellent haven, built by Herod the Great, and called Sebastos (Augustus) in honour of Cæsar. It was, even before the destruction of Jerusalem, the seat of the Roman Procurators (see ch. xxiii. 23 ff.; xxiv. 27; xxv. 1), and is called by Tacitus the *capital of Judea*. It was chiefly inhabited by Gentiles, but there were also many thousand Jewish inhabitants. It was built by Herod the Great. Beforetime there was only a fort there, called the tower of Strato. It was fortified, provided with a haven (see ch. ix. 30; xviii. 22), and in honour of Cæsar Augustus named Cæsarea, more fully Cæsarea Sebasté. Vespasian made it a Roman colony. Abulfeda speaks of it as in ruins in his time (A. D. 1300). At present there are a few ruins only, and some fishers’ huts.

a centurion] The subordinate officer commanding the sixth part of a cohort, or half a maniple.

of the band called the Italian band] i.e. of a *cohort levied in Italy, not in Syria*.

2. a devout man, and one that feared God] i.e. he had abandoned polytheism, and was a worshipper of the true God: whether a proselyte of the gate, or not, seems uncertain. That he *may* have been such, there is nothing in the narrative to preclude: nor does Meyer’s objection apply, that it is not probable that, among the many thousand converts, no Greek proselyte had yet been admitted by baptism into the church. Many such cases may have occurred, and some no doubt had: but the object of this providential interference seems to have been, to give *solemn sanction* to such reception, by the agency of him who was both the chief of the Apostles, and the strong upholder of pure Judaism. It is hardly possible that the words “*of good report among all the nation of the Jews*” (ver. 22) should have been said of a Gentile not in any way conformed to the Jewish faith and worship. The great point (ch. xi. 3) which made the present event so important, was, that Cornelius was an *uncircumcised* person. Doubtless also among his *company* (ver. 24) there must have been many who were *not proselytes*.

gave much alms to the people] i.e. to the Jewish inhabitants, see ch. xxvi. 17, 23; xxviii. 17; John xi. 50; xviii. 14, and elsewhere.

prayed to God alway] From Cornelius’s own narrative, ver. 31, as well as from the analogy of God’s dealings, we are certainly justified in inferring, with Neander, that the subject of his prayers was that he might be guided into truth, and if so, hardly without reference to that faith which was now spreading so widely over Judæa. This is not matter of conjecture, but is implied by Peter’s words, “*ye know*,” &c., in ver. 37. Further than this, we cannot infer with certainty; but, if the *particular difficulty present in his mind* be sought, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that it was connected with the apparent necessity of embracing Judaism and circumcision in order to become a believer on Christ.

3. in a vision evidently] not in a trance, as ver. 10, and ch. xxii. 17,—but *with his bodily eyes*: thus asserting the objective truth of the appearance.

about the ninth hour of the day] It here appears that Cornelius observed the Jewish hours of prayer.

4. for a memorial] i.e. ‘*so as to be a memorial*’—There has been found a difficulty by some in the fact that Cornelius’s

works were received as well pleasing to God, before he had justifying faith in Christ. But it is surely easy to answer, with Calvin and Augustine, that Cornelius could not have prayed, without faith. His faith was all that he could then attain to, and brought forth its fruits abundantly in his life: one of which fruits, and the best of them, was, the earnest seeking by prayer for a better and more perfect faith.

7. was departed] So in Luke i. 38:—another token of the objective reality of the vision: “*coming in*” (ver. 3) and “*departing*” denoting the *real acts* of the angel, not the mere deemings of Cornelius.

9. On the morrow] The distance was thirty Roman miles, part of which they performed on the preceding evening, perhaps to Apollonia,—and the rest that morning. By the word rendered **the housetop**, Jerome, Luther, Erasmus, and others, understand an *upper chamber*. But why do we not then find here the word which St. Luke so frequently uses for an upper chamber? It was the flat roof, much frequented in the East for purposes of exercise (2 Sam. xi. 2; Dan. iv. 29, marg.),—of sleeping in summer (1 Sam. ix. 26, by inference, and as expressed in LXX),—of conversation (*ib. ver. 25*),—of mourning (Isa. xv. 3; Jer. xlvi. 38),—of erecting booths at the feast of tabernacles (Neh. viii. 16),—of other religious celebrations (2 Kings xxiii. 12; Jer. xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5),—of publicity (2 Sam. xvi. 22; Matt. x. 27; Luke xii. 3. Jos. B.J. ii. 21. 5),—of observation (Judg. xvi. 27; Isa. xxii. 1),—and for any process requiring fresh air and sun (Josh. ii. 6).

the sixth hour] The *second hour of prayer*: also of the mid-day meal.

10. he fell into a trance] literally, **a trance fell upon him**. The distinction of this appearance from the “*vision*” above (though the usage is not always strictly observed) is, that in this case that which was seen was a revelation *shewn* to the eye of the beholder when rapt into a supernatural state, having, as is the case in a dream, *no objective reality*: whereas, in the other case, the thing seen *actually happened*, and was beheld by the person as an ordinary spectator, in the possession of his natural senses.

11. tied by four rope-ends] Not, as A.V., ‘*knit at the four corners*,’ but as in margin. The *ends of the ropes* were attached to the sheet, and, in the vision, *they only were seen*.—These four *ends* are not without meaning, directed as they are to the four parts of heaven, and intimating that men from the North, South, East, and West, now were accounted clean before God, and were called to a share in his kingdom: see Luke xiii. 29. We must not wander away into childish exaggeration of symbolism as some have done, interpreting the four ends of the *four gospels*, &c.

12. all the fourfooted and creeping things of the earth] literally: not ‘many of each kind,’ nor ‘some of all kinds:’ in the vision it seemed to Peter to be an assemblage of *all creation*.

fourfooted... creeping things... fowls] In ch. xi. 6, Peter follows the more strictly Jewish division: see there.

14.] Peter rightly understands the command as giving him free choice of *all* the creatures shewn to him. We cannot infer hence that the sheet contained *unclean animals only*. It was a mixture of clean and unclean,—the aggregate, therefore, being *unclean*.

Lord] So Cornelius to the angel, ver. 4. It is here addressed to the unknown heavenly speaker.—On the clean and unclean beasts, &c., see Levit. xi.

15.] These weighty words have more than one application. They reveal what was needed for the occasion, in a figure: God letting down from heaven clean and unclean alike, Jew and Gentile,—represented that He had made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of all the earth: God having *purified* these, signified that the distinction was now abolished which was ‘added because of transgressions’ (Gal. iii. 19),—and all *regarded in his eyes as pure for the sake of His dear Son*. But the *literal truth of the representation* was also implied;—that the same distinctions between the animals intended for use as food were now done away, and free range allowed to men, as their lawful wants and desires invite them, over the whole creation of God: that creation itself having been *purified and rendered clean for use by the satisfaction of Christ*. The same truth which is asserted by the heavenly voice in Peter’s vision, is declared Ephes. i. 10; Col. i. 20; 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.—Only we must be careful not to confound this restitution with the *restoration* of all things of ch. iii. 21; see notes there.

16. thrice] denoting the *certainty* of the thing revealed: see Gen. xli. 32.

18.] The strict sense is, that **having called out (some one), they were enquiring**.

19.] See ch. viii. 29, note.

20. I (emphatic) have sent them] The Holy Spirit, shed down upon the Church to lead it into all the truth, had in His divine arrangements brought about, by the angel sent to Cornelius, their coming.

23. lodged them] This was his first consorting with men uncircumcised and eating with them (ch. xi. 3): though perhaps this latter is not necessarily implied.

certain brethren from Joppa] *Six*, ch. xi. 12; in expectation of some weighty event to which hereafter their testimony might be required, as indeed it was, as there appears.

24.] These **near friends** of Cornelius, like himself, must have been fearers of the true God, or at all events must have been influenced by his vision to wait for the teaching of Peter.

25. worshipped] St. Luke, observes Bengel, has not added “*him*;” doubtless from an euphemistic motive. It was natural for Cornelius to think that one so pointed out by an angel must be deserving of the highest respect; and this respect he shewed in a way which proves him not to have altogether lost the heathen training of his childhood. He must have witnessed the rise of the custom of paying divine honours first to those who were clothed with the delegated power of the senate, and then, even more conspicuously, to him in whom the imperial majesty centered.

26. I myself also am a man] This was the lesson which Peter’s vision had taught him, and he now begins to practise it:—the *common honour and equality of all mankind in God’s sight*.—Those who claim to have succeeded Peter, have not imitated this part of his conduct. See Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8.

27.] This second *going in* (compare ver. 25) betokens the *completion* of his entering in; or the former, his entering the *house*,—this latter, the *chamber*.

28.] Ye (emphatic) **know**: i.e. **you, of all men, [best] know**: being those immediately concerned in the obstruction to intercourse which the rule occasioned.

how that it is an unlawful thing,... or ‘how unlawful a thing it is:’ better the former. There is some difficulty about this unlawfulness of consorting with those foreigners who, like Cornelius, worshipped the true God. It rests upon no legal prohibition, and seems, at first sight, hardly consistent with the zeal to gain predicated of the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 15, and with other, Jewish and Rabbinical, notices cited in my Greek Test. But, whatever *exceptions* there may have been, it was unquestionably the *general practice* of the Jews, to separate themselves in common life from uncircumcised persons. We have Juvenal testifying to this at Rome in his Satires,—that the Jews “would not shew the way except to their fellow-religionists, nor guide any but a circumcised person to a fountain of which he was in search.” And Tacitus says that “they cherished against all mankind the hatred of enemies, they were separate in hoard and bed,” &c.

and] (not, ‘*but* God hath shewed me,’ as A.V.) ‘*Ye*, though ye see me here, know, how strong the prejudice is which would have kept me away: *and I*, though entertaining fully this prejudice myself, yet have been taught, &c.’ The stress in reading must be laid on **me**.

30. until this hour] viz. the hour at which he was then speaking, which probably was the *sixth*, the hour of the mid-day meal, which was the only one partaken by the Jews on their solemn days.

in bright clothing] In Luke xxiii. 11, where the same word is used in the original, the brightness was in the colour: here, probably, in some supernatural splendour. The garment might have been white (as in ch. i. 11) or not,—but at all events, it was radiant with brightness.

33. all things that are commanded thee of God] He says this, not doubting that God, who had directed him to Peter, had also directed Peter what to speak to him.

34. opened his mouth] This is a phrase used on occasions of more than ordinary solemnity. See Matt. v. 2; xii. 35; ch. viii. 35.

Of a truth I perceive] ‘For the first time I now clearly, *in its fulness and as a living fact*, apprehend (grasp by experience the truth of) what I read in the Scripture (Deut. x. 17; 2 Chron. xix. 7; Job xxxiv. 19).’

35.] but gives the explanation,—what it is that Peter now fully apprehends: **but**, as opposed to God being a respecter of persons in its now apparent sense.

in every nation, &c.] It is very important that we should hold the right clue to guide us in understanding this saying. The question which recent events had solved in Peter’s mind, was that of the admissibility of men of all nations into the church of Christ. *In this sense only*, had he received any information as to the *acceptableness* of men of all nations before God. He saw,

that in every nation, men who seek after God, who receive His witness of Himself without which He has left no man, and humbly follow His will as far as they know it,—these have no *extraneous hindrance*, such as uncircumcision, *placed in their way to Christ*, but are capable of being admitted into God's church *though Gentiles*, and *as Gentiles*. That only *such* are spoken of, is agreeable to the nature of the case; for men who do not fear God, and work unrighteousness, are out of the question, not being likely to seek such admission. It is clearly unreasonable to suppose Peter to have meant, that *each heathen's natural light and moral purity would render him acceptable in the sight of God*:—for, if so, why should he have proceeded to preach Christ to Cornelius, or indeed *any more at all*? And it is equally unreasonable to find any verbal or doctrinal difficulty in the expression *worketh righteousness*, or to suppose that **righteousness** must be taken in its technical and imputed sense, and therefore that he alludes to the state of men *after becoming* believers. He speaks *popularly*, and certainly not without reference to the *character he had heard* of Cornelius, which consisted of these very two parts, that he *fear'd God*, and *abounded in good works*.—The deeper truth, that the preparation of the heart itself in such men *comes from God's preventing grace*, is not in question here, nor touched upon.

36.] The construction of this and the following verse is very difficult. I have treated in my Greek Test., of the various ways in which it has been taken, and endeavoured to establish that one which I believe to be right. Set plainly before the English reader it will stand thus:—**Of a truth I perceive, &c...** (and recognize this as) **the word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace** (see reff.) **through Jesus Christ:** (then, for the first time, *truly perceiving this also*, on the mention of Jesus Christ, he adds the ascription to Him of lordship over *all men*,) **He is Lord of ALL MEN**; with a strong emphasis on *all*.

by Jesus Christ belongs to **preaching**, not to **peace**.

37. the matter] Not the *thing*, but the *thing said*, the ‘*material*’ of the proclamation, in this case equivalent to ‘*the history*.’

began from Galilee] It was from Galilee first that the fame of Jesus went abroad, as Luke himself relates, Luke iv. 14, 37, 44; vii. 17; ix. 6. (xxiii. 5.) Galilee also was the nearest to Cæsarea, and may have been for this reason expressly mentioned.

after the baptism which John preached] So also St. Peter dates the ministry of our Lord in ch. i. 22. (See note there.)

38. Jesus of Nazareth] The *personal subject* of the matter which was published: ‘*Ye know the subject which was preached..... viz. Jesus of Nazareth.*’

how that God anointed him] Not as A.V., “*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth*:” see the last note.—The fact of the anointing with the Holy Spirit, in His baptism by John, was the historical opening of the ministry of Jesus: this anointing however was not His *first* unction with the Spirit, but only symbolic of that which He had in His incarnation: which unction abode upon Him, John i. 32, 33, and is alleged here as the continuing anointing which was upon Him from God.—Stier well remarks, how entirely all personal address to the hearers and all doctrinal announcements are thrown into the background in this speech, and the *Person and Work and Office of Christ* put forward as the sole subject of apostolic preaching.

oppressed] literally, *subdued*, so that he is their master,—and his power is used for their oppression. Here, it alludes to physical oppression by disease (see Luke xiii. 16) and possession: in 2 Tim. ii. 26, a very similar description is given of those who are *spiritually bound* by the devil.

God was with him] So Nicodemus had spoken, John iii. 2; and probably Peter here used the words as well known and indicative of the presence of divine power and co-operation (see Judg. vi. 16): beginning as he does with the outer and lower circle of the things regarding Christ, as they would be matter of observation and inference to his *hearers*, and gradually ascending to those higher truths regarding His Person and Office, which were matter of *apostolic testimony* and demonstration from Scripture,—His resurrection (ver. 40), His being appointed Judge of living and dead (ver. 42), and the predestined Author of salvation to all who believe on Him (ver. 43).

39. And we...] Answering to **ye know**, ver. 37. ‘*You know the history as matter of universal rumour: and we are witnesses of the facts.*’ By this **we**, St. Peter at once takes away the ground from the exaggerated reverence for himself individually, shewn by Cornelius, ver. 25: and puts himself and the rest of the Apostles in the strictly subordinate place of *witnesses* for Another.

whom they slew] St. Peter omits all mention of the actors in the murder, speaking as he did to Gentiles: a striking contrast to ch. ii. 23; iii. 14; iv. 10; v. 30,—when he was working conviction in the minds of *those actors themselves*.

hanged on a tree] So also ch. v. 30, where see note.

41.] Bengel would understand this eating and drinking with Him of *previous intercourse during His ministry*, and would put “not to”... as far as “with him” in a parenthesis,—finding a difficulty in their having eaten and drunk with Him *after His*

Resurrection. But this is most improbable from the construction of the sentence, besides that the fact of their having eaten and drunk with Him *after* His Resurrection gives most important testimony to the reality and identity of His risen Body. And there is no real difficulty in it: Luke xxiv. 41, 43 and John xxi. 12 give us instances; and, even if the drinking with Him, is to be pressed, it is no contradiction to Luke xxii. 18, which only refers to one particular kind of drinking.

42. unto the people] Here, as elsewhere (ver. 2; John xi. 50 al. fr.), the *Jewish people*: that was all which in the apostolic mind, up to this time, the command had absolutely enjoined. The further unfoldings of the Gospel had all been brought about over and above this first injunction. Ch. i. 8 is no obstacle to this interpretation; for although literally fulfilled by the leadings of Providence, as related in this book, they did not so understand it when spoken.

which is ordained of God] Had not Peter in his mind the Lord's own solemn words, John xvii. 6?

Judge of quick and dead] See also St. Paul, ch. xvii. 31, preaching to Gentiles, brings forward the appointment of a Judge over all men as the central point of his teaching. This expression gives at once a universality to the office and mission of Christ, which prepares the way for the great truth declared in the next verse.—It is impossible that the *living and dead* here can mean (as the Augsburg Catechism, and Olshausen) the *righteous and sinners*:—a canon of interpretation which should constantly be borne in mind is, *that a figurative sense of words is never admissible, EXCEPT WHEN REQUIRED BY THE CONTEXT.* Thus, in the passage of John v. 25 (where see notes), the sense of “*the dead*” is determined to be figurative by the addition of “*and now is*” after the *hour* being mentioned, no such addition occurring in ver. 28, where the literally dead, “*all that are in the graves*,” are mentioned.

43.] All the prophets, generically: not that *every one* positively asserted this, but that the whole bulk of prophetic testimony announced it. To press such expressions to literal exactness is mere trifling. See ch. iii. 21, 24.

shall receive remission of sins] The *legal sacrifices*, as well as the declarations of the prophets, all pointed to the remission of sins by faith in Him. And the *universality* of this proclamation, applying to **whosoever believeth in him**, is set forth by the prophets in many places, and was recognized even by the Jews themselves in their expositions of Scripture, though not in their practice.

44.] Peter had spoken up to this point: and was probably proceeding (compare his own account of his speech, “*as I began to speak*,” ch. xi. 15) to include his present hearers and all nations in the number to whom this blessing was laid open,—or perhaps *beyond this point* his own mind may as yet have been not sufficiently enlightened to set forth the *full* liberty of the Gospel of Christ,—when the fire of the Lord fell, approving the sacrifice of the Gentiles (see Rom. xv. 16): conferring on them the *substance before the symbol*,—the baptism with the Holy Ghost before the baptism with water: and teaching us, that as the Holy Spirit dispensed once and for all with the necessity of circumcision in the flesh, so can He also, when it pleases him, with the necessity of water-baptism: and warning the Christian church not to put baptism itself in the place which circumcision once held. See further in note on Peter’s important words, ch. xi. 16.—The outpouring of the Spirit on the Gentiles was strictly analogous to that in the day of Pentecost; Peter himself describes it by adding (ch. xi. 15), **as on us at the beginning**. Whether there was any visible *appearance* in this case, cannot be determined: perhaps from ver. 46 it would appear *not*.

45.] We do not read that Peter himself was astonished. He had been specially prepared by the vision: *they had not*.—The **speaking with tongues** here is identified with the **speaking with other tongues** of ch. ii. 4, by the assertion of ch. xi. 15, just cited;—and this again with the **speaking with tongues** of ch. xix. 6: so that the gift was *one and the same throughout*. On the whole subject, see note, ch. ii. 4.

47.] One great end of the unexpected effusion of the Holy Spirit was, entirely to preclude the question which otherwise could not but have arisen, ‘Must not these men be *circumcised before baptism?*’

the water... the Holy Ghost] The TWO great PARTS of *full and complete baptism*: the latter infinitely greater than, but not superseding the necessity of, the, former. The article should here certainly be expressed: **Can any forbid THE WATER to these who have received THE SPIRIT?**—The expression **forbid**, used with **the water**, is interesting, as shewing that the practice was to *bring the water to the candidates, not the candidates to the water*. This, which would be implied by the word under any circumstances, is rendered certain, when we remember that they were assembled in *the house*.

48. he commanded them to be baptized] As the Lord Himself when on earth *did not baptize* (John iv. 2), so did not ordinarily the Apostles (see 1 Cor. i. 13–16, and note). Perhaps the same reason may have operated in both cases,—lest those baptized by our Lord, or by the chief Apostles, should arrogate to themselves pre-eminence on that account. Also, which is implied in 1 Cor. i. 17, as compared with Acts vi. 2, the ministry of the Word was esteemed by them their higher and paramount duty and office, whereas the subordinate ministration of the ordinances was committed to those who *served tables*.

Acts: Chapter 11

CHAP. XI. 1–18.] PETER JUSTIFIES, BEFORE THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, HIS HAVING CONSORTED WITH MEN UNCIRCUMCISED.

1. in Judæa] perhaps more strictly, **throughout Judæa**.

that the Gentiles... also...] They seem to have heard the fact, without any circumstantial detail (but see on the words “*the angel*” below, ver. 13); and, from the charge in ver. 3,—from some reporter who gave the objectionable part of it, as is not uncommon in such cases, all prominence.

5.] it came even to me is a fresh detail.

12. these six brethren] They had accompanied him to Jerusalem, and were there to substantiate the facts, as far as they had witnessed them.

13. the angel] The use of the definite article almost looks as if the history of Cornelius’s vision were known to the hearers. The difference between the vision of Cornelius and that of Peter is here again strikingly marked. While the latter is merely “praying in the city of Joppa,” no place nor circumstance being named, the former sees the angel ‘*standing in his house*.’—Notice also that Peter never names Cornelius in his speech—because he, his character and person, was absorbed in the category to which he belonged,—that of “*men uncircumcised*.”

14. whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved] This is implied in the angel’s speech: especially if the prayer of Cornelius had been for such a boon, of which there can be little doubt.

15. as I began to speak....] See note on ch. x. 44, as also for the rest of the verse.

16.] Ch. i. 5. This prophecy of the Lord was spoken to his assembled followers, and promised to them that baptism which was the completion and aim of the inferior baptism by water administered to them by John. Now, God had Himself, by pouring out on the Gentiles the Holy Spirit, included *them* in the number of these persons addressed as “*ye*” in the prophecy, and pronounced them to be members of the church of believers in Christ, and partakers of the Holy Ghost, the end of baptism. This (in all its blessed consequences, = the gift of “*repentance unto life*,” see on ver. 18) was (ver. 17) the **like** (literally, equal) **gift** bestowed on them: and, this having been bestowed,—to refuse the symbolic and subordinate ordinance,—or to regard them any longer as strangers from the covenant of promise would have been, so far as in him lay, to **withstand (hinder) God**.

17.] when believing belongs to both **them** and **us**; setting forth the strict analogy between the cases, and the *community* of the faith to both.

19–30.] THE GOSPEL PREACHED ALSO IN ANTIOCH TO GENTILES. BARNANAS, BEING THEREUPON SENT BY THE APOSTLES FROM JERUSALEM, FETCHES SAUL FROM TARSUS TO ANTIOCH. THEY CONTINUE THERE A YEAR, AND, ON OCCASION OF A FAMINE, CARRY UP ALMS TO THE BRETHREN AT JERUSALEM. Our present section takes up the narrative at ch. viii. 2, 4. In vv. 19–21 it traverses rapidly the time occupied by ch. ix. 1–30, and that (undefined) of Saul’s stay at Tarsus, and brings it down to the famine under Claudius.

19. So then] A resumption of what had been dropt before, see ch. viii. 4, continued from ver. 2: not however without reference to some narrative about to follow which is brought out by a **But**—see ch. viii. 5, also ch. ix. 31, 32; xxviii. 5, 6,—and implying, whether by way of *distinction* or *exception*, a contrast to what is stated in this verse.

Phenicé] properly, the strip of coast, about 120 miles long, extending from the river Eleutherus (near Aradus), to a little south of Tyre, and belonging at this time to the province of Syria: see ch. xv. 3; xxi. 2. Its principal cities were Tripolis, Byblos, Sidon, Tyre, and Berytos. It is a fertile territory, beginning with the uplands at the foot of Lebanon, and sloping to the sea, and held a distinguished position for commerce from the very earliest times.

Cyprus] Cyprus was intimately connected by commerce with Phœnicé, and contained many Jews. See on its state at this time, note on ch. xiii. 7.

Antioch] A city in the history of Christianity only second in importance to Jerusalem. It was situated on the river Orontes, in a large, fruitful, and well-watered plain, 120 stadia from the sea and its port Seleucia. It was founded by Seleucus Nicator, who called it after his father Antiochus. It soon became a great and populous city, and was the residence of the Seleucid kings of Syria (1 Macc. iii. 37; vii. 2; xi. 13, 44; 2 Macc. v. 21), and of the Roman proconsuls of Syria. Josephus (B. J. iii. 2, 4) says that, for greatness and prosperity, it was the third city of the Roman world. Seleucus the founder had settled there many Jews

who had their own governor, or Ethnarch. The intimate connexion of Antioch with the history of the church will be seen as we proceed. reference to the principal passages will here be enough: see vv. 22, 26, 27; ch. xiii. 1; xv. 23, 35 ff; xviii. 22. It became afterwards one of the five great centres of the Christian church, with Jerusalem, Rome, Alexandria and Constantinople. Of its present state (Antakia, a town not one-third of its ancient size) a view is given in Conybeare and Howson, where also, edn. 2. vol. i. pp. 149 ff., is a minute and interesting description of the city and its history, ancient and modern. See also Mr. Lewin's Life and Epistles of St. Paul, vol. i.p. 108 ff.

20. some of them] not, of these, *last-mentioned Jews*: but of those who were scattered abroad. This both the sense and the form of the sentence require.

men of Cyrene] of whom Lucius mentioned ch. xiii. 1, as being in the church at Antioch, must have been one, Symeon called *Niger* (black), also mentioned there, may have been a Cyrenean proselyte.

Grecians] Many retain and advocate here the reading *Hellenists*, or *Grecian Jews*. It appears mainly to have arisen from a mistaken view that the baptism of Cornelius must necessarily have preceded the conversion of all other Gentiles. But that reading gives, in this place, no assignable sense whatever: for (1) the *Hellenists* were *long ago a recognized part of the Christian church*—(2) among these who were scattered abroad themselves in all probability there were many Hellenists,—and (3) the term **Jews** *includes* the Hellenists,—the distinctive appellation of pure Jews being not *Jews* but **Hebrews**, ch. vi. 1. Nothing to my mind can be plainer, from what follows respecting Barnabas, than that these **Grecians** were GENTILES, *uncircumcised*; and that their conversion took place *before any tidings had reached Jerusalem of the divine sanction given in the case of Cornelius*. See below.

21. the hand of the Lord was with them] By *visible manifestations not to be doubted*, the Lord shewed it to be His pleasure that they should go on with such preaching; the word **them** implying, *the preachers to the Gentiles*, whose work the narrative now follows.

22. Barnabas] himself a Cyprian, ch. iv. 36.—His mission does not seem exactly to have been correspondent to that of Peter and John to Samaria (nor can he in any distinctive sense, be said to have been *an Apostle, as they were*: see ch. xiv. 14, and note): but more probably, from what follows, the intention was to *ascertain the fact*, and to *deter* these persons from the admission of the uncircumcised into the church: or, at all events, to use his discretion in a matter on which they were as yet doubtful: The choice of such a man, one by birth *with the agents*, and of a *liberal spirit*, shews sufficiently that they wished to deal, not harshly, but gently and cautiously,—whatever their reason was.

23, 24.] It is on these verses principally that I depend as determining the character of the whole narrative. It certainly is implied in them that the effect produced on Barnabas was *something different from what might have been expected*: that to sympathize with the work was *not the intent* of his mission, but a result brought about in the heart of a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, by witnessing the effects of divine grace (the force of the original can hardly be given in an English version. It is not merely, '*the grace of God*', but **the grace which [evidently] was that of God**, which he recognized as that of God). And this is further confirmed to my mind by finding that he immediately *went and sought Saul*. He had been Saul's friend at Jerusalem: he had doubtless heard of the commission which had been given to him to preach to the *Gentiles*: but the church was waiting the will of God, to know *how* this was to be accomplished. Here was an evident door open for the ministry of Saul, and, in consequence, as soon as Barnabas perceives it, he goes to fetch him to begin his work in Antioch. And it was *here*, more properly, and not in Cæsarea, that the real commencement of the *Gentile church* took place,—although simultaneously, for the convincing of the Jewish believers at Jerusalem, and of Peter, and for the more solemn and authorized standing of the Gentile church, the important events at Cæsarea and Joppa were brought about.

23. exhorted them all] in accordance with his name, which (iv. 36) was interpreted **son of exhortation**.

25.] This therefore took place after ch. ix. 30: *how long after*, we have no hint in the narrative, and the question will be determined by various persons according to the requirements of their chronological system. Some chronologers make it not more than from half a year to a year: others, placing the conversion of Saul in A.D. 31,—nine years. Speaking from probability, it seems very unlikely that any considerable portion of time should have been spent by him before the great work of his ministry began. Even supposing him during this retirement to have preached in Syria and Cilicia,—judging by the analogy of his subsequent journeys, *a few months* at the most would have sufficed for this. For my own view, see Introduction to Acts, §6.

26. Christians] This name is never used by Christians of themselves in the N.T. (but "*the disciples*," "*the faithful*," "*the believers*," "*the brethren*," "*the saints*," "*they of this [or the] way*"), only (see ch. xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16) as *spoken by, or coming from*, those without the church. And of those, it cannot have arisen with the Jews, who would never have given a name *derived from the Messiah* to a hated and despised sect. By the Jews they were called *Nazarenes*, ch. xxiv. 5, and *Galilæans*: and the Emperor Julian (the Apostate), who wished to deprive them of a name in which they gloried (see below),

and to favour the Jews, ordered that they should not be called Christians, but Galilæans. The name soon became matter of glorying among its bearers: see 1 Pet. iv. 16. In the epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, given by Eusebius, we read, that when the governor asked Epagathus whether he too were a Christian, he confessed it with a loud voice: and again that Sanctus, to every question, replied in Latin, “I am a Christian.” And in the Clementine Liturgy we have these words, “We give thanks to Thee that the name of thy Christ is named upon us, and that we are called Thine.” Before this, while the believers had been *included among Jews*, no distinctive name for them was needed: but now that a body of men, compounded of *Jews and Gentiles*, arose, distinct in belief and habits from both, some new appellation was required.—It may be observed, that the inhabitants of Antioch were famous for their propensity to jeer and cal] names; see instances in Conybeare and Howson, i.p. 148, note 2.

27. in these days] It was during this year, ver. 26.

prophets] Inspired teachers in the early Christian church, referred to in the Acts, and in the Epistles of Paul (see reff. and ch. xix. 6; xxi. 9; Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10; xiii. 2, 8; xiv. 6; 1 Thess. v. 20). They might be of either sex (ch. xxi. 9). The foretelling of future events was not the usual form which their inspiration took, but that of an *exalted and superhuman teaching*, ranked by St. Paul above ‘speaking with tongues,’ in being the *utterance of their own conscious intelligence informed by the Holy Spirit*. This inspiration was, however, occasionally, as here, and ch. xxi. 10, made the vehicle of prophecy, properly so called.

28. Agabus] The same who prophesied Paul’s imprisonment in Jerusalem, ch. xxi. 10 ff. From the form of his announcement there, we may infer the manner in which he **signified by the Spirit here**. It was, “*Thus saith the Holy Ghost.*”

throughout all the world] not, ‘*all Judæa*,’ though in fact it was so: the expression is probably a hyperbolical one in ordinary use, and not to be pressed as strictly implying that to which its literal meaning would extend. That it occurs in a *prophecy* is no objection to this: the scope, and not the wording of the prophecy is given. But see below.

in the days of Claudius Cæsar] In the fourth year of Claudius, A.D. 44, there was a famine in Judæa and the neighbouring countries. And three others are mentioned during his reign: one in Greece, and two in Rome, so that *scarcity* in the days of Claudius Cæsar did extend through the greater part of the Roman world, if it be thought necessary to press the words of the prophecy. The queen Helena of Adiabene and her son Izates helped the Jews with subsidies on the occasion (in relating which, Josephus calls it “*the great famine*”), both of corn and money.—I do not believe that the words ‘*in the days of Claudius Cæsar*’ imply that the *events just related were not also in the reign of Claudius*: but they are inserted to particularize the famine as being that well-known one, and only imply that the author was not writing under Claudius.

29.] There is no need to suppose that the prophecy of Agabus preceded by any long time the outbreak of the famine: nor would it be any derogation from its prophetic character to suppose it even coincident with its first beginnings; it was the *greatness and extent* of the famine which was particularly revealed, and which determined the Christians of Antioch to send the relief. Baumgarten, in tracing the gradual transition of the apostolic narrative from Jewish to Gentile Christianity, calls this contribution, sent from Antioch to Jerusalem, the first stretching out of the hand by the Gentile world across the ancient gulf which separated it from Israel.

The church at Jerusalem was poor, probably in connexion with the community of goods, which would soon have this effect; see ch. ii. 44, note.

30. the elders] These were the *overseers or presidents* of the congregation,—an office borrowed from the synagogues, and established by the Apostles in the churches generally, see ch. xiv. 23. They are in the N.T. identical with *bishops*, see ch. xx. 17, 28; Titus i. 5, 7; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. So Theodoret on Phil. i. 1, “He calls the elders, *bishops*: for at that time they had both names.” The title “*episcopus*,” as applied to one person superior to the *elders*, and answering to our ‘*bishop*,’ appears to have been unknown in the apostolic times.—Respecting the chronology of this journey to Jerusalem, see note on ch. xii. 25, and the table in the Introduction.

Acts: Chapter 12

CHAP. XII. 1–25.] PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM BY HEROD AGRIPPA. MARTYRDOM OF JAMES THE BROTHER OF JOHN. IMPRISONMENT AND MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE OF PETER. DEATH OF HEROD AT CÆSAREA. RETURN OF BARNABAS AND SAUL FROM JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH.

1. about that time] Before the arrival of Barnabas and Sanlin Jerusalem. The famine in Judæa broke out under Cuspius Fadus, and continued under Tiberius Alexander, procurators of Judæa. Now Cuspius Fadus was sent to Judæa by Claudius *on the death of Agrippa* (i. e. after Aug. 6, A.D. 44). The visit of Barnabas and Saul must have taken place about the time of, or

shortly after, Agrippa's death.

Herod the king] HEROD AGRIPPA I., grandson of Herod the Great,—son of Aristobulus and Berenice. Having gone to Rome, to accuse Herod the Tetrarch (Antipas), and fallen under the displeasure of Tiberius for paying open court to Caius Cæsar (Caligula), he was imprisoned and cruelly treated; but, on the accession of Caligula, released, and at once presented with the tetrarchy of Philip (Trachonitis),—who had lately died,—and the title of king. On this, Antipas, by persuasion of his wife Herodias, went to Rome, to try to obtain the royal title also, but was followed by his enemy Agrippa, who managed to get Antipas banished to Spain, and to obtain his tetrarchy (Galilee and Peraea) for himself. Finally, Claudius, in return for services rendered to him by Agrippa, at the time of Caligula's death, presented him with Samaria and Judæa (about 41 A.D., Jos. Antt. xix. 5. 1), so that he now ruled (Jos. ibid.) all the kingdom of Herod the Great. His character, as given by Josephus, Antt. xix. 7. 3, is important as illustrating the present chapter. He describes him as munificent in gifts and very ambitious of popular favour, making himself conspicuous by lavish expenditure; and a great observer, for popularity's sake, of the law and customs of the Jews. This character will abundantly account for his persecuting the Christians, who were so odious to the Jews, and for his vain-glorious acceptance of the impious homage of the people, ver. 23.

2. James the brother of John] Of him we know nothing besides what is related in the Gospels. He was the son of Zebedee, called (Matt. iv. 21) together with John his brother: was one of the favoured Three admitted to the death-chamber of Jairus's daughter (Mark v. 37), to the mount of transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1), and to the agony in the garden (Matt. xxvi. 37). He, together with John his brother (named by our Lord 'Boanerges,' 'sons of thunder'), wished to call down fire on the inhospitable Samaritans (Luke ix. 54),—and prayed that his brother and himself might sit, one on the right hand and the other on the left, in the Lord's kingdom (Matt. xx. 20–24). It was then that He foretold to them their drinking of the cup of suffering and being baptized with the baptism which He was baptized with: a prophecy which James was the first to fulfil.—*This is the only Apostle of whose death we have any certain record.* With regard to all the rest, tradition varies, more or less, as to the place, or the manner, or the time of their deaths.—Eusebius relates, from a work of Clemens, who had received it by tradition of those before him, that the accuser of James struck by his confession, became a Christian, and was led away with him to martyrdom. As they went to execution, he asked the Apostle's forgiveness. After a moment's thought, he replied "Peace be to thee," and kissed him: and so both were beheaded together.

with the sword] Probably according to the Roman method of *beheading*, which became common among the later Jews. It was a punishment accounted extremely disgraceful by the Jews.

3.] See the character of Agrippa above.

the days of unleavened bread] Wieseler regards the whole of the following narrative as having happened on one and the same day and night, viz. that of the 14th of Nisan (April 1), A.D. 44. He takes the words in the strict meaning: that it was the *very day* of the passover, and that "*after the passover*" means, after the eating of the passover on the evening of the 14th of Nisan, and that Herod was intending to bring Peter forth on the next morning. He finds support for this in the four quaternions of soldiers, the guard for one night (see below), and maintains that the expression **the Passover** cannot apply to the whole festal period, which would have been "*the feast*" or "*those days*." But Bleek calls this view most arbitrary and even unnatural; and I own, with all respect for Wieseler's general acumen, I am disposed to agree with this criticism. The whole cast of the narrative,—the use of **days**, not "*day*," as in St. Luke's own expression in his Gospel, xxii. 7,—the intimation of *enduring custody* in the delivering him to the soldiers to keep him, the delay implied in the word **intending**,—the specification of **that same night** presupposing more nights preceding,—all this would be unaccountable in the precise historical diction of St. Luke, unless he had intended to convey an impression that *some days elapsed*. But still more decisive is his own definition of *the Passover* Luke xxii. 1, "*the feast of unleavened bread which is called the Passover.*" So that "*after the Passover*" may well be equivalent to "*after the feast of unleavened bread.*" The argument from the four quaternions of soldiers proves nothing: the same sixteen (see below) may have had him in *permanent charge*, that number being appointed as adequate to the duties required.

4. to four quaternions of soldiers] In military arrangements, Herod seems to have retained the Roman habits, according to which the night was divided into four watches, and each committed to four soldiers, to two of whom the prisoner was chained, the other two keeping watch before the doors of the prison, forming the *first* and *second guards* of ver. 10. It is plain that this number being mentioned is no sign that the custody was only for *one night*.

after the Passover] (see above) **after the days of the feast**, i.e. after the 21st of Nisan. Herod, who (ver. 1, note) observed rigorously the Jewish customs, would not execute a prisoner during the feast.

5.] On the *duration* implied by this verse, see above.

6. the same night] emphatic: **that very night**, viz. which preceded the day of trial.—The practice of attaching a prisoner to one keeper or more by a chain is alluded to by several ancient authors. In the account of the imprisonment of Herod Agrippa

himself by Tiberius, Jos. Antt. xviii. 6. 7, we read of the *soldier who was chained with him*. See note on ch. xxiv. 23; see also ch. xxviii. 16, 20.

7.] It is in St. Luke's manner to relate simultaneously the angelic appearance and the shining of a light around: cf. Luke ii. 9; xxiv. 4; ch. x. 30. The light accompanied, or perhaps *shone from*, the angel.

9.] **went out**, viz. from the chamber or cell.

10.] The *first* and *second* watch or guard cannot mean the two soldiers to whom he was chained, on account of the mention of his *going out* above: but are probably the other two, one at the door of the chamber, the other at the outer door of the building. Then 'the iron gate leading into the city' was that outside the prison buildings, forming the exit from the premises. The situation of the prison is uncertain, but seems to have been *in the city*. The additional clause in the margin is remarkable, and can hardly be other than genuine.

11.] when Peter was **come to himself**: i.e. when he had recovered his self-consciousness. He was before in the half-consciousness of one who is dreaming and knows that it is a dream: except that in his case the dream was *the truth*, and his supposition the unreality.

12.] And now **having become aware of it**,—for this, and not "when he had considered the thing," is the meaning,—he proceeds at once to action.

John, whose surname was Mark] It is uncertain whether this John Mark was the same as the Evangelist Mark: but they have been generally believed to be the same. For a full account of him, see Introduction to Mark. His mother Mary was not sister, but aunt of Barnabas: see Col. iv. 10, note.

15. It is his angel] No other rendering but **his angel** will suit the sense: and with a few exceptions all Commentators, ancient and modern, have recognized this meaning. Our Lord *plainly asserts the doctrine of guardian angels* in Matt. xviii. 10 (see note there): and from this we further learn in what sense His words were understood by the early church. From His words, "*take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones*," taken with the context, we infer that *each one* has his guardian angel: from this passage we find not only that such was believed to be the case, but that it was supposed that such angel *occasionally appeared in the semblance* (seeing that he spoke with the voice) *of the person himself*. We do not, it is true, know who the speakers were; nor is the peculiar form in which they viewed the doctrine binding upon us: it may have been erroneous, and savouring of superstition. But of the *doctrine itself* this may not be said, *as the Lord Himself has asserted it*. For what purpose they suppose this angel to have come, does not appear in the narrative.

17. beckoning unto them] His motive was *haste*: he tells briefly the particulars of his deliverance, and, while it was yet night, hastily departs.

unto James] James, *the brother of the Lord*, whom we find presiding over the church at Jerusalem, ch. xv. 13; xxi. 18: Gal. ii. 12. See Gal. i. 19; ii. 9. I believe him to have been one of those "*brethren of the Lord*" mentioned Matt. xiii. 55; John vii. 5; ch. i. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5, of whom I have in the note on the first of these passages maintained, that they were His real maternal brethren, sons of Joseph and Mary:—and to have been an *Apostle*, as Paul and Barnabas, but not of the number of the twelve (see note on ch. xiv. 14):—and to have been therefore of course distinct from James the son of Alpheus, enumerated (Matt. x. 3 and parallels) *among* the twelve. The reasons for this belief I reserve for the Introduction to the Epistle of James. **into another place**] I see in these words a minute mark of truth in our narrative. Under the circumstances, the place of Peter's retreat would very naturally at the time be kept secret. It probably was unknown to the person from whom the narrative came, or designedly left indefinite. And so it has remained, the narrative not following Peter's history any longer. We find him again at Jerusalem in ch. xv. Whether he left it or not on this occasion is uncertain. It is not asserted in the word **departed**,—which only implies that he left the *house*.

18. as soon as it was day] Wieseler argues from this, and I think rightly, that the deliverance of Peter must have taken place in the *last* watch of the night (3–6 A.M. in April), for otherwise his escape would have been perceived *before* the break of day, viz. at the next change of the watch.

20.] It is impossible that Herod should have been at *war* with the Tyrians and Sidonians, belonging as they did to a Roman province, and he himself being in high favour at Rome:—nor is this implied in our text. The quarrel, however it originated, appears to have been carried out on Herod's part by some commercial regulation opposed to their interest, dependent as they were on supplies from his territory.

came with one accord, viz. by a deputation.—**Blastus** is a Roman name, and, from Herod's frequent visits to Rome, it is likely that he would have Romans as his confidential servants.

peace] not (see above) in its strict sense, but **reconciliation**.

because their country was nourished by the king's country] We learn from 1 Kings v. 11, that Solomon made presents of wheat and oil to Hiram in return for the cedar and fir-trees for the Lord's house: and from Ezek. xxvii. 17, that Judah and Israel exported wheat, honey, oil, and balm (or resin) to Tyre. In Ezra iii. 7 also, we find Zerubbabel giving meat, drink, and oil to them of Sidon and Tyre, to bring cedar-trees to Joppa. Mr. Humphry quotes from Bede, 'The Tyrians found the king's friendship necessary to them, because their country was a very narrow strip, and close on the borders of Galilee and Damascus.'—An additional reason for their request at this particular time may have been, the prevalence of famine.

21.] The account in Josephus is remarkably illustrative of the sacred text: "The third year of his reign over all Judæa was now fulfilled, and he came to the city of Cæsarea.... and gave spectacles in honour of Cæsar.... and all the rank and wealth of the province was assembled at them. And on the second day of the spectacles, he put on a vesture all wrought of silver, so that the texture was wondrous to behold, and came into the theatre at the rising of the sun, Then the silver, struck with the first glitter of the solar rays, cast a splendid reflection, dazzling the eyes of the beholders, and struck fear into them. And immediately his flatterers called out, in words unpropitious to him or any one, from all parts of the assembly hailing him as God, Be gracious to us; if we have hitherto feared thee as a man, henceforth we confess thee more than mortal. The king did not rebuke them, nor even reject this impious flattery. Looking up however shortly after, he saw an owl over his head, sitting on a rope, and straightway felt that it was a presage of mischief." Josephus goes on to relate that he was immediately seized with a violent pain in his bowels, of which he died after five days' agony. On the fraud committed by Eusebius in citing this account of Josephus's, see my Greek Test.—The circumstance related in our text, of the *answer to the Sidonian embassy*, of which Josephus seems not to have been aware, *having been one object* of Herod on the occasion, shews an accuracy of detail which well accords with the view of the material of this part of the Acts having been collected at Cæsarea, where the event happened (see Introd. to Acts, §2. 11).

23.] The *fact* may be correctly related by Josephus (see above): but our narrative alleges the *cause* of what happened to have been the *displeasure of God*, and the stroke to have been inflicted by *His angel*. Compare 2 Kings xix. 35; 1 Chron. xxi. 15, 16. But no *appearance* of an angel is implied.

he was eaten of worms] Another additional particular; and one to be expected from a physician. In several cases of deaths by divine judgment we have accounts of this loathsome termination of the disease. See examples in my Greek Test.

24.] Similarly, ch. v. 12 ff.; vi. 7; ix. 31, a general statement of the progress and prosperity of the church of God forms the transition from one portion of the history to another.

25.] The journey (ch. xi. 30) took place after the death, or about the time of the death, of Herod; see on ver. 1. The purpose of the mission would be very soon accomplished: Saul would naturally not remain longer in Jerusalem than was unavoidable, and would court no publicity: and hence there seems an additional reason for placing the visit *after* Herod's death: for, of all the persons whose execution would be pleasing to the Jews, Saul would hold the foremost place. Our verse is probably inserted as a note of passage from the last recorded fact of Barnabas and Saul (xi. 30), to their being found at Antioch (xiii. 1).

John] See above on ver. 12.

Acts: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII. 1–XIV. 28.] FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL AND BARNABAS. *Henceforward the history follows Saul* (or Paul, as he is now [ver. 9] and from this time denominated) *his ministry, and the events of his life, to the exclusion* (with the sole exception of the council in ch. xv.) *of all the other Apostles.*

XIII. 1.] The word "certain" has been interpolated, to make it appear that the persons mentioned were not the *only* prophets and teachers at Antioch. It is omitted by all our most ancient authorities. The enumeration is probably inserted on account of the solemnity of the incident about to be related, that it might be known *who they were*, to whom the Holy Spirit entrusted so weighty a commission.

prophets] See on ch. xi. 27.

teachers] Those who had the *gift of teaching*, see 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11. They were probably less immediately the organs of the Holy Spirit than the *prophets*, but under His continual guidance in the gradual and progressive work of *teaching the Word*.

Symeon that was called Niger] Nothing is known of him. From his appellation of Niger, he may have been an African proselyte.

Lucius] A Lucius, probably the same person, is mentioned Rom. xvi. 21 as a “*kinsman*” of Paul. There is no reason to suppose him the same with Luke (Lucas, or Lucanus),—but the contrary; for why should Paul in this case use *two different names*? See Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24.

Manaen] The same name with *Menahem* the king of Israel, 2 Kings xv. 14. A certain Essene, of this name, foretold to Herod the Great, when a boy going to school, that he should be king of the Jews. And in consequence, when he came to the throne, he honoured Manaen, and, on his account, all the Essenes. It is then not improbable, that this Manaen may have been a son of that one: but see below. The Herod here meant was Antipas, who with his brother Archelaus (both sons of Herod the Great by Malthace a Samaritan woman, see Matt. xiv. 1, note) were brought up in a private family at Rome. Both were at this time exiles, Antipas at Lyons, Archelaus at Vienne. This Manaen had probably been Herod’s **foster-brother**; not, ‘*brought up with him*,’ for, if he had been *brought up* with Antipas, he would also have been with Archelaus: see above.—In this case, his mother may have called her infant by the name of the person who had brought the Essenes into favour with Herod, and no relationship with that person need have existed.

Saul] mentioned last, perhaps because the *prophets* are placed first, and he was *not one*, but a teacher: or it may be, that he himself furnished the account. This circumstance, which has been objected to by some as invalidating the accuracy of the account, is in fact an interesting confirmation of it, as being eminently characteristic of him who spoke as in 1 Cor. xv. 9; 2 Cor. xii. 6; Eph. iii. 8.

2. As they ministered] The word in the original is that generally used to express the priestly service among the Jews, to which now had succeeded that of the *prophets and teachers* in the Christian church: **ministering** is therefore the only word adequate to render it, as A.V. More closely to define it is not only impracticable, but is narrowing an expression purposely left general.

the Holy Ghost said] viz. by one of the prophets present, probably Symeon or Lucius: see above. The announcement being *to the church*, and several persons being mentioned, we can hardly suppose it to have been an inner command merely to some one person, as in the case of Philip, ch. viii. 29. There is in the original words of the injunction of the Spirit, a precision and force implying that it was for a special purpose, and to be obeyed at the time.

the work] Certainly, by ver. 4, we may infer that there had been, or was simultaneously with this command, a divine intimation made to Barnabas and Saul of the nature and direction of this work. *In general*, it had already been pointed out in the case of Saul, ch. ix. 15; xxii. 21; xxvi. 17. It consisted in preaching to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph. iii. 8. In virtue of the foundation of the Gentile churches being entrusted to them, Saul and Barnabas become after this Apostles, not *vice versa*; nor is there the least ground for the inference that this was a formal extension of the apostolic office, the pledge of its continuance through the episcopacy to the end of time. The apostolic office terminated with the apostolic times, and by its very nature, admitted not of continuance: the episcopal office, in its ordinary sense, sprung up after the apostolic times: and the two are entirely distinct. The confusion of the two belongs to that unsafe and slippery ground in church matters, the only logical refuge from which is in the traditional system of Rome. Jerome says, “Let bishops remember that they are greater than presbyters not so much by the strictness of divine appointment, as by custom, and that the two orders ought together to rule the church.”

3. when they had fasted and prayed] not, “*when they had done fasting and praying*.” this was a *new* fasting and *special* prayer for Barnabas and Saul. Fasting and prayer have ever been connected with the solemn times of ordination by the Christian church; but the fasts four times a year, or ‘ember days at the four seasons,’ for the special purpose of ordinations, were probably not introduced till the fourth or even fifth century.

laid their hands on them] See on ch. vi. 6.

4. being sent forth] Under the guidance of the Spirit, who directed their course.

Seleucia] A very strong fortified city (supposed impregnable) fifteen miles from Antioch,—on the Orontes, and five miles from its mouth. It was founded and fortified by Seleucus Nicator, who was buried there. It was called *Seleucia ad Mare*,—and *Pieria*, from Mount Pierius, on which it was built, to distinguish it from other Syrian towns of the same name. Polybius mentions, that it has but one approach from the sea, steep, and excavated by hand, with frequent flights of stairs. This excavated way is to this day conspicuous amongst the ruins of the city. It was under the Seleucid kings the capital of a district Seleucis,—and, since Pompey’s time, a *free city*.

they sailed to Cyprus] The lofty outline of Cyprus is visible from the mouth of the Orontes. See below, ver. 7. It was the

native country of Barnabas,—and, as John Mark was his kinsman, they were likely to find more acceptance there than in other parts.

5.] Salamis was the nearest port to Seleucia on the eastern side of the island. It had a good harbour. It was the residence of a king anciently, and always one of the chief cities of the island. There were very many Jews there, as appears by there being more than one synagogue. Their numbers may have been increased by the farming of the copper-mines by Augustus to Herod. On the insurrection of the Jews in the reign of Trajan, Salamis was nearly destroyed, and they were expelled from the island. Its demolition was completed by an earthquake in the reign of Constantine, who (or his immediate successors) rebuilt it and gave it the name of Constantia. The ruins of this latter place are visible near the modern Famagusta, the Venetian capital of the island. **[their minister]** Probably for the administration of baptism: see also 1 Cor. i. 14–17.

6.] Paphos is on the western shore, with the length of the island between it and Salamis. It is Nea Paphos which is meant, about eight miles north of the Paphos more celebrated in classic poets for the temple and worship of Venus. It was destroyed by an earthquake in Augustus's reign, but rebuilt by him. It is now called Baffa, and contains some important ruins.

a certain sorcerer] On the prevalence of such persons at this time, see ch. viii. 9, note. The Roman aristocracy were peculiarly under the influence of astrologers and magicians, some of whom were Jews. We read of such in connexion with Marius, Pompey, Crassus, Cæsar,—and later with Tiberius: and the complaints of Horace and Juvenal shew how completely, and for how long a time, Rome was inundated with Oriental impostors of every description.

Bar-Jesus] He had given himself the Arabic title of Elymas, ‘*the wise man*’ (from the same root as the Turkish ‘Ulema’), interpreted a *magician* or *sorcerer* in our text.

7. the deputy] The office was that called in Latin ‘*proconsul*,’ the title of the governor of those provinces which were (semblably) left by the emperors to the government of the senate and people. The proconsul was appointed by lot, as in the times of the republic; carried with him the lictors and fasces as a consul: but had no military power, and held office only for a year. This last restriction was soon relaxed under the emperors, and they were retained five or even more years. The imperial provinces, on the other hand, were governed by a military officer, a Proprætor or Legatus of the Emperor, who was girded with the sword, and not revocable unless by the pleasure of the Emperor. The minor districts of the imperial provinces were governed by Procurators. Nothing more is known of this Sergius Paulus. Another person of the same name is mentioned by Galen, more than a century after this, as a great proficient in philosophy. He was of consular rank, and is probably the Sergius Paulus who was consul with L. Venuclius Apronianus, A.D. 168, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

8. Elymas] See above on ver. 6.

9. who also is called Paul] This notice marks the transition from the former part of his history, where he is uniformly called Saul, to the latter and larger portion, where he is without exception known as Paul. I do not regard it as indicative of any change of name at the time of this incident, or *from* that time: the evidence which I deduce from it is of a different kind, and not without interest to enquirers into the character and authorship of our history. Hitherto, our Evangelist has been describing events, the truth of which he had ascertained by research and from the narratives of others. But henceforward there is reason to think that the joint memoirs of himself and the great Apostle furnish the material of the book. In those memoirs the Apostle is universally known by the name PAUL, which superseded the other. If this was the first incident at which Luke was present, or the first memoir derived from Paul himself, or, which is plain, however doubtful may be the other alternatives, the commencement of that part of the history which is to narrate the teaching and travels of the Apostle Paul,—it would be natural that a note should be made, identifying the two names as belonging to the same person.—The **also** must not be understood as having any reference to *Sergius Paulus*, or as meaning that the Apostle ‘*also* (as well as Sergius) was called Paul.’ It signifies that Paulus was a *second name* borne by Saul, in conformity with a Jewish practice as old as the captivity (or even as Joseph, see Gen. xli. 45), of adopting a Gentile name. Mr. Howson traces it through the Persian period (see Dan. i. 7; Esth. ii. 7), the Greek (1 Macc. xii. 16; xvi. 11; 2 Macc. iv. 29), and the Roman (ch. i. 23; xiii. 1; xviii. 8, &c.), and the middle ages, down to modern times. Jerome has conjectured that the name was adopted by Saul *in memory of this event*, the subjugation of Sergius Paulus to Christ, as the first fruits of his preaching—in the same way as Scipio after the conquest of Africa was called Africanus, and Metellus was called Creticus after the conquest of Crete. It is strange that any one could be found capable of so utterly mistaking the character of St. Paul, or of producing so unfortunate an analogy to justify the mistake. It is yet stranger that Augustine should, in his Confessions, adopt the same view: “He who was the least of Thine Apostles,... loved to be called Paul, instead of Saul, as before, to commemorate so great a victory.” So also Olshausen. A more probable way of accounting for the additional name is pointed out by observing that such new names were often alliterative of or allusive to the original Jewish name:—he who was Jesus as a Jew, was called Jason or Justus, Col. iv. 11: see other examples in my Greek Test.

set his eyes on him] It seems probable that Paul never entirely recovered his sight as before, after the “glory of that light” (see ch. xxii. 11). We have several apparent allusions to weakness in his sight, or to something which rendered his bodily presence contemptible. In ch. xxiii. 1, the same expression, “fixing his eyes on,” “earnestly beholding,” A.V., “the council” occurs, and

may have some bearing (see note there) on his not recognizing the high priest. See also Gal. iv. 13, 15; vi. 11, and 2 Cor. xii. 7, 9, and notes. The traditional notices of his personal appearance represent him as having contracted and overhanging eyebrows.—Whatever the word may imply, it appears like the graphic description of an eye-witness, who was *not* Paul himself.

10. son of the devil] Meyer supposes an indignant allusion to the name Bar-jesus (*son of Jesus, or Joshua*). This is possible, though hardly probable.

wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?] This evidently applies, not to Elymas's conduct on this occasion merely, but to his whole life of imposture and perversion of others. The especial sin was, that of laying hold of the nascent enquiry after God in the minds of men, and wresting it to a wrong direction.

The Lord here and in ver. 11, is Jehovah.

11. for a season] The punishment was only temporary, being accompanied with a gracious purpose to the man himself, to awaken repentance in him.

a mist and a darkness] In the same precise and gradual manner is the healing of the lame man, ch. iii. 8, described: *he stood* (first), *and walked*. So here, first a dimness came on him,—then total darkness. And we may conceive this to have been shewn by his gestures and manner under the infliction.

12. at the doctrine of the Lord] Hesitating as he had been before between the *teaching* of the sorcerer and that of the Apostle, he is amazed at the divine power accompanying the latter, and gives himself up to it. It is not said that he was *baptized*: but the supposition is not thereby excluded: see ver. 48; ch. xvii. 12, 34; xviii. 8, first part.

13. Paul and his company] Is there not a trace of the narrator being among them, in this expression?—Henceforward *Paul is the principal person*, and Barnabas is thrown into the background.

Perga in Pamphylia] Perga lies on the Cestrus, which flows into the bay of Attaleia. It is sixty stadia (74 miles) from the mouth, “between and upon the sides of two hills, with an extensive valley in front, watered by the river Cestrus, and backed by the mountains of the Taurus.” (Conybeare and Howson, vol. i.p. 195, from Sir C. Fellows's Asia Minor.) The remains are almost entirely Greek, with few traces of later inhabitants. The inhabitants of Pamphylia were nearly allied in character to those of Cilicia: and it may have been Paul's design, having already preached in his own province, to extend the Gospel of Christ to this neighbouring people.

John probably took the opportunity of some ship sailing from Perga. His reason for returning does not appear, but may be presumed, from ch. xv. 38, to have been, unsteadiness of character, and unwillingness to face the dangers abounding in this rough district (see below). He afterwards, having been the subject of dissension between Paul and Barnabas, ch. xv. 37–40, accompanied the latter again to Cyprus; and we find him at a much later period spoken of by Paul, together with Aristarchus, and Jesus called Justus, as *having been a comfort to him* (Col. iv. 10, 11): and again in 2 Tim. iv. 11, *as profitable to him for the ministry*.

14.] It is not improbable that during this journey Paul may have encountered some of the ‘perils by robbers’ of which he speaks, 2 Cor. xi. 26. The tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate the table-land of Asia Minor from the coast, were notorious for their lawless and marauding habits. Strabo says of Isauria, that its inhabitants were all robbers, and of the Pisidians, that, like the Cilicians, they have great practice in plundering. He gives a similar character of the Pamphylians. **ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA** was founded originally by the Magnetes on the Meander, and subsequently by Seleucus Nicator; and became, under Augustus, a Roman colony. Its position is described by Strabo as being on a hill, and was unknown or wrongly placed till Mr. Arundell found its ruins at a place now called Yalobatch, answering to Strabo's description; where since an inscription has been found with the letters ANTIOCHEAE CAESARE.

15.] The divisions of the law and prophets at present in use among the Jews were probably not yet arranged. Before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the *Law only* was read in the synagogues: but, this having been forbidden by him, the Prophets were substituted:—and, when the Maccabees restored the reading of the Law, that of the Prophets continued as well.

sent unto them] Then they were not sitting in the *foremost seats*, Matt. xxiii. 6, but somewhere among the congregation. The message was probably sent to them as having previously to this taught in the city, and thus being known to have come for that purpose. See, as illustrating our narrative, Luke iv. 17 ff. and notes.

16. beckoning with his hand] As was his practice: *so he stretched forth the hand*, ch. xxvi. 1. See also ch. xxi. 40. The contents of this speech (vv. 16–41) may be thus arranged: I. *Recapitulation of God's ancient deliverances of His people and*

mercies towards them, ending with His crowning mercy, the sending of the Deliverer and promised Son of David (vv. 16–25). II. *The history of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, and of God's fulfilment of His promise by raising Him from the dead* (vv. 26–37). III. *The personal application of this to all present,—the announcement to them of justification by faith in Jesus, and solemn warning against the rejection of Him.* It is in the last degree unsafe to argue, as Dr. Wordsworth has done, that because Strabo asserts the language of the Pisidians to have been neither Greek nor Lydian, St. Paul must have spoken to them by virtue of his miraculous gift of tongues. To the question put by Dr. W., “In what language did St. Paul preach in Pisidia?” we may reply, seeing that he preached in the synagogue, after the reading of the law and prophets, “In the same language as that in which the law and prophets had just been read.”

ye that fear God] The persons thus addressed here, and in ver. 26, formed a distinct class, viz. the (uncircumcised) proselytes of the gate; not excluding even such pious Gentiles, not proselytes in any sense, who might be present. The speech, from the beginning and throughout, is *universal* in its application, embracing Jews and Gentiles.

17. of this people of Israel] Grotius thinks that as the Apostle said these words, he pointed with his hand to the Jews. Or rather, perhaps by the word **this** he indicated, *without gesture*, the people *in whose synagogue they were assembled*.

our fathers] It is evident that the doctrine so much insisted on afterwards by St. Paul, that all believers in Christ were the true children of Abraham, was fully matured already: by the words **this people** he alludes to the time when God was the God of the Jews only: by this **us** he unites all present in the now extended inheritance of the promises made to the fathers.

exalted the people] Evidently an allusion to Isa. i. 2, where the word is also used in the sense of ‘bringing up,’ nourishing to manhood. This was done by increasing them in Egypt so that they became a great nation: see Gen. xlvi. 19. There is no reference to any *exaltation* of the people during their stay in Egypt: whether by their deliverance, or by the miracles of Moses, or by Joseph’s preferment to honour.

18. he bore them as a nurse beareth a child] The adoption of this rendering, instead of that of the A.V., depends on the change of one letter in the Greek. ‘The word is “*etrop* (or, *ph*) *ophoresen*:”’ the former being the reading rendered in the A.V. But the other is the more probable, both from the MSS. here, and from the Heb. of Deut. i. 31, and the expansion of the same image in Num. xi. 12.

19. seven nations] See Deut. vii. 1; Josh. iii. 10; xxiv. 11.—From the occurrence of manifest references, in these opening verses of the speech, to Deut. i. and Isa. i., combined with the fact that these two chapters form the present lessons in the synagogues on one and the same sabbath, Bengel and Stier conclude that they had been then read. It may have been so: but see on ver. 15.

20.] Taking the words as they stand, *no other sense* can be given to them, than that the time of the judges lasted 450 years. And we have *exactly the same chronological arrangement* in Josephus; who reckons 592 years from the Exodus to the building of Solomon’s temple,—arranging the period thus: (1) forty years in the wilderness: (2) twenty-five years under Joshua: (3) Judges (below): (4) forty years under Saul, see on ver. 21: (5) forty years under David, 1 Kings ii. 11: (6) four years of Solomon’s own reign. This gives 592 minus 149, i.e. 443 years (*about* 450) for the judges, including Samuel. That this chronology differs widely from 1 Kings vi. 1, is most evident,—where we read that Solomon began his temple in the four hundred and eightieth (LXX, four hundred and fortieth) after the Exodus. All attempts to reconcile the two are arbitrary and forced. See some such recounted in my Greek Test. It seems then that St. Paul followed a chronology current among the Jews, and agreeing with the book of Judges itself (the spaces of time in which, added together, come exactly to 450), and that adopted by Josephus, but not with that of our present Hebrew text of 1 Kings vi. 1.

Samuel] mentioned as the *terminus* of the period of the Judges, also as having been so nearly concerned in the setting up over them of Saul and David.

21. Saul.... a man of the tribe of Benjamin] It may be not altogether irrelevant to notice that a *Saul, a man of the tribe of Benjamin*, was speaking; and to trace in this minute specification something characteristic and natural.

by the space of forty years] So also Josephus. In the Old Testament the length of Saul’s reign is not specified; 1 Sam. vii. 2 gives no reason, as Bengel thinks, why Saul’s reign should have been *less than twenty years*, as the twenty years there mentioned do not extend to the bringing up of the ark by David, but only to the circumstances mentioned in the following verses. Biscoe has well shewn, that as Saul was a young man when anointed king, and Ishboseth his *youngest son* (1 Chron. viii. 33) was forty years old at his death (2 Sam. ii. 10), his reign cannot have been much short of that period. It is clearly against the construction to suppose Samuel’s time as well as Saul’s included in the forty years, following as they do upon the verb “*gave them*.” Yet this has been done by the majority of Commentators.

22. he removed him] i.e. **deposed him**: in this case, by his *death*, for David was not made king till then. Or perhaps the word

may refer to the sentence pronounced against Saul, 1 Sam. xiii. 14, or xv. 23, 28, and the following verb, **raised up**, to the whole process of the exaltation of David to be king. But I prefer the former.

to whom he gave testimony, and said] The two passages, Ps. lxxxix. 20, and 1 Sam. xiii. 14, are interwoven together: both were spoken of David, and both by prophetic inspiration. They are cited from memory, neither the words “*the son of Jesse*,” nor “*which shall fulfil all my will*,” being found in them. These latter words are spoken of *Cyrus*, see Isa. xliv. 28. That such citations are left in their present shape in our text, forms a strong presumption that we have the speeches of St. Paul word for word as delivered by him, and no subsequent general statement of what he said, in which case the citation would have been *corrected by the sacred text*.

23. hath God according to promise brought...] viz. the promise in Zech. iii. 8, where the very word “*bring forth*” is used; not however excluding the many other promises to the same effect.

24. before the presence of his coming] referring to “*brought*” above, when his coming forward publicly was about to take place.

25.] ‘Ihe expression “to fulfil (or finish) a course” is peculiar to St. Paul: see ch. xx. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 7. On this course see Luke iii. 15 ff.

26.] The same two classes, (see on ver. 16,) Jews, and God-fearing Gentiles, are here again addressed: and this should be more distinctly marked in the version, than is done in the A.V. **this salvation]** viz. the salvation implied in Jesus being a Saviour—salvation *by Him*.

27.] On the peculiar construction of this verse, almost unintelligible in any English representation, consult my Greek Test.

28. when they found] Not, ‘*though*,’ but rather **because** they found no cause: **when they found no cause of death in him, they besought,&c.:** see Luke xxiii. 22, 23.

29.] De Wette rightly remarks, that St. Paul, in this compendious narrative, makes no distinction between friend and foe in what was done to our Lord, but regards both as fulfilling God’s purpose regarding Him. I may add that there is also a contrast between what men did to Him, and *God’s* raising Him, ver. 30.—Joseph and Nicodemus, be it observed, were both *rulers*. Paul touches but lightly on the cross of Christ, and hastens on to the great point, the Resurrection, as the fulfilment of prophecy and seal of the Messiahship of Jesus.

31.] The **now** gives peculiar force to the sentence. **Who are at this moment witnesses,—***living* witnesses; i.e. ‘I am not telling you a matter of the *past* merely, but one made present to the people of the Jews by living and eye-witnessing testimony.’

32. we declare unto you] He and Barnabas were not of the number of those who came up with Him from Galilee unto Jerusalem, ver. 31, nor was their mission to the Jewish people. ‘*They* are at this moment witnessing to the people, we, preaching to you.’ The **we** is emphatic. Stier observes how entirely Paul sinks himself, his history and commission from Christ, in the great Object of his preaching.

33. in that he hath raised up Jesus] The term **raised up** is ambiguous: but here the meaning, **from the dead**, is absolutely required by the context; both because the word is repeated with that addition (ver. 34), and because the Apostle’s emphasis throughout the passage is on the *Resurrection* (ver. 30) as the *final fulfilment of God’s promises regarding Jesus*. The other meaning, ‘*having raised up*,’ as in ch. vii. 37, is however maintained by several Commentators. Meyer well remarks, that this meaning would hardly in our passage have been thought of or defended, had it not been that the subjoined citation from Ps. ii. has been thought necessarily to apply to our Lord’s *mission upon earth*.

The reading of some of our ancient authorities here, *in the first psalm*, is to be accounted for by the fact that anciently our second Psalm was the first, *our* first being reckoned as prefatory. St. Paul

refers the prophecy in its full completion to the *Resurrection* of our Lord: similarly in Rom. i. 4, “*declared to be the Son of God with power.... by the resurrection from the dead*.”

34. now no more to return...] Compare Rom. vi. 9, “*Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him*.” It is interesting to trace the same shades of thought in the speeches and epistles of Paul; and abundant opportunity of doing so will occur as we proceed.—But here the *returning to corruption* does not merely imply death, so that Jesus should have once undergone it, and no more hereafter, as the A.V. seems to imply: but we must supply ‘to die, and in consequence to’ before the words, understanding them as the *result of death, if it had dominion over Him*: thus the clause

answers even more remarkably to Rom. vi. 9.

the holy things is the LXX rendering of the Hebrew word, Isa. lv. 3, which in 2 Chron. vi. 42, they have translated “*the mercies*.” The word ‘holy’ should have been preserved in the A.V., as answering to “*thine Holy One*” below; **the mercies of David, holy and sure: or my holy promises which I made sure unto David.**

35.] Wherefore also,—correspondent to which purpose, of His Christ not seeing corruption. **he saith]** viz. God, not David: the *subject* is continued from vv. 32 and 34, and fixed by “*he said*” and “*I will give*” just preceding,—*thou shalt not suffer* (literally *give*) and *thine Holy One* accurately correspond to “*I will give*” and “*holy things*” before. See on ch. ii. 27.

36.] The psalm, though spoken by David, cannot have its fulfilment in David.

his own generation] David ministered only to *the generation in which he lived*: but *through this Man*, remission of sins is preached to you and to all who believe on Him.

after he had served his own generation by the will (i. e. according to the appointment) **of God]** His whole course was marked out and fixed by God—he fulfilled it, and fell asleep. (See, on the whole, 2 Sam. vii. 12; 1 Kings ii. 10.)

was laid unto his fathers] An expression arising from the practice of burying families together: the expression occurs very frequently in the Old. Test.

38.] Paul speaks here of justification only in its *lowest* sense, as negative, and synonymous with remission of sins; he does not unfold here that higher sense of *justifying*, the *accounting righteous*, which those who have from God are *just by faith*. It is the first office of the Spirit by which he spoke, to convict concerning sin, before He convicts concerning righteousness: therefore he dwells on the *remission of sins*, merely just giving a glimpse of the great doctrine of justification, of which he had such wonderful things to write and to say.

39.] And from **all things** (sin), from which ye **could not in** (under) **the law of Moses be justified in Him** (as in the expression, *in Christ, in the Lord*, frequently), **every believer is** (habitual present tense) **justified**.... but not implying that in the law of Moses there might be justification from *some* sins;—under the law there is *no* justification (Gal. iii. 11);—but it means **Christ shall do for you all that the law could not do**: leaving it for inference, or for further teaching, that this was absolutely ALL: that the law could do *nothing*. The same thought is expanded Rom. viii. 3. This interpretation will be the more clearly established, when we remember that *to justify from sin* was not in any sense, and could not be the office of the law, by which came the knowledge of sin. The expression “*to justify from*” is only once used again by St. Paul (Rom. vi. 7, marginal rendering: the A.V. has “*freed from sin*,” but wrongly), and that where he is arguing against the continuing in sin. **every one that believeth** is not to be joined with **in him**, which (see above) is contrasted with **in the law of Moses**.—It is quite in St. Paul’s manner to use *every one that believeth* thus absolutely: see Rom. i. 16; iii. 22; x. 4 (Gal. iii. 22).

40.] The object of preaching the Gospel to the Jews *first* was for a testimony to them: its reception was almost uniformly unfavourable: and against such anticipated rejection he now warns them.

41. ye despisers] So the LXX render the Hebrew word, signifying ‘*among the heathen*,’ so in A.V., for which they seem to have read some other word resembling it.—The prophecy was spoken of the judgment to be inflicted by means of the Chaldaeans: but neither this nor any other prophecy is confined in its application to the occasion of which it was once spoken, but gathers up under it all analogous procedures of God’s providence: such repeated fulfilments increasing in weight, and approaching nearer and nearer to that last and great fulfilment of all the promises of grace and all the threats of wrath, by which every prophetic word shall be exhausted.

42.] The insertions in the text followed by the A.V. have been made partly perhaps to remove the ambiguity in the “*they*” and “*them*,” and to shew who they were that besought, &c. But they confuse the sense. **As they** (the congregation) **were going out, they** (the same) **besought**.

43.) See a similar expression ch. xi. 23. There too, we have *the grace of God* similarly used of the *work of the Gospel begun in the hearts of the converts*.

44. came... together] ‘*In the synagogue*;’ it was the sight of the Gentile crowds in *their* house of prayer which stirred up the jealousy of the Jews.

45. contradicting and blaspheming] These words form a graphic repetition, passing from the *particular thing which they did*, viz. contradict the words spoken by Paul, to *the spirit in which they did it*, viz. a contradictory and blaspheming one.

46. should first have been spoken to you] See ch. iii. 26; Rom. i. 16.

47.] They refer the word **thee** in the prophecy not to *themselves as teachers*, but to Christ.

48. as many as were disposed to eternal life] ‘The meaning of this word **disposed** must be determined by the context. The Jews had *judged themselves unworthy of eternal life*: the Gentiles, as many as were disposed to eternal life, believed. *By whom* so disposed, is not *here* declared: nor need the word be in this place further particularized. *We know, that it is GOD who worketh in us the will to believe*, and that the preparation of the heart is of Him: but to find in *this text* pre-ordination to life asserted, is to force both the word and the context to a meaning which they do not contain. The word in the original is the same as in 1 Cor. xvi. 15, where it is said that the house of Stephanas “**have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints**,” and in Rom. xvii. 1, where it is said that “*the powers that be are ordained of God*.” in both of which places the *agents* are expressed, whereas here the word is used absolutely, without an agent expressed. Calvin, &c., find here *predestination in the strongest sense*: “This ordaining can be referred only to the eternal decree of God... It is a ridiculous cavil to refer it to the *mind of those who believed*, as if they received the Gospel who were properly disposed in their minds.” So the Vulgate translates the word “*pre-ordained*,” and Augustine, “*destined*.” here are several other renderings, which see in my Greek Test. Dr. Wordsworth well observes, that it would be interesting to enquire what influence such renderings as this of “*pre-ordained*” in the Vulgate version had on the minds of men like St. Augustine and his followers in the Western Church, in treating the great questions of free will, election, reprobation, and final perseverance; and on some writers in the reformed churches who, though rejecting the authority of that version, were yet swayed by it away from the sense of the original, here and in ch. ii. 47. The tendency of the Eastern Fathers, who read the original Greek, was, he remarks, in a different direction from that of the Western School.

50. devout... women] Women had a strong religious influence both for and against Christianity: see for the former ch. xvi. 14; xvii. 4; Phil. iv. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 16: for the latter, we have Josephus’s statement, that the majority of the wives of the Damascenes were proselytes: which may be compared with ch. ix. 22–25. These were proselytes of the gate, or at least inclined to Judaism.

expelled them] Though the *chief men of the city*, at the instigation, probably, of their wives, were concerned, this seems to have been no *legal* expulsion: for we find them revisiting Antioch on their return, ch. xiv. 21;—but only a compulsory retirement for peace, and their own safety’s sake. **51.]** As commanded by our Lord, Matt. x. 14, where see note.

Iconium] A populous city, east of Antioch in Pisidia, lying in a fertile plain at the foot of, and almost surrounded by, Mount Taurus. At this time, it was the capital of Lycaonia, and had around it a distinct territory, ruled by a tetrarch, and probably on that account is not reckoned to any of the above-mentioned districts. It became famous in the middle ages as the capital of the Seljukian Sultans, and had a great part in the growth of the Ottoman empire. It is now Konía, a town of 30, 000 inhabitants.

52.] See, for similar “joyful perorations,” as Dr. Wordsworth well designates them, Luke xxiv. 52; ch. v. 41; xii. 24.

Acts: Chapter 14

CHAP. XIV. 1. Greeks] Probably these were of the number of the *devout persons*, or *worshippers of God*, mentioned ch. xiii. 43, 50; xvi. 14; xvii. 4, 17; xviii. 7, i.e. those of the uncircumcised who were more or less attached to the Jewish religion.

2.] which believed not, viz. when Paul preached.

Ver. 3 gives the sequel of ver. 1,—ver. 4, of ver. 2.

3. speaking boldly in the Lord] i.e. ‘speaking with boldness, which boldness was grounded on confidence in the Lord.’ **By the Lord** here is meant GOD: see ch. iv. 29, 30, and ch. xx. 32, where we have joined together “*God, and the word of His grace*.”

and granted] or, **by granting**, &c.

4.] This was the way in which God bore His testimony. Such a split into two factions was a common occurrence, on far less important occasions, in these cities of Oriental Greeks.

5.] Dr. Howson remarks, that there was no “assault” made on them, as the A.V. has it; for if there had been, they could not but have been *ware of it*: but a stir, or movement, was going on which would have led to an assault, had they not been ware of it.

6. Lystra] This, as well as Derbe (of both which very little further is known), was probably a small town at the foot of the

singular mountain-mass known as the Kara-dagh, or black mountain, Lystra being S., and Derbe S.E. from Iconium. The sites are very uncertain. There are the ruins of about forty Christian churches on the north side of the Kara-dagh, at a place called by the Turks Binbir-Kilisseh (the 1001 churches), which the most recent travellers believe may be Lystra. In one of these places (probably at Lystra, see note, ch. xvi. 1) Paul found and took up Timothy on his second journey; and from the expression “*my beloved child*” in 1 Cor. iv. 17, compared with the use of “*father*” in the same chapter, as defined ver. 15, we are justified in concluding that he had been converted by the Apostle; and, if so, during *this visit*.—There appear to have been few Jews in the district: we hear of no synagogue. **Lycaonia**] Strabo describes Lycaonia as a hilly plain among the mountain-spurs of Taurus, very ill watered, cold and bare, but exceedingly adapted for sheep-pasture and the growth of wool.

9.] The imperfect tense here in the original is important. He was **listening** to Paul's preaching, and, while listening, his countenance, read by the Apostle's gift of spiritual discernment, gave token of **faith to be healed**.

stedfastly beholding him] See note on ch. xiii. 9.

10. with a loud voice] The original implies that he suddenly raised his voice above the tone in which he was before speaking.

11. in the speech (dialect) of Lycaonia] The nature of this dialect is uncertain. The notice is inserted to shew that the Apostles *had no knowledge of the inference drawn by the crowd*, till they saw the bulls being brought to their doors, ver. 13. So Chrysostom: “This was not yet known to the Apostles: for the men spake in their own tongue, and thus conveyed no meaning to them.” See, on the real nature of the gift of tongues, and the bearing of notices of this kind on its consideration, the note on ch. ii. 4.—These appearances of the gods are frequent subjects of heathen poetry and mythology. It was in the neighbouring country of Phrygia that Jupiter and Mercury were said to have wandered, and to have been entertained by Baucis and Philemon.

12.] This distinction is (besides the reason given) in accordance with what Paul himself cites (as the saying of his adversaries, it is true, but not therefore without some physical foundation), “*his bodily presence is weak*.” So Chrysostom, adding, “Barnabas seems to me to have been a person of noble appearance and bearing.”

leader of the discourse] Titles like this were commonly given to Hermes, the god of eloquence.

13. which was before their city] i.e. which was the defender, or tutelar god, of their city.

bulls and garlands] The meaning is not that the bulls were wreathed with the garlands: these last may have been to hang on the doors of the house where the Apostles were: or for manifold purposes connected with the sacrifice. They brought them, not to the gates of the city, but to the *doors of the outer court of the house*: see ch. xii. 13.

14. the apostles] This is the first place where Paul and Barnabas are so called. St. Paul constantly claims for himself the title in his Epistles: see Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1; ix. 1; xv. 9; 2 Cor. i. 1; Gal. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 1; 2 Tim. i. 1; Tit. i. 1. It seems to have been borne in this higher sense also by James the Lord's brother: see Gal. i. 19, and note, and the Introduction to the Epistle of James: and by Barnabas, here and in 1 Cor. ix. 5, 6: see also Gal. ii. 9. So that there were, widening the word beyond the Twelve, fifteen Apostles, usually so called. The word was also used in a still wider sense: see Rom. xvi. 7; 2 Cor. viii. 23 (marginal rendering); 1 Thess. ii. 6: in which latter place Silvanus and Timotheus seem to be included in it. The Apostles were *within*: on being told, they **rushed forth** into the crowd.

15.] The original, **these vain...** may be filled up by *things* or *gods*: more probably the latter, as contrasted with the One living God.

16.] Compare Rom. iii. 25, 26, and ch. xvii. 30.

17.] Compare Rom. i. 19, 20. The words **gave us rain from heaven** had a remarkable applicability in a country where we have seen from Strabo (on ver. 6) that there was *great scarcity of water*. He relates that in one city of Lycaonia, where water was reached by digging the wells very deep, it was sold for money.

19. who persuaded the multitude] We are told that the Lycaonians were fickle and untrustworthy. They stoned him, not in the Jewish method, but tumultuously and in the streets, dragging him out of the city afterwards.—He refers to this stoning, 2 Cor. xi. 25, “*once was I stoned*.”

20. the disciples stood round about him] not to *bury him*, but, as would naturally be the case, *in mournful anxiety and regret*.

he rose up] The first, and I think the right impression is, that this recovery was *supernatural*. It is not indeed so strongly implied, as to leave no doubt: especially as a blow from a stone would be likely to stun, and occasion the appearance of death.

Derbe] See above, on ver. 6. It is probably now Divlē. From Derbe not being enumerated, 2 Tim. iii. 11, with Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, as the scene of any of Paul's sufferings, we may perhaps infer that none befell him there.—They may have fled to Derbe, as being in a different jurisdiction from Lystra; the latter being comprised in the Roman province of Galatia, whereas Derbe seem to have belonged at this time to Antiochus, king of Commagéné,

21. they returned again] They were not far from the famous pass, called the 'Cilician gates,' which leads direct into that province: but, notwithstanding all that had befallen him, St. Paul prefers returning by the churches which he had founded, to a short and easy journey to the coast by his own home.

22. that we must...] Is not this use of the first person a token of the presence of the narrator again? My own conjecture would be, that he remained in Antioch during the journey to Iconium, &c., and back. The events between those two limits are much more summarily related than those before or after.

23. when they had elected them elders] The verb means, *appointed by suffrage*: and probably, by the analogy of ch. vi. 2–6 (see 2 Cor. viii. 19), the strict meaning is here to be retained. The word will not bear Jerome's and Chrysostom's sense of '*laying on of hands*,' adopted by Roman Catholic expositors. Nor is there any reason here for departing from the usual meaning of electing by shew of hands. The Apostles may have admitted by ordination those *presbyters whom the churches elected*.

25. Attalia] A maritime town at the mouth of the river Catarrhactes, in Pamphylia, not far from the border of Lycia, built by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, in a convenient position to command the trade of Syria or Egypt. It is still an important place, called Satalia. To reach it they had to cross the plain from Perga.

26.] from whence, as being the centre whence their apostolic commission had spread.

27. the door of faith] The same metaphor is used in 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3, by St. Paul, and shews, perhaps, his hand in the narrative.—On the explanation of long time here, see chronological table in Introduction.

Acts: Chapter 15

CHAP. XV. 1–35.] DIFFERENCE RESPECTING THE NECESSITY OF CIRCUMCISION FOR THE GENTILE CONVERTS. COUNCIL OF THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS AT JERUSALEM.

1. certain men] Called in Gal. ii. 4 "*false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus.*" Some of our later MSS. read, "certain men of the sect of the Pharisees which believed," as in ver. 5. Doubtless it was so. In spite of the special revelations which had accompanied the reception of the first Gentiles into the church, the strong Judaizing party adhered to their old prejudices respecting the necessity of conformity to the law of Moses. With this party Paul was in conflict all his life; and even long after, we find it raising its head again in the sects of the Ebionites and the Nazarenes.—Neander notices the account in Josephus, where Izates, K. of Adiabene, is converted to Judaism by a certain Ananias, who, for fear of a commotion among his people allows him to remain uncircumcised—when a certain Eleazar, who had the reputation of being very strict about his national observances, prevails on him to perform the rite, for that without it he could not be a Jew.

2.] Compare Gal. ii. 5.

should go up to Jerusalem] I assume here what seems to me to be almost beyond the possibility of question, that this journey was the same as that mentioned Gal. ii, 1–10. In that case, Paul there (ver. 2) says that he went up "*by revelation.*" In this expression I cannot see it necessarily implied that the revelation was made to *himself*, but that there was some intimation of the Holy Ghost, similar perhaps to that in ch. xiii. 2, in accordance with which the church at Antioch sent him and Barnabas; —there being *prophets* there, by whom the Spirit spoke His will.

certain other of them] Titus was one, Gal. ii. 1, 3, and that, in all probability, in order to *give an example of a Gentile convert of the uncircumcision endowed with gifts of the Holy Spirit.* Titus is *not mentioned in the Acts*; but only in 2 Cor., Gal., 2 Tim., and the epistle addressed to him.

3. being brought on their way by the church] This seems to have been something of an official escorting of them on the way, and perhaps parting from them with solemn commendation to God: causing great joy to them. It shews that the mind of the church was with *them*, not with the Judaizers. This was also the case in Phœnicia and Samaria, as is shewn by "*all the brethren.*"

4.] On their arrival at Jerusalem, there seems to have taken place an official reception of them and their message, *in public*. There they *related*—as a most important element for the determination of the question—*God's dealings with them* (see on ch. xiv. 27), and recounted the places where churches of believing Gentiles had been founded. This having taken place, a *protest* was entered on the part of the Pharisee believers—in no way doubting the truth of these conversions, nor in any way disparaging the ministry of Paul and Barnabas,—that it was necessary to circumcise *them*, i.e. *those of whom they had spoken*, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.—It may be objected, that this view would not be consistent with Paul's statement, Gal. ii. 2, *I communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation*. But I cannot see any inconsistency, if the words used in both cases be accurately weighed. To the church and apostles and elders, Paul and Barnabas gave a simple *recital* of how God had dealt with them among the Gentiles: but Paul did not lay before the whole assembly the *Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles*, viz. the indifference of the Mosaic law to their salvation (Gal. i. 7–9), for fear of its being hastily disparaged or repudiated, and so his work being hindered: “*lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain*,” Gal. ii. 2. But, in private interviews with the chief Apostles, James, Peter, and John (Gal. ii. 9), he *did unfold the whole freeness of this Gospel*, and so effectually, us to prepare the way for their full and public accordance with him at the council.

6.] *The Apostles and elders only* are mentioned as having assembled: in which case “*all the multitude*” (ver. 12) must mean that of the elders, and the decision of ver. 22 must have been arrived at *in a larger assembly*. But most probably the deliberation of the Apostles and elders implied the presence of the brethren also, who are intended by “*all the multitude*”—and there was *but one assembly*. The objection, *that no one place could have held them*, is nugatory: the *official presence of all* is assumed continually in such cases, where the assembly is *open to all*.

7.] A promiscuous debate, not perhaps without some angry feeling, ensued on their first coming together,—and among the *multitude*, as is implied in ver. 12,—man disputing with man.

Peter] Partly on account of the universal deference paid to him, but principally because of his peculiar fitness to open the apostolic decisions on the subject, from having been made the instrument of the *first public and approved reception of the Gentiles*.

ye (emphatic) know] In Peter's speeches in ch. x., this phrase occurs at the beginning of a sentence, ver. 28, and ver. 37: and we have traces of the same way of expressing the personal pronoun in his speeches, ch. ii. 15; iii. 14, 25. Such notices are important, as shewing that these reports are not only according to the *sense* of what was said, but the words spoken, *verbatim*.

a good while ago] literally, “*from ancient days*.” In regard to the whole time of the Gospel up to that day (about 20 years), the date of the conversion of Cornelius, *at least fifteen years* before this (compare Gal. ii. 1), would very properly be so specified. The length of time elapsed is placed by Peter in the

strongest light, to shew that the question had in fact been settled by divine interference *long since*.

8, 9.] The allusion is throughout to *spiritual circumcision*, as the purification of the *heart*. God, who saw deeper than the mere fleshly distinction between Jew and Gentile, who knows that the hearts of *all* are unclean, and that the same all-sufficient sacrifice can cleanse them *all*, if applied by faith (compare the remarkable parallel, 1 Pet. i. 18–22 incl.), put no difference between us and them, but has been pleased to render them spiritually clean.

purifying their hearts, not simply ‘*by faith*,’ but by their faith, or **by the faith in Christ**.

10.] **tempt God**, *by putting obstacles in the way of His evidently determined course*.

a yoke] See Gal. v. 1. Peter could not be so much referring to the mere outward observance of ceremonies, which he himself and the Jewish converts thought it expedient to retain,—but to the imposition of the law, as a condition of salvation, on the consciences of the disciples. This being so, the words, “*which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear*,” will refer, not to the *burdenomeness* of ceremonies, but to the far more grievous burden of legal death, of which Paul cries out so bitterly in Rom. vii. 24,—and says, Gal. v. 3, “*I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law*.”

11.] Seeing that we *all* in common believe that the grace of Christ is the sufficient,

and only cause of our salvation, it can neither be reasonable nor according to God's will, to fetter that grace with superfluous and vexatious conditions. See nearly the same argument retorted on Peter himself, Gal. ii. 14 ff.

even as also they] *they* are the *Gentile Christians*, not *our fathers*:—*their* ground of trust is the same as ours: *ours*, no more than theirs.

12.] The multitude (see above) then,—and not before, on account of their mutual disputes,—being tranquillized by Peter's speech, quietly received from Paul and Barnabas an account of the seals of *signs and wonders* by which God had stamped the approval of their ministry among the Gentiles. The miracles at Paphos and Lystra would be among the principal of these.

13.] after they had held their peace, viz. Paul and Barnabas. *Both had spoken;* doubtless wonders, unrecorded, had been wrought by the hand of Barnabas, which he had recounted.

James] See note, ch. xii. 17, and the Introduction to the Epistle of James. I assume here, that this is James the Just, the brother of the Lord, the author of the Epistle: and though an Apostle (Gal. i. 19; see also note on ch. xiv. 14), not one of the Twelve. If we may presume to judge from the character of his Epistle, to say nothing of the particulars which tradition has handed down concerning him, his decision would come with remarkable weight on this occasion. For he is, among all the sacred writers of the New Test., the representative of the strictest adherence to and loftiest appreciation of the *pure standard of legal morality*. All that the law was, from its intrinsic holiness, justice, and goodness (Rom. vii. 12), capable of being to Christians, *he* would be sure to attribute to it. And therefore when *his judgment*, as well as that of Peter, is given in favour of the freedom of the Gentiles, the disputers, even of the Pharisaic party, are silenced. There does not seem to be in the following speech any decision *ex cathedra*, either in the words, "**hearken unto me**," or in "**my sentence is**" (ver. 19): the decision lay in the weightiness, partly no doubt of the person speaking, but principally of the matter spoken by him.

14. Symeon] James characteristically uses this Jewish form of the name: so also Peter himself, 2 Pet. i. 1 (original; and margin, A.V.). The name occurs Gen. xxix. 33, LXX; Luke ii. 25; iii. 30; ch. xiii. 1; Rev. vii. 7: the name Simon, elsewhere used in the N.T. for Peter, is found (Shimon) in 1 Chron. iv. 20.

for his name] for the service, or the making known, of His Name.

a people, answering to the *people*, so well known as His by covenant before.

16–18.] The citation from Amos is made freely from the LXX: differing widely in the latter part from our present Hebrew text, which see in the A.V. at the place. Of this we may at least be sure, that James, even if (as I believe) he *spoke in Greek*, and quoted as here given, would not himself (nor would the Pharisees present have allowed it) have quoted any rendering, especially where the stress of his argument lay in it, *at variance with the original Hebrew*.—The prophecy regards that glorious restitution of the kingdom to (the Son of) David, which should be begun by the incarnation of the Lord, and perfected by His reign over all nations. During the process of this restitution those nations, as the effect of the rebuilding, should seek the Lord,—to whomsoever the gospel should be preached. There is here neither assertion nor negation of the national restoration of the Jews. Be this as it may (and I firmly believe in the literal accomplishment of all the prophecies respecting them as a nation), it is obvious, on any deep view of prophetic interpretation, that the glorious things which shall have *a fulfilment* in the literal Israel, must have *their complete and more worthy fulfilment* in the spiritual theocracy, of which the Son of David is the head.

17. upon whom my name is called] Notice the same expression in the Epistle of James, ch. ii. 7.

18.] The variation of reading here is remarkable. The text which I have given is in all probability the original, and the words inserted in the common text have been intended as a help out of the difficulty. Not only are they wanting in several ancient MSS., but they bear the sure mark of spuriousness,—manifold variations in the MSS. where they do occur. The sense, and account of the text seem to be this: the Apostle paraphrases the words **who maketh [all] these things** of the LXX, adding **known from the beginning of the world**, and intending to express ‘saith the Lord, who from the beginning revealed these things,’ viz. by the prophet just cited. The addition has been made to fill up the apparently elliptical “*known from the beginning of the world*,” which not being found in the passage of Amos, was regarded as a sentence by itself. These last words may perhaps be an allusion to the mystery of the admission of the Gentiles into the church, which was now being revealed practically, and had been from of old announced by the prophets: compare Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Eph. iii. 5, 6, &c.

19.] not, as A.V. ‘*are turned*,’ but **are turning**:—the converts daily gathered into the church.

20.] The **pollutions of idols** are the things polluted by being offered to idols, about which there was much doubt and contention in the early church:-see Exod. xxxiv. 15, and 1 Cor. viii. and x. 19.

fornication] It may seem strange that a *positive sin* should be made the subject of these enactments which mostly regard things in themselves indifferent, but rendered otherwise by expediency and charity to others. In consequence we have the following attempts to evade the simple rendering of the word: (1) Some explain it of *spiritual fornication* in eating things offered to idols: (2) others, of the committal of actual fornication at the *rites in idol temples*, &c. See further in my Greek Test. But the solution will best be found in the fact, that *fornication* was universally in the Gentile world regarded on the same

footing with the other things mentioned, as *indifferent*, and is classed here as Gentiles would be accustomed to hear of it, among those things which they allowed themselves, but which the Jews regarded as forbidden. The moral abomination of the practice is not here in question, but is abundantly set forth by our Lord and his Apostles in other places.

things strangled] as containing the blood,—see Levit. xvii. 13, 14.

blood] in any shape: see Gen. ix. 4; Levit. xvii. 13, 14; Deut. xii. 23, 24. Some of the fathers, and others, interpret the word of *homicide*, which is refuted by the context.

21.] Living as the Gentile converts would be in the presence of Jewish Christians, who heard these Mosaic prohibitions read, as had been from generations past, in their synagogues, it would be well for them to avoid all such conduct and habits as would give unnecessary offence. On the reading of the law, &c., in the synagogues, see ch. xiii. 15, note.

22. Barsabas] In most of our old authorities, **Barsabbas**. Of this Judas nothing further is known than that (ver. 32) he was a ‘prophet’ (see ch. xiii. 1). Wolf and Grotius hold him to have been the brother of Joseph Barsabas, ch. i. 23.

Silas] otherwise Silvanus: the former name is found in the Acts, the latter in the Epp. of Paul. He also was a ‘prophet’ (ver. 32). He accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey through Asia Minor and Macedonia (ver. 40—ch. xvii. 10),—remained behind in Berea (xvii. 14), and joined Paul again in Corinth (xviii. 5; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1), where he preached with Paul and Timotheus (2 Cor. i. 19). Whether the Silvanus (1 Pet. v. 12), by whom the first Epistle of Peter was carried to the churches of Asia Minor, was the same person, is altogether uncertain. Tradition distinguishes Silas from Silvanus, making the former bishop of Corinth, the latter of Thessalonica. On the hypothesis which identifies Silas with Luke, and makes him the author of the Acts, see Introduction to Acts, §1. 11. b, c. I may repeat here, that in my mind the description of Silas here as one of the “chief men among the brethren,” of itself, especially when contrasted with the preface to Luke’s gospel, would suffice to refute the notion. It has been also supposed that Silas (because it may signify *third* in Hebrew) is the same name with *Tertius* who wrote the Ep. to the Romans, Rom. xvi. 22: but without reason.

23.] In this, the first *official* mention of **elders**, it is very natural that the import of the term should be thus given by attaching *brethren* to it.

send greeting] The word used is the *Greek* form of salutation: and the only other place where it occurs in an apostolic document (we have it in the letter of the chief captain Lysias, ch. xxiii. 26) is in James i. 1, which has been remarked as a coincidence serving to shew his hand in the drawing up of this Epistle.

Cilicia] This mention of *churches in Cilicia*, coupled with the fact of Paul’s stay at Tarsus (ch. ix. 30–xi. 25: see also Gal. i. 21), makes it probable that Paul preached the gospel there, *and to Gentiles*, in accordance with the vision which he had in the temple (ch. xxii. 21).

24. subverting] The word implies *turning up the foundations*. The words “*saying ye must be circumcised and keep the law*,” inserted in the common text, are manifestly, in my view, an interpolation, from the desire to specify in what particulars these persons had sought to unsettle the souls of the Gentile brethren. The persons to whom the epistle was addressed would very well know *what* it was that had disturbed their minds, and the omission of formal mention of it would be natural, to avoid prominent cause of offence to the Jewish converts by an apparent depreciation of circumcision and the observance of the law.

25. Barnabas and Paul] Paul has generally been mentioned *first*, since ch. xiii. 43. (The exception, ch. xiv. 14, appears to arise from the people calling Barnabas Jupiter, and thus giving him the precedence in ver. 12, after which the next mention of them follows the same order.) But here, as at ver. 12, we have naturally the old order of precedence in the Jerusalem congregation preserved.

26. men that have delivered up their lives] The sacrifice of their lives was made *by them*: they were martyrs in will, though their lives had not as yet been laid down in point of fact.—This is mentioned to shew that Paul and Barnabas could have no other motive than that of serving the Lord Jesus Christ, and to awaken trust in the minds of the churches. But, although this was so, the Apostles and Elders did not think proper to send only Paul and Barnabas, who were already so deeply committed by their acts to the same side of the question as the letter which they bore,—but as direct authorities from themselves, Judas and Silas also, who might by word confirm the contents of the Epistle.

27.] the same things as above, **the contents of the Epistle** (and any explanation required): not, as Neander, ‘*the same things as Paul and Barnabas have preached:*’ **by mouth**, as opposed to ‘*by letter*,’ decides against this interpretation.

28. it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us] Not to the Holy Ghost *in us*,—but as, in ch. v. 32, the Holy Spirit, given to the Apostles and testifying by His divine power, is *coupled with* their own human testimony,—so here the *decision of the*

Holy Spirit, given then as leaders of the church, is laid down as the *primary and decisive determination* on the matter,—and *their own formal ecclesiastical decision* follows, as giving utterance and scope to His will and command. The other interpretation weakens this accuracy of expression, and destroys the propriety of the sentence.

32.] The statement, that they were **prophets also themselves**, gives the reason for their superadding to the appointed business of their mission the work of exhorting and edifying.—On the **prophets** see ch. xi. 27; xiii. 1: Eph. ii. 20, and notes.

34. omitted] On every account it is probable that the words forming this verse in the common text are an interpolation, to account for Silas being found again at Antioch in ver. 40. On this his subsequent presence at Antioch, see note, ver. 40.—We learn from Gal. ii. 10, that *a condition* was attached to the cordiality with which the Gentile mission of Paul and Barnabas was recognized by the chief Apostles;—that they should *remember the poor*, i.e. the poor *at Jerusalem*:—that the wants of the mother church should not be forgotten by those converts, whose Judaical bond to her was thus cast loose. This was an object which Paul was ever most anxious to subserve. See Gal. 1. c. and note.

35.] teaching, to those who had received it,—**preaching** to those who had not.

36—CH. XVIII. 22.] PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY (unaccompanied by Barnabas, on account of a difference between them) THROUGH ASIA MINOR TO MACEDONIA AND GREECE, AND THENCE BY SEA, TOUCHING AT EPHESUS, TO JERUSALEM AND BACK TO ANTIOCH.

36. some days after] *How long*, we are not informed but perhaps (?) during this time took place that visit of Peter to Antioch mentioned Gal. ii. 11 ff., when he sacrificed his Christian consistency and better persuasions to please some Judaizers, and even Barnabas was led away with the dissimulation. On this occasion Paul boldly rebuked him. See, on the whole occurrence, notes to Gal. as above.

38.] The form of this verse, as literally rendered from the Greek, is: **But Paul thought proper, (as to) one who had fallen off from them from Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work, not to take with them that man.** We may well believe that St. Paul's own mouth gave originally the character to the sentence.

who departed from them] See ch. xiii. 13. It hence is evident that his departure was not by the authority of the Apostles.

39.] “Paul sought justice, Barnabas courtesy,” Chrysostom: who also remarks on their separate journeys,—“It seems to me that their parting was by agreement, and that they said to one another, ‘Since you will it, and I do not, that we be not at strife, let us divide our courses.’ So that they did this out of a yielding spirit to one another.” Yet it seems as if there were a considerable difference in the *character of their setting out*. Barnabas appears to have gone with his nephew without any special sympathy or approval; whereas Paul was commanded to the grace of God by the assembled church.—We find Mark afterwards received into favour by Paul, see Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11; and in the former of those places it would seem as if he was dependent for his reception on Paul's special commendation.

40. Silas] He may perhaps have come down again to Antioch (see ver. 33) *in Peter's company*. We find (see above on ver. 22) a Silvanus (which is the same name) in 1 Pet. v. 12, the bearer of that epistle to the congregations of Asia Minor.

41. Syria and Cilicia] See note, ver. 23. Here we finally lose sight of Barnabas in the sacred record.

Acts: Chapter 16

CHAP. XVI. 1.] We have Derbe first, as lying nearest to the pass from Cilicia into Lycaonia and Cappadocia. Paul probably travelled by the ordinary road through the ‘Cilician gates,’ a rent or fissure in the mountain-chain of Taurus, extending from north to south through a distance of eighty miles. See various interesting particulars in Conybeare and Howson, i.p. 301 ff. and notes.

was there] At *Lystra*: which, and not Derbe, was in all probability the birth-place of Timotheus, see on ch. xx. 4. This view is confirmed by ver. 2.—He had probably been converted by Paul during his former visit, as he calls him his *son in the Lord*, 1 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2; perhaps at Antioch in Pisidia, see 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. His mother was Eunice, his grandmother, Lois,—both women of well-known piety, 2 Tim. i. 5. Whether his father was a proselyte of the gate or not, is uncertain: he certainly was *uncircumcised*. He would be, besides his personal aptness for the work, singularly fitted to be the coadjutor to Paul, by his *mixed extraction* forming a link between Jews and Greeks.

2.] Some of these testimonies were probably *intimations of the Spirit respecting his fitness for the work*: for Paul speaks, 1 Tim. i. 18, of “*the prophecies which went before on thee*” (see ch. xiii. 1, 3). He was set apart for the work by the laying on of

the hands of Paul and of the presbytery, 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6, after he had made a good confession before many witnesses, 1 Tim. vi. 12.

3. took and circumcised him] Every Israelite might perform the rite.

because of the Jews] That he might not at once, wherever he preached, throw a stumbling-block before the Jews, by having with him one by birth a Jew, but uncircumcised. There was here no concession in doctrine at all, and no reference whatever to the duty of Timotheus himself in the matter. In the case of Titus, a *Greek*, he dealt otherwise, no such reason existing: Gal. ii. 3.

4. through the cities] Iconium, and perhaps Antioch in Pisidia. He might at Iconium see the elders of the church of Antioch, as he did afterwards those of Ephesus at Miletus. If he went to Antioch, he might regain his route into Phrygia and Galatia by crossing the hills east of that city.

5.] This general notice, like those at ch. ix. 31, xii. 24, marks the opening of a new section.

6–9.] This very cursory notice of a journey in which we have reason to think so much happened,—the founding of the Galatian and Phrygian churches (see ch. xviii. 23, where we find him, on his second visit, “*confirming all the disciples*”), the sickness of the Apostle, alluded to Gal. iv. 13; the working of miracles and imparting of the Spirit mentioned Gal. iii. 5; the warmth and kindness of feeling shewn to Paul in his weakness, Gal. iv. 14–16, seems to shew that the narrator was not with him during this part of the route; an inference which is remarkably confirmed by the sudden resumption of circumstantial detail with the use of the first person, at ver. 10.

6. Phrygia] There were two tracts of country called by this name: one near the Hellespont, the other called *Phrygia major*. It is with the latter that we are here concerned, which was the great central space of Asia Minor, yet retaining the name of its earliest inhabitants, and on account of its being politically subdivided among the contiguous provinces, impossible to define accurately.—The Apostle’s route must remain very uncertain. It is probable that he may have followed the great road (according to his usual practice and the natural course of a missionary journey) from Iconium to Philomelium and perhaps as far as Synnada, and thence struck off to the N.E. towards Pessinus in Galatia. That he visited Colossæ, in the extreme S.W. of Phrygia, on this journey, as supposed by some, is very improbable.

the region of Galatia] The midland district, known as Galatia, or Gallo-græcia, was inhabited by the descendants of those Gauls who invaded Greece and Asia in the third century B.C., and after various incursions and wars, settled and became mixed with the Greeks in the centre of Asia Minor. They were known as a brave and freedom-loving people, fond of war, and either on their own or others’ account, almost always in arms, and generally as cavalry. Jerome says that their speech was like that of the Germans in the neighbourhood of Treves: and perhaps **the speech of Lycaonia** ch. xiv. 11, spoken of the neighbouring district, may refer to this peculiar dialect. But Greek was extensively spoken. They were conquered by the consul Cn. Manlius Vulso, 189 B.C., but retained their own governors, called as before tetrarchs, and afterwards kings (for one of whom, Deiotarus, a protégé of Pompey’s, Cicero pleaded before Cæsar); their last king, Amyntas, passed over from Antony to Augustus in the battle of Actium. Galatia, after his murder, A.D. 26, became a Roman province. The principal cities were Aneyra,—which was made the metropolis of the province by Augustus,—Tavium, and Pessinus: in all, or some of which, the Apostle certainly preached. He was detained here on account of sickness (Gal. iv. 13). See further in Introduction to the Epistle to the Galatians, §2.

being hindere d] By some special intimation, like that in ch. xiii. 2.

Asia] This name, applied at first to the district near the river Caÿster in Lydia, came to have a meaning more and more widely extended, till at last it embraced as at present, the whole vast continent, forming one of the quarters of the globe. But we never find this meaning in Scripture. The Asia of the Acts is not even our Asia Minor,—which name is not used, till the fourth century A.D.—but only a portion of the western coast of that great peninsula. (A full account of the history of the territory and its changes of extent will be found in Conybeare and Howson, i. pp. 275 ff. I confine myself to its import in the Acts.) This, which was the *Roman province of Asia*,—Asia Proper,—as spoken of in the Acts, includes only Mysia, Lydia, and Caria, —excluding Phrygia (ch. ii. 9 and here: 1 Pet. i. 1 it must be *included*),—Galatia, Bithynia, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Lycia. See ch. xix. 26, &c.

7.] **come to** (i. e. to the borders of) **Mysia**.

Bithynia] At this time a Roman province (senatorial: Hadrian, whose favourite province it was, took it from the senate).

The expression **the Spirit of Jesus** is remarkable, as occurring in all the great MSS., and from its peculiarity bearing almost unquestionable trace of genuineness. If the report of this journey came from an *unusual source*, an unusual expression would

be accountable.

8.] passing by Mysia, i.e. as regarded their work of preaching (cf. ch. xx. 16),—and not ‘having passed by’ as *avoiding* it; for they could not get to the coast *without entering Mysia*.

Troas (Alexandria Troas, in honour of Alexander the Great: now Eski Stamboul) was a colony enjoying the *Italian right* (see on ver. 12), and a free city, and was not reckoned as belonging to either of the provinces, Asia or Bithynia. Whether it was for this reason that Paul and his companions visited it, is uncertain. He may have had the design of crossing to Europe, if permitted, which the subsequent vision confirmed. See ch. xx. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 13.

9.] The vision seems to have appeared in the same way as that sent to Peter in ch. x. It was an *unreal* apparition, designed to convey a practical meaning. The context precludes our understanding it as a *dream*.

a man of Macedonia] known probably by the affecting words spoken by him. There would hardly be any peculiarity of dress by which a Macedonian could be recognized.

10. we endeavoured to go into Macedonia] by immediate enquiry for a ship. This word is remarkable as the introduction of the *first person* in the narrative: which however is dropped at ch. xvii. 40, on Paul’s leaving Philippi, and resumed again, ch. xx. 5, on occasion of sailing from Philippi. Thence it continues (in all places where we have reason to expect it: see below) to the end of the book. On the question, what is implied by this, we may remark, (1) That while we safely conclude from it that the writer was in company with Paul when he thus speaks, we cannot with like safety infer that he was not, where the third person is used. This latter must be determined by other features of the history. For it is conceivable that a narrative, even where it concerns all present, might be, in its earlier parts, written as of others in the third person, but might, when more intimacy had been established, or even by preference only, be at any point changed to the *first*. And again, the episodes where the chief person, alone, or with his principal companion or companions, is concerned, would be many, in which the narrator would use the third person, not because he was not *present*, but because he was not concerned. This has not been enough attended to. If it be thought fanciful, I may refer to an undoubted instance in the episode, ch. xxi. 17, “*when we were come to Jerusalem*,” to ch. xxvii. 1, “*when it was determined that we should sail...*;” during the whole of which time the writer was with or in the neighbourhood of Paul, and drops the *we* merely because he is speaking of Paul alone. (2) One objection raised by De Wette to the common view, that, *Luke* accompanied Paul from this time (except as above), is, that several times St. Paul’s companions are mentioned, but Luke is never among them. On examining however one of the passages where this is done, we find that *after* the enumeration of Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timotheus, Tychicus, and Trophimus, we are told, *These going before tarried for us at Troas*: so that the writer evidently regards himself as being closely associated with St. Paul, and does not think it requisite to enumerate himself among the companions of the Apostle. This may serve as a key to his practice on other occasions. On the whole, and after careful consideration of the subject, I see no reason to doubt the common view, that *Luke here joined the Apostle* (whether as a *physician*, *on account of his broken health*, must of course be matter of conjecture, but is not improbable), and from this time (except from ch. xvii. 1–xx. 5), accompanies him to the end of the history. See the question of the authorship of the Acts further discussed in the Introduction, §1. 12–14.

11.] They had a fair wind on this occasion: in ch. xx. 6, the voyage in the opposite direction took *five* days. This is also implied by **we came with a straight course**, viz. **ran before the wind**. The coincidence of their *going to Samothrace* also shews it: determining the wind to have been from the S. or S.S. E. It is only a strong southerly breeze which will overcome the current southwards which runs from the Dardanelles by Tenedos (Conybeare and Howson, i.p. 336): and this, combined with the short passage, is another mark of the veracity of our narrative. They seem to have anchored N. of the lofty island of Samothrace, under its lee.

to Neapolis] In an E. by N. direction, past the island of Thasos. It was not properly in Macedonia, but in Thrace, and twelve Roman miles from Philippi, which was the frontier town of Macedonia strictly speaking: see below. It was by Vespasian, together with the whole of Thrace, attached to the province of Macedonia. Some Roman ruins and inscriptions serve to point out the Turkish village of Cavallo as its site.

12. Philippi] Philippi was built as a military position on the site of the village Krenides, by Philip the Great of Macedon. The plain between the Gangites, on which the town is situate, and the Strymon, was the field of the celebrated battle of Antony and Octavius against Brutus and Cassius: see more below. There is now an insignificant place on its site retaining the name Filiba (or Philippiggi?).

the first Macedonian city of the district] It was the first Macedonian city to which Paul and his companions came in that district,—Neapolis properly belonging to Thrace. And this epithet of **first** would belong to it not only as regarded the journey of Paul and Silas, but as lying *furthest eastward*, for which reason also the *district* was called *Macedonia prima*, though furthest from Rome. The other explanations are, (1) ‘*chief city*,’ as A.V. But this it was not: Thessalonica being the chief city of the whole province, and Amphipolis of the division (if it then subsisted) of *Macedonia prima*:—(2) **first** is taken as a title

of honour, as we find in the coins of Pergamus and Smyrna (but not in the case of any city out of Asia Minor): (3) ‘*the first city which was a colony.*’ But there could be no reason for stating this: whereas there would be every reason to particularize the fact that they tarried and preached in the very first city to which they came, *in Macedonia*, the territory to which they were sent.

a colony] Philippi was made a *colonia* by Augustus, as a memorial of his victory over Brutus and Cassius, and as a frontier garrison against Thrace. Its full name on the coins of the city was *Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis*. A Roman colony was in fact a portion of Rome itself transplanted to the provinces (Aulus Gellius calls the *colonies* “little effigies and images of the Roman people”). The colonists consisted of veteran soldiers and freedmen, who went forth, and determined and marked out their situation, with all religious and military ceremonies. The inhabitants of the *colonies* were *Roman citizens*, and were still *enrolled in one or other of the tribes*, and possessed the privilege of voting at Rome. In them the Roman law was strictly observed, and the Latin language was used on their coins and inscriptions. They were governed by their own senate and magistrates (*Duumviri*, two in number, as the consuls at Rome: see below, ver. 20), and not by the governor of the province. The land on which they stood was tributary, as being provincial, unless liberated from tribute by the special favour of the *Italian right*, or ownership of the soil. This Philippi possessed, in common with many other *coloniæ* and favoured provincial towns. The population of such places came in process of time to be of a mixed character: but only the descendants of the original colonists by Roman wives, or women of a people possessing the citizenship, were Roman citizens. Hence new supplies of colonists were often necessary.

in that city,—as distinguished from the suburban place of prayer, to which they afterwards, on the Sabbath, went out of the gate.

13.] a (or, the) river side: viz. the small stream *Gangités*, or *Gangas*: not, as Meyer and De Wette, the *Strymon*, the nearest point of which was many miles distant. The name *Krenidés*, formerly borne by the city, was derived from the fountains of this stream.—From many sources we learn, that it was the practice of the Jews to hold their assemblies for prayer *near water*, whether of the sea, or of rivers: probably on account of the frequent washings customary among them. See the citations in my Greek Test.

where prayer was wont to be made] literally, **where a meeting for prayer was accustomed to be.** It is possible to understand the substantive here rendered *prayer*, of a building devoted to the purposes of prayer. But that will not suit the verb, **was wont to be.** It may be understood **a meeting for prayer:** and this will agree with the circumstances. There seem to have been few, if any, *Jews* in Philippi: this open air assembly consisting merely of women attached to the Jewish faith. We hear of no opposition arising from Jews. There appears (xvii. 1) to have been *no synagogue*.

14. a seller of purple] The guild of *dyers* at Thyatira have left inscriptions, still existing, shewing the accuracy of our narrative. The celebrity of the purple dyeing of the neighbourhood is as old as Homer. Thyatira was a city of the province of Asia. Thus although forbidden to preach the word in *Asia*, their first convert at Philippi is an *Asiatic*.

which worshipped God] A proselyte; see ch. xviii. 7, 13.

She **was listening**—when, in opening her heart, the act of God took place. “The heart of man is of itself shut,” says Bengel, “but it is God’s work to open it.”

It appears rather to have been a *conversation* (notice above, **we spoke**—not “we spoke *the word*”) than a set discourse: **the things which Paul was saying.**

15. she was baptized, and her household] It *may be* that no inference for infant-baptism is hence deducible. The practice, however, does not rest on *inference*, but on the *continuity and identity of the covenant of grace to Jew and Christian*, the *sign only* of admission being altered. The Apostles, *as Jews*, would have proposed to administer baptism to the children, and Jewish or proselyte converts would, *as matter of course*, have acceded to the proposal; and that the practice thus by universal consent, tacitly (because at first unquestioned) pervaded the universal church, can hardly with any reason be doubted. The preposterous views of the modern Baptists would have been received with astonishment and reprobation in the apostolic Church. See note on 1 Cor. vii. 14.

If ye have judged me: modestly alluding to the decision respecting her faithfulness implied by their baptizing her, and assuming that such a judgment *had been passed*.

16.] This happened on other occasions; not on the same day. In ver. 15 is implied their taking up their abode with Lydia:—in this ver., that they *habitually resorted* to this place of prayer to teach, and that what follows happened on such occasions.—It may be remarked that the A.V. of this passage, ‘*as we went to prayer*,’ has given rise to a curious abuse of the expression ‘*going to prayer*,’ in the sense of ‘*beginning to pray*,’ among the lower classes in England.

possessed with a spirit of divination] On the whole subject of dæmoniacal possession, see note on Matt. viii. 32. This was a case in which the presence of the spirit was a *patient fact*, recognized by the heathen possessors and consulters of this female slave, and by them turned to account; and recognized also by the Christian teachers, as an instance of one of those works of the devil which their Lord came, and commissioned them to destroy. All attempt to explain away such a narrative as this by the subterfuges of rationalism, is more than ever futile. The fact of the *spirit leaving* the girl, and the masters *finding the hope of their gains gone*, is *fatal*: and we may see, notwithstanding all his attempts to account for it psychologically, that Meyer feels it to be so.

17. cried] or, **used to cry out:** several occasions are referred to.—The recognition of Paul and his company here by the spirit is strictly analogous to that of our

Lord by the dæmons, Matt. viii. 29; Luke iv. 34: and the same account to be given of both: viz. that the *evil spirit knew and confessed* the power of God and His Christ, whether in His own Person or that of His servants.

18. being grieved] Not *mere* annoyance is expressed by this word, but rather holy indignation and sorrow at what he saw and heard; the Christian soldier was goaded to the attack, but the mere satisfaction of anger was not the object, any more than the result, of the stroke.

19.] Her masters (a partnership of persons).—They may have been the heirs of some one to whom she had belonged) perceived that the hope of their gain had gone out (*with the demon*).

caught... and **drew** give the idea of force having been used. Paul and Silas only are apprehended as having been the principal persons in the company.

unto the rulers is said *generally*: they dragged them to the forum to the authorities,—afterwards specified as *magistrates* (or *generals*, see below).

20. the magistrates] literally, **generals:** the two presiding officers (*duumviri*), or *prætors* of the colony. Wetstein, writing about 1750, says that at Messina the prefect of the city was even then called *Stradigo*, from *Strategos*, the Greek word used here.

being Jews... being Romans] Calvin remarks that this accusation was craftily adopted to injure the Christians; for on the one side they put forward the name of Romans, which was in high favour: whereas by the Jewish name which was then held in disrepute (especially if the decree of Claudius, expelling them from Rome, ch. xviii. 2, had at this time been enacted) they excite jealousy against them: for as far as religion was concerned, the Romans had affinity with any nation rather than the Jews.

21. teach customs] “Dio Cassius tells us that Mæcenas gave the following advice to Augustus: ‘By all means and in every way yourself reverence the Divinity after your country’s manner, and compel others to do so: and all who follow strange customs in this matter, both hate and punish:’ and the reason is alleged, viz. that such innovations lead to secret associations, conspiracies, and cabals, which are most inconvenient for a monarchy” (Conybeare and Howson, i.p. 356).

22.] The multitude probably cried out tumultuously, as on other occasions (see Luke xxiii. 18; ch. xix. 28, 34; xxi. 30; xxii. 22, 23),—and the magistrates, without giving the Christians a trial (ver. 37), rent off their clothes, viz. by the lictors.

24. the stocks] In the original only **the wood**. Eusebius mentions, speaking of the martyrs in Gaul, that their feet were stretched to *the fifth hole in the wood*.

25.] Not as A.V., ‘*prayed and sang praises*,’—but, as in margin, **in their prayers, were singing praises, or, praying, sing praises.** The distinction of modern times between prayer and praise, arising from our attention being directed to the *shape* rather than to the essence of devotion, was unknown in these days: see Col. iv. 2.—“Their legs in the stocks pained them not, whose souls were in heaven.” Tertullian. The prisoners (in the outer prison) were *listening* to their singing, when the earthquake happened.

26. every one’s bands were loosed] i.e. of *all the prisoners* in the prison: see below (ver. 28), “*We are all here.*” Doubtless there were gracious purposes in this for those prisoners, who before were listening to the praises of Paul and Silas; and the very form of the narrative, mentioning this listening, shews *subsequent communication* between some one of these and the narrator.—Their chains were loosed, not by the earthquake, but by miraculous interference over and above it. It is some satisfaction to find, that few, even among the rationalist Commentators, have attempted to rationalize this wonderful example of the triumph of prayer.

27. was about to kill himself] The law was, that if a prisoner escaped, the keeper was liable to the intended punishment of the fugitive. Mr. Howson notices, by the examples of Cassius, Brutus, Titinius, and many of the proscribed, after the battle,—that Philippi is famous in the annals of suicide.

29.] Not as A.V., ‘*a light*,’ but **lights**: the translators have mistaken a plural word for a singular.

30. brought them out] Into the outer prison: not perhaps yet *outside* the prison, which (from ver. 34, when he takes them **up** to his own house) seems to have been *underground*, or at all events on a lower level in the same building. In this same space they seem to have been joined by the jailor’s family,—to have converted and baptized them, and to have been taken (to the well?) and washed from their stripes; and afterwards to have been led up (by stairs?) to his house, and hospitably entertained. The circumstantiality of the account shews that *some eyewitness* related it.—His question connected with the words, “*the way of salvation*,” of the daemonic in ver. 17, makes it necessary to infer, as De Wette well observes, that he had previously become acquainted with the subject of their preaching. He wanted no means of escape from any danger but that which was *spiritual*: the earthquake was past, and his prisoners were all safe. Bengel admirably remarks: “He had not heard the hymns of Paul, for he had slept, but notwithstanding, either before or after, he had become informed, who Paul was.”

Sirs is literally **Lords**: they will not take this title to themselves, but tell him of One who was alone worthy of it.

31. Believe on the Lord...] Not without allusion to the name by which he had just addressed them.—Considering *who the person was* that asked the question,—a heathen in the depths of ignorance and

sin,—and how indisputably therefore the answer embraces *all sinners whatever*,—there perhaps does not stand on record in the whole book a more important answer than this of Paul:—or, I may add, one *more strikingly characteristic of the Apostle himself and his teaching*. We may remark also, in the face of all attempts to establish a *development* of St. Paul’s doctrine according to mere external circumstances,—that this reply was given *before any one of his extant epistles was written*.

and thy house does not mean that *his* faith would save his household,—but that the same way was open to them as to him: “Believe, and thou shalt be saved: and the same of thy household.”

33. washed them from their stripes] i.e. washed them, so that they were purified from the blood occasioned by their stripes.

34. when he had brought them up] See note on ver. 30.

believing in God] This participle gives the *ground* of his rejoicing: and the full meaning is, **rejoiced that he with all his house had been led to believe [in] God**.—The expression **believing in God** could only be used of a converted *heathen*, not of a *Jew*: in ch. xviii. 8, of a *Jew*, we have “*believed [on] the Lord*.”

35.] What had influenced the magistrates is not recorded. We can hardly suppose that the earthquake alone would have done so, as they would not have connected it with their prisoners; they may have heard what had taken place: but that, again, is hardly probable. I should rather set it down to calmer thought, repudiating the tumultuary proceeding of the evening before.

the serjeants] i.e. **the lictors**—‘bearers of the rods,’ which, and *not fasces*, were carried before the colonial duumviri.

36.] Paul and Silas had returned to the prison: whither the jailor goes, accompanied by the lictors (for it was they that he addressed in ver. 37), to announce the order.

37.] openly and privily are opposed: the *injury* had been *public*: the *reparation*, not to Paul and Silas merely, but to the Gospel of which they were the heralds, must be *public also*.

men who are Romans] By the Valerian Law, passed in the year of Rome 254, and the Porcian Law, in the year of Rome 506, Roman citizens were exempted from stripes and tortures: by the former, till an appeal to the people was decided,—by the latter, absolutely. On the question, *how Paul came to be born a Roman citizen*, see note on ch. xxii. 28.—Another irregularity had been committed by the magistrates, in scourging them *uncondemned*.—Mr. Humphry”remarks, ‘St. Paul submitted to be scourged by his own countrymen (five times, 2 Cor. xi. 24): for, though he might have pleaded his privilege as a Roman, to the Jews he “became as a Jew,” observing their ceremonies, and submitting to their law.’

38. they feared] For the account which they might have to give at Rome, or even for their popularity with the very mob of Roman citizens who had demanded the punishment.

39. besought them] viz. not to make their treatment matter of legal complaint. In the request to depart from the city, the

magistrates seem to shew fear of a change in the temper of the mob.

40.] They do not depart hastily, or as though forced, but wait to reassure the brethren.

exhorted is better than '*comforted*,' A.V. The one in this ease would imply the other.

Acts: Chapter 17

CHAP. XVII. 1.] Here (or rather perhaps at "*they exhorted them and departed*," in the preceding verse) we have the first person again dropped,—implying apparently that the narrator did not accompany Paul and Silas. I should be inclined to think that Timotheus *went with them* from Philippi,—not, as is usually supposed, joined them at Berea: see below on ver. 10.

when they had passed through] The road, on which they travelled from Philippi to Thessalonica, was the Via Egnatia, the Macedonian continuation of the Via Appia, and so named from Egnatia, in the neighbourhood of which the latter meets the Adriatic. It extended from Dyrrachium in Epirus to the Hebrus in Thrace, a distance of 500 miles. The stages here mentioned are thus particularized in the itineraries; Philippi to Amphipolis, 33 miles: Amphipolis to Apollonia, 30 miles: Apollonia to Thessalonica, 37 miles. See more particulars in Conybeare and Howson, i. pp. 368 ff.

Amphipolis] Anciently called Nine Ways, lying in a most important position, at the end of the lake Cercinitis, formed by the Strymon, commanding the only easy pass from the coast of the Strymonic gulf into Macedonia. In consequence of this, the Athenians colonized the place, calling it Amphipolis. It was the spot where Brasidas was killed, and for previously failing to succor which, Thucydides was exiled: see Grote's Hist. of Greece, vol. vi. p. 625 ff., where there is a plan of Amphipolis. After this it was a point of contention between the Athenians and Philip, and subsequently became the capital of Macedonia Prima.—It is now called Emboli.

Apollonia] Its situation is unknown, but was evidently (see the distances above given) inland, not quite half-way from Amphipolis to Thessalonica, where the road crosses from the Strymonic to the Thermaic gulf. Leake saw some ruins at about the right spot, but did not visit them: and Cousinéry mentions seeing, on an opposite hill, the village of Polina. It must not be confounded with a better known Apollonia near Dyrrachium, on the western coast, also on the Via Egnatia. See Conybeare and Howson, i. pp. 376 f.

Thessalonica] At this time the capital of the province Macedonia, and the residence of the proconsul (Macedonia had been an *imperial*, but was now a *senatorial province*). Its former names were Emathia, Halia, and Therma: it received its name of Thessalonica, from Cassander, on his rebuilding and embellishing it, in honour of his wife Thessalonice, sister of Alexander the Great. It was made a *free city* after the battle of Philippi: and every thing in this narrative is consistent with its privileges and state as such. See in my Greek Test. It has ever been an important and populous city, and still continues such (the present population is 70, 000), being the second city in European Turkey, under the slightly corrupted name of Saloniki. For a notice of the church there, see Introduction to the first Ep. to the Thessalonians, §2.

the synagogue of the Jews] The article implies that there was no other synagogue for the towns lately traversed: and shews the same minute acquaintance with the peculiarities of this district as our narrative has shewn since the arrival at Neapolis.

2. as his manner was] See the marginal references. Paul was most probably suffering still from his 'shameful treatment' at Philippi, 1 Thess. ii. 2.

3.] The particularity of this suffering and rising again from the dead is reproduced in 1 Thess. iv. 14.

4. consorted with] Literally, **were added** (as if by lot, that being determined by God, who gave them the Holy Spirit of adoption: 1 Thess. ii. 13) to the great family of which Paul and Silas were members.

devout Greeks] See ch. xiii. 43 al.—The aptitude of *women* for the reception of the Gospel several times appears in this book,—see above, ch. xvi. 13 ff, and below, vv. 12, 34.

5. took unto them] as their accomplices, to assist them in the *making a riot*, which follows.

of the baser sort] Literally, of *men out of the markets*, or *loungers in the forum*: such persons as are every where known to be the scum of the population. These may be alluded to in 1 Thess. ii. 14. (See note on ch. xix. 38.)

Jason] With whom (ver. 7) Paul and Silas lodged. He appears, perhaps (?) again with Paul at Corinth, Rom. xvi. 21, but did not accompany him into Asia, ch. xx. 4.

6.] These rulers are called in the original by the peculiar title of *Politarchs*, governors of the citizens. The exact accuracy of the title as existing at Thessalonica, has been proved by an inscription found on the spot, in which it occurs: and in the same inscription curiously enough we have three of the names which occur here, or in the Epistles, as companions of Paul: viz. Sosipater (*of Berœa*, Rom. xvi. 21, see also Acts xx. 4); Secundus (*of Thessalonica*, ch. xx. 4); and Gaius (*the Macedonian*, note, ch. xix. 29).

These that have turned the world upside down] The words presuppose some rumour of Christianity and its spread having before reached the inhabitants of Thessalonica.

7. these all] **All these people**, i.e. *Christians, wherever found*. A wider acquaintance is shewn, or at least assumed, with the belief of Christians, than extended merely to Jason and his friends.

saying that there is another king, one Jesus] This false charge seems to have been founded on Paul's preaching much at Thessalonica concerning the triumphant coming and kingdom of Christ. This appears again and again in his two Epistles: see 1 Thess. i. 10; ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 13–18; v. 1, 2; 2 Thess. i. 5, 7–10; ii. 1–12; and particularly 2 Thess. ii. 5, where he refers to his having often told them of *these things*, viz. the course, and destruction of Antichrist, by whom these Jews might perhaps misrepresent Paul as designating Cæsar.

9. when they had taken security] either by *sureties*, or by a *sum of money*, or both. They bound over Jason and the rest (*certain brethren*, ver. 6) to take care that no more trouble was given by these men: in accordance with which security they sent them away; and by night, to avoid the notice of the multitude.

10.] It does not follow, because Timotheus is not mentioned here, that therefore he did not accompany, or at all events follow, Paul and Silas to Berœa. He has never been mentioned since he joined Paul's company at Lystra. The very intermittent and occasional notices of Paul's companions in this journey should be a caution against rash hypotheses. The general character of the narrative seems to be, that where Paul, or Paul and Silas, are alone or principally concerned, all mention of the rest is suspended, and sometimes so completely as to make it appear as if they were absent: then, at some turn of events they appear again, having in some cases been really present all the time. I believe Timotheus to have been with them at Thessalonica the first time, because it does not seem probable that Paul would have sent to them one to confirm and exhort them concerning their faith (1 Thess. iii. 2) who had not known them before, especially as he then had Silas with him.—And this is confirmed by both the Epistles to the Thessalonians, which are from Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus. From these Epistles we learn that, during his residence among them, Paul worked with his own hands (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8) to maintain himself: and from Phil. iv. 15, 16, that the Philippians sent supplies more than once towards his maintenance. Both these facts, especially the last, seeing that the distance from Philippi was 100 Roman miles, make it very improbable that his stay was so short as from three to four weeks: nor is this implied in the text: much time may have elapsed while the “*great multitude*” of ver. 4 were joining Paul and Silas. See further in Introd. to 1 Thess. §2. 2 ff.

Berœa] 61, or according to another authority 57 Roman miles (S. W.) from Thessalonica.—Berœa was not far from Pella, in Macedonia Tertia, at the foot of Mt. Bermius. It was afterwards called Irenopolis, and now Kara Feria, or Verria, and is a city of the second rank in European Turkey, containing from 15, 000 to 20, 000 souls.

11. more noble]—of nobler disposition;—stirred up, not to envy, but to enquiry.

these things] viz. the doctrine of ver. 3, which Pan] and Silas preached here also.

13. they came stirring up, &c.] From the distance, some time must have elapsed before this could take place: and that some time *did* elapse, we may gather from 1 Thess. ii. 18, where Paul relates that he made several attempts to revisit the Thessalonians (which could be only during his stay at Berœa, as he left the neighbourhood altogether when he left that town), but was hindered. **14. to go as it were to the sea]** This expression I believe to be used simply to indicate the *direction in which* the Beroean brethren sent him forth: implying probably, that all that was known at Berœa of his intended route was, that it was in the direction of the sea. *Where* he embarked for Athens, is not said: probably at Dium, near the base of Mount Olympus, to which two roads from Berœa are marked in the ancient tables.

15.] Who they that conducted Paul were is not said.—The course of Timotheus appears to have been, as far as we can follow it from the slight notices given, as follows:—when Paul departed from Berœa, not having been able to revisit Thessalonica as he wished (1 Thess. ii. 18), he sent Timotheus (from Beroea, not from Athens) to exhort and confirm the Thessalonians, and determined to be left at Athens *alone* (1 Thess. iii. 1), Silas meanwhile remaining to carry on the work at Berœa. Paul, on his arrival at Athens, sends (by his conductors, who returned) this message to both, to come to him as soon as possible. They did so, and found him (ch. xviii. 5) at Corinth. See Introduction to 1 Thess., Vol. ii.

Athens] See a long and interesting description of the then state of Athens, its buildings, &c., in Conybeare and Howson, chap. x. vol. i. pp. 407 ff. It was a *free city*.

16. wholly given to idolatry] The multitude of statues and temples to the gods in Athens is celebrated with honour by classic writers of other nations, and with pride by their own. Xenophon says of Athens, that “*the whole city is an altar, the whole city a sacrifice and an offering to the gods.*”

17. in the market] It was the space before the famous Stoa or porch, where the Stoicks held their disputations.

18. Epicurean] The Epicurean philosophy was antagonistic to the gospel, as holding the atomic theory in opposition to the creation of matter,—the disconnection of the Divinity from the world and its affairs, in opposition to the idea of a ruling Providence,—and the indissoluble union, and annihilation together, of soul and body, as opposed to the hope of eternal life, and indeed to all spiritual religion whatever. The Epicureans were the materialists of the ancient world.—The common idea attached to Epicureanism must be discarded in our estimate of the persons mentioned in our text. The “**chief good**” of the real Epicureans, far from being a degraded and sensual pleasure, was *imperturbability* of mind, based upon *wisdom*—perhaps the best estimate of the highest good formed in the heathen world;—and their ethics were exceedingly strict. But the abuse to which such a doctrine was evidently liable, gave rise to a pseudo-Epicureanism, which has generally passed current for the real, and which amply illustrated the truth, that corruption of that which is best, is itself worst. For their chimerical *imperturbability*, Paul offered them *the peace which passeth all understanding*, Phil. iv. 7.

Stoick] So named from the *Stoa*, or porch (see above),—founded by Zeno of Cittium in the fourth century B.C., but perhaps more properly by Cleanthes and Chrysippus in the third century B.C. Their philosophy, while it approached the truth in holding one supreme Governor of all, compromised it, in allowing of any and all ways of conceiving and worshipping Him (see below, vv. 24, 25),—and contravened it, in its pantheistic belief that all souls were emanations of Him. In *spirit* it was directly opposed to the gospel,—holding the independence of man on any being but himself, together with the subjection of God and man alike to the stern laws of an inevitable fate. On the existence of the soul after death their ideas were various: some holding that all souls endure to the conflagration of all things,—others confining this to the souls of good men,—and others believing all souls to be reabsorbed into the Divinity. By these tenets they would obviously be placed in antagonism to the doctrines of a Saviour of the world and the resurrection,—and to placing the *summum bonum* of man in abundance of that grace which is *made perfect in weakness*, 2 Cor. xii. 9.

some said... other some] These are not to be taken as belonging the one to the Epicureans, the other to the Stoicks,—but rather as describing two classes, common perhaps to both schools,—the one of which despised him and his sayings, and the other were disposed to take a more serious view of the matter, and charge him with bringing in new deities.

this babbler] The word in the original signifies a kind of bird which picks up and devours seeds: whence the Athenians called by this name those who went about picking up trifles in converse and making it their business to retail them: in fact, the name imports *one who talks fluently to no purpose*, and hints also that his talk is *not his own*.

a setter forth of strange gods] “*Socrates is guilty of bringing in new gods*,” was one of the charges on which Athens put to death her wisest son. The *strange gods* which they charged Paul with setting forth were, *the true God*, the God of the Jews, and *Jesus Christ* His Son: the Creator of the world (ver. 24), and the Man whom He hath appointed to judge it, ver. 31. Compare ver. 23, end: which is an express answer to this charge.

19. they took him] No violence is implied.

to the hill of Mars] There is no allusion here to the *court* of Areopagus, nor should the words have been so rendered in A.V.,—especially as the same expression below (ver. 22) is translated ‘*Mars’ hill*.’ We have in the narrative *no trace of any judicial proceeding*, but every thing to contradict such a supposition. Paul merely makes his speech, and, having satisfied the curiosity of the multitude who came together on Mars’ Hill, departs unhindered:—**they brought him up to the hill of Mars.** The following note is borrowed from Mr Humphry’s Commentary:—‘It might be expected that on the hill of Mars the mind of the stranger would be impressed with the magnificence of the religion which he sought to overthrow. The temple of the Eumenides was immediately below him: opposite, at the distance of 200 yards, was the Acropolis, which, being entirely occupied with statues and temples, was, to use the phrase of an ancient writer, as one great offering to the gods. The Persians encamped on the Areopagus when they besieged the Acropolis (Herod. viii. 52): from the same place the Apostle makes his first public attack on Paganism, of which the Acropolis was the stronghold. Xerxes in his fanaticism burnt the temples of Greece. Christianity advanced more meekly and surely: and though the immediate effect of the Apostle’s sermon was not great, the Parthenon in time became a Christian church. Athens ceased to be a city **wholly given to idolatry**,—and the repugnance of the Greeks to images became so great, as to be a principal cause of the schism between the churches of the east and west in the eighth century.’—The hill of Mars was on the west of the Acropolis. The Areopagus, the highest criminal court of Athens, held its sittings there. To give any account of it is beside the purpose, there being no allusion to it in the text.

Full particulars may be found under the word *Areopagus* in Smith's Dictionary of Gr. and Rom. Antiquities.

May we know] A courteous method of address (not ironical).

21.] A remark of the narrator (as I believe, *Paul himself*), as a comment on the words **new** and **strange** of the verses before. The character here given of the Athenians is also that which we find in their own historians and orators. See proofs in my Greek Test. One remarkable one is found in Demosthenes, where in stirring them up against Philip, he says, "Are ye content to be always going about the marketplace asking one another, What new thing is reported? Can any thing be stranger than that a Macedonian man should&c. &c."

22.] The commentators vie with each other in admiration of this truly wonderful speech of the great Apostle. Chrysostom says: "This is what the Apostle elsewhere says, that he became to those not under the law as not under the law, that he might win those not under the law. For when addressing the Athenians, he grounds his argument not on the law or the prophets, but begins his persuasion from one of their altars, conquering them by their own maxims." 'The oration of Paul before this assembly is a living proof of his apostolic wisdom and eloquence: we see here how he, according to his own words, could become a Gentile to the Gentiles, to win the Gentiles to the Gospel.' Neander. And Stier very properly remarks, 'It was given to the Apostle in this hour, what he should speak; this is plainly to be seen in the following discourse, which we might weary ourselves with praising and admiring in various ways; but far better than all so-called praise from our poor tongues is the humble recognition, that the Holy Ghost, the spirit of Jesus, has here spoken by the Apostle, and therefore it is that we have in his discourse a masterpiece of apostolic wisdom.' The same commentator gives the substance of the speech thus: '*He who is* (by your own involuntary confession) *unknown to you Athenians* (religious though you are),—*and yet* (again, by your own confession) *able to be known,—the all-sufficing Creator of the world, Preserver of all creatures, and Governor of mankind,—now commandeth all men* (by me His minister) *to repent, that they may know Him, and to believe in the Man whom He hath raised from the dead, that they may stand in the judgment, which He hath committed to Him.*'

Ye men of Athens] The regular and dignified appellation familiar to them as used by all their orators,—of whose works Paul could hardly be altogether ignorant.

very religious] **Carrying your religious reverence very far:** an instance of which follows, in that they, not content with worshipping *named* and *known* gods, worshipped even an *unknown* one. *Blame* is neither expressed, nor even implied: but their *exceeding veneration* for religion laid hold of as a *fact*, on which Paul, with exquisite skill, engraves his proof that he is introducing *no new gods*, but enlightening them with regard to an object of worship on which they were confessedly in the dark. So Chrysostom, "That is, **very pious**:... he says it as praising them, and not with any spirit of blame." To understand this word as A.V., '*too superstitious*,' is to miss the fine and delicate tact of the speech, by which he at once parries the charge against him, and in doing so introduces the great Truth which he came to preach.—The character thus given of the Athenians is confirmed by Greek writers. Pausanias says, "The Athenians are conspicuous above other people in their zeal in divine matters." Josephus calls them "the most devout of the Greeks."

23. your objects of worship] Not, as A.V., '*your devotions*:' but even temples, altars, statues, &c.

also an altar] Over and above the many altars to your own and foreign deities.

To an (not, the) unknown God] That this was the veritable inscription on the altars, the words **with this inscription** (literally, **on which had been inscribed**) are decisive. Meyer well remarks, that the historical fact would be abundantly established from this passage, being Paul's testimony of what he *himself had seen*,—and spoken to the Athenian people. But we have our narrative confirmed by other testimonies which I have cited in my Greek Test., shewing that there really were altars with this inscription at Athens.

What ye ignorantly worship, that declare I unto you] The change to "*Whom*" and "*Him*" has probably been made from reverential motives. The neuters give surely the deeper, and the more appropriate sense. For Paul does not *identify* the true God with the dedication of, or worship at, the altar mentioned: but speaks of *the Divinity* of whom they, by this inscription, confessed themselves ignorant. But even a more serious objection lies against the masculines. The sentiment would thus be in direct contradiction to the assertion of Paul himself, 1 Cor. x. 20, "*The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God.*" Compare also our Lord's words, John iv. 22, "*Ye worship that which ye know not.*"—In the word **worship (shew piety towards)** we have another confirmation of the sense above insisted on in ver. 22. He wishes to commend their *reverential* spirit, while he shews its misdirection. An important lesson for all who have controversies with Paganism and Romanism.

24.] 'No wonder, that the devil, in order to diffuse idolatry, has blotted out among all heathen nations the recognition of *Creation*. The true doctrine of Creation is the proper refutation of all idolatry.' Roos, cited by Stier, who remarks, 'Only on the firm foundation of the Old Testament doctrine of Creation can we rightly build the New Testament doctrine of

Redemption, and only he, who scripturally believes and apprehends by faith the earliest words of Revelation, concerning a Creator of all things, can also apprehend, know, and scripturally worship, THE MAN, in whom God's word, down to its latest canonical Revelation, gathers together all things.'

God... dwelleth not in temples made with hands] A remarkable reminiscence of the dying speech of Stephen: see ch. vii, 48.—Mr. Humphry notices the similarity, but difference in its conclusion, of the argument attributed to Xerxes in Cicero: "Xerxes is said to have burnt the temples of Greece, because they attempted to shut up within walls the gods, to whom all things ought to be open and free, and of whom all this world is the temple and house."—Where Paul stood, he might see the celebrated colossal statue of Athena Polias, known by the Athenians as "*the Goddess*," standing and keeping guard with spear and shield in the enclosure of the Acropolis.

25.] is served: i.e. **is really and truly served**. So "*God is not mocked*," Gal. vi. 7. As the assertion of Creation contradicted the Epicurean *error*, so this laid hold of that portion of truth, which, however disguised, that school had apprehended: viz. that the Deity does not stand in need of us, nor can gain aught from us. There is a verse in 2 Macc. xiv. 35, remarkable, as compared with the thoughts and words of Paul here: "*Thou, O Lord of all things, who hast need of nothing, wast pleased that the temple of thine habitation should be among us.*'

life, and breath, and all things] He is the *Preserver*, as well as the Creator, of all; and all things come to us *from Him*. Compare, on **all things**, David's words, 1 Chron. xxix. 14, "*Thine are all things, and of Thine own have we given Thee.*"

26.] These words were said, be it remembered, to a people who gave themselves out for aboriginal, *sprung from the earth*: but we must not imagine that to refute this was the *object* of the words: they aim far higher than this, and controvert the whole genius of polytheism, which attributed to the various nations *differing mythical origins*, and *separate guardian gods*. It is remarkable, that though of all people the Jews were the most distinguished in their covenant state from other nations of the earth, yet to them only was given the revelation of the true history of mankind, as all created of one blood: a doctrine kept as it were in store for the gospel to proclaim.—Not, 'hath made of one blood,' &c., as A.V., but as in margin. See Matt. v. 32; Mark vii. 37.

determined the times....] He who was before (ver. 24) the *Creator*, then (ver. 25) the *Preserver*, is now the *Governor* of all men: prescribing to each nation its space to dwell in, and its time of endurance.

27. if haply] if by any chance, denoting a contingency apparently not very likely to happen.

though he be not far...] 'Not that HE is *distant from us*, but that we are ignorant of Him.' See Rom. x. 6, 8; Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.

28.] There is no justification for *the pantheist* in this.—It is properly said only of the race of men, as being His offspring, bound to Him: proceeding from, and upheld by, and therefore living, moving, and being in Him:—but even in a wider sense *His Being*, though a separate objective Personality, involves and contains that of His creatures. See Eph. i. 10, where the same is said of Christ.

we live, and move, and have our being] 'A climax rising higher with each term, *out of God* we should have no *Life*, nor even *movement* (which some things without life have, plants, water, &c.), nay, not any *existence* at all (we should not have *been*),' the intent being to shew the *absolute dependence for every thing* of man on God,—and thence the *absurdity of supposing the Godhead like to the works of his (man's) hands.*

certain of your own poets] viz. Aratus, in the opening lines of the poem called "the Phenomena:"... Cleanthes also in his hymn to Zeus (Jupiter), has the same words. Aratus was a *native of Tarsus*, about 270 B.C., and wrote astronomical poems, of which two remain. Cleanthes was born at Assos, in Troas, about 300 B.C. The Apostle, by the plural, seems to have both poets in his mind.—The **his** refers to Zeus (Jupiter) in both cases, the admission being taken as a portion of truth regarding the Supreme God, which even heathen poets confessed.

30. God overlooked] The rendering of the A.V. hears the same meaning, but is to our ears in these days objectionable. In this assurance lie treasures of mercy for those who lived in the times of ignorance. God **overlooked** them: i.e. corrected not this *ignorance itself* as a sin, but *the abuses even of this*, by which the heathen sunk into deeper degradation. The same argument is treated more at length in Rom. i. ii.

31. in righteousness] *Righteousness* is the character of the judgment,—the element of which it shall consist.

whereof he hath given assurance] "As the thing asserted was hardly credible, he gives a distinguished proof of it." Grotius.

32. some mocked: and others said...] We must not allot these two parties, as some have done, the former to the Epicureans,

the latter to the Stoicks: the description is general.—The words, **we will hear thee again of this matter**, need not be taken as ironical. The hearing not having taken place is no proof that it was not intended at the time: and the distinction between these and the mockers seems to imply that these were in earnest.

33. thus] i.e. ‘in this state of the popular mind:’ (with an expectation of being heard again?) The “so” of the A.V. does not give this forcibly enough, but looks like a mere particle of transition.

34. Dionysius the Areopagite] Nothing more is known of him. Eusebius relates that he was bishop of Athens, and Nicephorus, that he died a martyr. The writings which go by his name are undoubtedly spurious.

Acts: Chapter 18

CHAP. XVIII. 1.] Corinth was at this time a *colony* (see note, ch. xvi. 12), the *capital of the Roman province of Achaia*, and *the residence of the proconsul*. For further particulars, see Introduction to 1 Cor. §2.

2. a certain Jew] It appears that Aquila and Priscilla were *not Christians* at this time: it is the similarity of employment only which draws them to St. Paul, and their conversion is left to be inferred as taking place in consequence: see ver. 26.

born in Pontus] literally, **a Pontian by race.** It is remarkable, that *Pontius Aquila* is a name found in the Pontian *gens* at Rome more than once in the days of the Republic, whence some have supposed that this may have been a freedman of a Pontius Aquila, and that the words “*a Pontian by race*” may have been an inference from his name. But besides that St. Luke’s acquaintance with the real origin of Aquila could hardly but have been accurate,—*Aquila*, the translator of the Old Test. into Greek, *was also a native of Pontius*. From the notices of Aquila and Priscilla in the Epistles, they appear to have travelled, fixing their abode by turns in different principal cities for the sake of their business. In ver. 19, we have them left at Ephesus (see also ver. 26): in 1 Cor. xvi. 19, still there; in Rom. xvi. 3 ff, again at Rome; in 2 Tim. iv. 19, again at Ephesus.

because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome...] Suetonius says, “The Jews, who at the instigation of *Chrestus* were continually exciting tumults, he expelled from Rome,” but as he gives this without any fixed note of time, as the words “*at the instigation of Chrestus*” may be taken in three ways (as indicative either (1) of an actual leader of that name, or (2) of some tumult connected with the expectations of a Messiah, or (3) of some dispute about Christianity), Neander well observes that after all which has been said on it, no secure historical inference respecting the date of the event, or its connexion with any Christian church at Rome, can be drawn. It was *as a Jew* that Aquila was driven from Rome: and there is not a word of Christians here. See more in my Greek Test. ‘The edicts soon became invalid, or the prohibition was taken off: we find Aquila at Rome, Rom. xvi. 3, and many Jews resident there, ch. xxviii. 17 ff.

3. wrought] “The Jewish Rabbis having no state pay, it was their practice to teach their children a trade. ‘What is commanded of a father towards his son?’ asks a Talmudic writer, ‘To circumcise him, to teach him the law, to teach him a trade.’ Rabbi Judah saith, ‘He that teacheth not his son a trade, doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief:’ and Rabban Gamaliel saith, ‘He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a vineyard that is fenced.’” Conybeare and Howson, i.p. 58.—The places where St. Paul refers to his supporting himself by his own manual labour are,—ch. xx. 34 (Ephesus):—1 Cor. ix. 12 ff.; 2 Cor. vii. 2 (Corinth):—1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8 (Thessalonica).—In 2 Cor. xi. 9, we learn that supplies were also brought to him at Corinth from Macedonia, i.e. Philippi: see Phil. iv. 15.

tent-makers] The general opinion now is, that St. Paul was a maker of tents from the ‘*cilicium*,’ or hair-cloth of Cilician goats. If it be objected, that he would hardly find the raw material for this work in cities far from Cilicia, it may be answered, that this would not be required in the fabrication of *tents* from the *hair-cloth*, which doubtless itself would be an article of commerce in the markets of Greece.—Chrysostom calls Paul sometimes a *leather-cutter*, imagining that the tents were made of leather.

5.] See ch. xvii. 15; 1 Thess. iii. 6. The meaning is, that ‘*when Silas and Timotheus returned from Macedonia, they found Paul anxiously occupied in discoursing to the Jews.*’ It seems to be implied, that they found him in a state of more than ordinary anxiety, more than usually absorbed in the work of testifying to the Jews:—a crisis in the work being imminent, which resulted in their rejection of the word of life. (On the whole character of his early preaching at Corinth, see notes, 1 Cor. ii. 1–5.) Thus only, the **but** in ver. 5 and that in ver. 6 will both be satisfied: **he discoursed in the synagogue,&c.... but when Silas and Timotheus returned, he was earnestly occupied in discoursing, &c. But, as they opposed themselves and blasphemed, &c.**

6.] The term **blood** is used as in ch. xx. 26. The image and nearly the words, are from Ezek. xxxiii. 4. **from henceforth]** Not *absolutely*, only *at Corinth*: for ver. 19 we find him arguing with the Jews again in the synagogue at Ephesus. The difference in the readings of the last clause in the verse is matter of punctuation. Probably there should be no stop at **clean**, and then it

will read as in the margin, **I shall henceforth with a clear conscience go to the Gentiles.**

7.] In order to shew that he henceforth separated himself from the Jews, he, on leaving the synagogue, went no longer to the house of the Jew Aquila (who appears *afterwards* to have been converted), but to the house of a Gentile proselyte of the gate, close to the synagogue: in the sight of all the congregation in the synagogue: for this seems to be the object in mentioning the circumstance.

8.] On this, a schism took place among the Jews. The ruler of the synagogue attached himself to Paul, and was, together with Gaius, baptized by the Apostle himself (1 Cor. i. 14): and with him many of the Corinthians (Jews and Gentiles, it being the house of a proselyte), probably Aquila and Priscilla also, believed and were baptized.

9. speak, and hold not thy peace] So, for solemnity's sake, we have an affirmation and negation combined, John i. 3. See also Isa. lviii. 1.

10. I have much people] See John x. 16. As our Lord *forewarned* Paul in Jerusalem that *they would not receive his testimony concerning Him*, so here He *encourages* him, by a promise of much success in Corinth. The word **people**, the express title beforetime *of the Jews*, is still used now, notwithstanding their *secession*.

11.] The year and a half may extend either to his *departure*, or to the incident in ver. 12 ff. Meyer would confine it to the latter, taking the verb in the sense of '*remained in quiet*:' but it will hardly bear such emphasis: and seeing that the incident in vv. 12 ff. was a notable fulfilment of the promise,—for though they set on him, *they could not hurt him*,—I should be disposed to take the other view, and regard that which is related ver. 12 to ver. 18, as having happened during this time.

12. Gallio] His original name was Marcus Annaeus Novatus: but, having been adopted into the family of the rhetorician Lucius Junius Gallio, he took the name of Junius Annaeus Gallio. He was brother of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the philosopher, whose character of him is in exact accordance with that which we may infer from this narrative: "No man on earth is so pleasant to me, as this man is to all." "Gallio, my brother, whom there is none that does not love a little, even those who have not the power of loving more." He is called "*the pleasant Gallio*" by Statius. He appears to have given up the province of Achaia from ill health. He was spared after the execution of his brother: but Dio Cassius adds, that Seneca's brothers were put to death afterwards, and Eusebius in his Chronicle, on A.D. 66, says that he put an end to himself after his brother's death.

the deputy] See note on ch. xiii. 7. Achaia was originally a senatorial province, but was temporarily made an imperial one by Tiberius.

of Achaia] The Roman province of Achaia contained Hellas and the Peloponnesus, and, with Macedonia, embraced all their Grecian dominions.—"The **judgment seat** is mentioned three times in the course of this narrative (see vv. 16, 17). It was of two kinds: (1) fixed in some public and open place: (2) moveable, and taken by the Roman magistrates to be placed wherever they might sit in a judicial character. Probably here and in the case of Pilate (John xix. 13), the former kind of seat is intended. See Smith's Dict. of Antiquities, under 'Sella.' See also some remarks on 'the tribunal,—the indispensable symbol of the Roman judgment seat,' in the Edinburgh Review for Jan. 1847, p. 151." Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. 494.

13. contrary to the law] Against the Mosaic law:—the exercise of which, as a '*lawful religion*,' was allowed to the Jews.

15. questions] The plural expresses contempt: **If it is questions, &c.**: as we should say, 'a parcel of questions.' See ch. xxiii. 29.

names] Paul asserted Jesus to be the Christ, which the Jews denied. This, to a Roman, would be a question of *names*.

So Lysias (ch. xxiii. 29) declined to decide Paul's case, and Festus (ch. xxv. 20) though he did not altogether put the enquiry by, wished to judge it *at Jerusalem*, where he might have the counsel of those learned in the Jewish law.

17. all (the people)] Apparently, all the *mob*, i.e. the Gentile population present. Sosthenes, as the ruler of the synagogue (either *the ruler*, or *one of the rulers*; perhaps he had succeeded Crispus), had been the chief of the complainant Jews, and therefore, on their cause being rejected, and themselves ignominiously dismissed, was roughly treated by the mob. From this, certainly the right explanation, has arisen the explanatory gloss, "*the Greeks*." Another explanatory gloss, "*the Jews*," is given: and has sprung from the notion that this Sosthenes was the same person with the Sosthenes of 1 Cor. i. 1, a Christian and a companion of Paul. But, not to insist on the improbability of the party driven from the tribunal having beaten one of their antagonists in front of the tribunal,—*why did they not beat Paul himself?*—there is no ground for supposing the two persons to be the same, Sosthenes being no uncommon name. If they were, this man must have been converted afterwards; but he is not among those who accompanied Paul into Asia, either in ver. 18, or ch. xx. 4.—The carelessness of Gallio about the matter clearly seems to be a further instance of his contempt for the Jews, and indisposition to favour them or their persecution of

Paul. Had this been otherwise meant, certainly **and** would not have been the copula. ‘So little did the information against Paul prosper that the informers themselves were beaten without interference of the judge.’ Meyer.

18.] It has been considered doubtful whether the words **having shorn his head in Cenchrēa** apply to *Paul*, the subject of the sentence, or to *Aquila*, the last subject. I agree with Neander that if we consider the matter carefully, there can be no doubt that they *can only apply to Paul*. For, although this vow differed from that of the Nazarite, who shaved his hair at the *end* of his votive period in the temple at Jerusalem, and burnt it with his peace-offering (Num. vi. 1–21), Josephus gives us a description of a somewhat similar one, where it appears that the hair was shaved thirty days before the sacrifice. At all events, *no sacrifice could be offered anywhere but at Jerusalem*: and every such vow would conclude with a sacrifice. Now we find, on comparing the subsequent course of Aquila with that of Paul,—that the former *did not go up to Jerusalem*, but remained at Ephesus (ver. 26): but that Paul *hastened* by Ephesus, and did go up to Jerusalem: see ver. 22. Again, it would be quite irrelevant to the purpose of St. Luke, to relate such a fact of *one of Paul's companions*. That he should do so apologetically, to shew that the Apostle still countenanced conformity with the law, is a view which I cannot find justified by any features of this book: and it surely would be a very far-fetched apology, and one likely to escape the notice of many readers, seeing that Aquila would not appear as being under Paul’s influence, and even his conversion to the Gospel has not been related, but is left to be implied from ver. 26. Again, Meyer’s ground for referring the action to Aquila,—that his name is here placed after that of his wife,—is untenable, seeing that, for some reason, probably the superior character or office in the church, of Priscilla, the same arrangement is found (in the best MSS. at ver. 26, and) at Rom. xvi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 19. There need be no enquiry *what danger* can have prompted such a vow on his part, when we recollect the catalogue given by him in 2 Cor. xi. Besides, he had, since his last visit to Jerusalem, been suffering from sickness (see note on ch. xvi. 6, and Introd. to Gal. §1. 3): it is true, a considerable time ago, but this need not prevent our supposing that the vow may have been then made, to be paid on his next visit to Jerusalem. That he had not sooner paid it is accounted for by his having been since that time under continual pressure of preaching and founding churches, and having finally been detained by special command at Corinth. That he was now so anxious to pay it (ver. 21), consists well with the supposition of its having been long delayed.

in Cenchrēa] Cenchrēa (pronounced Kenchrēa) was a village with a port, about eight miles from Corinth, forming its naval station on the Asiatic side, as Lechæum did on the Italian. There was soon after a Christian church there: see Rom. xvi. 1.

19. Ephesus] Ephesus was the ancient capital of Ionia, and at this time, of the Roman proconsular province of Asia,—on the Cayster, near the coast, between Smyrna and Miletus. It was famed for its commerce, but even more for its magnificent temple of Artemis (Diana: see ch. xix. 24, 27, and notes). See a full account of its situation and history, secular and Christian, in the Introduction to Eph. §2. 2–6; and an interesting description, with plan, in Mr. Lewin’s Life and Epistles of St. Paul, i. 344 ff.

and left them there: but] I should understand this to mean, that the Jewish synagogue was *outside the town*, and that Priscilla and Aquila were left *in the town*.

21.] The omission of the words here inserted in the common text, “*I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem*,” seems necessitated on the principle of being guided in doubtful cases by the testimony of our most ancient MSS. The text thus produced is the shortest and simplest, and the facts, of other glosses having been attempted on this verse, and of one MS. inserting the words without altering the construction to suit them, and of other variations, tend perhaps to throw discredit on the insertion. The gloss, if such it be, has probably been owing to an endeavour to conform the circumstances to those related in ch. xx. 16. If the words are to stand, and for those who read them, it may still be interesting to enquire at *what feast* they may be supposed to point. (1) *Not at the Passover*: for the ordinary duration of the winter *shutting up of the sea* was till the vernal equinox. And we are not at liberty to assume an exceptional case, such as sometimes occurred. Hence, if the voyage from Corinth at all approached the length of that from Philippi to Jerusalem in ch. xx., xxi., he would have set sail at a time when it would have been hardly possible. (2) *Not at the Feast of Tabernacles*. For if it were, he must have sailed from Corinth in August or September. Now, as he stayed there something more than a year and a half, his sea-voyage from Berea to Athens would in this case have been made in the depth of winter; which (especially as a choice of land or water was open to him) is impossible. (3) It remains, then, that the feast should have been *Pentecost*; at which Paul also visited Jerusalem, ch. xx. 16. The Apostle’s promise of return was fulfilled ch. xix. 1 ff.

22. and gone up] to Jerusalem: for (1) it would be out of the question to suppose that Paul made the long detour by Cæsarea *only to go up into the town from the beach*, as supposed by most of those who omit the disputed words in ver. 21, and *salute the disciples*,—and (2) the expression **he went down to Antioch**, which suits a journey from Jerusalem (ch. xi. 27), would not apply to one from Cæsarea.

and saluted the church] The payment of his vow is not mentioned, partly because it is understood from the mere mention of the vow itself, ver. 18,—partly, perhaps, because it was privately done, and with no view to attract notice as in ch. xxi.

23.] PAUL’ S VISIT TO THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA AND PHRYGIA.—Either (1) Galatia is here a general term

including Lycaonia, and St. Paul went by Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, &c. as before in ch. xvi., or (2) he did not visit Lycaonia this time, but went through Cappadocia: to which also the words “*having passed through the upper tracts*” (ch. xix. 1) seem to point, “upper Asia” being the country east of the Halys. We find Christian churches in Cappadocia, 1 Pet. i. 1. On this journey, as connected with the state of the Galatian churches, see Introduction to Gal. §3. 1.

in order implies that he regularly visited the churches, each as they lay in his route.—One work accomplished by him in this journey was the ordaining (but apparently not collecting) a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem: see 1 Cor. xvi. 1,—Timotheus and Erastus probably accompanied him, see ch. xix. 22; 2 Cor. i. 1; and Gaius and Aristarchus, ch. xix. 29; and perhaps Titus, 2 Cor. xii. 18 al. (and Sosthenes? 1 Cor. i. 1, but see on ver. 17).

24–28.] APOLLOS AT EPHESUS, AND IN ACHAIA.

The name **Apollos** is abbreviated from **Apollonius**, as Lucas from Lucanus, &c.

born at Alexandria] literally, **an Alexandrian by race**. Alexandria was the great seat of the Hellenistic or later Greek language, learning, and philosophy (see ch. vi. 9). A large number of Jews had been planted there by its founder, Alexander the Great. The celebrated LXX version of the Old Test. was made there under the Ptolemies. There took place that remarkable fusion of Greek, Oriental, and Judaic elements of thought and belief, which was destined to enter so widely, for good and for evil, into the minds and writings of Christians. We see in the providential calling of Apollos to the ministry, an instance of adaptation of the workman to the work. A masterly exposition of the Scriptures by a learned Hellenist of Alexandria formed the most appropriate watering (1 Cor. iii. 6) for those who had been planted by the pupil of Gamaliel. The word rendered **eloquent** may mean **learned**. But the former meaning is most appropriate here, both because the peculiar kind of learning implied by it, acquaintance with stories and legends, would not be likely to be predicated of Apollos,—and because the subsequent words, *mighty in the Scriptures*, sufficiently indicate his *learning*, and in what it lay.

25.] Apollos had received (from his youth?) the true doctrine of the Messiahship of Jesus, as pointed out by John the Baptist: doubtless from some disciple of John; but more than this he knew not. The *doctrines* of the Cross,—the Resurrection,—the outpouring of the Spirit,—these were unknown to him: but more particularly (from the words “*knowing only the baptism of John*”) the *latter*, as connected with Christian baptism: see further on ch. xix. 2, 3.—The mistake of supposing that he *did not know Jesus to be the Messiah*, has arisen from the description of his subsequent work at Corinth, ver. 28, but by no means follows from it: *this he did before*, but not so completely. The same mistake has led to the alteration of Jesus into “*the Lord*” in the ordinary text, it having been well imagined that he could not teach **accurately the things concerning Jesus**, if he did not know him to be the Messiah: whereas by these words is imported that he knew and taught accurately the *facts* respecting Jesus, but of the *consequences* of that which he taught, of all which may be summed up in the doctrine of Christian baptism, he had no idea.

knowing only...] Meyer well remarks, that it is not meant that he was absolutely ignorant of the fact of there *being such a thing* as Christian baptism, but ignorant of its being any thing different from that of John: he knew, or recognized in baptism only that which the baptism of John was: a sign of repentance.

26. **more accurately]** The former accuracy was only in *facts*: this is the still more expanded accuracy of *doctrine*. That was merely “*the things concerning Jesus*,” as He lived and ministered on earth: this included also the promise of the Spirit, and its performance.

27. **exhorting the disciples to receive him]** Probably this exhortation was given by Priscilla and Aquila principally. It may have been from their account of the Corinthian church, that he was desirous to go to Achaia.

through grace] These words *may* be joined with the verb *helped*, implying that the grace was in *him*. But the rendering in the text is much more probable,—**those who had believed through grace**. “The **for**, which follows, should be noticed. His coming was a valuable assistance to the Christians against the Jews, in the controversies which had doubtless

been going on since Paul’s departure.” Conybeare and Howson, edn. 2, ii. p. 10.

28. **mightily convinced]** The original word is a very forcible one,—he **argued down**, as we say,—‘*proved in their teeth*:’ and then it has also the sense of *continuity*,—that this was not done once or twice, but continuously.

Acts: Chapter 19

CHAP. XIX. 1–40.] ARRIVAL, RESIDENCE, AND ACTS OF PAUL AT EPHESUS.

1. the upper tracts] By this name were known, the eastern parts of Asia Minor, beyond the river Halys, or in comparison with Ephesus, in the direction of that river.

certain disciples] These seem to have been in the same situation as Apollos, see on ch. xviii. 25. They cannot have been mere disciples of John, on account of **when ye believed**, which can bear no meaning but that of believing *on the Lord Jesus*: but they had received only John's baptism, and had had no proof of the descent of the Holy Spirit, nor knowledge of His gifts.

2.] The indefinite past tense in the original should be faithfully rendered: not as A.V. '*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*' but **Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye became believers?** i.e. '*on your becoming believers, had ye the gifts of the Spirit conferred on you?*'—as in ch. viii. 16, 17. This is both grammatically necessary, and absolutely demanded by the sense; the enquiry being, not as to any reception of the Holy Ghost during the period since their baptism, but as to one simultaneous with their first reception into the church: and their *not* having *then* received Him is accounted for by the *deficiency of their baptism*.

We did not so much as hear] Literally, **on the contrary, not even...** Here again, not, 'we *have not* heard,' which would involve an absurdity: "for they could not be followers of Moses or of John the Baptist, without hearing of the Holy Ghost" (Bengel);—but **we did not hear**, at the time of our conversion:—Our reception into the faith was unaccompanied by any preaching of the office or the gifts of the Spirit,—our baptism was not followed by any imparting of His gifts: **we did not so much as hear Him mentioned**. The stress of the sentence is on *hearing*: so far from *receiving* the Holy Ghost, they did not even *hear* of His existence.

3.] St. Paul's question establishes the above rendering:—**To what then** (if ye did not so much as hear of the Holy Ghost at your first believing) **were ye baptized?** If the question and answer in ver. 2 regarded, as in A.V., the *whole interval* since their conversion, this enquiry would have been more naturally expressed in the perfect tense.

Unto what] unto (with a view to, as introductory to) **what profession?** They answer, **Unto** (that indicated by) **the baptism of John**, viz.: *repentance, and the believing on Jesus, then to come, but now* (see ch. xviii. 25, note) *the object of our faith*.

5.] Two singular perversions of this verse have occurred: (1) the Anabaptists use it to authorize the repetition of Christian baptism, whereas it is not *Christian baptism* which was repeated, seeing that John's baptism was *not such*, but only the baptism which they now for the first time received; and (2) some of the orthodox, wishing to wrest this weapon out of the hands of the Anabaptists, oddly enough suppose this verse to belong still to Paul's discourse, and to mean, '*and the people when they heard him (John), were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.*' This obviously is contrary to fact, historically: and would leave our present narrative in a singular state: for Paul, having treated their baptism as *insufficient*, would thus proceed on it to impose his hands, as if it were *sufficient*.

in (into) the name of the Lord Jesus] Two questions arise here: (1) Was it the ordinary practice to rebaptize those who had been baptized either by John or by the disciples (John iv. 1 f.) *before baptism became, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit, "the bath of regeneration?"* This we cannot definitely answer. That it was *sometimes* done, this incident shews: but in all probability, in the cases of the majority of the original disciples, the greater baptism by the Holy Ghost and fire on the day of Pentecost superseded the outward form or sign. The Apostles themselves received only this baptism (besides probably that of John): and most likely the same was the case with the original believers. But of the three thousand who were added on the day of Pentecost, very many must have been already baptized by John; and all were *rebaptized without enquiry*. (2) What conclusion can we deduce from this verse respecting the use or otherwise of baptism *in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, in the apostolic period? The only answer must be, that at that early time we have no indication of set formulæ in the administration of either sacrament. Such formulæ arise of necessity, when precision in formal statement of doctrine became an absolute necessity in the church: and the materials for them were found ready in the word of God, who has graciously provided for all necessities of His church in all time. But, in matter of *fact*, such a baptism as this *was* a baptism into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As Jews, these men were already servants of the living God—and by putting on the Son, they received in a new and more gracious sense the Father also. And in the sequel of their baptism, the imposition of hands, they sensibly became recipients of God the Holy Ghost. Where such manifestations were present, the form of words might be wanting; but with us, who have them not, it is necessary and imperative. Mr. Howson regards (i. 517; ii. 13) St. Paul's question in our ver. 3 as indicative that the name of the Holy Ghost was used in the baptismal formula. But the inference seems to me insecure.

6.] See ch. viii. 17; x. 46, and note on ch. ii. 4: and on the fact that they *prophesied*, ch. xi. 27, note.

9.] Probably the school of Tyrannus was a private synagogue (called Beth Midrasch by the Jews), where he might assemble the believing Jews quietly, and also invite the attendance of Gentiles to hear the word. But it is also possible that, as commonly supposed, Tyrannus may have been a Gentile sophist. The name occurs as a proper name, 2 Macc. iv. 40.

10. two years] We cannot derive any certain estimate of the length of St. Paul's stay in Ephesus from these words,—even if we add the three months of ver. 8,—for vv. 21, 22 admit of an *interval after the expiration of the two years and three months*. And his own expression, ch. xx. 31, “*three whole years*,” implies that it was longer than from this chapter would at first sight appear. He probably (compare his announced intention, 1 Cor. xvi. 8, with his expectation of meeting Titus at Troas, 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13, which shews that he was not far off the time previously arranged) left Ephesus about or soon after the third Pentecost after that which he kept in Jerusalem. See Introd. to 1 Cor. §6.

all they which dwelt in Asia] Hyperbolical:—*all had the opportunity*, and probably some of every considerable town availed themselves of it. To this long teaching of St. Paul the seven churches of Asia owe their establishment.

11. no common miracles] miracles of no ordinary kind. In what they differed from the usual displays of power by the Apostles, is presently related: viz. that even garments taken from him were endued with miraculous power.

12.] Diseases, and possession by evil spirits, are here plainly distinguished from each other. ‘The rationalists, and semi-rationalists, are much troubled to clear the fact related, that such handkerchiefs and aprons were instrumental in working the cures, from participation in what they are pleased to call a popular notion founded in superstition and error. But in this and similar narratives (see ch. vv. 15, note) Christian faith finds no difficulty whatever. All miraculous working is an exertion of the direct power of the All-powerful; a suspension by Him of His ordinary laws: and whether He will use any instrument in doing this, or what instrument, must depend altogether on His own purpose in the miracle—the effect to be produced on the recipients, beholders, or hearers. Without His special selection and enabling, *all instruments were vain*; with these, *all are capable*. In the present case, as before in ch. v. 15, it was His purpose to exalt His Apostle as the Herald of His gospel, and to lay in Ephesus the strong foundation of His church. And He therefore endues him with this extraordinary power. But to argue by analogy from such a case,—to suppose that because our Lord was able, and Peter, and Paul, and in Old Test. times Elisha, were enabled, to exert this peculiar power, therefore the same will be possessed by the body or relics of every real or supposed saint, is the height of folly and fanaticism. The true analogy tends directly the other way. In *no cases but these* do we find the power, even in the apostolic days: and the general cessation of all extraordinary gifts of the Spirit would lead us to the inference that *à fortiori these*, which were even then the rarest, have ceased also.

13.] See note on Matt. xii. 27, respecting the Jewish exorcists. These men, seeing the success of Paul's agency in casting out devils, adopt the name of Jesus in their own exorcisms.

14. chief of the priests] The word must be used in a wide sense. He may have been chief of the priests resident at Ephesus: or perhaps chief of one of the twenty-four courses.

15.] The narrative, from describing the nature of the attempt, passes to a single case in which it was tried, and in which (see below) two only of the brothers were apparently concerned.

16. them both] The weight of MSS. evidence for this reading is even surpassed by its internal probability. There would be every reason, as *seven* have been before mentioned, for altering it: but no imaginable one for substituting it for that of the common text. *Two only*, it would seem, were thus employed on this particular occasion: and St. Luke has retained the word as it stood in the record furnished to him. Whether any similar occurrence happened to the rest, we are not informed: this one is selected as most notorious.

18.] The natural effect of such an occurrence was to induce a horror of magical arts, &c., which some were still continuing to countenance or practise secretly, together with a profession of Christianity. Such persons now came forward and confessed their error. The **deeds** mentioned in this verse were probably the *association* with such practices: the next verse treats of the *magicians themselves*.

19. their books] These books consisted of *magical formulæ*, or *receipt-books*, or *written amulets*. These last were celebrated by the name of *Ephesian scrolls*. They were copies of the mystic words engraved on the image of the Ephesian Artemis (Diana).

fifty thousand pieces of silver] 50, 000 drachmæ, i.e. denarii: for the drachma of the Augustan and following ages was the Roman denarius—about 8½ d. of our money: which makes the entire value about £1770.

21. these things] The occurrences of vv. 19, 20.

in the spirit] An expression mostly used by St. Paul, see Rom. i. 9; viii. 16; xii. 11: 1 Cor. ii. 4; v. 3, 4; xiv. 14, and other places.

I must also see Rome] As he was sent to the Gentiles, he saw that the great metropolis of the Gentile world was the legitimate

centre of his apostolic working. Or perhaps he speaks under some divine intimation that *ultimately* he should be brought to Rome. If so, his words were literally fulfilled. He did see Rome, when he had been at Jerusalem this next time: but after considerable delay, and as a prisoner. Compare the same design as expressed by him, Rom. i. 15: xv. 23–28; and Paley's remarks in the *Horæ Pauline*.

22.] He intended *himself to follow*, after Pentecost, 1 Cor. xvi. 8. This mission of Timothy is alluded to 1 Cor. iv. 17 (see also 1 Cor. i. 1); xvi. 10. The object of it was to bring these churches in Macedonia and Achaia into remembrance of the ways and teaching of Paul. It occurred shortly-before the writing of 1 Cor. He was (1 Cor. xvi. 11) soon to return:—but considerable uncertainty hangs over this journey. We find him again with Paul in Macedonia, 2 Cor. i. 1: but apparently he had not reached Corinth. See 1 Cor. xvi. as above: and 2 Cor. xii. 18, where he would probably have been mentioned, had he done so.—On the difficult question respecting a journey of Paul himself to Corinth during this period, see notes, 2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii. 1,—and Introduction to 1 Cor. §5.

Erastus] This Erastus can hardly be identical with the Erastus of Rom. xvi. 23, who must have been resident at Corinth: see there: and therefore hardly either with the Erastus of 2 Tim. iv. 20: see note there.

24. silver shrines] These were small models of the celebrated temple of the Ephesian Artemis (Diana), with her statue, which it was the custom to carry on journeys, and place in houses, as a charm. We may find an exact parallel in the usages of that corrupt form of Christianity, which, whatever it may pretend to teach, in practice honours similarly the “great goddess” of its imagination.

25. of like occupation] i.e. manufacturers of all sorts of memorials or amulets connected with the worship of Artemis (Diana),—Mr. Howson (ii. p. 98) suggests that possibly *Alexander the coppersmith* may have been one of these craftsmen: see 2 Tim. iv. 14.

26.] The people believed that the images themselves were gods: see ch. xvii the citation from Plutarch in my Greek Test.—And so it is invariably, wherever images are employed *professedly as media* of worship.

27.] but that eventually even the temple itself of the great goddess Artemis will be counted for nothing. “Great” was the usual epithet of the Ephesian Artemis.—The temple of Artemis at Ephesus, having been burnt to the ground by Herostratus on the night of the birth of Alexander the Great (B. C. 355), was restored with increased magnificence, and accounted one of the wonders of the ancient world. Its dimensions were 425 by 220 feet, and it was surrounded by 127 columns, 60 feet high. It was standing in all its grandeur at this time. See Conybeare and Howson, ch. xvi. vol. ii. pp. 84 ff.

29. having caught] It is not implied that they seized Gaius and Aristarchus *before* they rushed into the theatre: but rather that the two acts were simultaneous.

Gaius] A different person from the Gaius of ch. xx. 4, who was of Derbe, and from the Gaius of Rom. xvi. 23, and 1 Cor. i. 15, who was evidently a Corinthian. Aristarchus is mentioned ch. xx. 4; xxvii. 2; Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24. He was a native of Thessalonica.

into the theatre] The resort of the populace on occasions of excitement. ‘Of the site of the theatre, the scene of the tumult raised by Demetrius, there can be no doubt, its ruins being a wreck of immense grandeur. I think it must have been larger than the one at Miletus; and that exceeds any I have elsewhere seen..... Its form alone can now be spoken of, for every seat is removed, and the proscenium is a heap of ruins.’ Fellows, Asia Minor, p. 274. ‘The theatre of Ephesus is said to be the largest known of any that have remained to us from antiquity.’ Conybeare and Howson, ii. p. 83, note 3.

31. certain of the chief of Asia] Literally, **of the Asiarchs.** These Asiarchs were officers elected by the cities of the province of Asia to preside over their games and religious festivals. Of these it would be natural that the one who for the time presided would bear the title of “*the Asiarch*,” but no more is known of such presidency. The Asiarch Philip at Smyrna is mentioned by Eusebius as presiding in the amphitheatre at the martyrdom of Polycarp. These Ephesian games in honour of Artemis took place in May, which whole month (another singular coincidence with the practices of idolatrous Christendom) was sacred to, and named *Artemision after*, the goddess.

33. drew forth] i.e. **urged forward**, through the crowd; the Jews pushing him on from behind.—Alexander does not seem to be mentioned elsewhere (but see on 2 Tim. iv. 14). He appears to have been a Christian convert from Judaism, whom the Jews were willing to expose as a victim to the fury of the mob: or perhaps one of themselves, put forward to clear them of blame on the occasion.

34. when they knew that he was a Jew] They would hear nothing from a Jew, as being an enemy of image-worship.

35.] The townclerk is the nearest English office corresponding to that here mentioned in the original. He was the keeper of the archives, and public reader of decrees, &c., in the assemblies. The word here rendered **worshipper** probably means a **virger**, or adorner of the temple: here used as implying that Ephesus had the charge and keeping of the temple. The title is found on inscriptions as belonging to Ephesus; and seems to have been specially granted by the emperors to particular cities.

of the image which fell down from Jupiter] To give peculiar sanctity to various images, it was given out that they had fallen from heaven. See examples in my Greek Test. This artifice also has been imitated by the paganized Christianity of the wretched Church of Rome.

37.] From this verse it appears that Paul had proceeded at Ephesus with the same caution as at Athens, and had not held up to contempt the worship of Artemis, any further than unavoidably the truths which he preached would render it contemptible. This is also manifest from his having friends among the Asiarchs, ver. 31. Chrysostom, however, treats this assertion of the town-clerk merely as a device to appease the people: "this," he says, "was a lie, and was said only for the populace." **38.** **court-days are held]** The sentence implies that they were then actually going on. They were the periodical *assizes* of the district, held by the proconsul and his *assessors* (see below).

deputies] i.e.—see on ch. xiii. 7,—**proconsuls:** the fit officers before whom to bring these causes. So the Commentators generally. But perhaps the assessors of the proconsul may have themselves popularly borne the name.

let them implead one another] i.e. **let them** (the plaintiffs and defendants) **plead against one another.**

39.] The definite article points out the regularly recurring assembly, of which they all knew.

40.] He here assumes that this assembly was an *unlawful* one.

The meaning is, **There being no ground why** (i. e. in consequence of which) **we shall be able to give an account**, i.e. 'no ground whereon to build the possibility of our giving an account.'

Acts: Chapter 20

CHAP. XX. 1—XXI. 16.] JOURNEY OF PAUL TO MACEDONIA AND GREECE, AND THENCE TO JERUSALEM.

2.] Notices of this journey may be found 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13; viii. 5, 6. He delayed on the way some time at Troas, waiting for Titus,—broke off his preaching there, though prosperous, in distress of mind at his non-arrival, 2 Cor. ii. 12, 18,—and sailed for Macedonia, where Titus met him, 2 Cor. vii. 6. That Epistle was written during it, from Macedonia (see 2 Cor. ix. 2, 'I am boasting'). He seems to have gone to the confines at least of Illyria, Rom. xv. 19.

them] The Macedonian brethren.

Greece] Achaia: see ch. xix. 21.

3. there abode] This stay was made at Corinth, most probably: see 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7: and was during the winter; see below on ver. 6. During it the Epistle to the Romans was written: see Introduction to Rom. §4.

as he was about to sail] This purpose, of going from Corinth to Palestine by sea, is implied ch. xix. 21, and 1 Cor. xvi. 3—7.

4. into (as far as) **Asia]** It is not hereby implied that they went *no further* than to Asia: Trophimus (ch. xxi. 29) and Aristarchus (ch. xxvii. 2), and probably others, as the bearers of the alms from Macedonia and Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4), accompanied him to Jerusalem.

Sopater [the son] of Pyrrhus, a Berean] This mention of his father is perhaps made to distinguish him (?) from Sosipater, who was with Paul at Corinth (Rom. xvi. 21). The name Pyrrhus has in our copies been erased as that of an unknown person, and because the mention of the father is unusual in the N.T.:—no possible reason can be given for its *insertion* by copyists.

Aristarchus] See ch. xix. 29; xxvii. 2; Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24.—Secundus is altogether unknown.—The Gaius here is not the Gaius of ch. xix. 29, who was a *Macedonian*. The epithet **of Derbe** is inserted for distinction's sake. Timotheus was from *Lystra*, which probably gives occasion to his being mentioned here in close company with Gaius of Derbe. The name Caius (Gaius) was far too common to create any difficulty in there being two, or three (see note, ch. xix. 29) companions of Paul so called.

of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus] Tychicus is mentioned Eph. vi. 21, as sent (to Ephesus from Rome) with that Epistle. He bore also that to the Colossians, Col. iv. 7, at the same time. See also 2 Tim. iv. 12; Tit. iii. 12.—Trophimus, an Ephesian, was in Jerusalem with Paul, ch. xxi. 29: and had been, shortly before 2 Tim. was written, left sick at Miletus. (See Introduction to 2 Tim. §1. 5.)

5. These] The persons mentioned in ver. 4: not only Tychicus and Trophimus. The mention of Timotheus in this list, distinguished from those included under the word **us**, has created an insuperable difficulty to those who suppose Timotheus himself to be the narrator of what follows: which certainly cannot be got over (as De Wette) by supposing that Timotheus might have inserted himself in the list, and then tacitly excepted himself by the **us** afterwards. The truth is apparent here, as well as before, ch. xvi. 10 (where see note), that the anonymous narrator was in very intimate connexion with Paul; and on this occasion we find him remaining with him when the rest went forward.

going before&c...] For what reason, is not said: but we may well conceive, that if they bore the contributions of the churches, a better opportunity, or safer ship, may have determined Paul to send them on, he himself having work to do at Philippi; or perhaps, again, as Meyer suggests, Paul may have remained behind to keep the days of unleavened bread. But then why should not they have remained too? The same *motive* may not have operated with them: but in that case no reason can be given why they should have been *sent* on except as above. It is not impossible that both may have been combined: before the end of the days of unleavened bread, a favourable opportunity occurs of sailing to Troas, of which they, with their charge, avail themselves: Paul and Luke waiting till the end of the feast, and taking the risk of a less desirable conveyance. That the feast had *something* to do with it, the mention of **after the days of unleavened bread** seems to imply: such notices being not inserted ordinarily by Luke for the sake of *dates*. The assumption made by some that the rest of the company sailed at once for Troas from Corinth, while Paul and Luke went by land to Philippi, is inconsistent with the words used in the opening of ver. 4.—From the notice here, we learn that Paul's stay in Europe on this occasion was about three-quarters of a year: from shortly after Pentecost, when he left Ephesus (see on ch. xix. 10), to the next Easter.

6. in five days] The wind must have been adverse: for the voyage *from* Troas to Philippi (Neapolis) in ch. xvi. 11, seems to have been made in *two* days. It appears that they arrived on a Monday.—Compare notes, 2 Cor. ii. 12 ff.

7. upon the first day of the week] We have here an intimation of the continuance of the practice, which seems to have begun immediately after the Resurrection (see John xx. 26), of assembling on the first day of the week for religious purposes. Perhaps the greatest proof of all, that this day was thus observed, may be found in the early (see 1 Cor. xvi. 2) and at length general prevalence, in the *Gentile world*, of the *Jewish seven-day period as a division of time*,—which was entirely foreign to Gentile habits. It can only have been introduced as following on the practice of especial honour paid to this day. But we find in the Christian Scriptures no trace of any *sabbatical* observance of this or any day: nay, in Rom. xiv. 5 (where see note), St Paul shews the untenableness of any such view under the Christian dispensation. The idea of the *transference of the Jewish sabbath from the seventh day to the first* was an invention of later times.

to break bread] See note on ch. ii. 42. The breaking of bread in the Holy Communion was at this time inseparable from the *agapæ* or *love-feasts*. It took place apparently in the evening (after the day's work was ended), and at the end of the assembly, after the preaching of the word (ver. 11).

unto them, in the third person, the discourse being addressed to the disciples at Troas: but the first person is used before and after, because all were assembled, and partook of the breaking of bread together. Not observing this, the copyists have altered **we** above into "*the disciples*," and again into **they** below to suit this **to them**.

8. there were many lights] This may be noticed, as Meyer observes, to shew that the fall of the young man could be well observed: or, perhaps, because many lights are apt to increase drowsiness at such times. Calvin and Bengel suppose it to have been done,—in order that all suspicion might be removed from the assembly, others that the lights were used for solemnity's sake,—for that both Jews and Gentiles celebrated their festal days by abundance of lights. But surely the adoption of either Jewish or Gentile practices of this kind in the Christian assemblies was very improbable.

9.] Who Eutychus was is quite uncertain. The occurrence of the name as belonging to slaves and freedmen (as it appears from inscriptions) determines nothing.

on the window-seat] The windows in the East were (and are) without glass, and with or without shutters.

being fallen into a deep sleep] Literally, **borne down by a deep sleep**. I believe the word is used here and below *in the same sense*, not, as usually interpreted, here of the effect of sleep, and below of *the fall* caused by the sleep. It implies that relaxation of the system, and collapse of the muscular power, which is more or less indicated by our expressions '*falling asleep*,' '*dropping asleep*.' This effect is *being produced*, in this clause, but as Paul was going on long discoursing, took *complete possession of him*, and having been **overpowered**,—**entirely relaxed in consequence of the sleep**, he *fell*. In the

words, **was taken up dead**, here there is a *direct assertion*, which can hardly be evaded by explaining it, ‘*was taken up for dead*,’ or by saying that it expresses the *judgment of those who took him up*, as Meyer. It seems to me, that the supposition of a mere suspended animation is as absurd here as in the miracle of Jairus’s daughter, Luke viii, 41–56. Let us take the narrative as it stands. The youth falls, and is taken up dead: so much is plainly asserted. Paul, not a physician, but an Apostle,—gifted, not with medical discernment, but with miraculous power, goes down to him, falls on him and embraces him,—a strange proceeding for one bent on discovering suspended animation, but not so for one who bore in mind the action of Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 21) and Elisha (2 Kings iv. 34), each time over a *dead body*,—and *having done this, not before*, bids them not to be troubled, for *his life was in him*. I would ask any unbiased reader, taking these details into consideration, which of the two is the natural interpretation,—and whether there can be any reasonable doubt that *the intent of St. Luke is to relate a miracle of raising the dead*, and that he mentions the falling on and embracing him as the outward significant means taken by the Apostle to that end?

11.] The intended breaking of bread had been put off by the accident. The article here may import, ‘the bread which it was intended to break,’ alluding to ver. 7 above.

and eaten] The *agapé* was a veritable meal. Not ‘*having tasted it*,’ viz. the bread which he had broken;—though that is implied, usage decides for the other meaning.

so] i.e. ‘*after so doing*.’

12.] As in the raising of Jairus’s daughter, our Lord commanded that something should be given her to eat, that nature might be recruited, so doubtless here rest and treatment were necessary, in order that the restored life might be confirmed, and the shock recovered. The time indicated by **break of day** must have been before or about 5 A.M.: which would allow about four hours since the miracle. We have here a minute but interesting touch of truth in the narrative. Paul, we learn afterwards, ver. 13, intended to go afoot. And accordingly here we have it simply related that he started away from Troas before his companions, not remaining for the reintroduction of the now recovered Eutychus in ver. 12.

13. Assos] A sea-port (also called Apollonia, Plin. v. 32) in Mysia or Troas, opposite to Lesbos, twenty-four Roman miles from Troas, built on a high cliff above sea, with a precipitous descent. Paul’s *reason* is not given for wishing to be alone: probably he had some apostolic visit to make.

14. Mitylene] The capital of Lesbos, on the E. coast of the island, famed for its beautiful situation. It had two harbours: the northern, into which their ship would sail, was large and deep, and defended by a breakwater.

15. we put in to Samos] Then they made a short run in the evening to Trogylgium, a cape and town on the Ionian coast, only five miles distant, where they spent the night. He had passed in front of the bay of Ephesus, and was now but a short distance from it.

Miletus] The ancient capital of Ionia. See 2 Tim. iv. 20, and note.

16. Paul had determined] We see here that the ship was at Paul’s disposal, and probably hired at Philippi, or rather at Neapolis, for the voyage to Patara (ch. xxi. 1), where he and his company embark in a merchant vessel, going to Tyre. The separation of Paul and Luke from the rest at the beginning of the voyage may have been in some way connected with the hiring or outfit of this vessel. The expression **he had determined** is too subjectively strong to allow of our supposing that the Apostle merely followed the previously determined course of a ship in which he took a passage.

to sail by (i. e. to omit visiting)] He may have been afraid of detention there, owing to the machinations of those who had caused the uproar in ch. xix. Another reason has been given: “He seems to have feared that, had he run up the long gulf to Ephesus, he might be detained in it by the westerly winds, which blow long, especially in the spring.” But these would affect him nearly as much at. Miletus.

17.] The distance from Miletus to Ephesus is about thirty miles. He probably, therefore, stayed three or four days altogether at Miletus.

the elders] called, ver. 28, **bishops**. This circumstance began very early to contradict the growing views of the apostolic institution and necessity of prelatical episcopacy. Thus Irenæus (Cent. 2), “He called together at Miletus the *bishops and presbyters* (elders), who came from Ephesus and the rest of the churches near.” Here we see (1) the two, *bishops and presbyters*, distinguished, as if *both* were sent for, in order that the titles might not seem to belong to the same persons,—and (2) other neighbouring churches also brought in, in order that there might not seem to be *bishops* in one church only. That neither of these was the case, is clearly shewn by the plain words of this verse: “he sent to Ephesus, and summoned the *elders of the church*.” So early did interested and disingenuous interpretations begin to cloud the light which Scripture might have

thrown on ecclesiastical questions. The A.V. has hardly dealt fairly in this case with the sacred text, in rendering the designation *episcopous*, ver. 28, ‘*overseers*:’ whereas it ought there, as in all other places, to have been bishops, that the fact of *elders and bishops having been originally and apostolically synonymous* might be apparent to the ordinary English reader, which now it is not.

18.] The evidence furnished by this speech as to the literal report in the Acts of the words spoken by St. Paul, is most important. It is a treasure-house of words, idioms, and sentiments, peculiarly belonging to the Apostle himself. See this shewn in my Greek Test. The contents of the speech may be thus given: *He reminds the elders of his conduct among them* (vv. 18–21); *announces to them his final separation from them* (vv. 22–25); *and commends earnestly to them the flock committed to their charge, for which he himself had by word and work disinterestedly laboured* (vv. 26–35).

from the first day] These words hold a middle place, partly with “*ye know*,” partly with “*after what man-ner I was with you*.¹” The knowledge on their part was coextensive with his whole stay among them: so that we may take the words with **ye know**, at the same time carrying on their sense to what follows.

I was with you] So 1 Thess. i. 5, ii. 10. See 1 Cor. ix. 20, 22.

19. serving the Lord] With the sole exception of the assertion of our Lord, ‘Ye cannot serve God and mammon,’ Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13, this peculiar verb (“*to be a bond-servant to*”), for ‘serving God,’ is used by *Paul only*, and by him seven times, viz. Rom. vii. 6, 25; xii. 11; xiv. 18; xvi. 18; Phil. ii, 22; Col. iii. 24; 1 Thess. i. 9.

with all humility of mind] Also a Pauline expression, 2 Cor. viii. 7; xii. 12.

temptations] See especially Gal. iv. 14.

20. I kept back nothing] So again ver. 27. The sense in Gal. ii. 12 is similar, though not exactly identical—‘*reserved himself*,’ withdrew himself from any open declaration of sentiments. In Heb. x. 38 it is different.

22. bound in my spirit] This interpretation is most probable, both from the construction, and from the usage of the expression repeatedly by and of St. Paul in the sense of *his own spirit*. See ch. xvii. 16, where the principal instances are given. Compare Rom. xii. 11; 1 Cor. v. 3; 2 Cor. ii. 13, and ch. xix. 21. *How he was bound in the spirit*, is manifest, by comparing other passages, where the Holy Spirit of God is related to have shaped his apostolic course. He was bound, by the Spirit of God leading captive, constraining, his own spirit.—As he went up to Jerusalem, *bound in his spirit*, so he left Judæa again *bound in the flesh*,—*a prisoner according to the flesh*.—He had no detailed knowledge of futurity—nothing but what the Holy Spirit, in general forewarnings, repeated at every point of his journey (*city by city*; see ch. xxi. 4, 11, for two such instances), announced, viz. imprisonment and tribulations. That *here no inner voice* of the Spirit is meant, is evident from the words.

23. the Holy Ghost witnesseth] Compare Rom. viii. 16.

24.] The reading in the margin, amidst all the varieties, seems to be that out of which the others have all arisen, and whose difficulties they more or less explain. And the meaning will be, ‘*I do not value my life, in comparison with the finishing my course.*’

the finishing of my course] See the same image, with the same word remarkably expanded, Phil. iii, 12–14.

my course] A similitude peculiar to Paul: occurring, remarkably enough, in his speech at ch. xiii. 25. He uses it without this word, at 1 Cor. ix. 24–27, and Phil. iii. 14.

which I have received] Compare Rom. i. 5, “*by whom we [have] received grace and apostleship*.”

25.] It has been argued from the words **among whom I have gone**, that the elders of other churches besides that of Ephesus must have been present. But it might just as well have been argued, that every one to whom St. Paul had there preached must have been present, on account of the words *ye all*. If he could regard the elders as the representatives of the various churches, of which there can be no doubt, why may not he similarly have regarded the *Ephesian* elders as representatives of the churches of proconsular Asia, and have addressed all in addressing them? Or may not these words have even a wider application, viz. to *all* who had been the subjects of his former personal ministry, in Asia and Europe, now addressed through the Ephesian elders?—See the question, whether Paul ever did see the Asiatic churches again, discussed in the Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, §2. 18 ff. I may remark here, that such an expression in the mouth of St. Paul, does not necessarily imply that he spoke from divine and unerring knowledge, but expresses his own conviction of the certainty of what he is saying: see ch. xxvi. 27, which is much to our point, as expressing his firm persuasion that king Agrippa was a believer in the prophets: but certainly no infallible knowledge of his heart:—Rom. xv. 29, where

also a firm persuasion is expressed:—Phil. i. 19, 20, where his *knowledge*, ver. 19, is explained to rest on his *expectation and hope*, in ver. 20. So that he may here ground his expectation of never seeing them again, on the plan of making a journey into the west after seeing Rome, which he mentions Rom. xv. 24, 28, and from which, with bonds and imprisonment and other dangers awaiting him, he might well expect never to return, Consequently, what he here says need not fetter our judgment on the above question.

28. the flock] This similitude does not elsewhere occur in Paul's writings. We find it, where we should naturally expect it, used by him, to whom it was said, 'Feed my sheep,' 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. But it is common in the O.T. and sanctioned by the example of our Lord Himself: Luke xii. 32.

over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you...] See ch. xiii. 2.

bishops] See on ver. 17, and Theodoret on Phil. i. 1, "The Apostle calls the elders (presbyters) bishops: for at that time they had both names."

the church of God] On the variety of reading here, and the reasons which have led me to adhere to that in the text, see in my Greek Test.

29. grievous wolves] Not *persecutors*, but *false teachers*, from the words "*enter in among you*," by which it appears that they were to *come in among the flock*, i.e. to be baptized Christians. In fact ver. 30 is explanatory of the metaphoric meaning of ver. 29.

30.] your own selves does not necessarily signify the *presbyters*: he speaks to them as being the whole flock.

31.] On the *three years* spoken of in this verse, see note, ch. xix. 10. We may just remark here (1) that this passage being precise and definite, must be the master-key to those others (as in ch. xix.) which give wide and indefinite notes of time: and (2) that it seems at first sight to preclude the idea of a journey (as some think) to Crete and Corinth having taken place during this period. But this apparent inference may require modifying by other circumstances: compare Introduction to 1 Cor. §v. 4.

32. which is able] Clearly spoken of *God*, not of the *word of His grace*, which cannot be said to *give an inheritance*, however it might *build up*.—The expression "*an in-heritance among all them that are sanctified*" is strikingly similar to "*his inheritance in the saints*" Eph. i. 18, addressed to this same church. See also ch. xxvi. 18.

33.] See 1 Sam. xii. 3; and for similar avowals by Paul himself, 1 Cor. ix. 11, 12; 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9; xii. 13.

34. these hands] Also strikingly in Paul's manner: compare "*these bonds*," ch. xxvi. 29,—and ch. xxviii. 20. See 1 Cor. iv. 12, which he wrote when at Ephesus.—Observe, **ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me**. This is not without meaning—his friends were among his *necessities*—he supplied by his labour, not his and their wants, but *his wants and them*.

35. the weak] Not here *the weak in faith* (Rom. xiv. 1; 1 Cor. viii. 9), as many think,—which the context both before and after will not allow:—but the poor.

It is more blessed to give than to re-ceive] This saying of our Lord is one of the very few not recorded in the Gospels, which have come down to us. Many such must have been current in the apostolic times, and are possibly preserved unknown to us, in such epistles as those of James, Peter, and John. Bengel remarks, "The world's opinion is different:" and cites from an old poet in Athenæus, "A fool the giver,—the receiver blest." But we have some sayings the other way: not to quote authors who wrote after this date, and might have imbibed some of the spirit of Christianity, we find in Aristotle, "It is more becoming the liberal man to give just gifts, than to receive just receipts, or to abstain from receiving unjust ones. For it is more the part of 'virtue to do, than to receive, good.'"

Acts: Chapter 21

XXI. 1.] The A.V., '*After we had gotten from them*,' does not come up to the original: which is as in the margin: and Chrysostom says, "The expression shews the violence of the parting."

we came with a straight course] See ch. xvi. 11, **having run before the wind**. Cos, opposite Cnidus and Halicarnassus, celebrated for its wines and ointments. The chief town was of the same name, and had a famous temple of Æsculapius. It was the birth-place of Hippocrates, the great physician. The modern name, Stanchio, is a corruption of "*es tan Co*" (towards Cos),

as Stamboul, for Constantinople, is of “*es tan polin*” (towards the city). **Rhodes** was at this time free. It was reduced to a Roman province under Vespasian. The situation of its chief town is praised by Strabo.—The celebrated Colossus at this time broken and lying in ruins.—**Patara**, in Lycia, the capital of the race, a large maritime town, a short distance E. of the mouth of the Xanthus. It had a temple and oracle of Apollo. There are considerable ruins remaining.—Here they leave their ship hired at Troas, or perhaps at Neapolis (see note on xx. 16), and avail themselves of a merchant ship bound for Tyre.

3. when we had discovered Cyprus] Lite-rally, **having been shewn Cyprus.**

we left it on the left hand] i.e. to the E. ‘This would be the straight course from Patara to Tyre.

Tyre] This city, so well known for its commercial importance and pride, and so often mentioned in the Old Testament prophets, was now a free town of the province of Syria.

4. But...] Implying, ‘the crew indeed were busied with unloading the ship: but we, having sought out (by enquiry) the disciples.’.... ‘*Finding disciples*’ (A. V.) is quite wrong. It is not improbable that Paul may have preached at Tyre before, when he visited Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21) after his conversion,—and again when he confirmed the churches (ch. xv. 41): “*the disciples*” seems to imply this.

seven days] The time taken in unloading:—they apparently proceeded in the same ship, see ver. 6.—The notice here is very important, that these Tyrian disciples said to St. Paul *by the Spirit*, that he should not go to Jerusalem,—and yet *he went thither*, and, as he himself declares, *bound in spirit by the leading of God*. We thus have an instance of that which Paul asserts 1 Cor. xiv. 32, that the spirits of prophets are *subject to prophets*, i.e. that the revelation made by the Holy Spirit to each man’s spirit was under the influence of that man’s will and temperament, moulded by and taking the form of his own capacities and resolves. So here: these Tyrian *prophets* knew by the Spirit, which testified this in every city (ch. xx. 23), that bonds and imprisonment awaited Paul. This appears to have been announced by them, shaped and intensified by their own intense love and anxiety for him who was probably their Father in the faith (see on ver. 5). But he paid no regard to the prohibition, being himself under a leading of the same Spirit too plain for him to mistake it. See below on vv. 10 ff.

5. departed] Literally, went forth: viz. from the house where they were lodged.

till we were out of the city] “We passed through the city to the western shore of the ancient island, now the peninsula, hoping to find there a fitting spot for the tent, in the open space between the houses and the sea.” Robinson, iii. 392.

on the shore] “Yet had we looked a few rods further, we should have found a very tolerable spot by a threshing-floor, where we might have pitched close upon the bank, and enjoyed, in all its luxury, the cool sea-breeze, and the dashing the surge upon the rocky shore.” id. ibid.

7. finishing our voyage] viz. *the whole voyage*, from Neapolis to Syria. The A.V., ‘*when we had finished our course from Tyre*, is not so probable a rendering of the original. ‘With their landing at Ptolemais their voyage ended: the rest of the journey was made by land.’ (De Wette.)

Ptolemais] Anciently Accho (Judg. i. 31,—in Greek and Roman writers *Acé*), called Ptolemáis from (probably) Ptolemy Lathurus. It was a large town with a harbour. It was never (Judg. i. 31) fully possessed by the Jews, but belonged to the Phoenicians, who in after times were mixed with Greeks. But after the captivity a colony of Jews is found there. The emperor Claudius gave it the freedom of the city, whence it is called by Pliny ‘a colony of Cladius Cæsar,’ “*Colonia Claudi Cæsaris*.” It is now called St. Jean d’ Acre, and is the best harbour on the Syrian coast, though small. It lies at the end of the great road from Damascus to the sea. Population now about 10, 000.—The distance from Ptolemais to Cæsarea is forty-four miles. For Cmsarea, see on ch. x. 1.

8. Philip the evangelist] It is possible that he may have had this appellation from his having been the first to travel about preaching the gospel: see ch. viii. 5 ff. The office of Evangelist, see Eph. iv. 11, 2 Tim. iv. 5, seems to have answered very much to our *missionary*: Theodoret, on the former of these texts, says, “These went about preaching;” and Eusebius,—“They fulfilled the work of Evangelists, making it their business to preach Christ to those who had never yet heard the word of the faith, and to deliver to them the record of the Holy Gospels.” The latter could hardly have been part of their employment so early as this; nor had the word *Gospel* in these times the peculiar meaning of a *narrative of the life of Christ*, but rather embraced the *whole good tidings of salvation by Him*, as preached to the Jews and Heathens.—Eusebius apparently mistook this Philip for the *Apostle*: as did also Clement of Alexandria and Papias.

which was one of the seven] See ch. vi. 5, and note. The sentence in the original implies, that the *reason why* they abode with him was, that he was one of the seven: and in English the words ought not to be “*which was*,” but **being (one) of the seven**. The fact of Philip being settled at Cæsarea, and known as *the Evangelist*, seems decisive against regarding the occurrence of

ch. vi. 8 ff. as the establishment of any permanent order in the church.

9.] This notice is inserted apparently without any immediate reference to the history, but to bring so remarkable a circumstance to the knowledge of the readers. The four daughters had the gift of “*prophecy*:” see on ch. xi. 27. Eusebius (see, however, his mistake above) gives from Polycrates traditional accounts of them,—that two were buried at Hierapolis, and one at Ephesus. From that passage, and one cited from Clement of Alexandria it would appear that two were afterwards married, according to tradition.—To find an argument for the so-called ‘honour of virginity’ in this verse, only shews to what resources those will stoop, who have failed to apprehend the whole spirit and rule of the gospel in the matter. They are met however on their own ground by an argument built on another misapprehension (that of Philip being a deacon in the ecclesiastical sense): for if so, this would prove that it was lawful for deacons to marry.

10.] This Agabus in all probability is identical with the Agabus of ch. xi. 28. That there is no reference to that former mention of him, might be occasioned by different sources of information having furnished the two narratives.

11.] Similar symbolical actions accompanying prophecy are found 1 Kings xxii. 11; Isa. xx. 2; Jer. xiii. 1 ff; Ezek. iv. 1 ff; 9 ff; v. 1, &c. De Wette remarks that “**Thus saith the Holy Ghost**” is the New Test. prophetic formula, instead of “*Thus saith the Lord*” of the Old Test.

14. **The will of the Lord be done**] One of the passages from which we may not unfairly infer, that the Lord’s prayer was used by the Christians of the Apostolic age. See note on 2 Tim. iv. 18.

15.] The word ‘*carriages*’ in the A.V. is used, as in Judg. xviii. 21, for *baggage, things carried*.

16.] The word rendered old signifies *from the beginning*, and probably implies that he had been a disciple all through, and had accompanied our Lord during His ministry. See ch. xi. 15, where the term is applied to the time of the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit.

17—XXIII. 35.] PAUL AT JERUSALEM: MADE PRISONER AND SENT TO CÆSAREA

17. **the brethren**] The Christians generally: not the Apostles and elders; James and the elders are not mentioned till ver. 18.

18. **James**] ‘the brother of the Lord:’ the president of the church at Jerusalem: see ch. xii. 17; xv. 13; Gal. ii. 12, and notes,—and Introduction to the Epistle of James, §i. 24–37

20.] While they praised God for, and fully recognized, the work wrought by him among the *Gentiles*, they found it requisite to advise him respecting the suspicion under which he laboured among the believing Jews. They, led, naturally perhaps, but incorrectly (see 1 Cor. vii. 18), by some passages of Paul’s life [and of his already-written Epistles?], in which he had depreciated legal observances in comparison with faith in Christ, and spoken strongly against their adoption by Gentile converts,—apprehended that he advised, on the part of the *Hellenistic* believers, an entire apostasy from Moses and the ordinances of the law.

Thou seest...] This can hardly be a reference to the elders present, as representatives of the “myriads” of believing Jews: for only those of Jerusalem were there:—but refers to Paul’s own experience, and knowledge of the vast numbers of the Jews who believed at Jerusalem, and elsewhere in Judæa.

how many thousands (literally, **ten thou-sands, myriads**) is perhaps not to be strictly taken. Origen says, that probably the whole number of believing Jews at no time had amounted to 144, 000.

21.] **they were informed** (at some time in the mind of the speaker. The indefinite past tense must be preserved. Below, ver. 24, it is the perfect). The informants were the anti-Pauline Judaizers.

22.] Not as A.V., ‘*the multitude must needs come together*, i.e. there must be a meeting of the whole church: but **a multitude** (of these Judaizers) **will certainly come together**: ‘*they will meet and discuss your proceeding in a hostile manner*.’

23. **a vow**] A vow of Nazarites. This vow must not be confounded, historically or analogically, with that of ch. xviii. 18: see note there, and Num. vi. 2–21.

24. **them take] to thyself**, as comrades.

purify thyself with them] i.e. **become a Nazarite with them**. The same expression occurs in the LXX, Num. vi. 3, in describing the Nazarite’s duties.

be at charges for them] It was a custom of the Jews, and was considered a proof of great piety, that the richer Nazarites should pay the expenses of the sacrifices of the poorer. See Num. vi. 14 ff. Josephus, relating Agrippa's thank-offerings at Jerusalem, says that he ordered very many Nazarites to be shaven.—On the shaving the head, see Num. vi. 18.—De Wette remarks: ‘James and the elders made this proposal, assuming that Paul could comply with it with a safe conscience, perhaps also as a proof, to assure themselves and others of his sentiments: and Paul accepted it with a safe conscience. But this he could only have done on one condition, that he was sure by it not to contribute in these four Nazarites to the error of *justification by the works of the law*. He might keep, and encourage the keeping of, the law,—but not with the purpose of thereby deserving the approbation of God.’

25.] See ch. xv. 28, 29.

26.] Paul himself entered into the vow with them, and the time settled (perhaps the least that could be assigned: the Mischna requires thirty days) for the completion of the vow, i.e. the offering and shaving of their heads, was seven days. No definite time is prescribed in Num. vi., but there, seven days is the time of purification *in case of uncleanness during the period of the vow*.

to signify] i.e. to **make known** to the ministers of the temple.

the ac-complishment, i.e. *that he and the men had come to accomplish: announcing their intention of accomplishing*.

the offering] See Num. vi. 13–17.

27. seven days] Of the votive period: not (as some think) since Paul's arrival in Jerusalem. Five days of the seven had passed: see on ch. xxiv. 11.

which were from Asia] From Ephesus and the neighbourhood, where Paul had so long taught. “Paul, while intent on appeasing the believing Jews, incurs the furious hostility of his unbelieving enemies.” Calvin, who adds, ‘In how many ways had those who were at Jerusalem this Pentecost, already persecuted Paul in Asia?’—Notice the similarity of the charge against him to that against Stephen, ch. vi. 13.

28. Greeks into the Temple] The generic plural: *only one* is intended; see next verse. They meant, into the inner court, which was forbidden to Gentiles.

29. Trophimus] See ch. xx. 4, note. We here learn that he was an Ephesian.

30.] The Levites shut the doors to prevent profanation by a riot, and possibly bloodshed, in the temple: hardly, as Bengel, lest Paul should use the temple as an asylum:—the right of asylum was only (Exod. xxi. 13, 14) for murder unawares. But by ver. 14 there, and by Joab's fleeing to the altar, 1 Kings ii. 28 ff., we see that it was resorted to on other occasions.

31. seeking to kill him] By *beating him*: see ver. 32.

tidings came] literally, **went** (were carried) **up; up**, either because of his *high station*, as commanding officer, or because he was *locally* stationed in the tower Antonia, overlooking (from the N.W.) the temple, where the riot was.

the chief captain of the band] Claudius Lysias (ch. xxiii. 26), the *tribune* of the *cohort* (whose proper complement was 1000 men).

33. with two chains] See ch. xii. 6. He would thus be in the custody of two soldiers.

The literally accurate rendering of the chief captain's demand would be, **who he might be** (subjective possibility): and **what he had done** (assuming that he must have done *something*).

34. the castle] The camp or barracks attached to the tower Antonia;—or perhaps ‘into the tower’ itself: but the other is the more usual meaning of the word. For a full history and description of the fortress of Antonia, see Robinson i. pp. 431, 435; Williams, Holy City, i. 99; ii. 403–411; Howson ii. 311.

35. upon the stairs] The steps leading up into the tower. The description of the tower or fort Antonia in Josephus, sets the scene vividly before us:—“It was, upon the whole, the resemblance of a tower, and encompassed with four other towers at equal distances one from another, and one from every corner: three of them fifty cubits in height, and the fourth, that looked to the S. and E., of seventy cubits: and from thence they had the view of the whole temple. From the place where the galleries

joined, there were upon the right and left two pair of stairs, which served for a passage to the soldiers into the temple: for when the Romans were masters of Jerusalem, there were guards posted still upon that quarter to prevent seditions upon their public festivals and meetings. For as the temple commanded the city, so Antonia the temple." (L' Estrange.)

38. that Egyptian] The inference of the tribune was not, as in Bengel, "He speaks Greek, therefore he is an Egyptian," but the very contrary to this. His being able to speak Greek is a proof to Lysias that he is *not* that Egyptian.—This Egyptian is mentioned by Josephus, who says that he persuaded the people to follow him to the Mount of Olives, whence he would by a word throw down the walls of Jerusalem. This Felix heard of, and sent soldiers to stop his folly, who slew four hundred of his followers, and took two hundred alive. He himself, however, escaped. In another place, he says of the same person, that he collected about 30, 000 deluded persons, and brought them out of the wilderness to the Mount of Olives, and that a battle took place, in which most of his followers were killed or taken prisoners. It is obvious that the *numerical* accounts in Josephus are inconsistent with our text, and with *one another*. This latter being the case, we may well leave them out of the question. At different times of his rebellion, his number of followers would be variously estimated; and the tribune would naturally take it as he himself or his informant had known it, at some one period. That this is so, we may see, by noticing that our narrative speaks of his *leading out*,—whereas Josephus's numbers are those whom he *brought back from* the wilderness against Jerusalem, by which time his band would have augmented considerably.

those four thousand,—the matter being one of notoriety.

murderers] "Sicarii," so called from *sica*, a dagger. They are thus described by Josephus: "Another kind of brigands abounded in Jerusalem, those named *Sicarii*, who slew men in open day in the midst of the city: mixing with the crowds principally in the feasts, and having short swords hidden under their garments, with which they stabbed people."

39. indeed] implying 'not the Egyptian, but.'

of no mean city] There was distinction in his being a citizen of a *free city*. "Many of the coins of Tarsus bear the epigraphs 'metropolis' and 'free.'" Dr. Wordsworth.

40. in the Hebrew tongue] The Syro-Chaldaic, the mother-tongue of the Jews in Judaea at this time: his motive is implied (ch. xxii. 2) to be, that they might be the more disposed to listen to him.

Acts: Chapter 22

CHAP. XXII. 1.] This speech of Paul repeats the narrative of his conversion to Christianity, but this time most skilfully arranged and adapted (within legitimate limits) to avoid offence and conciliate his hearers. Proofs of this will appear as we go on.

3.] On *Gamaliel* see note, ch. v. 34.—The expression "**at the feet of Gamaliel**" (see ch. iv. 35, note) indicates that the rabbi sat on an elevated seat and the scholars on the ground or on benches, literally *at his feet*.

according to the perfect manner (the art. omitted aft. a prep.), **the strict acceptation, of the law of the fathers;** so in ch. xxvi. 5, i.e. "*the straitest sect of our religion;*"—i. e. as a Pharisee.

as ye all are this day] Not meaning '*in the same way as YE all are this day*' (but now in *another way*): but **as ye all are this day:** 'I had the same zealous character (not excluding his still retaining it) which you all shew to-day.' A conciliatory comparison.

5. the high priest] '*of that day, who is still living:*' i.e. Theophilus, see on ch. ix. 1. Similarly, **the whole Sanhedrim** are '*those who were then members, and now survive.*"

unto the (Jewish: or, their) brethren] The rendering, '*against the (Christian) brethren,*' is altogether inadmissible. If ever Paul spoke to the Jews *as a Jew*, it was on this occasion.

6.] On Paul's conversion, and the comparison of the accounts in chaps. ix., xxii., and xxvi., see notes on ch. ix. I have there treated of the discrepancies, real or apparent.

11.] See notes, ch. ix. 8, 18.

12.] That Ananias was a *Christian* is not *here* mentioned,—and "*having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there*" is added: both, as addressed to a *Jewish audience*. Before the *Roman governor* in ch. xxvi., he *does not mention him at all*, but

compresses the whole substance of the command given to Ananias into the words spoken by the Lord to himself. A heathen moralist (Horace) could teach, “*Of whom, and what, thou speakest, and to whom, Take frequent heed:*” and a Christian Apostle was not unmindful of the necessary caution. Such features in his speeches are highly instructive and valuable to those who would gather from Scripture itself its own real character: and be, not slaves to its letter, but disciples of its spirit.

14–16 is not related, but included, in ch. ix. 18, 19.

14. The God of our fathers] So Peter, ch. iii. 13; v. 30. In ch. ix. 17, “*the Lord*” is the word: this title is given for the Jews.

that Just One] So Stephen, ch. vii. 52. How forcibly must the whole scene have recalled *him*, whom presently (ver. 20) he mentions *by name*.

16. wash away thy sins] This was the Jewish as well as the Christian doctrine of baptism.—See 1 Cor. vi. 11, and note.

calling on his name] i.e. the name of Jesus, “*that Just One*.” Paul carefully avoids mentioning to the Jews *this Name*, except where it is *unavoidable*, as in ver. 8: so again he says, **I saw him**, ver. 18.

17.] viz. as related ch. ix. 26–31, where nothing of this vision, or its having been the cause of his leaving Jerusalem, is hinted.

19.] The probable account of this answer is, that Paul thought his former great zeal *against Christ*, contrasted with his present zeal *for Him*, would make a deep impression on the Jews in Jerusalem: or, perhaps, he wishes by his earnest preaching of Jesus as the Christ among them, to *undo the mischief of which he before was the agent*, and therefore alleges his former zeal and his consenting to Stephen’s death as reasons why he should remain in Jerusalem.

20. thy martyr] So A.V., following Beza: the Vulgate, and Erasmus, ‘*thy witness*,’ which is the primary meaning of the word *martyr* in Greek. “The Apostle may have here used the word (speaking in Hebrew) in its strict primary sense; for a view of Christ in His glory was vouchsafed to Stephen, and it was by *bearing witness* of that manifestation that he hastened his death (ch. vii. 55 ff). The present meaning of the word *martyr* did, however, become attached to it at a very early period, and is apparently of apostolic authority: e.g. Rev. xvii. 6, and Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. v. (cited in note on ch. i. 25).... The transition from the first to the secondary sense may be easily accounted for. Many who had only seen with the eye of faith, suffered persecution and death as a proof of their sincerity. For such constancy the Greek had no adequate term. It was necessary for the Christians to provide one. None was more appropriate than ‘*witness*’ (*martyr*), seeing what had been the fate of those whom Christ had appointed to be His *witnesses* (ch. i. 8). They almost all suffered: hence to *witness* became a synonym for to *suffer*: while the suffering was in itself a kind of testimony.” (Mr. Humphry.) Dr. Wordsworth well designates this introduction of the name of Stephen “a noble endeavour to make public reparation for a public sin, by public confession in the same place where the sin was committed.”

21.] The object of Paul in relating this vision appears to have been to shew that his own inclination and prayer had been, *that he might preach the Gospel to his own people*: but that it was by the imperative command of the Lord Himself that he went to the Gentiles.

22. unto this saying] viz. the announcement that he was to be *sent to the Gentiles*. “The nations of the earth have no living existence,” was the maxim of the children of Abraham, as set down in their Rabbinical books.

it was not fit] implying, *he ought to have been put to death long ago* (when we endeavoured to do it, but he escaped).

23.] They were not ‘*casting off their garments*,’ as preparing to stone him, or even as *representing* the action of such preparation: the former would be futile, as he was in the custody of the tribune,—the latter absurd, and not borne out by any known habit of the Jews: but **shaking their garments**, as shaking off the dust, abominating such an expression and him who uttered it. The casting dust into the air was part of the same gesture. Chrysostom explains it in this way.

24.] The tribune, not understanding the language in which Paul spoke, wished to extract from him by the scourge the reason which so exasperated the Jews against him. In this he was acting illegally: for Augustus had expressly provided that legal examinations were not to begin with torture.

25.] Literally, **while they were binding him down with the thongs**. The *position* of the prisoner was, bent forward, and tied with a sort of gear made of leather to an inclined post.

the centurion] This was the ordinary officer—standing by to superintend the punishment.

On St. Paul’s question to him, see ch. xvi. 37, note.

28.] Dio Cassius mentions that, in the reign of Claudius, Messalina used to sell the freedom of the city, and at very various prices at different times.

I was free born] literally, **But I** (besides having the privilege like thee of being a Roman citizen) **was also born one.** *How was Paul a Roman citizen by birth?* Certainly not because he was of Tarsus: for (1) that city had no such privilege, but was only a *free city*, not a colony nor a municipal town: and (2) if this had been so, the mention of his being a man of Tarsus (ch. xxi. 39) would have of itself prevented his being scourged. It remains, therefore, that his father, or some ancestor, must have obtained the freedom of the city, either as a reward for service or by purchase. It has been suggested that the father of Saul may have been sold into slavery at Rome, when Cassius laid a heavy fine on the city of Tarsus for having espoused the cause of Octavius and Antony, and very many of the Tarsians were sold to pay it. He may have acquired his freedom and the citizenship afterwards. See Mr. Lewin, i.p. 4. But this is mere conjecture.

29. was afraid] There is no inconsistency (as De Wette thinks) in the tribune's being afraid because he had bound him, and then letting him remain thus bound. Meyer rightly explains it, that the tribune, having committed this error, is afraid of the possible consequences of it (for as Cicero says, it was an offence to bind a Roman citizen, and a crime to scourge him), and shews this by taking the first opportunity of either *undoing it*, or *justifying his further detention*, by *loosing him*, and *bringing him before the Sanhedrim*. His fear was on account of his *first false step*; but it was now too late to reverse it: and the same reason which leads him to continue it now, operates afterwards when the hearing was delayed. 'The centurion *believed Paul's word*, because a false claim of this nature, being easily exposed, and punishable with death, was almost an unprecedented thing.' Hackett.

30.] It seems remarkable that the tribune in command should have had the power to summon the Sanhedrim: and I have not seen this remarked on by any Commentator.

brought Paul down] From Antonia to the council-room. According to tradition the Sanhedrim ceased to hold their sessions in the *temple*, about twenty-six years before this period. Had they done so now, Lysias and his soldiers could not have been present, as no heathen was permitted to pass the sacred limits. Their present council-room was in the upper city, near the foot of the bridge leading across the ravine from the western cloister of the temple.

Acts: Chapter 23

XXIII. 1.] earnestly beholding seems to describe that peculiar look, connected probably with infirmity of sight, with which Paul is described before as regarding those before him: and may perhaps account for his not knowing that the person who spoke to him was the high priest, ver. 5. See ch. xiii. 9, note.—The purport of Paul's assertion seems to be this: being charged with neglecting, and teaching others to neglect the law of Moses, he at once endeavours to disarm those who thus accused him, by asserting that up to that, *he had lived a true and loyal Jew*,—obeying, according to his conscience, the law of that divine polity of which he was a covenant member. Thus **I have lived before God** (literally, **have been a citizen before God**) will have its full and proper meaning: and the words are no vain-glorious ones, but an important assertion of his innocence.

2. Ananias] He was at this time the *actual high priest* (ver. 4). He was the son of Nebedæus—succeeded Joseph son of Camydus—and preceded Ismael, son of Phabi. He was nominated to the office by Herod, king of Chaleis, in A.D. 48; and sent to Rome by Quadratus, the prefect of Syria, to give an account to the emperor Claudius; he appears, however, not to have lost his office, but to have resumed it on his return. This has been regarded as not certain,—and the uncertainty has produced much confusion in the Pauline chronology. But as Wieseler has shewn, there can be no reasonable doubt that it was so, especially as Ananias came off victorious in the cause for which he went to Rome, viz. a quarrel with the Jewish procurator Cumanus,—who went with him, and was condemned to banishment. He was deposed from his office not long before the departure of Felix, but still had great power, which he used violently and lawlessly: he was assassinated by the *sicarii* (see ch. xxi. 38, note) at last.

3.] It is perfectly allowable (even if the fervid rebuke of Paul be considered exempt from blame) to contrast with his conduct and reply that of Him Who, when similarly smitten, answered with perfect and superhuman meekness, 22, 23. Our blessed Saviour is to us, in all His words and acts, *the perfect pattern for all under all circumstances*: by aiming at whatever He did in each case, we shall do best: but even the greatest of his Apostles are so far our patterns only as they *followed* Him, which certainly in this case Paul *did not*. That Paul thus answered, might go far to excuse a like fervent reply in a Christian or a minister of the gospel,—but must never be used to *justify* it: it may serve for an *apology*, but never for an *example*.

God shall (is about to, literally) smite thee] Some have seen a prophetic import in these words;—see above on the death of Ananias. But I would rather take them as an expression founded on a conviction that God's just retribution would come on unjust and brutal acts.

thou whitened wall] Lightfoot's interpretation, that St. Paul used this term because Ananias had only the semblance of the high priesthood and had lost the thing itself, is founded on the hypothesis (*for it is none other*) that the high priesthood was vacant at this time, and Ananias had thrust himself into it. The meaning is as in Matt. xxiii. 27; and in all probability Paul referred in thought to our Lord's saying.

sittest thou to judge me] This must not be taken as favouring the common interpretation of ver. 5 (see below): for the *whole Sanhedrim* were the judges, and sitting to judge him according to the law.

4.] Hence we see, that not only by the Jews, but by the tribune, who was present, Ananias was regarded as the veritable high priest.

5.] (1) The ordinary interpretation of these words since Lightfoot, is, that Ananias *had usurped the office during a vacancy*, and therefore was not recognized by Paul. They regard his being sent to Rome as a virtual setting aside from being high priest, and suppose that Jonathan, who was murdered by order of Felix, was appointed high priest in his absence. But (a) there is no ground whatever for believing that his office vacated. He won the cause for which he went to Rome, and returned to Jerusalem: it was only when a high priest was detained as hostage in Rome, that we read of another being appointed in his room: and (b) which is fatal to the hypothesis, *Jonathan himself the high priest was sent to Rome with Ananias*. Jonathan was called by the title merely as having been previously high priest. He succeeded Caiaphas, and he was not high priest again afterwards, having expressly declined to resume the office. Nor can *any other Jonathan* have been elevated to it,—for Josephus gives, *in every case*, the elevation of a new high priest, and his whole number of twenty-eight from Herod the Great to the destruction of Jerusalem agrees with the notices thus given. So that this interpretation is untenable. (2) Chrysostom and most of the ancient commentators supposed that Paul, having been long absent, was really *unacquainted with the person of* the high priest. But this can hardly have been; and even if it were, the position and official seat would have pointed out, to one who had been himself a member of the Sanhedrim, the president of the council. (3) Calvin and others take the words ironically: '*I could not be supposed to know that one who conducted himself so cruelly and illegally, could be the high priest*' This surely needs no refutation, as being altogether out of place and character. (4) Bengel and others understand the words as an acknowledgment of rash and insubordinate language, and render, '*I did not give it a thought*', '*I forgot*' and so Dr. Wordsworth. But this is never the meaning of the word here used in the original; and were any pregnant or unusual sense intended, the context (as at 1 Thess. v. 12) would suggest it. (5) On the whole then, I believe that the only rendering open to us, consistently with the simple meaning of the words, and the facts of history is, **I did not know that it** (or he) **was the high priest**: and that it is probable that the solution of his ignorance lies in the fact of his *imperfect sight*—he heard the insolent order given, but knew not from whom it proceeded. I own that I am not entirely satisfied with this, as being founded perhaps on too slight premises: but as far as I can see there is no *positive* objection to it, which there is to every other. The objection stated by Dr. Wordsworth, "If St. Paul could not discern that Ananias was high priest, how could he see that he sat there as his judge?" would of course be easily answered by supposing that Paul, who had himself been a member of the Sanhedrim, may have known Ananias by his voice: or indeed may not (as above) have known him at all personally. It is hardly worth while to notice the rendering given by some, '*I knew not that there was a high priest*' Had any such meaning been intended, it would have been further specified by the construction. Besides which, it renders Paul's apology irrelevant, by eliminating from it the person who is necessarily its subject.

for it is written] Implying in this, '*and the law is the rule of my life*' Even in this we see the consummate skill of St. Paul.

6.] Surely no defence of Paul for adopting this course is required, but all admiration is due to his skill and presence of mind. Nor need we hesitate to regard such skill as the fulfilment of the promise, that in such an hour, the Spirit of wisdom should suggest words to the accused, which the accuser should not be able to gainsay. All prospect of a fair trial was hopeless: he well knew from fact, and present experience, that personal odium would bias his judges, and violence prevail over justice: he therefore uses, in the cause of Truth, the maxim so often perverted to the cause of falsehood, "*divide, and govern*." In *one tenet* above all others, did the religion of Jesus Christ and the belief of the Pharisees coincide: that of *the resurrection of the dead*. That *they* looked for this resurrection by right of being the seed of Abraham, and denied it to all others,—whereas *he* looked for it through Jesus whom they hated, in whom *all* should be made alive who had died in Adam,—this was *nothing to the present point*: the belief was common—in the truest sense it was the *hope of Israel*—in the truest sense does Paul use and bring it forward to confound the adversaries of Christ. At the same time by this strong assertion of his Pharisaic standing and extraction, he was further still vindicating himself from the charge against him. So also ch. xxvi. 7.

the son of Pharisees] i.e. '*a Pharisee of Pharisees*',—'by descent from father, grandfather, and upwards, a pure Pharisee.' This meaning not having been apprehended, the plural was by the copyists altered into the singular.

8.] See note, Matt. iii. 7, for both *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*: Josephus says that the latter denied the future existence of the soul, and rewards and punishments hereafter.

9. but what if a spirit or an angel have spoken to him?] Perhaps in this they referred to the history of his conversion, as told to the people, ch. xxii.

10. should have been pulled in pieces] to be taken *literally*, not as merely meaning, ‘*should be killed*.’ The Pharisees would strive to lay hold of him to rescue him: the Sadducees, to destroy him, or at all events, to secure him. Between them both, there was danger of his being pulled asunder by them.

11.] By these few words, the Lord assured him (1) of a *safe issue from his present troubles*; (2) of an *accomplishment of his intention of visiting Rome*: (3) of the certainty that however he might be sent thither, he should *preach the gospel and bear testimony there*. So that they upheld and comforted him (1) in the *uncertainty of his life from the Jews*: (2) in the *uncertainty of his liberation from prison at Cesarea*: (3) in the *uncertainty of his surviving the storm in the Mediterranean*: (4) in the *uncertainty of his fate on arriving at Rome*. So may one crumb of divine grace and help be multiplied to feed five thousand wants and anxieties.

12.] Wetstein and Lightfoot adduce instances of similar conspiracies,—not to eat or drink till some object be gained. See 1 Sam. xiv. 24 ff.

14.] It is understood from the narrative that it was to the *Sadducees*, among the chief priests and elders, that the murderers went. That the high priest belonged to this sect, cannot be inferred with any accuracy. **15. determine with greater accuracy**] or perhaps, neglecting the comparative sense, to **determine accurately** (not as A.V. ‘*enquire something more perfectly*’).

16.] It is quite uncertain whether Paul’s sister’s son lived in Jerusalem, or had accompanied him thither. The *us* of ch. xx. 5, will include more than merely Luke. But from his knowledge of the plot, which presupposes other acquaintances than he would have been likely to make if he had come with St. Paul, I should suppose him to have been domiciled at Jerusalem, possibly under instruction, as was formerly Paul himself, and thus likely, in the schools, to have heard the scheme spoken of.

21.] They waited for, not “*a promise*,” as A.V., but **the promise** (to that effect).

23. two centurions] literally, **some two centurions**. The soldiers here spoken of were the ordinary heavy-armed legionary soldiers: distinguished below from the *horsemen* and *spearmen*.

spearmen] The word thus rendered has never been satisfactorily explained: but *spearmen* seems to represent it more nearly than any other term. See in my Greek Test.

24. bring him safe] The full meaning of the word is, **escort him safe the whole way**.

Felix] FELIX was a freedman of the Emperor Claudius: Suidas and Zonaras give him the prænomen of *Claudius*, but Tacitus calls him *Antonius Felix*, perhaps from Antonia, the mother of Claudius, as he was brother of Pallas, who was a freedman of Antonia. He was made sole procurator of Judæa after the deposition of Cumanus (having before been three years joint procurator with him) principally by the influence of the high priest Jonathan, whom he afterwards procured to be murdered. Of his character Tacitus says, “*Antonius Felix wielded kingly power with the disposition of a slave, disgracing it by every kind of cruelty and lust*.” His procuratorship was one series of disturbances, false messiahs, assassins, and robbers, and civil contests. He was eventually (A. D. 60) recalled, and accused by the Cæsarean Jews, but acquitted at the instance of his brother Pallas. On his wife Drusilla, see note ch. xxiv. 24, 26.

most excellent] See Luke i. 3.—This letter seems to be given (translated from the Latin) *as written*, not merely according to its general import (see the false statement in ver. 27): *from what source*, is impossible to say, but it may be imagined that the contents transpired through some officers at Jerusalem or at Cæsarea friendly to Paul.

27. with the troop] See above ver. 10, and note, ch. xxi. 32.

rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman] The fact was not as he here states it. This was *an attempt to conceal the fault that he had committed*, see ch. xxii. 29. For this assertion cannot refer to the *second* rescue: see next verse.

31.] ANTIPATRIS, forty-two Roman miles from Jerusalem, and twenty-six from Cæsarea, was built by Herod the Great, and called in honour of his father. It was before called Kapharsaba. In Jerome’s time it was a half-ruined town. They might have well made so much way during the night and the next day,—for the text will admit of that interpretation,—**the morrow** being not necessarily the morrow *after they left Jerusalem*, but *after they arrived at Antipatris*.

32. the horsemen] As they had now the lesser half of their journey before them, and that furthest removed from Jerusalem. The *spearmen* appear to have gone back with the soldiers.

35. in Herod's palace] The procurator resided in the former palace of Herod the Great. Here Paul was committed to the custody of a soldier, not in a prison, but in the buildings attached to the palace.

Acts: Chapter 24

CHAP. XXIV. 1–XXVI. 32.] PAUL'S

IMPRISONMENT AT CÆSAREA.

1. after five days] or, **on the fifth day**—from Paul's *departure for Cæsarea*. This would be the natural point from which to date the proceedings of the High Priest, &c., who were *left* in Jerusalem. That it is so, appears from ver. 11. See note there. **a certain orator**] This was an “*orator forensis*,” or *pleader*, persons who abounded in Rome and the provinces.

Tertullus] The name is a diminutive from Tertius, as Lucullus from Lucius,—Catullus from Catius. We are told that many Roman youths, who were studying for the bar, were in the habit of accompanying the magistrates into the provinces, to practise themselves in pleading the causes of the provincials, and thus be preparing for more important actions in the metropolis.

informed] **laid information;** and, as it seems, not by writing, but by word of mouth, since they appeared in person, and Paul was called to confront them.

2.] Grotius tells us that it is among the precepts of the rhetoricians, to win the favour of a judge by praising him. Certainly Tertullus fulfils and overacts the precept, for his exordium is full of the basest flattery. Contrast with his “*great quietness*” and “*worthy deeds*,” the description of Tacitus, where he says that Felix, and Ventidius Cumanus, who ruled in Galilee, emulated one another in crimes and enormities. They carried out their mutual enmity by employing bands of robbers to slay and plunder, who sometimes met in open battle, and brought back their spoils to the procurator. Contrast also Josephus's account of the inhabitants of Cæsarea sending a deputation to Rome to complain of the oppressions and enormities of Felix. There was just enough foundation for the flattery, to make the falsehood of its general application to Felix more glaring. He had put down some rebels (see ch. xxi. 38, note) and assassins, but, as Wetstein remarks, was himself worse than them all.

by thy providence] This was with the Latins, as with us, more properly an attribute of divinity than of men; but with other divine characteristics, had come to be attributed to the Emperors. “*The providence of Cæsar*” is a common phrase on their coins.

3.] We receive it, i.e. **not only here in thy presence, but also at all times and in all places.** A refinement of flattery.

5. the world would here mean the Roman empire.

Nazarenes] This is the only place in the New Testament where the Christians are so called. The *Jews* could not call them by any name answering to *Christians*, as the hope of a *Messiah* or *Christ* was professed by themselves.

6.] Considerable difficulty rests on the omission of the words here put in brackets. Their absence from the principal MSS., their many variations in those which contain them, are strongly against their genuineness; as also is the consideration that no probable reason for their omission can be suggested. On the other hand, as De Wette observes, it is hardly imaginable that so little should have been assigned to the speaker, as would be if these words were omitted. Besides this, the words **whom we took** seem to require some sequel, some reason, after his seizure, why he was there present and freed from Jewish durance. The phenomena are common enough in the Acts, of unaccountable *insertions*; but in this place it is the *omission* which is unaccountable, for no similarity of ending, no doctrinal consideration can have led to it.

8.] by examining of whom, if the disputed words be *inserted*, refers naturally enough to *Lysias*; but if they be omitted, to *Paul*, which would be very unlikely,—that the judge should be referred to the prisoner (for examination by torture on one who had already claimed his rights as a Roman citizen, can hardly be intended) for the particulars laid to his charge. Certainly it might, on the other hand, be said that Tertullus would hardly refer the governor to Lysias, whose interference he had just characterized in such terms of blame; but (which is a strong argument for the genuineness of the doubtful words) remarkably enough, we find Felix, ver. 22, putting off the trial *till the arrival of Lysias*. The English reader should be cautioned against one mistake which the form of the words in the A.V. rather encourages: the referring **whom** to the *accusers*. This cannot be, as the relative “*whom*” is, in the original, in the *singular*.

9. assented] **joined in setting upon him,** bore out Tertullus in his charges.

10. of many years] Felix was now in the seventh year of his procuratorship, which began in the twelfth year of Claudius, D.D. 52.—‘The contrast between Tertullus’s and Paul’s winning favour with the judge is remarkable. The former I have characterized above. But the Apostle, using no flattery, yet alleges the one point which could really win attention to him from Felix, viz. his confidence arising from speaking before one *well skilled by experience in the manners and customs of the Jews*.

II. twelve days] The point of this seems to be, that Felix having been so long time a judge among the Jews, must be well able to search into and adjudicate on an offence whose whole course was comprised within so short a period.—The twelve days may be thus made out: 1. his arrival in Jerusalem, ch. xxi. 15–17; 2. his interview with James, ib. 18 ff; 3. his taking on him the vow, ib. 26; 3–7. the time of the vow, interrupted by—7. his apprehension, ch. xxi. 27; 8. his appearance before the Sanhedrim, ch. xxii. 30 ff; 9. his departure from Jerusalem (at night); and so to the 13th, the day now current, which was the 5th inclusive from his leaving Jerusalem. This is far more natural than to suppose that the days which he had already spent at Cæsarea are *not to be counted*, because his raising disturbances while in custody was out of the question.

12. in the city] literally, **throughout the city**, ‘any where in the city;’ as we say, ‘*up and down the streets*.’

14.] The **But** here has its peculiar force, of taking off the attention from what has immediately preceded, and raising a new point as more worthy of notice. **But**, (‘*if thou wouldst truly know the reason why they accuse me*’), this is the whole grievance.

heresy, in allusion to the same word used by Tertullus, ver. 5. The word is capable of an indifferent or of a bad sense. Tertullus had used it in the latter. Paul explains what it really was.

the god of my fathers] literally, **my paternal God** (see below). Notice in the words the skill of Paul. The term was one well known to the Greeks and Romans, and which would carry with it its own justification. The abandonment of a man’s national worship and attaching himself to strange gods and modes of worship was regarded unfavourably by the Romans: and the Jews had had their worship of their fathers’ God with their ancient national rites, again and again secured to them by decrees of magistrates and of the senate. In his address *to the Jews* (ch. xxii. 14) the similar expression, “*the God of our fathers*,” brings out more clearly those individual fathers, in whom Felix had no interest further than the identification of *Paul’s religion with that of his ancestors* required.

15. they themselves] literally, **these very men**. It would appear from this, that the High Priest and the deputation *were not of the Sadducees*. But perhaps this inference is too hasty; Paul might regard them as representing the whole Jewish people, and speak *generally*, as he does of the same hope ch. xxvi. 7, where he assigns it to “*our twelve tribes*.” The words “*of the dead*,” inserted here in some MSS. to fill up the meaning, are not likely to have been spoken by the Apostle. The juxtaposition of those words, which excited mockery even when the Gospel was being *directly preached*, would hardly have been hazarded in this defence, where every expression is so carefully weighed.

16. herein] **accordingly**, i.e. ‘having and cherishing this hope.’

I also, i.e. ‘as well as they’

17.] But refers back to the former “*but*,” ver. 14. ‘But the matter of which they complain is this, that after an absence of many years,’ &c.—See 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4; 2 Cor. viii. ix. notes, ch. xx. 4.

18.] The construction in the original is peculiar, and can hardly be represented in a faithful English version. The nominative case to the verb **found** has to be supplied, somehow thus: **amidst which they found me purified in the temple, none who detected me in the act of raising a tumult.... but certain Asiatic Jews....** This would leave it to be inferred that no legal officers had apprehended him, but certain private individuals, illegally; who besides had not come forward to substantiate any charge him.

19.] This also is a skilful argument on the part of the Apostle:—it being the custom of the Romans not to judge a prisoner without the accusers face to face, he deposes that *his real accusers were the Asiatic Jews*, who first raised the cry against him in the temple,—*not the Sanhedrim*, who merely received him at the hands of others,—and that *these were not present*.

20.] Otherwise: **Or let these persons themselves say, what fault they found in me while I stood before the Sanhedrim, other than in the matter of this one saying.**

22. having more perfect knowledge about the way] not, ‘*till he should obtain* more accurate knowledge’ (ungrammatical): nor, ‘*since he had now obtained*’ (viz. by Paul’s speech, which the words will not bear). But this, the only right rendering, is variously understood. Chrysostom says: “He adjourned the case purposely, not because he wanted information, but because he

wished to put off the Jews. He was not willing to acquit the prisoner, for fear of them." And nearly so Luther and others. But these interpretations, as De Wette observes, overlook the circumstance, that such a reason for adjournment would be as unfavourable to *Paul* as to the *Jews*. Meyer explains it, that he adjourned the case, '*because*,' &c. But this would imply that he was favourably disposed to *Paul*. The simplest explanation is that given by De Wette: He put them off to another time, not as requiring any more information about 'the way,' *for that matter he knew before*,—but waiting for the arrival of Lysias.—Whether Lysias was expected, or summoned, or ever came to be heard, is very doubtful. The *real* motive of the *deferring* appears in ver. 26. The comparative "more perfect" implies, "more accurate than to need additional information."

he deferred them] them, viz. both parties: not, "*these things.*" **28. liberty]** Not literally and absolutely, for he was in military custody, but it was relaxed as much as was consistent with safe custody. **Remission**, or **relaxation**, would perhaps be a better rendering than '*liberty*.'

24. when Felix came] Into the hall or chamber where Paul was to speak.

Drusilla] She was daughter of Herod Agrippa I. (see ch. xii.) and of Cypros,—and sister of Agrippa II. She was betrothed at six years old to Epiphanes son of Antiochus, king of Commagéné; but he declining the marriage, not wishing to be circumcised and become a Jew, she was married to the more obsequious Azizus, king of Emesa. Not long after, Felix, being enamoured of her beauty, persuaded her, by means of a certain Simon, a Cyprian magician (see note on ch. viii. 9), to leave her husband and live with him. She bore him a son, Agrippa: and both mother and son perished in an eruption of Vesuvius, in the reign of Titus.—The Drusilla mentioned by Tacitus, a granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra, must have been *another wife* of Felix, who was *thrice* married, and each time to persons of royal birth; Suetonius calls him "*the husband of three queens.*"

25.] It is remarkable that Tacitus uses of Felix the expression, "he thought himself licensed to commit all crimes with impunity." The fear of Felix appears to have operated merely in his *sending away* Paul: no impression for *good* was made on him.

26.] The Julian law enacted that no one should receive any consideration for throwing a man into prison, for putting him into bonds, or releasing him, or for a condemnation or an acquittal. Mr. Humphry observes, that Albinus, who succeeded Festus, so much encouraged this kind of bribery, that no malefactors remained in prison, except those who did not offer money for their liberation. St. Paul did not resort to this mode of shortening his tedious and unjust imprisonment, and Tertullian quotes his conduct in this respect against those who were disposed to purchase escape from persecution: a practice which prevailed and became great evil in the time of Cyprian.

27. two years] viz. of Paul's imprisonment.

Porcius Festus] Festus appears to have succeeded Felix in the summer or autumn of the year 60 A.D.: but the question is one of much chronological difficulty. He found the province wasted and harassed by bands of robbers and *sicarii* (assassins), and the people the prey of false prophets. He died, after being procurator a very short time,—from one to two years. Josephus contrasts him, as a putter down of robbers, favourably with his successor Albinus. It was a natural *wish* of Felix at this time to confer *obligations* on the *Jews*, who were sending to complain of him at Rome.

left Paul bound] There was no *change* in the method of custody, see note on ver. 23. He left him in the '*military custody*' in which he was.

Acts: Chapter 25

XXV. 1. the province] The term is properly used of *a province*, whether imperial or senatorial (see note on ch. xiii. 7),—but is here loosely applied to Judaea, which was only a procuratorship, *attached to the province* of Syria.

2. the high priest] The High Priest now was Ishmael the son of Phabi. See chronological table in the Introduction.

The term **chief of the Jews** is more general than "*elders*," though most of the chief *men* must have been members of the Sanhedrim. Festus, relating this application, ver. 15, calls them "*elders*."

3.] favour is explained to mean *condemnation*, ver. 15.

laying wait] They were *making, contriving*, tho ambush already. The country was at this time, as may be seen abundantly in Josephus, full of *sicarii* (assassins): who were hired by the various parties to take off their adversaries.

5. are powerful] not, as in A.V., “*those among you that are able*” [to go down?]: but, **are powerful among you:** those who from their position and influence are best calculated to represent the public interests.

6.] The number of days is variously read. It is possible that a perverted notion of the necessity of an absolute precision in details in the inspired text, may have occasioned the erasure of one of the numbers.

8.] These were the three principal charges to which the “*many and grievous complaints*” of the Jews referred.

9.] The question is asked of Paulas a Roman citizen, having a right to be tried by Roman law: and more is contained in it, than at first meets the eye. It *seems* to propose only a change of *place*; but doubtless in it was contained by implication a sentence pronounced by the Sanhedrim. The words **before me** may mean no more than that the procurator would be *present* and sanction the trial: Grotius interprets it “wilt thou be judged by the Sanhedrim in my presence?” Otherwise, a journey to Jerusalem would be superfluous. Festus may very probably have anticipated the rejection, of this proposal by Paul, and have wished to make it appear that the obstacle in the way of Paul being tried by the Sanhedrim arose not from *him*, but from the prisoner himself.

10.] Paul’s refusal has a positive and a negative ground—1. ‘*Cæsar’s tribunal is my proper place of judgment*: 2. *To the Jews I have done no harm, and they have therefore no claim to judge me.*’

I stand at Cæsar’s judgment seat] Meyer quotes from Ulpian, “What is done by a procurator of Cæsar, is approved as if it were done by Cæsar himself.”

as thou very well knowest] literally, **knowest better than thou choosest to confess.** We have an ellipsis of the same kind in our phrase ‘*to know better*.’ Or it may be in this case as in 2 Tim. i. 18, ‘*better, than that I need say more on it.*’ but I prefer the other interpretation.

11. no man may (literally, **can**) **deliver me**] Said of *legal* possibility: “it is not lawful for any man....” The dilemma here put by St. Paul is, “*If I am guilty, it is not by them, but by Cæsar, that I must be (and am willing to be) tried, sentenced, and punished. If I am innocent, and Cæsar acquits me, then clearly none will be empowered to give me up to them: therefore, at all events, guilty or innocent, I am not to be made their victim.*”

I appeal unto Cæsar] literally, **I call upon**, i.e. *appeal to Cæsar.* This power (of appeal to the *people*) having existed in very early times was ensured to Roman citizens by the Lex Valeria in the year of Rome 245, suspended by the Decemviri, but solemnly re-established after their deposition A.U. C. 305, when it was decreed that it should be unlawful to make any magistrate from whom there did not lie an appeal. When the emperors absorbed the *power of the people* and the *tribunitial veto* in themselves, the appeals to the people and to the tribunes were both made to the emperor. In Pliny’s celebrated Epistle to the Emperor Trajan respecting the Bithynian Christians, we read, “Others shared in the like madness, whom, as they were Roman citizens, I noted to be sent to the metropolis.” **12. the council]** The *convention*, or assembly of citizens in the provinces, assembled to try causes on the *court-days*, see ch. xix. 38. A certain number of these were chosen as jurymen, for the particular causes, by the proconsul, and these were called his ‘*councillors*,’ or ‘*assessors*.’ So in Josephus, Cestius, on receiving an application from Jerusalem respecting the conduct of Florus, took counsel with his *assessors*, or *council*. He consulted them, to decide whether the appeal was to be conceded, or if conceded, to be at once acted on. The law provided that if the matter did not admit of delay, the appeal was not allowed.

The sense is stronger and better without a question after the first clause of Festus’s answer.—Thus were the two—the design of Paul (ch. xix. 21), and the promise of our Lord to him (ch. xxiii. 11)—brought to their fulfilment, by a combination of providential circumstances. We can hardly say that these must have *influenced* Paul in making his appeal: that step is naturally accounted for, and was rendered necessary by the difficulties which now beset him: but we may be sure that the prospect at length, after his long and tedious imprisonment, of *seeing Rome*, must at this time have cheered him, and caused him to hear the decision of Festus, “To Cæsar shalt thou go,” with no small emotion.

13.] HEROD AGRIPPA II., son of the Herod of ch. xii. (see note on ver. 1 there), was at Rome, and seventeen only, when his father died. Claudius was about to send him to succeed to the kingdom, but was dissuaded by his freedmen and favourites, and sent Cuspius Fadus as procurator instead. Soon after, Claudius gave him the principality of Chaleis, which had been held by his uncle Herod,—the presidency of the temple at Jerusalem and of its treasures,—and the appointment of the High Priest. Some years after the same emperor added to his jurisdiction the former tetrarchy of Philip, and Batanæa, Trachonitis, and Abiléné, with the title of *King*. Nero afterwards annexed Tiberias, Tarichéa, Julias, and fourteen neighbouring villages to his kingdom. He built a large palace at Jerusalem; but offended the Jews by constructing it so as to overlook the temple, and by his capricious changes in the high priesthood,—and was not much esteemed by them. When the last war broke out, he attached himself throughout to the Romans. He died in the third year of Trajan, and fifty-first of his reign, aged about seventy.

Bernicé] ‘The Macedonian form (*Berenicé* or *Beronicé*) for Pherenicé. She was the eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and first married to her uncle Herod, prince of Chalcis. After his death she lived with Agrippa her brother, but not without suspicion; in consequence of which she married Polemo, king of Cilicia. The marriage was, however, soon dissolved, and she returned to her brother. She was afterwards the mistress of Vespasian, and of Titus.

to salute Festus] on his accession to the procuratorship, to gain his favour.

14. declared Paul's cause] He did this, not only because Agrippa was a Jew, but because he was (see above) *governor of the temple*.

16. to give up] i.e. *to his enemies, and for destruction*. On the practice of the Romans, here nobly and truly alleged, several citations occur in Grotius and Wetstein.

18. Round about whom] See ver. 7: the A.V., ‘*against whom*,’ is wrong.

19.] The word rendered **religion** is used by Festus in a *middle* sense, certainly not as equivalent to ‘*superstition*,’ A.V., speaking as he was to Agrippa, a Jew.

20.] See the *real reason* why he proposed this, ver. 9. This he now conceals, and alleges his *modesty* in referring such matters to the judgment of the Jews themselves. This would be pleasing to his guest Agrippa.

21. Augustus (in the Greek, **Sebastos**)] This title was first conferred by the senate on Octavianus, and borne by all succeeding emperors. Dio Cassius says: “**Augustus** implies that he was something more than man: for all most revered and sacred things are called *august*. Whence also they called him **Sebastos**, after the Greek manner, as *one to be adored*, from *sebazomai*, to adore.”

22. I would hear the man myself] literally, **I was wishing to...** It is a modest way of expressing a wish, formed in this case while the procurator was speaking, but spoken of by Agrippa as if now passed by, and therefore not pressed. See Rom. ix. 3, and note there. Agrippa, as a Jew, is anxious to hear Paul's defence, as a matter of national interest. The procurator's curator's ready consent is explained, ver. 26.

23. with great pomp] Wetstein finely remarks on the words, “This was in the same city where the father of Agrippa and Bernice had been eaten of worms for his blasphemous pride.”

the place of hearing] The original is a Greek word, formed after the Latin ‘*auditorium*:’ perhaps no fixed-hall of audience, but the chamber or saloon set apart for this occasion.

the chief captains] These were the tribunes of the cohorts stationed at Cæsarea. Stier remarks, “Yet more and more complete must the giving of the testimony in these parts be, before the witness departs for Rome. In Jerusalem, the long-suffering of the Lord towards the rejecters of the Gospel was now exhausted. In Antioch, the residence of the *Præses* (or governor) of Syria, the new mother church of Jewish and Gentile Christians was flourishing; here, in Cæsarea, the residence of the procurator, the testimony which had begun in the house of Cornelius the centurion, had now risen upward, till it comes before this brilliant assembly of all the local authorities, in the presence of the last king of the Jews.”

24. all the multitude of the Jews] At Jerusalem (ver. 1) *literally*, by the popular voice (probably) of some tumultuous outcry: —here, *by their deputation*.

25. that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and seeing that he himself....] These reasons did really coexist as influencing Festus's determination.

26. no certain thing] i.e. nothing **fixed, definite**. The whole matter had been hitherto obscured by the exaggerations and fictions of the Jews.

unto my lord] viz. Nero. Augustus and Tiberius refused this title; Caligula and (apparently) all following bore it: but it was not a *recognized* title of any emperor before *Domitian*. Olshausen remarks, that now first was our Lord's prophecy, Matt. x. 18, Mark xiii. 9, fulfilled. But Meyer answers well, that we do not know enough of the history of the other Apostles to be able to say this with any certainty. James the greater, and Peter, had in all probability stood before Agrippa I. See ch. xii. 2, 3.

XXVI. 1.] The *stretching out of the hand* by a speaker was not, as Hammond supposes, the same as the “*beckoning with the hand*” of ch. xii. 17; xiii. 16. The latter was to ensure silence; but this, a formal attitude usual with orators. Apuleius describes it very precisely. The hand was stretched out with the two lower fingers shut, and the rest straightened. St. Paul’s hand was *chained*—compare “*these bonds*,” ver. 29.

5. the strictest sect] See ch. xxii. 3. Josephus calls the Pharisees “a sect of the Jews professing to be more devout than other men, and to observe the laws more strictly.” The use of the term finds another example in Eph. v. 15, which is literally, “*See ye walk strictly.*” The word rendered *sect* is the same as that rendered in ch. xxiv. 5, 14 “heresy,” here used in an indifferent sense.

6.] The promise spoken of is not that of the resurrection merely, but that of a Messiah and His Kingdom, *involving* (ver. 8) *the resurrection*. This is evident from the way in which he brings in the mention of Jesus of Nazareth, and connects His exaltation (ver. 18) with the universal preaching of repentance and remission of sins. But he *hints* merely at this hope, and does not explain it fully: for Agrippa knew well what was intended, and *the mention of any king but Cæsar* would have misled and prejudiced the Roman procurator. There is great skill in binding on his former Pharisic life of orthodoxy (in externals), to his now real and living defence of the hope of Israel. But though he thus far identifies them, he makes no concealment of the difference between them, ver. 9 ff.

7. our twelve tribes] The Jews in Judæa, and those of the dispersion also. See James i. 1. There was a difference between Paul and the Jews, which lies beneath the surface of this verse, but is yet not brought out: *he had already arrived at the accomplishment of this hope, to which they, with all their sacrifices and zeal, were as yet only earnestly tending*, having it yet in the future only (see Rom. x. 2). It was *concerning this hope* (in what sense appears not yet) that he was accused by the Jews.

8.] Having impressed on his hearers the injustice of this charge from the Jews, with reference to his holding that hope which they themselves held, he now leaves much to be filled up, not giving a confession of his own faith, but proceeding as if it were well understood. ‘You assume rightly, that I mean by *this hope*, in my own case, my believing it accomplished in the crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth.’ Then, this being acknowledged, he goes on to show how his own view became so changed with regard to Jesus; drawing a contrast in some respects between *himself*, who was supernaturally brought to the faith, and *them*, who yet could not refuse to believe that God could and might raise the dead. All this he mainly addresses to Agrippa (ver. 26), as being the best acquainted with the circumstances, and, from his position, best qualified to judge of them. It may be, as Stier suggests, that if not open, *yet practical* Sadduceism had tainted the Herodian family. Paul knew, at all events, how generally the highly cultivated, and those in power and wealth, despised and thought *incredible* the doctrine of the resurrection.

It is not, as commonly rendered, ‘*that God should raise the dead*’ (E. V.): but the question is far stronger than this: **why is it judged by you a thing past belief, if God raises the dead?** i.e. ‘*if God, in His exercise of power, sees fit to raise the dead* (the word implying that such a fact has veritably taken place), *is it for you to refuse to believe it?*’

9.] Henceforward he passes to *his own history*,—how he once refused, like them, to believe in Jesus: and shews them both the process of his conversion, and the ministry with which he was entrusted to others.

10, 11.] This is the “*great persecution*” of ch. viii. 1. We are surprised here by the unexpected word **saints (holy ones)**, which it might have been thought he would have rather in this presence avoided. But, as Stier remarks, it belongs to the more confident tone of this speech, which he delivers, not as a *prisoner defending himself*, but as one being heard before those who were his *audience, not his judges*.

I gave my vote against them can hardly be taken *figuratively*, as many Commentators, trying to escape from the inference that the “*young man*” Saul was a member of the Sanhedrim; but must be understood as testifying to *this very fact*, however strange it may seem. He can hardly have been *less than thirty*, when sent on his errand of persecution to Damascus. On the fact, compare the words “*Saul was consenting unto his death*,” ch. viii. 1.

11. punished them] viz. *by scourging*; comp. Matt. x. 17. **I compelled them to blaspheme** does not imply that any *did* blaspheme (Christ: so Pliny, in his celebrated Epistle, speaks of ordering the Bithynian Christians *to curse Christ*, and adds, that he hears none can be compelled to do this who are really Christians): the verb only relates the *attempt*. The persecuting the Christians even to foreign cities, forms the transition to the narrative following.

12. Whereupon] literally, **In which things (being engaged).**

13.] See notes on ch. ix. 3–8, where I have treated of the discrepancies, real or only apparent, between the three accounts of Saul’s conversion. See also ch. xxii. 6–10.

14. in the Hebrew tongue] These words are expressed here only. In ch. ix. we have the *fact* remarkably preserved by the

Hebrew form in the original; in ch. xxii. he was speaking in Hebrew, and the notice was not required.

it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks] This is found here only; in ch. ix. the words are spurious, having been inserted from this place. The metaphor is derived from oxen at plough or drawing a burden, who, on being pricked with the goad, kick against it, and so cause it to pierce deeper. See instances, in my Greek Test., of the use of the proverb.

16–19.] There can be no question that St. Paul here *condenses into one, various sayings of our Lord to him at different times, in visions*, see ch. xxii. 18–21; and by *Ananias*, ch. ix. 15; see also ch. xxii. 15, 16. Nor can this, on the strictest view, be considered any deviation from truth. It is what all must more or less do who are abridging a narrative, or giving the general sense of things said at various times. There were reasons for its being minute and particular in the *details of his conversion*; that once related, the commission which he thereupon received is not followed into *its details*, but *summed up as committed to him by the Lord himself*. It would be not only irreverent, but false, to imagine that he put *his own thoughts* into the mouth of our Lord; but I do not see, with Stier, the necessity of maintaining that all these words were actually *spoken* to him at *some time* by the Lord. The message delivered by Ananias certainly furnished some of them; and the unmistakable utterings of God's Spirit which supernaturally led him, may have furnished more, all within the limits of truth.

16.] for this purpose refers to what follows, **to make thee, &c.**; **for** gives the reason for **rise, and stand upon thy feet**. See **reff.**

of these things which thou hast seen] Stier remarks, that Paul was the witness of the *glory of Christ*: whereas Peter, the first of the former twelve, describes himself (1 Pet. v. 1) as ‘a witness of the *sufferings* of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.’ So true it was that this *latest born* among the Apostles, became, by divine grace, *more than they all* (1 Cor. xv. 8–10).—The expression **a minister of those things which thou hast seen** may be compared with “*ministers of the word*,” which St. Luke calls the *eye-witnesses*, Luke i. 2.

and of those things in the which (or, on account of which) I will appear unto thee] That such visions did take place, we know, from ch. xviii. 9; xxii. 18; xxiii. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 1; Gal. i. 12.

17. delivering thee from] This, and not ‘*choosing thee out of*,’ is the right meaning.

the people] as elsewhere, **the Jewish people**. “Thus,” says Calvin, “the Lord armed him against all fears which awaited him, and at the same time prepared him to bear the cross.”

unto whom] to *both*, the people, and the Gentiles; not the Gentiles only.

18.] not, as Beza, and A.V., ‘*to turn them*:’ but, **that they may turn**; see ver. 20.—The general reference of **whom** becomes tacitly modified (not expressly, speaking as he was to the Jew Agrippa) by the expressions above, **darkness** and **the power of Satan**, both, in the common language of the Jews, applicable only to the Gentiles. But in reality, and in Paul’s mind, they had their sense as applied to Jews,—who were in spiritual darkness and under Satan’s power, however little they thought it. See Col. i. 13.

that they may receive] A *third step*: first the *opening of the eyes*—next, *the turning to God*—next, the *receiving remission of sins and a place among the sanctified*; see ch. xx. 32.—This last reference determines the words **by faith that is in me** to belong, not to **sanctified**, but to **receive**.—Thus the great object of Paul’s preaching was to awaken and shew the necessity and efficacy of *faith that is in Christ*. And fully, long ere this, had he recognized and acted on this his great mission. The epistles to the Galatians and Romans are two noble monuments of the APOSTLE OF FAITH.

19. I was not disobedient] See Isa. l. 5.

22.) The **therefore** refers to the whole course of deliverances which he had had from God, not merely to the last. It serves to close the narrative, by shewing how it was that he was there that day,—after such repeated persecutions, crowned by this last attempt to destroy him.

23. If (not, “*that*,” as A.V.) meaning, that the things following were patent facts to those who knew the prophets. See Heb. vii. 15 (marginal rendering), where *if* has the same sense.

The first thing which was thus patent was not, as Beza, and A.V., “*that Christ should suffer*:” but **that Christ was liable to suffering**. St. Paul does not refer to the prophetic announcement, or the historical reality, of the *fact* of Christ’s suffering, but to the *idea* of the Messiah, as *possible* and suffering, being in accordance with the testimony of the prophets. That the fact of His having suffered on the cross was in the Apostle’s mind, can hardly be doubted: but that the words do not assert it, is evident from the change of construction in the next clause, where the fact of the bringing life and immortality to light by the

resurrection is spoken of.

first rising from the dead] literally, **first from the resurrection of the dead:** implying that this light, to be preached to the Jews (**the people**) and Gentiles, must spring from the resurrection of the dead, and that Christ the first from the resurrection, was to announce it. See Isa. xlvi. 6; xlix. 6; lx. 1, 2, 3; Luke ii. 32; ch. xiii. 47.

24.] The words **as he thus spake for himself** must refer to the last words spoken by Paul: but it is not necessary to suppose that *these only* produced the effect described on Festus. Mr. Humphry remarks, “Festus was probably not so well acquainted as his predecessor (ch. xxiv. 10) with the character of the nation over which he had recently been called to preside. Hence he avails himself of Agrippa’s assistance (xxv. 26). Hence also he is unable to comprehend the earnestness of St. Paul, so unlike the indifference with which religious and moral subjects were regarded by the upper classes at Rome. His self-love suggests to him, that one who presents such a contrast to his own apathy, must be mad: the convenient hypothesis that much learning had produced this result, may have occurred to him on hearing Paul quote prophecies in proof of his assertions.”

thou art beside thyself (mad)] not merely, ‘*thou ravest*,’ nor ‘*thou art an enthusiast*:’ nor are the words spoken in jest, as Olshausen supposes,—but in earnest, as Chrysostom says: “They are the words of angry passion.” Festus finds himself by this speech of Paul yet more bewildered than before.

thy much learning] or, as it may be rendered, **those many writings.** Meyer understands Festus to allude to the many rolls which Paul had with him in his imprisonment (we might compare “*the books, especially the parchments*” of 2 Tim. iv. 13) and studied: but the ordinary interpretation, **thy much learning**, seems more natural, and so De Wette.

doth make thee mad] or, is turning thee to madness, **is turning thy brain.**

25.] truth may be spoken *warmly* and *enthusiastically*, but *cannot be predicated of a madman’s words: soberness* is directly opposed to **madness.**

26.] Agrippa is doubly his witness, (1) as *cognizant of the facts* respecting Jesus, (2) as *believing the prophets*. This latter he does not only assert, but appeals to the faith of the king as a Jew for its establishment.

was not done in a corner] *This*, the act done to Jesus by the Jews, and its sequel, was not done in an obscure corner of Judæa, but in the metropolis, at a time of more than common publicity.

28.] These words of Agrippa have been very variously explained. I have discussed the proposed renderings in the note in my Greek Test. From that it appears that the rendering of the A.V. is inadmissible, for want of any example of the original expression bearing this meaning: and that the rendering in the margin seems to suit best both the words and the context. It appears also that Agrippa is characterizing *no effect on himself*, but what Paul was fancying in his mind, reckoning on the *persuasion* which he had expressed above (ver. 26): and that he speaks of something *not* that he is *likely to become*, but that *contrasts strangely with his present worldly position and intentions.* I would therefore render the words thus: **Lightly** (with small trouble) **art thou persuading thyself that thou canst make me a Christian:** and understand them, in connexion with Paul’s having attempted to make Agrippa a witness on his side,— ‘*I am not so easily to be made a Christian of, as thou supposest.*’

29.] I could wish to God, that whether with ease or with difficulty (on my part), not only thou, but all who hear me today, might become such as I am, except only these bonds. He understands the saying just as Agrippa had uttered it, viz. that he was calculating on making him a Christian, **easily**, ‘*with little trouble*,’ ‘*with slight exertion or persuasion*:’ and contrasts with it, **with difficulty**, ‘*with great trouble*,’ ‘*with much labour*.’ See further in my Greek Test.

except these bonds] He shews the chain, which being in *military custody*, he *bore on his arm*, to connect him with the soldier who had charge of him. This *exception* may be regarded as a proof of the perfect courtesy of the great Apostle.

31. doeth nothing] said generally, of his life and habits. No *definite act* was alleged against him: and his apologetic speech was in fact a sample of the acts of which he was accused.

32.] Agrippa in these words delivers his judgment as a Jew: ‘*For aught I see, as regards our belief and practices, he might have been set at liberty.*’—But now he could not: for “by an appeal the power of the judge, from whom the appeal lies, is taken away, for acquittal as for condemnation. The whole cause in its integrity must be reserved for the superior court.” Grotius.

CHAP. XXVII. 1–XXVIII. 31] PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME AND SOJOURN THERE. I cannot but express the benefit I have derived in my commentary on this section, from Mr. Smith's now well-known treatise on the voyage and shipwreck of St. Paul: as also from various letters which he has from time to time put into my hands, tending further to elucidate the subject. The substance of these will be found embodied in an Appendix following the chronological table in the Introduction to the Acts.

1. that we should sail] Here we have again the *first person*, the narrator having, in all probability, remained in Palestine, and in the neighbourhood of Paul, during the interval since ch. xxi. 18.

they delivered Paul] *Who?* perhaps the assessors with whom Festus took counsel on the appeal, ch. xxv. 12: but more likely the plural is used indefinitely, the subject being 'they,' as 'on' in French, or 'man' in German.

of Augustus' band] There is some difficulty in determining what this cohort was. More than one of the *legions* at different times bore the honorary title 'Augusta:' but of a 'cohort Augusta,' or 'Augustana,' we never hear. It appears likely (see my Greek Test.) that there was a band of picked men called by this name and stationed at Rome for the special body-guard of the emperor. To this Julius seems to have belonged,—to have been sent on some service into Asia, and now to have been returning to Rome.

2. of Adramyttium] Adramyttium was a seaport with a harbour in Mysia, an Athenian colony. It is now a village called Endramit. Grotius, Drusius, and others erroneously suppose *Adrumetum* to be meant, on the north coast of Africa.

Aristarchus] See ch. xix. 29; xx. 4; Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24. In Col. iv. 10, Paul calls him his**fellow-prisoner**, but perhaps only figuratively: the same term is applied to Epaphras, Philem. 23, where follows "Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my *fellow-labourers*."

8. Sidon] This celebrated city is generally joined in the New Test. with Tyre, from which it was distant twenty-five miles, and of which it was probably the mother city. It was within the lot of the tribe of Asher (Josh. xix. 28), but never conquered by the Israelites (Judg. i. 31; iii. 3). From the earliest times the Sidonians were renowned for their manufactures of glass, linen, silversmith's work, and for the hewing of timber (1 Kings v. 6; Ezra iii. 7). In ancient times, Sidon seems to have been under Tyre, and to have furnished her with mariners (see Ezek. xxvii. 8). It went over to Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, but seems under him, and afterwards under the Chaldeans and Persians, to have had tributary kings of its own (Jer. xxv. 22; xxvii. 3). The Sidonians furnished the best ships in Xerxes' navy. Under Artaxerxes Ochus Sidon freed itself, but was by him, after a severe siege, taken and destroyed. It was rebuilt, and soon after went over to Alexander, keeping its own vassal kings. After his death it was alternately under Syrian and Egyptian rule, till it fell under the Romans. The present Saida is west of ancient Sidon, and is a port of some commerce, but insecure, from the sanding up of the harbour.

The friends here mentioned were probably Christian brethren (see ch. xi. 12, where the Gospel is said to have been preached in Phoenicia; and ch. xxi. 3, where we find brethren at *Tyre*); but it is usual in that case for *brethren* or *disciples* to be specified: compare ch. xxi. 4, 7. The **refreshing himself** (literally, **getting attention paid him**) was perhaps to obtain from them that outfit for the voyage which, on account of the official precision of his custody at Cæsarea, he could not there be provided with.

4. we sailed under] i.e. '*in the lee of*' Cyprus. "When a ship is forced out of her course by a contrary wind, so that an island is interposed between the wind and the ship, she is said to *sail under* the island." Wetstein; who also says, "If the wind had been favourable, they would have put out to sea, and left Cyprus on the right, as in Acts xxi. 3, but now they are forced to coast along Cilicia, between Cyprus and Asia." They kept under shelter of Cyprus, i.e. between Cyprus and Cilicia, so **having sailed the whole length** of the sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia, they came to Myra. See the account of the reverse voyage, ch. xxi. 3, where, the wind being nearly in the same quarter, the direct course was taken, and they left Cyprus at a distance on their left, in going to Tyre. On this it may be well to quote (from Smith) the testimony of M. de Pagés, a French navigator, who, on his voyage from Syria to Marseilles, informs us that after making Cyprus, "the winds from the west, and consequently contrary, which prevail in these places during the summer, *forced us to run to the north*. We made for the coast of Caramania (Cilicia), in order to meet the northerly winds, *which we found accordingly*."

5. Myra] It was, says Strabo, on a high hill, about three miles from the sea. The neighbourhood is full of magnificent ruins; see Sir C. Fellows's Lycia, ch. ix. The name still remains. The various readings merely shew that the copyists were unacquainted with the place.

6.] The Alexandrian ship may have been laden with corn for Rome; but this cannot be inferred from ver. 38, for the ship had been *lightened before*, ver. 18.—On her size, see below, ver. 37.—Most probably this ship had been prevented taking the direct course to Italy, which was by the south of Crete, by the prevailing westerly winds. Under such circumstances, says Mr. Smith (p. 32), "ships, particularly those of the ancients, unprovided with a compass, and ill calculated to work to windward,

would naturally stand to the N. till they made the land of Asia Minor, which is peculiarly favourable for such a mode of navigation, because the coast is bold and safe, and the elevation of the mountains makes it visible at a great distance; it abounds in harbours, while the sinuosities of its shores and the westerly current would enable them, if the wind was at all off the land, to work to windward, at least as far as Cnidus, where these advantages ceased. Myra lies due N. from Alexandria, and its bay is well calculated to shelter a wind-bound ship. The Alexandrian ship was not, therefore, out of her course at Myra, even if she had no call to touch there for the purposes of commerce.

7. when we had sailed slowly] It is evident that the ship was encountering an adverse wind. The distance from Myra to Cnidus is only 130 geogr. miles, which, with a fair wind, would not take more than one day. Mr. Smith shews that the wind was N.W., or within a few points of it. "We learn from the sailing directions for the Mediterranean, that, throughout the whole of that sea, but mostly in the eastern half, including the Adriatic and Archipelago, N.W. winds prevail in the summer months;... the summer trade winds come from the N.W. (p. 197); which agrees with Aristotle's account of these winds. According to Pliny (ii. 47), they begin in August, and blow for forty days."

with difficulty] not as E.V., 'scarce,' which being also an adverb of *time*, gives the erroneous idea to the English reader that the ship had *scarcely reached* Cnidus when the wind became unfavourable.

Cnidus] Cnidus is a peninsula at the entrance of the *Aegean Sea*, between the islands of Cos and Rhodes, having a lofty promontory and two harbours. "With N.W. winds the ship could work up from Myra to Cnidus; because, until she reached that point, she had the advantage of a weather shore, under the lee of which she would have smooth water, and as formerly mentioned, a westerly current; but it would be slowly and with difficulty. At Cnidus that advantage ceased." Smith, p. 37.

we sailed under (see above on ver. 4) **Crete...]** "Unless she had put into that harbour (Cnidus), and waited for a fair wind, her only course was to run under the lee of Crete, in the direction of Salmone, which is the eastern extremity of that island."—Salmone (Capo Salomon) is described by Strabo as a sharp headland looking toward Egypt and the Rhodian Archipelago. Pliny calls it Sammonium.

8. hardly passing it] "After passing this point (Salmone), the difficulty they experienced in navigating to the westward along the coasts of Asia, would recur; but as the south side of Crete is also a weather shore with N.W. winds, they would be able to work up as far as Cape Matala. Here the land trends suddenly to the N., and the advantages of a weather shore cease, and their only resource was to make for a harbour. Now Fair Havens is the harbour nearest to Cape Matala, the farthest point to which an ancient ship could have attained with N. W-ly winds." Smith, as above.

fair havens] The situation of this anchorage was ascertained by Pococke, from the fact of the name still remaining. "In searching after Lebena farther to the west, I found out a place which I thought to be of greater consequence, because mentioned in Holy Scripture, and also honoured by the presence of St. Paul, that is, 'the Fair Havens, near unto the city of Lasea;' for there is another small bay about two leagues to the E. of Matala, which is now called by the Greeks good or fair havens." Cited by Mr. Smith, who adds: "The most conclusive evidence that this is the Fair Havens of Scripture, is, that its position is precisely that where a ship circumstanced as St. Paul's was must have put in. I have already shewn that the wind must have been about N.W.;—but with such a wind she could not pass Cape Matala: we must therefore look *near, but to the E.* of this promontory, for an anchorage well calculated to shelter a vessel in N.W. winds, but not *from all winds*, otherwise it would not have been, in the opinion of seamen (ver. 12), an unsafe winter harbour. Now here we have a harbour which not only fulfils every one of the conditions, but still retains the name given to it by St. Luke." Smith, p. 45.

Laséa] This place was, until recently, altogether unknown; and from the variety of readings, the very name was uncertain. Pliny mentions *Lasos* among the cities of Crete, but does not indicate its situation. There is a *Lisia* named in Crete in the Peutinger Table, which may be the same. [On the very interesting discovery of *Lasea* by the Rev. G. Brown in the beginning of the year 1856, see the Appendix at the end of the Introduction to Acts. The ruins are on the beach, about two hours eastward of Fair Havens.]

9. much time] Not 'since the beginning of our voyage,' as Meyer:—the time was spent *at the anchorage*.

the voyage] viz. to Rome,—which henceforth was given up as hopeless for this autumn and winter. And by observing this, we avoid a difficulty which has been supposed to attend the words. *Sailing* was not unsafe so early as this (see below); but to undertake so long a voyage, was.

the fast, especially so called, is the solemn fast of the day of expiation, the 10th of Tisri, the seventh month of the Jewish ecclesiastical year, and the first of the civil year. See Levit. xvi. 29 ff.; xxiii. 26 ff. This would be about the time of the autumnal equinox. The *sailing season* did not close so early; not indeed till nearly the middle of November.

10.] From the use of **I perceive** here, and from the saying itself, it seems clear to me that Paul was not uttering *at present* any

prophetic intimation, but simply his own sound judgment on the difficult question at issue. It is otherwise at vv. 22–24. As Smith remarks, “The event justified St. Paul’s advice. At the same time it may be observed, that a bay, open to nearly one-half the compass, could not have been a good winter harbour” (p. 47).

12.] See above on ver. 8. The anchorage was sheltered from the N.W., but not from *nearly half the compass*.

Phenicé] or more properly **Phœnix**. Ptolemy calls the haven *Phœnicus*, and the city (lying some way inland) *Phœnix*. Strabo describes an isthmus about twelve miles wide, having on the north side a port called Amphimallia, and on the south, Phenicé. This description, and the other data belonging to Phœnix, Smith (p. 48) has shewn to fit the modern *Lutro*, which, though not known now as an anchorage, probably from the silting up of the harbour, is so marked in the French admiralty chart of 1738, and “if then able to shelter the smallest craft, must have been capable of receiving the largest ships seventeen centuries before.” Mr. Smith gives an inscription, making it highly probable that Alexandrian ships did winter at Lutro.

looking to the north east and the south east] **looking** (literally) **down the S.W. and N.W. winds**; i.e. *in the direction* of these winds, viz. N.E. and S.E. For the S.W. and N.W. here mentioned in the original are *not quarters of the compass*, but *winds*; and **down**, used with a wind, denotes the direction of its blowing,—**down the wind**. This interpretation, which I was long ago persuaded was the, right one, I find now confirmed by the opinion of Mr. Smith. The harbour of Lutro satisfies these conditions: and is otherwise even more decisively pointed out as being the spot, by the mention in the Geographers of the island Clauda as connected with it. From these data and others mentioned in my Greek Test., it is almost demonstrated that the port of Phœnix is the present port of Lutro. Mr. Smith has kindly sent me the following extract from a letter containing additional confirmation of the view: ‘Loutro is an excellent harbour; you open it unexpectedly, the rocks stand apart and the town appears within. During the Greek war, when cruising with Lord Cochrane,..... chased a pirate schooner, as they thought, right upon the rocks; suddenly he disappeared, and when rounding in after him,—like a change of scenery, the little basin, its shipping, and the town of Loutro, revealed themselves.’

13. **blew softly]** The S. wind was favourable for them in sailing from Fair Havens to Phœnix.

supposing that they had (as good as) **obtained their purpose**; i.e. that it would now be a very easy matter to reach Phœnix.

loosing thence] The word may be understood either of *weighing anchor*, or of *setting sail*. They crept close along the land till they passed Cape Matala. “A ship which could not lie nearer to the wind than seven points, would just weather that point which bears W. by S. from the entrance of Fair Havens. We see therefore the propriety of the expression ‘they sailed *close* by Crete,’ which the author uses to describe the first part of their passage.” Smith, p. 56. **14. there blew down from it]** The words in the Greek, of which this appears to be the right rendering, are not easy. I have discussed them in my Greek Test.: and there first proposed the sense thus given, viz. that the wind blew **down** (from) **Crete**, ‘*down the high lands forming the coast*.’ It is a common expression in lake and coasting navigation, that ‘a gust came down the valleys.’ And this would be exactly the direction of the wind in question. When they had doubled, or perhaps were now doubling, Cape Matala, the wind suddenly changed, and the typhoon *came down upon them from the high lands*;—at first, as long as they were sheltered, only by fits down the gullies, but as soon as they were in the open bay past the cape, with its full violence. This, the hurricane rushing down the high lands when first observed, and afterwards *catching the ship*, seems to me exactly to describe their changed circumstances in passing the cape. A confirmation of this interpretation may be found by St. Luke himself using the word “*came down*” to express the descending of a squall from the hills on the lake of Gennesareth, Luke viii. 23. The above is also Mr. Howson’s view, and has been adopted by Mr. Smith. See, in the Appendix appended to the Introduction to Acts, the confirmation of this view in what actually happened to the Rev. G. Brown’s party.

a tempestuous (literally, **typhonic**) **wind**] “The sudden change from a south wind to a violent northerly wind, is a common occurrence in these seas. (Captain J. Stewart, R.N., in his remarks on the Archipelago, observes, “It is always safe to anchor under the lee of an island with a northerly wind, as it dies gradually away; but it would be extremely dangerous *with southerly winds, as they almost invariably shift to a violent northerly wind.*”) The term ‘*typhonic*’ indicates that it was accompanied by some of the phenomena which might be expected in such a case, viz. the agitation and whirling motion of the clouds caused by the meeting of the opposite currents of air when the change took place, and probably also of the sea, raising it in columns of spray. Pliny, speaking of sudden gusts, says, they make an eddy which is called Typhon.” Smith, p. 60.

Euracylon] pronounced **Earakylon**. This is the reading of the Alexandrian, Vatican, and Sinaitic MSS. It is a compound word, signifying North-Easterly. The direction of the wind is established by Mr. S., from what follows, to have been about *half a point N. of E.N. E.*; and the subsequent narrative shews that the wind *continued to blow from this point till they reached Malta*.

15. **caught]** **hurried away**, ‘*borne along*,’ by it.

bear up against] literally, **look in the face of**.

we let her drive] literally, we gave up, and were driven.

16. running under] i.e. **running under the lee of**. “St. Luke exhibits here, as on every other occasion, the most perfect command of terms, and gives the utmost precision his language by selecting the most appropriate:—they ran before the wind to leeward of *Clauda*, hence it is ‘*running under*:’ they sailed with a side wind *to leeward of Cyprus and Crete*: hence it is ‘*sailed under*’” (Smith, p. 61, note).

Clauda] Here again, there can be little doubt that the name of the island was *Cauda* or *Gauda*, as we have in some MSS., or, as in Pliny and Mela, *Gaudos*: but Ptolemy *Claudos*, and the corruption was very obvious.—The island is the a modern Gozzo.

we had much work to come by the boat] “Upon reaching *Clauda*, they availed themselves of the smooth water under its lee, to prepare the ship to resist the fury of the storm. Their first care was to secure the boat by hoisting it on board. This had not been done at first, because the weather was moderate, and the distance they had to go, short. Under such circumstances, it is not usual to hoist boats on board, but it had now become necessary. In running down upon *Clauda*, it could not be done, on account of the ship’s way through the water. To enable them to do it, the ship must have been rounded to, with her head to the wind, and her sails, if she had any set at the time, trimmed, so that she had no head-way, or progressive movement. In this position she would drift, broadside to leeward. I conclude they passed round the *east* end of the island: not only because it was nearest, but because ‘an extensive reef with numerous rocks extends from Gozzo to the N.W., which renders the passage between the two isles very dangerous’ (Sailing Directions, p. 207). In this case the ship would be brought to on the starboard tack, i.e. with the right side to windward.”.... St. Luke tells us they had much difficulty in securing the boat. He does not say *why*: but independently of the gale which was raging at the time, the boat had been towed between twenty and thirty miles after the gale had sprung up, and could scarcely fail to be filled with water.” Smith, pp. 64, 65.

17.] taken up, i.e. taken on board.

helps, i.e. measures to strengthen the ship, strained and weakened by labouring in the gale. Pliny calls the typhoon “the chief pest of sailors, breaking not only the yards, but even the ribs of the vessels themselves.” Grotius, Heinsius, &c., are clearly wrong in interpreting **helps** to mean ‘*the help of the passengers*.’

undergirding] or *frapping* the ship. “To frap a ship (*ceintrer un vaisseau*) is to pass four or five turns of a large cable-laid rope round the hull or frame of a ship, to support her in a great storm, or otherwise, when it is apprehended that she is not strong enough to resist the violent efforts of the sea: this expedient, however, is rarely put in practice.” Falconer’s Marine Dict.:—Smith, p. 60, who brings several instances of the practice, in our own times. [See additional ones in Conybeare and Howson, ii. 404 f.]

the quicksand] **The Syrtis**, on the African coast; there were two, the greater and the lesser, of which the former was the nearer to them.

lowered the gear] “It is not easy to imagine a more erroneous translation than that of our authorized version: ‘Fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, they strake sail, and were so driven.’ It is, in fact, equivalent to saying that, fearing a certain danger, they deprived themselves of the only possible means of avoiding it.” Smith, p. 67. He goes on to explain, that *if they had struck sail*, they must have been driven *directly towards the Syrtis*. They therefore set what sail the violence of the gale would permit them to carry, turning the ship’s head off shore, she having already been brought to on the starboard tack (right side to the wind). The adoption of this course would enable them to run before the gale, and yet keep wide of the African coast, which we know they did. They lowered the gear, i.e. they sent down upon deck the gear connected with the fair-weather sails, such as the topsails. A modern ship sends down top-gallant, masts and yards, a cutter strikes her top-mast, when preparing for a gale. In this case it was perhaps the heavy yard which the ancient ships carried, with the sail attached to it, and the heavy ropes, which would by their top-weight produce uneasiness of motion as well as resistance to the wind. See a letter addressed to Mr. Smith by Capt. Spratt, R.N., quoted in Conybeare and Howson, ii. p. 405, note 5.

so] i.e. “not only with the ship undergirded, and made snug, but with storm-sails set, and on the starboard tack, which was the only course by which she could avoid falling into the Syrtis.” Smith.

18. they lightened the ship] *Of what the freight consisted*, we have no intimation. Perhaps *not of wheat*, on account of the separate statement of ver. 38.

19. the furniture of the ship] Beds, moveables of all kinds, cooking utensils, and the spare rigging.

with our own hands is used as shewing the urgency of the danger—when the seamen would with their own hands, cast away

what otherwise was needful to the ship and themselves.

20.] The sun and stars were the only guides of the ancients when out of sight of land. The expression, **all hope was taken away**, seems, as Mr. Smith has noticed, to betoken that a greater evil than the mere force of the storm (which perhaps had some little abated:—**no small tempest** seems to imply that it still indeed raged, but not as before) was afflicting them, viz. *the leaky state of the ship*, which increased upon them, as is shewn by their successive lighteners of her.

21. after long abstinence] “What caused the abstinence? A ship with nearly 300 people on board, on a voyage of some length, must have more than a fortnight’s provisions (and see ver. 38): and it is not enough to say with Kuinoel, that ‘their continual labour and fear of danger had caused them not to think of their food.’ ‘Much abstinence’ is one of the most frequent concomitants of heavy gales. The impossibility of cooking, or the destruction of provisions from leakage, are the principal causes which produce it.” Smith, p. 75: who quotes instances. But doubtless anxiety and mental distress had a considerable share in it.

should have been spared this harm and loss] literally, **should have turned to your own account this harm and loss**. This may perhaps be what our translators meant by *gained*: but it is by no means clear.

23.] Paul characterizes himself as dedicated to and the servant of God, to give solemnity and bespeak credit for his announcement. At such a time, the servants of God are highly esteemed.

24. all them that sail with thee] Bengel remarks, that “Paul is in the sight of God the chief man in the ship and the director of its course.”

26. we must be cast...] Spoken prophetically, as also ver. 31: not perhaps from actual revelation imparted in the vision, but by a power imparted to Paul himself of penetrating the future at this crisis, and announcing the Divine counsel.

27. the fourteenth night] The reckoning of days counts from their leaving Fair Haven: see vv. 18, 19.

in Adria] Adria, in the wider sense, embraces not only the Venetian Gulf, but the sea to the south of Greece:—so Ptolemy, “The Peloponnesus is bounded on the W. and S. by the Adriatic Sea: and again, Sicily is bounded on the N. by the Sea of Adria.” In fact, he bounds Italy on the S., Sicily on the E., Greece on the S. and W., and Crete on the W. by this Sea, which notices sufficiently indicate its dimensions. So also Pausanias, speaking of the straits of Messina, accounts for their tempestuous character by the meeting of the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic seas.

the shipmen deemed] What gave rise to this suspicion? Probably the sound (or even the apparent sight) of breakers. “If we assume that St. Paul’s Bay, in Malta, is the actual scene of the shipwreck, we can have no difficulty in explaining what these indications must have been. No ship can enter it from the east without passing within a quarter of a mile of the point of Koura: but before reaching it, the land is too low and too far from the track of a ship driven from the eastward, to be seen in a dark night. When she does come within this distance, it is impossible to avoid observing the breakers: for with north-easterly gales, the sea breaks upon it with such violence, that Capt. Smyth, in his view of the headland, has made the breakers its distinctive character.” Smith, p. 79.—I recommend the reader to study the reasonings and calculations by which Mr. Smith (pp. 79–86) has established, I think satisfactorily, that this **land** could be no other than the point of Koura, east of St. Paul’s Bay, in Malta.

28. fathoms] The measure here rendered *fathom* is described as being the length of the outstretched arms, from finger to finger. It is therefore very nearly our fathom, which is six feet.—Every particular here corresponds with the actual state of things. At twenty-five fathoms’ depth (as given in evidence at the court-martial on the officers of the Lively, wrecked on this point in 1810), the curl of the sea was seen on the rocks in the night, but no land. The twenty fathoms would occur somewhat past this: the fifteen fathoms, in a direction W. by N. from the former, after a time sufficient to prepare for the unusual measure of anchoring by the stern. And just so are the soundings (see Capt. Smyth’s chart, Smith, p. 88), and the shore is here full of **rough places**, mural precipices, upon which the sea must have been breaking with great violence.

29. out of the stern] The usual way of anchoring in ancient as well as in modern navigation, was *by the bow*. But under certain circumstances, they anchored *by the stern*; and Mr. Smith has shewn from the figure of a ship which he has copied from the “Antichità de Ercolano,” that their ships had hawseholes aft, to fit them for anchoring by the stern. “That a vessel *can* anchor by the stern is sufficiently proved (if proof were needed) by the history of some of our own naval engagements. So it was at the battle of the Nile. And when ships are about to attack batteries, it is customary for them to go into action prepared to anchor in this way. This was the case at Algiers. There is still greater interest in quoting the instance of the battle of Copenhagen, not only from the accounts we have of the precision with which each ship let go her anchors astern as she arrived nearly opposite her appointed station, but because it is said that Nelson stated after the battle that he had that morning been reading Acts xxvii.” Conybeare and Howson, ii. p. 414. We have an instance in Cæsar’s commentaries where his ships were

anchored by *four* anchors each, to provide against the violence of a storm. “The anchorage in St. Paul’s Bay is thus described in the Sailing Directions: ‘The harbour of St. Paul is open to E. and N.E. winds. It is, notwithstanding, safe for small ships; the ground, generally, being very good: and while the cables hold, there is no danger, *as the anchors will never start.*’” Smith, p. 92.

wished for the day] Uncertain, whether their ship might not *go down at her anchors*: and, even supposing her to ride out the night safely, uncertain whether the coast to leeward might not be iron-bound, affording no beach where they might land in safety. Hence also the ungenerous but natural attempt of the seamen to save their lives by taking to the boat. See Smith, p. 97.

30.] “We hear, in a case mentioned by Appian, of anchors being laid out from both ends of a ship.” ib.

carried anchors out of the foreship] Because in this case they would *carry out* the anchors to the *extent* of the cable which was loosened.

31.] “It is surprising to find him saying that the others cannot be saved except the sailors abode in the ship: as if it had been in their power to frustrate God’s promise. I answer, that Paul is not here treating accurately of God’s power, distinct from human will and means. And of a surety God does not offer His help to the faithful that they may despise means of safety, and indulge torpor and sloth, where there is a plain way of caution..... But it does not therefore follow, that the hand of God is tied to means or assistances; but when God ordains this or that way of acting, He curbs the inclinations of men that they transgress not His appointed bounds.” Calvin.

33.] This precaution on the part of Paul was another means taken of providing for their safety. All would, on the approaching day, have their strength fully taxed: which therefore needed recruiting by food..... **until it began to be day:** i.e. in the interval between the last-mentioned occurrence and daybreak, Paul employed the time, &c.

The words **having taken nothing** are spoken hyperbolically, and cannot mean literally that they had abstained entirely from food *during the whole fortnight*.

35.] “Paul neither *celebrates the agapé* (Olshausen), nor acts as the *father of a*

family (Meyer), but simply as a *pious Jew*, who asks a blessing before he eats.” De Wette.

36.] When we reflect *who were included* in these **all**—the soldiers and their centurion, the sailors and passengers of various nations and dispositions, it shews remarkably the influence acquired by Paul over all who sailed with him.

37.] Explanatory of **all**: i.e. ‘*and this was no small number; for we were,’*&c.

38. they lightened the ship] See above on ver. 18.—This wheat was either the remainder of the cargo, part of which had been disposed of in ver. 18—or was the *store for their sustenance*, the cargo having consisted of some other merchandise. And this latter is much the more likely, for two reasons: (1) that **wheat** is mentioned here and not in ver. 18, which it would have been in all probability, had the material cast out there been the same as here; and (2) that the fact is related *immediately after* we are assured that they were *satisfied with food*: from whence we may infer almost with certainty that **the wheat** is the *ship’s provision*, of part of which they had been partaking. It is a sufficient answer to Mr. Smith’s objection to this (“to suppose they had remaining such a quantity as would lighten the ship is quite inconsistent with the previous abstinence,” p. 99), that the ship was provisioned for the voyage to Italy for 276 persons, and that *for the last fourteen days hardly any food had been touched*. This would leave surely enough to be of consequence in a ship ready to sink from hour to hour.

39.] It may be and has been suggested, that *some of the Alexandrian seamen must have known Malta*;—but we may answer with Mr. Smith that “St. Paul’s Bay is remote from the great harbour, and possesses no marked features by which it might be recognized” (p. 100).

a creek with a shore] properly, **a creek having a sandy beach**. What is meant is a creek with a *smooth, sandy beach*, as distinguished from a rocky inlet.

They were minded, not ‘*to thrust in*, as A.V., but **to strand, to run aground**, their ship.

40.] (1) They *cut away* (or, *cut round*) *all four anchors* (the **round** may allude to the cutting round each cable in order to sever it, or to the going round and cutting all four), and left them in the sea (literally “**into** the sea,” i.e. ‘in the sea, *into* which they had been cast’). This they did to save time, and not to encumber the water-logged ship with their additional weight. (2) They let loose the ropes which tied up the rudders. “Ancient ships were steered by two large paddles, one on each quarter. When anchored by the stern in a gale, it would be necessary to lift them out of the water, and secure them by lashings or rudder

bands, and to loose these bands when the ship was again got under way.” Smith, p. 101. (3) They raised their “*artēmon*” to the wind. It would be impossible in the limits of a note to give any abstract of the long and careful reasoning by which Mr. Smith has made it appear that the ‘*artēmon*’ was the **foresail** of the ancient ships. I will only notice from him, that the rendering ‘*mainsail*’ in our A.V. was probably a mistaken translation from Bayfius or De Baif, the earliest of the modern writers on naval matters, and perhaps the only one extant when the translation was made: he says, “The *artemon* is the largest sail in the ship, as see Acts xxvii.... even now the Venetians retain the name.” These words, “the largest sail,” they rendered by *mainsail*; whereas the *largest sail* of the Venetian ships at the time was the *foresail*.—The French ‘*artimon*,’ even now in use, means the sail at the stern (mizen). But this is no clue to the ancient meaning, any more than is our word *mizen* to the meaning of the French *misaine*, which is the foresail.

41. a place where two seas met] At the west end of St. Paul’s Bay is an island, Selmoon or Salmonetta, which *they could not have known to be such* from their place of anchorage. This island is separated from the mainland by a channel of about 100 yards wide, communicating with the outer sea. Just within this island, in all probability, was the place where the ship struck, in a place **where two seas met**.

they ran the ship aground] “The circumstance which follows, would, but for the peculiar nature of the bottom of St. Paul’s Bay, be difficult to account for. The rocks of Malta disintegrate into very minute particles of sand and clay, which when acted on by the currents, or by surface agitation, form a deposit of tenacious clay: but in still water, where these causes do not act, mud is found: but it is only in the creeks where there are no currents, and at such a depth as to be undisturbed by the waves, that mud occurs.... A ship therefore, impelled by the force of the gale into a creek with a bottom such as that laid down in the chart, would strike a bottom of mud, graduating into tenacious clay, into which the fore part would fix itself and be held fast, while the stern was exposed to the force of the waves.” Smith, p. 103. **44. some of the things from the ship]** probably, as A.V., **broken pieces of the ship**:—some of the parts of the ship: the others mentioned being **whole planks**, perhaps of the decks.

Acts: Chapter 28

XXVIII. 1. Melita] The whole course of the narrative has gone to shew that this *can be no other than MALTA*. The idea that it is not MALTA, but *Meleda*, an island off the Illyrian coast in the Gulf of Venice, seems to be first found in Constantine Porphyrogenitus. It has been adopted by our own countrymen, Bryant and Dr. Falconer, and abroad by some commentators. It rests principally on three mistakes:—1. the meaning of the name Adria (see above on ch. xxvii. 27),—2. the fancy that there are no poisonous serpents in Malta (ver. 3),—3. the notion that the Maltese would not have been called Barbarians.—The idea itself, when compared with the facts, is preposterous enough. Its supporters are obliged to place Fair Havens on the *north side of Crete*,—and to suppose the wind to have been the hot *Sirocco* (comp. ver. 2).—Further notices of this question, and of the state of Malta at the time, will be found in the notes on the following verses.

2. the barbarians] A term implying very much what our word **natives** does, when speaking of any little-known or new place. They were not Greek colonists, therefore they were barbarians (Rom. i. 14). If it be necessary strictly to vindicate the term, see the two citations given in my Greek Test. where the Phoenicians are called barbarians, and Malta

is said to be a colony of the Phoenicians.

received us] not to *their fire*, but to hospitality.

the present rain] which commonly follows on great tempests.

the cold] This is decisive against the Sirocco, which is a hot and sultry wind, even so late as the month of November, and moreover seldom lasts more than three days.

3. when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks] “We find the Apostle doing the office of a prisoner, serving the wants of others.” Bengel. From the circumstance of the concealed viper, these sticks were probably heaps of neglected wood gathered in the forest. The difficulty here is, that there are *now no venomous serpents* in Malta. But as Mr. Smith observes, “no person who has studied the changes which the operations of man have produced on the animals of any country, will be surprised that a particular species of reptiles should have disappeared from Malta. My friend the Rev. Mr. Landsborough, in his interesting excursions in Arran, has repeatedly noticed the gradual disappearance of the viper from the island since it has become more frequented. Perhaps there is nowhere a surface of equal extent in so artificial a state as that of Malta at the present day,—and nowhere has the aboriginal forest been more completely cleared. We need not therefore be surprised that, with the disappearance of the woods, the noxious reptiles which infested them should also have disappeared” (pp. 111, 112). St. Paul had placed the faggot on the fire, and was settling or arranging it in its place, when the viper glided out of the heat and fixed on his hand. The verb in the original implies that the serpent glided out *through* the sticks.

fastened on his hand] The narrative leaves no doubt that the bite did veritably take place.

4.] The natives, who were sure to know, here positively declared it to have been a *venomous* serpent. I make these remarks to guard against the disingenuous shifts of rationalists and semirationalists, who will have us believe either that the viper *did not bite*, or that if it did, it was *not venomous*.

No doubt this man is a murderer] “They saw his fetters.” Bengel.—The idea of his being a murderer is not to be accounted for by the *member* which was bitten (for this would fit any crime which the hand could commit),—nor by supposing the bite of a serpent to have been the Maltese punishment for murder; it is accounted for by the obviousness of the crime as belonging to the most notorious delinquents, and the aptness of the assumed punishment,—death for death.

Vengeance] or *Nemesis*. What the Phoenician islanders called her, does not appear; but the *idea* is common to all religions.

5.] “Luke does not so much as hint, that any divine intervention took place.” De Wette.—True enough: but why? Because St. Luke believed that the very dullest of his readers would understand it without any such hint. According to these rationalists, a fortunate concurrence of accidents must have happened to the Apostles, totally unprecedented in history or probability. Besides, did not the natives themselves in this case testify to the fact? None were so well qualified to judge of the virulence of the serpent,—none so capable of knowing that the hanging on Paul’s hand implied the communication of the venom:—yet they change him from a murderer into a god, on seeing what took place. Need we further evidence, that the divine power which they mistakenly attributed to Paul himself, was really exerted on his behalf, by Him who had said “*they shall take up serpents?*” See below on ver. 8. The fact that St. Luke understood what the natives said, is adduced by Dr. Wordsworth as another proof (see his and my note on ch. xiv. 11) that the Apostles and Evangelists commonly understood unknown tongues. But such an inference here has absolutely nothing to rest on. Are we to suppose that these “barbarians” had no means of intercourse with Greek sailors?

6.] Both these, the inflammation of the body, and the falling down dead suddenly, are recorded as results of the bite of the African serpents.

7.] The chief, or first man of the Melitæans, was probably an official title: the more so, as Publius can hardly have borne the appellation from his *estates*, during his father’s lifetime. Two inscriptions have been found in Malta, at Citta Vecchia, which seem to establish this view. If so (and his Roman name further confirms it), Publius was *legate of the Praetor of Sicily*, to whose province Malta belonged.

us] Hardly perhaps more than Paul and his companions, and, it may be, Julius. At ver. 10, a *special reason* had occurred for his honouring Paul and his company: at present, Publius’s hospitality must have been prompted by the courtesy of Julius, who could hardly fail himself to be included in it. The three days were probably till they could find a suitable lodging.

8. fevers] Hippocrates also uses the plural. It probably indicates the recurrence of fever fits.

a bloody flux] **dysentery**. Dr. Falconer makes this an argument against Malta being meant. “Such a place, dry and rocky, and remarkably healthy, was not likely to produce a disease which is almost peculiar to moist situations.” But Mr. Smith answers, that the changed circumstances of the island might produce this change also: and besides, that he is informed by a physician of Valetta, that the disease is by no means uncommon in Malta.

laid his hands on him] It is remarkable, that so soon after the ‘*taking up of serpents*,’ we should read of Paul having ‘*laid his hands on the sick and they recovered*.’ See the two in close connexion, Mark xvi. 18.

10. with many honours] The ordinary interpretation of this as *rewards, gifts*, may be right, but is not necessary. The other meaning, that these were really honours, is rendered probable by the form of the sentence, which opposes to these “*honours*,” bestowed on them during their whole stay, **such things as were necessary**, with which they were loaded at their departure. Render it therefore **honoured us with many honours** (or ‘*distinctions*,’ or ‘*attentions*’).

11.] They probably set sail (see on ch. xxvii. 9) not earlier than the sixth of the ides of March (i. e. March 10).

whose sign was [lite-rally, with the sign (of)] the Dioscuri] The ancient ships carried at their prow a painted or carved representation of the sign which furnished their name, and at the stern a similar one of their tutelar deity. Sometimes these were one and the same, as appears to have been the case with this ship. Castor and Pollux (the Dioscuri,—sons of Zeus), sons of Jupiter and Leda, were considered the tutelar deities of sailors.

12.] Syracuse is about eighty miles, a day’s sail, from Malta.

13.] This **fetching a compass** apparently denotes the roundabout course of a vessel tacking with an adverse wind. That the wind was not favourable, follows from what is said below. Mr. Lewin's account is, "As the wind was westerly, and they were under shelter of the high mountainous range of Etna on their left, they were obliged to stand out to sea in order to fill their sails, and so came to Rhegium by a circuitous sweep." And he cites a case of a passage from Syracuse to Rhegium, in which a similar circuit was taken for a sim reason, p. 736. The at Rhegium, as perhaps the three at Syracuse before, was spent probably in waiting for the wind.

the south wind having sprung up,—succeeded the one which blew before.

the second day] viz. *after leaving Rhegium*: a distance of about 180 nautical miles.

Puteoli] (anciently Dicæarchia, now Puzzuoli) was the most sheltered part of the bay of Naples. It was the principal port of Southern Italy, and, in particular, formed the great emporium for the Alexandrian wheat ships.

14.] These Christians were perhaps Alexandrines, as the commerce was so considerable between the two places.

so] i.e. *after this stay with them*: implying that the request was complied with.—The brethren at Rome had heard probably by special message sent by some of their fellow-voyagers. [See a detailed account of the stages of the journey not here mentioned, in Conybeare and Howson, ii. pp. 438 ff.]

15. Appii forum, and The three taverns] Luke writes as one of the travellers *to* Rome, who would come on Appii Forum (forty-three miles from Rome) first. It was on the Via Appia, which leaving Rome by the Porta Capena, passed through the Pontine marshes, as far as Capua. Being not far from the coast (Strabo, v. 233), it was the resort of sailors, as Horace describes it. It has been suggested to me, that these may have been sailors belonging to the canal boats, as Appii Forum is too far inland to have been resorted to by sailors from the coast. He further says that it was an unpleasant halting-place for travellers, having, besides, very bad water.—The **Three taverns** was a way-side inn, ten miles nearer Rome. Cicero mentions both in the letters to Atticus. The brethren were in two parties: some had come the longer, others the shorter distance, to meet the Apostle.—I have given several instances in my Greek Test. of the practice of going forth to meet approaching travellers of eminence.

took courage] Both encouragement as to his *own arrival*, as a prisoner, in the vast metropolis,—in seeing such affection, to which he was of all men most sensible; and encouragement as to his *great work* so long contemplated, and now about to commence in Rome,—in seeing so promising a beginning for him to build on.

16.] The omission of the disputed words here is too strongly attested to allow us to retain them in the text. As regards the fact indicated in them, the captain of the guard (prefect of the prætorian guard) was the person officially put in charge with the prisoners sent from the provinces. The prætorian camp was outside the Viminal gate, where it had been fixed and fortified by Sejanus. It was incorporated in Aurelian's walls, and now forms a square projection from their line.

Paul was suffered] This permission probably resulted from the letters of Festus, expressing that no crime was laid to the charge of Paul: perhaps also partly from the favour of Julius, and his report of the character and bearing of Paul on the journey.

the soldier] a Prætorian, to whom he was chained; see below, ver. 20; and note on ch. xxiv. 23.

17.] The banishment of Jews from Rome (ch. xviii. 2) had either tacitly or openly been abrogated some time before this. Priscilla and Aquila had returned when the Epistle to the Romans was written, Rom. xvi. 3.—St. Paul was naturally anxious to set himself right with the Jews at Rome—to explain the cause of his being sent there, in case no message had been received by them concerning him from Judæa,—and to do away if possible with the unfavourable prejudice which such letters, if received, would have created respecting his character.—The fact of his sending for them, and their coming to him, seems to shew that he was not imprisoned in the Prætorian camp, but was already in a private lodging.

18. would have (wished to) let me go] This may have been at ch. xxv. 8. The possibility of such a release is asserted by Agrippa, ch. xxvi. 32.

19.] 'My appeal was a defensive and necessary step—not an offensive one, to complain of my nation.'

20. For this cause] For the reason just stated: because I have no hostile feeling to my nation. Then what follows adds another motive; for not only so, but I may well wish to see and speak with you, being a prisoner *for the hope of Israel* (see ch. xxvi. 6, and notes).

21.] It may seem strange that they had received no tidings concerning him. But, as Meyer well remarks, (1) *before* his appeal, the Jews in Judæa had no definite reason to communicate with the Jews in Rome respecting him, having no expectation that Paul, then a prisoner in Judæa, and the object of their conspiracies there, would ever go to Rome, or come into connexion with their brethren there. And (2) *since* his appeal, it would have been hardly possible for them to have sent messengers who should have arrived before him. For his voyage followed *soon after his appeal* (ch. xxv. 13; xxvii. 1), and was *so late in the year*, that for the former reason it is as unlikely that any deputation from them should have left *before* him, as for the latter, *after* him. Had any left within a few days, the same storm would have in all probability detained them over the winter, and they could not certainly have made a much quicker voyage than Paul's ship to Puteoli. Still, as casual, non-official tidings might have reached them, Paul shewed this anxiety. It appears, however, that *none had come*. Olshausen's view, that the banishment of the Jews from Rome under Claudius had interrupted the relations between the Roman and Judæan Jews, is hardly probable: see on ver. 17.

22. this heresy] To which they perhaps inferred that Paul belonged, from ver. 20: or they might have heard thus much generally respecting him by rumour, though they had received no special message.—Their short notice of Christianity is perhaps the result of caution, seeing as they did the favour shewn by the authorities towards Paul: or perhaps of dissimulation.—Many Commentators have noticed the omission of all mention of the *Christian church at Rome*, and of Paul's connexion with or work among them. And some recently in Germany have called in question the credibility of the Acts on this account. But without any reason: for the work of the Apostle among *churches already founded* is not the subject of our history, and is seldom related by Luke, without a special reason. Of the three years at Ephesus (ch. xx. 31),—the year and a half (ch. xviii. 11), and three months (ch. xx. 3) at Corinth, we know from the narrative nothing that took place among the Christians themselves. Besides, one great object of this history is to shew forth Paul as working out the Lord's implied command to preach the Gospel 'to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile' (ch. i. 8), and, having every where done this, it is but natural that he should open his commission in Rome by assembling and speaking to the *Jews*.

23. his lodging] Probably the "*hired house*" of ver. 30: hardly, as Olshausen thinks, the house of Aquila.

25.] they departed, but not before Paul had said one saying. It is very remarkable, that the same prophetic quotation with which our Lord opened his teaching by parables (Matt. xiii. 14, 15), should form the solemn close of the historic Scriptures.

26.] The **Go, and say**, is referred to *himself*, in his application of the prophecy. These words are not cited by our Lord (Matt. xiii. as above).

28.] this was probably omitted as superfluous, and perhaps to suit Luke iii. 6. It adds greatly to the force: **this the message of God's salvation**, i.e. '*there is no other for those who reject this.*'

they will also (besides having it sent to them) **hear it** "What Paul had learned by experience in many cities of Asia and Europe, viz. that the sowing of the word among the Gentiles was attended with more success, this he now anticipates also for the future." Grotius.

29.] This verse has not the usual characteristic of spurious passages,—the variety of readings in those MSS. which contain it. It *may* perhaps, after all, have been omitted as appearing superfluous after ver. 25, 30, 31.] It is evident that Paul was not *released from custody*, but continued with the soldier who kept him,—(1) from the expressions here; *he received all who came in to him*, but we do not hear of his preaching in the synagogues or elsewhere: he preached and taught *with all boldness*, and *unhindered*, both being mentioned as remarkable circumstances, and implying that there were reasons why this could hardly have been expected: and (2) from his constantly speaking of himself in the Epistles written during it, as a *prisoner*, see Eph. vi. 19, 20; Col. iv. 3, 4; Philem. 9; Philipp. frequently. On the whole question regarding the chronology of his imprisonment,—and the reason of this abrupt ending of the history, see Introduction to Acts,§iv. 3–7:—and on its probable termination and the close of St. Paul's life, see the Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles,§ii. 17 ff.

ROMANS

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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

Romans: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1-7.] ADDRESS THE EPISTLE, WITH AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF PAUL's CALLING TO BE AN APOSTLE OF THE GOSPEL OF THE SON OF GOD. It has been remarked by Calvin, that this whole Epistle is exquisitely and skilfully arranged, so that its great argument seems to flow out of the natural and rational progress of its ordinary thought. Beginning with the proof of his Apostleship, St. Paul thence comes to the Commendation of the Gospel: this in its turn brings on a disputation concerning faith; to which then, as if led to it by the context, he gives himself. And thus he enters on the grand subject of the whole Epistle, justification by faith, which employs him as far as the end of the fifth chapter. St. Paul in the addresses of his Epistles never uses the common Greek formula "greeting" (James i. 1), but always *a prayer for blessing* on those to whom he is writing. In all his Epistles (and in both those of Peter, and in the Apocalypse) this prayer is for "grace and peace," except in 1 and 2 Tim., where it is for "grace, mercy, and peace," as in 2 John. In Jude only we find "mercy, peace, and love."—The address here differs from those of most of Paul's Epistles, in having doctrinal clauses parenthetically inserted:—such are found also in the address of the Epistle to Titus, and (in much less degree) in that of the Epistle to the Galatians. These doctrinal clauses regard, 1. the *fore-announcement of the Gospel through the prophets*: 2. *the description and dignity of Him* who was the subject of that Gospel: 3. *the nature and aim of the apostolic office* to which Paul had been called,—including the *persons addressed* in the objects of its ministration.

1. A servant of Jesus Christ] So also Phil. i. 1, and Tit. i, 1 ("a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ"),—but usually "an apostle of Jesus Christ" (or, "of Christ Jesus") (2 Cor., Eph., Col., 1 Tim., 2 Tim.): "a [called] apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Cor.),—simply "an apostle" (Gal.),—"a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Philem.). The expression 'servant of God' is the especial Old Test. title of Israel, and of individuals, as Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Job, and others, who as prophets, kings, &c., were raised up for the express work of God. **Servant** must not be rendered "slave," nor merely "pious worshipper:" because the former excludes the element of freewill, while the latter does not express the entire dedication to Christ.

called to be an apostle] In naming himself a *servant of Jesus Christ*, he bespeaks their attention as a *Christian speaking to Christians*: he now further specifies the *place which he held by the special calling of God*; **called**, and that to the very highest office, of **an apostle**; and even more—among the Apostles, not one by original selection, but one *specially called*. "The rest of the apostles were educated by long intercourse with Jesus, and were called first to follow Him and obey Him, then put forth as Apostles. Paul, before time a persecutor, was suddenly made an Apostle by special calling. In like manner, the Jews were God's people by promise: the Greeks, by simple calling. Thus the *called apostle* had a similitude and relation to the *called saints*." Bengel.

apostle must not be taken here in the wider sense, of a *missionary*, as in ch. xvi. 7, but in its higher and peculiar meaning, in which the Twelve bore the title ("whom he also named apostles," Luke vi. 13), and Paul (and perhaps Barnabas), and James the Lord's brother. This title was not conferred on Paul by the separation ordered by the Holy Spirit, Acts xiii. 2, *but in virtue of his special call by the Lord in person*; compare the expression "*a chosen vessel*" ("*a vessel of choice*"), Acts ix. 15, with "*Have not I chosen you twelve?*" John vi. 70; also compare John xiii. 18; xv. 16 Acts i. 2. "I cannot agree," says Calvin, "with those who refer this word—**called**—to Paul's personal eternal election of God."

separated] not as in Acts xiii. 2 merely, though that was a particular application of the general truth:—but (as in Gal. i. 15) "*God, who separated me from my mother's womb*." "The same idea of *separation* is at the root of the word *Pharisee*: but here Paul signifies that he was separated by God, not only from among men, from among Jews, from among the disciples, but even from among teachers themselves." Bengel.

unto i.e. for the purpose of announcing. the gospel of God] i.e. **the good tidings sent by** (not concerning) **God**. The genitive is not, as in "*the Gospel of the kingdom*," Matt. iv. 23, Mark i. 14, one of apposition, but of *possession* or origin; **God's Gospel**. And so, whenever the expression '*the Gospel of Christ*' occurs, it is not '*the Gospel about Christ*,' but *Christ's Gospel*; that Gospel which flows out of His grace, and is His gift to men.—Thus in the very beginning of the Epistle, these two short words announce that the Gospel is *of God*,—in other words, that *salvation is of grace only*.

2.] This *good tidings* is no new invention, no after-thought,—but was *long ago announced* in what God's prophets wrote concerning His Son:—and announced by way of *promise*, so that God stood pledged to its realization. "Since the charge of bringing in novelties was brought against the Gospel, he shews that it was older than the Greeks, and long ago shadowed out in the prophets." Chrysostom.

3. concerning his Son] belongs to “*which he had promised afore*,” above,—**which he promised beforehand**, &c., **concerning His Son**, i.e. ‘which (good tidings) He promised beforehand, &c., and indicated that it should be concerning His Son.’ This is more natural than (as is done in the A.V.) to bind these words to “*the Gospel of God*,” which went before. Either meaning will suit ver. 9 equally well.—Christ, the Son of God, is the great subject of the good news.

which was born] or, **became**: not, as in A.V., “*was made*.” There is nothing in the word indicating *creation*, however true that may have been: see John i. 14.

according to the flesh] On the side of His humanity, our Lord became, was born; *that* nature of His begins only then, when He was “*made (born) of a woman*,” Gal. iv. 4.

flesh is here used exactly as in John i. 14, “*the word became flesh*,” to signify *that whole nature, body, and soul*, of which the outward visible tabernacle of the FLESH is the concrete representation to our senses.—The words **of the seed of David** cast a hint back at the promise just spoken of. At the same time, in so solemn an enunciation of the dignity of the Son of God, they serve to shew that even according to the human side, His descent had been fixed in the line of him who was Israel’s anointed and greatest king.

4.] The simple antithesis would have been, *which was born... according to the flesh, but was the Son of God according to the Spirit*, see 1 Tim. iii. 16. But (1) wonderful solemnity is given by dropping the particles, and taking up separately the human and divine nature of Christ, keeping **His Son** as the great subject of both clauses, and thus making them, not contrasts to one another, but correlative parts of the same great whole. And (2) the Apostle, dwelling here on *patent facts*,—the announcements of prophecy,—the history of the Lord’s Humanity, does not deal with the *essential subsistent Godhead of Christ*, but with *that manifestation of it* which the great fact of the Resurrection had made to men. Also (3) by amplifying the *Spirit* into **the Spirit of holiness**, he characterizes the Spirit of Christ as one of absolute holiness, i.e. as *divine*, and *partaking* of the God-head: see below.

with power] This qualifying clause belongs to **declared**,—not to the words “*the Son of God*,”—nor again is it a parallel clause to “*according to the Spirit of holiness*,” to “*by the resurrection*,” &c. (as St. Chrysostom, who interprets it “*by means of the miracles which He did*”), **manifested with power** (to be) **the Son of God**. The rendering then is, **which was with power declared** to be the **Son of God**.

declared] before men. It is not the objective *appointment* of Christ as the Son of God, that is spoken of, but the subjective manifestation in men’s minds that He is so: not of Christ’s *being* what He is, but of the *proof* of that fact by His Resurrection.

according to the Spirit of holiness] The Spirit of holiness is not equivalent to “*the Holy Spirit*:” this epithet would be inapplicable here, for it would point out the *Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, whereas it is the Spirit of Christ Himself*, in distinction from His Flesh, which is spoken of. And this Spirit is designated by the gen. of quality, **of holiness**, to shew that it is not a human, but a divine Spirit which is attributed *here* to Christ,—a Spirit to which holiness belongs as its essence. The other interpretations certainly miss the mark, by overlooking the terms, *according to the flesh* and *according to the Spirit*, the two sides of the Person of Christ here intended to be brought out. Such are that of Theodoret: “through the might wrought in Him by means of the Holy Spirit,”—Chrysostom: “from the Spirit, by whom He gave sanctification,” &c. Calvin and Olshausen also seem to wish to include the notion of *sanctifying* in the term **holiness**, which, how ever true, is more than strictly belongs to the words.

by] as indicating the source, out of which the demonstration proceeds.

the resurrection of the dead] not, “*the resurrection from the dead*,”—which, besides that it is not the rendering of the words of the original, would be a weakening of the strong expression of the Apostle, who takes here summarily and by anticipation the Resurrection of Jesus as being, including, involving (“*I am the Resurrection*,” John xi. 25) *the (whole) Resurrection of the dead*. So that we must not render as A.V. “*the resurrection from the dead*,” but **the resurrection of the dead**, regarded as accomplished in that of Christ. It was the full accomplishment of this, which more than any thing declared Him to be the Son of God: see John v. 25–29. Thus in these words lies wrapped up the argument of ch. vi. 4 ff.

even Jesus Christ our Lord] This is the place of these words in the original, and to this place they ought to be kept. For the Apostle having given this description of the Person and dignity of the Son of God, very Man and very God, now identifies this divine Person with JESUS CHRIST, the Lord and Master of Christians,—the historical object of their faith, and (see words following) the Appointer of himself to the apostolic office.

5. through whom] As in Gal. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 9, designating the Lord Himself as the Agent in conferring the grace and Apostleship.

we received] not ‘*all Christians*,—but *we*, the Apostle himself as he not unfrequently speaks. No others need be here included in the word. *Those to whom he is writing* cannot be thus included, for they are specially contrasted with the subject of the verb **received** by the following verse. Nor can this verb **received** (not, as A.V., “*have received*”) refer to any *general* bestowal of this kind, indicating, as it must, a definite past event, viz. the reception of the Apostleship by himself.

grace] It is hardly to be understood, as Augustine explains, that “the Apostle has grace in common with all the faithful, but *Apostleship* not in common with all.” for he is surely speaking of that *peculiar grace*, by which he wrought in his apostleship more than they all.

apostleship] ‘the office of an Apostle:’ not any *mission*, or *power of sending ministers*, resident in the *whole church*, which would be contrary to the usage of the word. The *existence* of such a power is not hereby denied, but *this place* refers *solely to the office of Paul* as an Apostle. It was the general bestowal of *grace*, which was the condition of and introduced the special bestowal (**and**, as so often, coupling a specific portion to a whole) of *apostleship*: compare 1 Cor. xv. 10.

unto] i.e. **with a view to**,—‘in order to bring about.’

obedience of faith] Such is the literal rendering of the words; and this ought to be kept in the translation. They may mean either, *obedience which is the result of faith*, or, *obedience, the object of which is the faith*; *obedience*, in fact, *to the faith*, as in Acts vi. 7, “*a great multitude of the priests were obedient unto the faith*.” Understood either way, these words form an introduction to the great subject of the Epistle.

in order to bring about obedience of faith among all (the) nations (or, all the Gentiles): the word rendered *Gentiles* being always the same as that meaning *nations*). The Jews do not here come into account. There is no inclusion, and at the same time no express exclusion of them: but Paul was commissioned as *the Apostle of the Gentiles*, and he here magnifies the great office entrusted to him.

for his name's sake] i.e. **on behalf of his name**; ‘for His glory’ “In the *name of Christ* is summed up what He had done and was, what the Christian ever bore in mind, the zeal which marked him, the name wherewith he was named.” Jowett. The words are best taken as belonging to the whole verse: as declaring the purpose for which the grace and apostleship had been received.

6. among whom] The whole should be taken together: **among whom ye also are called of Jesus Christ**; otherwise, with a comma at **also**, the assertion, ‘*among whom are ye also*,’ is flat and unmeaning. Some would take **of Jesus Christ** as a genitive of *possession*, because the call of believers is generally referred to the FATHER; but sometimes the SON is said to call likewise, see John v. 25; 1 Tim. i. 12;—and with **beloved of God** following so close upon it, the expression can I think hardly be taken otherwise than as **called by Jesus Christ**.

7.] This verse follows, in the sense, close on ver. 1.

beloved of God, called to be saints] Both these clauses refer to *all the Christians addressed*: not (as Bengel) the first to Jewish, the second to Gentile believers. No such distinction would be in place in an exordium which anticipates the result of the Epistle—that Jew and Gentile are one in guilt, and one in Christ.

from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ] God is the Giver of grace and peace,—Christ the *Imparter*.

8-17.] OPENING OF THE EPISTLE. His thankfulness for the faith of the Romans: remembrance of them in his prayers: wish to visit them: hindrances hitherto, but still earnest intention of doing so, that he may further ground them in that Gospel, of which he is not ashamed, inasmuch as it is THE POWER OF GOD TO ALL WHO BELIEVE. This leads to the announcement (in a citation from the Scripture) of one great subject of the Epistle,—viz.: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

8.] This placing himself in intimate connexion with his readers by mention of and thankfulness for their faith or Christian graces, is the constant habit of St. Paul. The three Epistles, Gal., 1 Tim., and Titus, are the only exceptions: 2 Cor. may seem to be such, but in ch. i. 3–22 we have an equivalent: see especially, vv. 6, 7, 11, 14. It is literally, First indeed... and the sentence answering to this is found at ver. 13, ‘Ye indeed are prospering in the faith: but I still am anxious *further* to advance that fruitfulness.’

my God] “See with what skill in the arrangement of terms he gives thanks. For he does not say, ‘*to God*,’ but **to my God**: which also the prophets do, appropriating to themselves that which is common to all. And what wonder, if they do? For we see God continually Himself doing the same in speaking of His servants, calling Himself, with a like appropriation, the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.” Chrysostom.

through Jesus Christ] “He offers his sacrifice of thanksgiving as through the Great High Priest: for he who would offer a sacrifice must know that it must be offered through the hands of the High Priest.” Origen. So also Calvin, “We have here an example, how thanks are to be offered through Christ, according to the apostolic precept, Heb. xiii. 15.” Olshausen says, “This is no mere phrase, but a true expression of the deepest conviction. For only by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in men’s hearts are thanksgivings and prayer acceptable to God.” But perhaps here it is better to take the words as expressing an acknowledgment that the faith of the Romans, for which thanks were given, *was due to and rested on* the Lord Jesus Christ: see ch. vii. 25, and the rendering there.

your faith] “In congratulations of this kind Paul sometimes describes the whole Christian character, Col. i. 3 ff., or some portion of it, 1 Cor. i. 5. And thus here he celebrates their faith, agreeably to his design, verses 12, 17.” Bengel.

published] De Wette notices the other side of the report, as given by the Jews at Rome, Acts xxviii. 22, to Paul himself. This *praise* was in the *Christian churches*, and brought by *Christian brethren*.

throughout the whole world] A popular hyperbole, common every where, and especially when speaking of general diffusion through the Roman empire, the ‘*orbis terrarum*.’ The praise would be heard in every city where there was a Christian church,—intercourse with the metropolis of the world being common to all.

9.] “A pious asseveration, concerning a thing necessary to be stated, and unknown, to men, especially to those who were unknown to the writer, and remote from him.” Bengel. There could be no other witness to his practice in his secret prayers, but God: and as the assertion of a habit, of incessantly praying for the Roman Christians, whom he had never seen, might seem to savour of an exaggerated expression of affection, he solemnly appeals to this only possible testimony. To the Eph., Phil. (see however Phil. i. 8), Col., Thess., he gives the same assurance, but without the asseveration. The thus calling God to witness is no uncommon practice with St. Paul: see references.

whom I serve in my spirit] The *serving God in his spirit* was a guarantee that his pro-fession was sincere, and that the oath just taken was no mere form, but a solemn and earnest appeal of his spirit. See also Phil. iii, 3, and John iv. 24. “The Apostle means that he is an intelligent true priest, of his God, not in the temple, but in his spirit,—not at the altar, but in the gospel of His Son.” Umbreit.

in the gospel] “The addition of these words shews the *kind* of his service.” Chrysostom. His peculiar method of service was concerned with the gospel of the Son of God. “Some take this addition, as if Paul wished to commend his service of God on account of its agreement with the commands of the Gospel, seeing that a service of God in the spirit is prescribed to us in the Gospel. But the other interpretation is far more agreeable to the sense, viz. that he renders his service to God in the preaching of the Gospel.” Calvin. See the use of the word “*Gospel*,” Phil. iv. 15.

how unceasingly] The words thus rendered may also mean, “that **without ceasing**.” The rendering in the text seems the better of the two. The whole phrase is a favourite one with our Apostle: see references.

my prayers must be understood of his *ordinary stated prayers*, just in our sense of the expression: “as often as he professedly and stately prayed to God, he remembered them among others.” Calvin.

10. if by any means] It is not said what was the substance of his prayer; only what was its aim and contemplated result. So in Simon’s entreaty, Acts viii. 24, “*Pray ye to the Lord for me, [in order] that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me,*” where the latter clause represents not the *contents* of the prayer, but the *end aimed* at by it.

now at length] i.e. before long:—literally, ‘*at last, some day or other?*

shall have a way opened] S **hall be allowed, prospered.** The rendering of the A.V., ‘*I might have a prosperous journey*, is incorrect,

by, i.e. in the course of, **the will of God.**

11. that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift] That the *gift* here spoken of was no mere supernatural power of working in the Spirit, the whole context shews, as well as the meaning of the word itself in ch. v. 15, 16; vi. 23. And even if the word barely taken, could ever (1 Cor. xii. 4, 9 are no examples, see there) mean technically a *supernatural endowment of the Spirit*, yet the epithet *spiritual*, and the object of imparting this gift, *confirmation in the faith*, would here preclude that meaning. Besides, St. Paul did not value the mere bestowal of these ‘gifts’ so highly, as to make it the subject of his earnest prayers incessantly. The gift alluded to was the comfort (mutual confirmation in the faith) spoken of below.

spiritual:—springing from the Spirit of God, and imparted to the spirit of man.

to the end that ye may be established] Knowing the trials to which they were exposed, and being conscious of the fulness of spiritual power for edification (2 Cor. xiii. 10) given to him, he longed to impart some of it to them, that they might be confirmed. “The Apostle does not say ‘*to the end that I may establish you*,’ for this belongs to God; see ch. xvi. 25, He is only the instrument: hence the passive.” Philippi.

12.] “Then since this saying seemed to assume too much to himself, see how he tempers it by what he puts after it. ‘That, they might not say, What? are we unsteady and wavering, and want thy tongue in order that we may stand firmly? he anticipates this objection, and precludes such an answer by saying (as in ver. 12). It is as if he had said, Do not suppose that I said it, finding fault with you: it was not with this view that I spoke the words; but this is what I wished to say: Ye are undergoing many trials in being harassed by your persecutors: I therefore desired to see you that I may comfort you,—or rather not that I only may comfort you, but may myself also receive comfort from you.” Chrysostom. See the same wish expressed in different words ch. xv, 32, and the partial realization of it, Acts xxviii. 15. The A.V. has, *by the mutual faith both of you and me*. This is hardly the proper use of the word *mutual*, which should mean, *faith which each has in the other*; whereas the comfort here is to spring from the faith which each sees in the other. The rendering in the text is therefore to be preferred. **Faith** is used in the most general sense—*faith* as the necessary condition and working instrument of all Christian exhortation, comfort, and confirmation; producing these, and evidenced by them.

13. I would not have you ignorant] A Pauline formula: see references. The words **but was hindered hitherto** are best as a parenthesis, The *reason of the hindrance* is given in ch. xv. 20–22: it was, *his scrupulous care to preach the gospel where it had not been preached before, rather than on the foundation of others*.

some fruit] The meaning is not here ‘wages,’ or ‘result of my apostolic labour,’ for such is not the ordinary meaning of the word in the New Test., but *fruit borne by you* who have been planted to bring forth fruit to God. This fruit I should then gather and present to God; compare the figure in ch. xv. 16: see also Phil. i. 22 and note.

14.] The connexion seems to be this: He wishes to have some fruit, some produce of expended labour, among the Romans as among the rest of the Gentiles. Till this was the case, he himself was a *debtor* to every such people: which situation of *debtor* he wished to change, by paying the debt and conferring a benefit, into that of one having money out at interest there, and yielding a *fruit*. The debt which he owed to all nations was (ver. 15) the obligation laid on him to preach the gospel to them: see 1 Cor. ix. 16.

Greeks—Barbarians—wise—unwise] These words must not be pressed as applying to any particular churches, or as if any one of them designated the Romans themselves,—or even as if **wise** belonged to **Greeks** and **unwise** to **Barbarians**. They are used, apparently, merely as comprehending *all Gentiles*, whether considered in regard of race or of intellect; and are placed here certainly not without a prospective reference to the universality of guilt, and need of the gospel, which he is presently about to prove existed in the Gentile world.—Notice that he does not call himself a debtor to the *Jews*—for they can hardly be included under the designation *Barbarians* (see Col. iii. 11). Though he had earnest desires for them (ch. ix. 1–3; x. 1), and every where preached to them first, this was not his peculiar *debt*, or bounden duty: see Gal. ii. 7, where he describes himself as “*entrusted, put in charge, with the gospel of the uncircumcision, as Peter with that of the circumcision.*”

15. So...] Having spoken of the whole obligation resting upon him, he now infers, from that, his readiness to fulfil one principal part of it, ‘I am ready to preach the Gospel, as to all Gentiles, so to you, who hold no mean place among them.’

16.] The words, **For I am not ashamed, &c.**, seem to be suggested by the *position of the Romans in the world*. ‘Yea, to you at Rome also: for, though your city is mistress of the world, though your emperors are worshipped as present deities, though you are elated by your pomps and luxuries and victories, yet I am not ashamed of the apparently mean origin of the gospel which I am to preach; for (and here is the transition to his great theme) it is, &c.

for it is the power of God] The gospel, which is the greatest example of the Power of God, he strikingly calls *that Power itself*. So in 1 Cor. i. 24 he calls Christ, *the Power of God*. But not only is the gospel the great example of divine Power; it is the *field of agency* of the power of God, working in it, and interpenetrating it throughout. In barely saying here that it is **the power** of God, the Apostle intends to convey (as also in 1 Cor. i. 24) a *superlative* sense; the *highest and holiest vehicle* of the divine Power, the power *by excellence*. “It is weighty for the difference between the Gospel and the Law, that the Law is never called *God’s power*, but *light, or teaching*, in which a man must walk, Ps. xxxvi. 10; cxix. 105; Prov. vi. 23; Isa. ii. 52.” Umbreit. And the *direction in which* this power acts in the gospel is **unto or towards salvation**—it is a *healing, saving power*: for as Chrysostom reminds us, there is a power of God *unto punishment*, and *unto destruction*, see Matt. x. 28.—But to whom is this gospel the power of God to save? **To every one that believeth**. The *universality* implied in **every one**, the *condition* necessitated in the qualification added, that believeth, and the **power of God** acting **unto salvation**, are the great subjects treated of in the former part of this Epistle. All are proved to be *under sin*, and so *needing God’s righteousness* (ch. i. 18–iii).

20), and the *entrance* into this righteousness is shewn to be *by fait h* (ch. iii. 21–v. 11). Then the *power of God* in freeing from the dominion of sin and death, and as issuing in salvation, is set forth (ch. v. 11–viii. 39). So that if the subject of the Epistle is to be stated in few words, these should be chosen: **the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.** This expresses it better than merely '*justification by faith*, which is in fact only a subordinate part of the great theme,—only *the condition necessitated by man's sinfulness for his entering the state of salvation*: whereas the argument extends *beyond this*, to the *death unto sin and life unto God* and *carrying forward of the sanctifying work of the Spirit*, from its first fruits even to its completion.

to the Jew first, and also to the Greek] This is the *Jewish* expression for all mankind, as "*Greeks and Barbarians*," ver. 14, is the Greek one. The term **Greek** here includes *all Gentiles*. The priority here mentioned is not in order of time, but is **principally** (comp. ch. ii. 9) spoken of *national precedence*, in the sense in which the Jews were to our Lord "*his own*," John i. 11. Salvation was "*from the Jews*," John iv. 22. See ch. ix. 5; xi. 24. Not that the Jew has any *preference* under the gospel; only he *inherits* and has a *precedence*.

17.] An explanation, *how the gospel is the power of God to salvation*, and how it is so *to the believer*:—because in it **God's righteousness** (not His *attribute* of righteousness,—‘the righteousness of God,’ but righteousness *flowing from, and acceptable to Him*) is unfolded, and the more, the more we believe. I subjoin De Wette's note on the words. “The Greek and Hebrew words rendered ‘righteousness,’ are taken sometimes for ‘virtue’ and ‘piety,’ which men possess or strive after,—sometimes imputatively, for ‘freedom from blame’ or ‘justification.’ The latter meaning is most usual with Paul: ‘righteousness’ is that which is so in the sight of God (ch. ii. 13), the result of His justifying forensic Judgment, or of ‘Imputation’ (ch. iv. 5). It may certainly be imagined, that a man *might obtain* justification by *fulfilling the law*: in that case his righteousness is ‘righteousness of his own’ (ch. x. 3), a *righteousness springing from the law* (Phil. iii. 9). But it is impossible for him to obtain a ‘righteousness of his own,’ which at the same time shall avail before God (ch. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16). The Jews not only *have not* fulfilled the law (ch. iii. 9–19), but *could not* fulfil it (vii. 7 ff.); the Gentiles likewise have rendered themselves obnoxious to the divine wrath (i. 24–32). God has ordained that the whole race should be included in disobedience. Now if man is to become righteous from being unrighteous,—this can only happen by God’s grace,—because God *declares him righteous*, assumes him to be righteous, *justifies* him (iii. 24; Gal. iii. 8):—to justify is not only negative, ‘*to acquit*,’ but also positive, ‘*to declare righteous*;’ but never ‘*to make righteous*’ by transformation, or imparting of moral strength by which moral perfection may be attained. Justification must be taken as the old protestant dogmatists rightly took it, in a *forensic* or *imputative* sense. God justifies for Christ’s sake (ch. iii. 22 ff.) on condition of faith in Him as Mediator: the result of *His justification* is ‘righteousness by faith,’ and as He imparts it freely, it is ‘*the righteousness of God*,’ or *from God* (so it ought to be), Phil. iii. 9. ‘*The righteousness of God*’ is ordinarily taken for *that which is righteousness with God in God's sight*; compare

ch. ii, 3, iii. 20; Gal. iii. 11; but that this is at least not necessary, see 2 Cor. v. 21. This justification is certainly an *objective* act of God: but it must also be *subjectively* apprehended (i. e. within him who is the subject of it), as its *condition* is subjective, i.e. dependent on such inner reception by its subject. It is *the acquittal from guilt, and cheerfulness of conscience, attained through faith in God's grace in Christ*,—the very frame of mind which would be proper to a perfectly righteous man—if such there were,—the harmony of the spirit with God,—peace with God. All interpretations which overlook the fact of imputation are erroneous.” To say, with Jowett, that all attempts to define *the righteousness of God* are “the afterthoughts of theology, which have no real place in the interpretation of Scripture,” is in fact to shut our eyes to the great doctrinal facts of Christianity, and float off at once into uncertainty about the very foundations of the Apostle’s argument and our own faith.

is revealed] The verb in the original is generally used of *making known* a thing hitherto concealed: but here of that gradually more complete realization of the state of justification before God by faith in Christ, which is the continuing and increasing gift of God to the believer in the gospel.

from faith] “**from** points to the condition, or the subjective ground. Faith is in the sense of *trust*, and that (1) *a trustful assumption of a truth* in reference to knowledge,—which is equivalent to conviction: (2) *a trustful surrender of the soul, as regards the feeling*. Here it is especially the latter of these: that trust reposed in God’s grace in Christ, which tranquillizes the soul and frees it from all guilt,—and especially trust in the atoning death of Jesus. Bound up with this (not by the meaning of the words, but by the idea of unconditional trust, which excludes all reserve) is *humility*, consisting in the abandonment of all merits of a man’s own, and recognition of his own unworthiness and need of redemption.” De Wette.

unto faith] i.e. *to him that believes*. This seems the most probable interpretation, making *faith* almost equivalent to the *person possessing faith*, see ch. iii. 22: but not entirely,—it is still the aspect, the *phase*, of the man, which is receptive of the righteousness of God, and to this it is revealed. The other principal interpretation—‘*proceeding from faith, and leading to a higher degree of faith*’—does not seem so suitable or forcible.

even as it is written] He shews that *righteousness by faith is no new idea*, but found in the prophets. The words are cited again in Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38: in the former place with the same purpose as here. They are used in Habakkuk with reference to

credence given to the prophetic word: but properly speaking, *all faith is one*, in whatever word or act of God reposed: so that the Apostle is free from any charge of forcing the words to the present purpose. There are two ways of arranging them: *the righteous shall live by faith, and the righteous by faith, he who is righteous by faith, shall live.* But in fact they amount to the same: if the former, which is more agreeable to the Heb., be taken, shall live must mean, ‘shall live on, endure in his righteousness, by means of faith,’ which would assert that it was a righteousness of faith, as strongly as does the latter. Delitzsch says, “The Apostle rests no more on our text than it will bear, He only places its assertion, that the life of the just springs from his faith, in the light of the New Test.”

CHAP. I. 18—XI. 36.] THE DOCTRINAL EXPOSITION OF THE ABOVE TRUTH: THAT THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH. And herein,—*inasmuch as this power of God consists in the revelation of God’s righteousness in man by faith, and in order to faith the first requisite is the recognition of man’s unworthiness, and incapability to work a righteousness for himself,—the Apostle begins by proving that all, Gentiles and Jews, are GUILTY before God, as holding back the truth in un-righteousness*, ch. i. 18—iii. 20. And First, ch. i, 18–32, OF THE GENTILES.

18.] He first states the general fact, of *all mankind*; but immediately passes off to the consideration of the *majority* of mankind, the Gentiles; reserving the Jews for exceptional consideration afterwards.

the wrath of God is revealed] The statement of ver. 17 was, that the RIGHTEOUSNESS of GOD is revealed. The necessary condition of this revelation is, the DESTRUCTION of the *righteousness* of MAN by the revelation of God’s anger against sin.

is revealed, not in the *Gospel*: not in men’s consciences: not in the miserable state of the then world: but (as implied indeed by the adjunct **from heaven**,—that it is a *providential, universally-to-be-seen* revelation) in the PUNISHMENTS which, ver. 24, God, has made to follow upon sin, see also ch. ii. 2. So that revealed is said of an *objective reality* here, not of an evangelic internal and subjective unfolding.

the wrath of God is put, but with the deepest truth, for *the righteousness of God in punishment* (see ch. ii. 8; v. 9; Eph. ii. 3; Matt. iii. 7; John iii. 36). It is the opposite, in the divine attributes, of *Love*.

ungodliness] (i. e. godlessness, living without God),—and **unrighteousness** (i. e. iniquity, injustice of thought and conduct). Neither term is exclusive of the other, nor to be formally pressed to its limits. They overlap and include each other by a large margin: the specific difference being, that ungodliness is more the *fountain* (but at the same time partially the result) of *unrighteousness*,—which *unrighteousness* is more the *result* (but at the same time partially the fountain) of *ungodliness*. **Unrighteousness** is the *state* of the thoughts and feelings and habits, induced originally by forgetfulness of God, and in its turn inducing impieties of all kinds. We may notice by the way, that the word *ungodliness* forms an interesting link to the Pastoral Epistles, where it, and its opposite, *godliness*, are the ordinary terms for an unholy and a holy life.

of men, who hold down (or hold back) the truth in unrighteousness] who, possessing enough of the germs of religious and moral verity to preserve them from abandonment, have checked the development of this *truth* in their lives, in the love and practice of sin. That this is the meaning here is plain: see the discussion in my Greek Testament.

This meaning, ‘*keeping back*,’ ‘*hindering the development of*, admirably suits the sense, that men had (see vv. 19 ff.) knowledge of God sufficient, if its legitimate work had been allowed, to have kept them from such excesses of enormity as they have committed, but that this *truth* they *held down*, or *back*, in unrighteousness, i.e. *crushed, quenched*, in (as the element, conditional medium) their state and practice of unrighteousness. It is plain that to take in unrighteousness for *unrighteously*, is to miss the force of the expression altogether—the pregnant ‘*in and by*’ implying that it is their unrighteousness,—the very absence of *righteousness* for which the argument contends,—which is the *state wherein, and the instrument whereby* they hold back the truth lit up in their consciences.

19.] because may either give the reason *why the anger of God is revealed*, and thus apply to all that follows as far as ver. 32, being taken up again at vv. 21, 24, 26, 28: or may explain the phenomena of these men holding back the truth in unrighteousness: which latter seems most probable: the words understood being, ‘(this charge I bring against them,) because.’ For he proves, first (ver. 20) that they *had the truth*; then (vv. 21 ff.) *that they held it back*.

that which is known, the objective knowledge patent and recognized in Creation:—not, as A.V., inconsistently with the meaning of the word in the original, ‘*that which may be known*,’ which would assert what, as simple matter of fact, was not the case, that *all which could be known of God* was manifest in them. He speaks now not of what they *might have known of God*, but of what they *did know*. Thus the expression will mean, *that universal objective knowledge of God as the Creator*, which we find more or less in every nation under heaven, and which, as matter of historical fact, was proved to be in possession of the great Gentile nations of antiquity. **is manifest in them**, i.e. *in their hearts*: not, *to them*,—nor, *among them*, for if it had been a thing acknowledged *among them*, it would not have been *held back*. Every man has in him this know-

ledge; his senses convey it to him (see next verse) with the phænomena of nature.

for God manifested it unto them] gives the reason why that which is known of God is manifest in them, viz. because God Himself so created the world, as to leave impressed on it this testimony to Himself.—Notice, and keep to, the *historic tense*: not, as A.V., ‘*hath manifested it*,’ but manifested it, viz. at the Creation. This is important for the right understanding of the words “*from the creation of the world*,” ver. 20.

20.] For (justifying the clause preceding) his invisible attributes from the time of the creation, when the manifestation was made by God, *are perceived*.

being understood (apprehended by the mind) **by means of His works** (of creation and sustenance,—not here of moral government). The rendering of the A.V., ‘*being understood by the things that are made*,’ is ambiguous, being capable of conveying the sense that the things which are made, understand them.

his eternal power] To this the evidence of Creation is plainest of all: Eternal, and Almighty, have always been recognized epithets of the Creator.

and divinity] not *Godhead*: the fact that the Creator is *divine*;—is of a *different nature* from ourselves, and accompanied by distinct attributes, and those of the highest order,—which we call *divine*.

so that they are without excuse] The words may be also, and more literally, rendered, **that they may be without excuse**. But, however true it is, that in the doings of the Allwise, *all results are purposed*,—the sense ‘*in order that they might be inexcusable*,’ would be

manifestly contrary to the whole spirit of the argument, which is bringing out, not at present *God’s sovereignty in dealing with man, but man’s inexcusableness in holding back the truth by unrighteousness*. Chrysostom says, “God has not done this for this express purpose, even though it has so turned out. For He did not put this knowledge of Himself forth in order to deprive them of all excuse, but in order that they might know Him: they, by forgetting Him, deprived themselves of all excuse.”

21. because] This assigns the reason why they were without excuse.

though they knew God] ie. ‘*with the knowledge of Him above stated*? This testifies plainly that matter of *fact*, and not of *possibility*, has been the subject of the foregoing verses. From this point, we take up what they **MIGHT HAVE DONE, but DID NOT**. They glorified Him not as GOD, i.e. they did not by worship recognize Him as the great Creator of all, distinct from and infinitely superior to all His works. Bengel well divides *glorifying and giving of thanks*. “We are bound to give God thanks for benefits, but to glorify Him for His own divine attributes.” They *did neither*: in their *religion*, they deposed God from His place as Creator,—in their *lives*, they were ungrateful by the abuse of His gifts.

their reasonings] not, as A.V., ‘*imaginings*, which the word never signifies. It is used generally in N.T. in a bad sense: *they became vain (idle, foolish) in their speculations*.

their heart] the whole inner man,—the seat of knowledge and feeling,—**being without understanding** (especially in not retaining God in its knowledge) **became dark** (lost the little light it had, and wandered blindly into the *mazes of folly*).

22, while they professed themselves wise—professing themselves to be wise] The words relate perhaps not. so much to the schools of philosophy, as to the assumption of wisdom by the Greeks in general, see 1 Cor. i. 22, of which assumption their philosophers were indeed eminent, but not the only examples.

23. changed, &c.] Quoted from Ps. cvi. 20,—only ‘*their glory*,’ of the Psalm, is changed to ‘*God’s glory*,’—viz. His Power and Majesty visible in the Creation, **for** is literally **in**, and represents the conditional element in which the change subsisted.

uncorruptible and **corruptible** shew by contrast the folly of such a substitution: He who made and upholds all things must be *uncorruptible*, and *no corruptible thing can express His likeness*.

an image of] literally, **the similitude of the form**,—not of any one particular man, but *of man* (examples being abundant), to which they degraded God,—and so of the other creatures. Deities of the *human* form prevailed in Greece—those of the *bestial* in Egypt. Both methods of worship were practised in Rome.

24–32.] Immorality, and indeed bestiality, were the sequel of idolatry.

24.] The **also** may import, *A s they advanced in departure from God, so God also on His part gave them up, &c.;—His*

dealings with *them* had a progression likewise.

gave them up] not merely permissive, but judicial: **God delivered them over.** As sin begets sin, and darkness of mind deeper darkness, grace gives place to judgment, and the divine wrath hardens men, and hurries them on to more fearful degrees of depravity.

in the desires, or lusts] not by nor *through* the lusts (as Erasmus and A.V.);—the lusts of the heart were the *field of action*, the department of their being, *in which* this dishonour took place.

uncleanness] more than mere profligacy in the satisfaction of natural lust; and see ver. 26, where a similar term, to **dishonour**, is used in the original:—bestiality, impurity in the *physical*, not only in the social and religious sense.

to dishonour] The infinitive mood may imply either (1) the *purpose* of God's delivering them over to impurity, '*that their bodies should be dishonoured*', or (2) the result of that delivering over, '*so that their bodies were dishonoured*', or (3) the nature of the impurity, as below, in ver. 26,—'*impurity, which consisted in their bodies being dishonoured*.' The second of these seems most accordant with the usage of the Apostle and with the argument. The clause may be, and with more probability, rendered, **so that their bodies were dishonoured among them**.

25.] This verse casts light on the *holding back* (or *down*) *the truth in unrighteousness* of ver. 18. *The truth of God* (the true notion of Him as the Creator) which they professed, they changed into *a lie* (the word '*lie*' is used of *idols*, Jer. xvi. 19), thus counteracting its legitimate agency, and depriving it of all power for good. The word rendered **worshipped** is used of the honour of *respect* and *observance* and *reverence*,—that rendered **served**, of *formal worship with sacrifice and offering*.

the creature] the *thing made*, a general

term for all objects of idolatrous worship.

rather than] or **beyond**, which would amount to the exclusion of the Creator; not, as A.V., *more than*, which would only imply that they gave to the one a *greater amount* of service than to the other.—The doxology expresses the horror of the Apostle at this dishonour, and puts their sin in a more striking light.

26.] literally, **passions of dishonour:** see above, ver. 24, stronger than **shameful passions**, as setting forth the condition to which the passions belonged. Contrast 1 Thess. iv. 4, "*to possess himself of his own vessel in honour.*"

27.] in themselves, their own persons, viz. by their degradation even below the beasts.

the recompence] The Apostle treats this degradation into which they fell, as a *consequence of a retribution for*, their departure from God into idolatry,—with which *in fact* it was closely connected. *This shame*, and not its *consequences*, which are not *here* treated of, is the recompence of their error, their aberration from the knowledge of God, which they received. This is further shewn by the verb **which was meet**, in the past tense. If there had been no hell, nor any punishment threatened, this alone was worse than any punishment. And if *even in this* they found pleasure, why this very pleasure was an accession of punishment.

28.] There is, in the original, a play on words in this place, which can hardly be expressed in any other language. **Because they reprobated the knowledge of God, God gave them over to a reprobate mind**, is indeed a very inadequate, but as far as the *form* of the two words is concerned, an *accurate* representation of it. Mr. Conybeare gives it—“As they thought fit to cast out the acknowledgment of God, God gave them over to an outcast mind.”

reprobate means *rejected by God*. God withdrew from them His preventing grace, and left them to the evil which they had chosen. God did *not* give them up to a mind which had, but to a mind judicially abandoned to that depravity which, being well able to exercise the faculty of discernment required, not only does not do so, but in the headlong current of its abandonment to evil, sympathizes with and encourages (ver. 32) its practice in others. It is the seeing and approving better things, which makes the *following worse things* so peculiarly criminal.

they did not choose to retain] equivalent to *they chose not to retain*: the latter would express more a *deliberate act of the judgment* ending in rejection of God, whereas the text charges them with *not having exercised* that judgment which would, if exercised, have led to the retention of God in their knowledge.

to retain God in their knowledge] So Job xxi. 14,—“they say to God, Depart from us: for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,” and xxii. 15–17. **29–31.]** The word “*fornication*,” found in some authorities here, and in others elsewhere in the list, is omitted in our earliest and best MSS. The Apostle can hardly have written it here, treating as he does all these

immoralities of the heart and conscience as *results of*, and *flowing from*, the licentious practices of idolatry above specified.— Accurate distinctions of ethical meaning can hardly be found for all these words. Without requiring such, or insisting on each excluding the rest, I have collected the most interesting notices respecting them.

unrighteousness] Perhaps a general term, comprehending all that follow: such would be according to the usage of the Epistle: but perhaps to be confined to the stricter import of **injustice**: of which on the part of the Romans, history gives abundant testimonies.

wickedness] This term is interpreted to mean *the disposition to work evil*: and is used therefore more of the *tempter* and seducer to evil.

covetousness (not as 1 Thess. iv. 6, see there), of which the whole provincial government and civil life of the Romans at the time was full. “When was the lap of avarice more widely spread?” exclaims Juvenal, soon after this.

maliciousness] The word thus rendered really means more the *passive side of evil*—the capability of and proclivity to evil,— the opposite to *virtue*.

whisperer s] i.e. secret maligners; “backbiters” indicates *open slanderers*. The word rendered “*haters of God*,” is never found in this active sense, but always in a passive, **hated by God**; and such is apparently the sense here. The order of crimes enumerated would be broken, and one of a totally different kind inserted between *slanderers* and *insolent*, if this word is to signify ‘*haters of God*.’ But on the other supposition,—if any crime was known more than another as ‘*hated by the gods*,’ it was that of informers, abandoned persons who circumvented and ruined others by a system of malignant espionage and false information. And the crime was one which the readers of this part of Roman history know to have been the pest of the state; Tacitus, for example, calls the informers, “persons favoured by the Prince, but hateful to God.” It does not follow that the informers *only* are intended, but the expression may be used to include all those abandoned persons who were known as *hated by the gods*, who were employed in pursuits hateful and injurious to their kind.

insolent] The word so rendered is opposed by the Greek writers to that indicating ‘a discreet and modest man: but here perhaps, and also as said by St. Paul of himself, 1 Tim. i. 13, it designates one who is *insolent*, ‘an insulting person.’

proud] The word so rendered is said to point out one who despises others in comparison with himself. Aristotle mentions insolence and pride as examples of qualities consequent on wealth.

boasters] “One who is rash, and claims a high character for bravery,” says Aristotle of the meaning of this word; and in another place, “the *boaster* seems to be one who appropriates credit to himself, when it does not belong to him, and greater than belongs to him. All exaggeration, and excessive depreciation, belong to the character of the boaster.”

without (moral) understanding] See Col. i. 9.

without natural affection] Petronius says of Rome, “In this city no one brings up children, because a man who has heirs of his own is not invited as a guest at feasts or at spectacles.”

32.] The Apostle advances to the h *ighest grade of moral abandonment*,—the knowledge of God’s sentence against such crimes, united with the contented practice of them, and encouragement of them in others.

the righteous judgment of God] the sentence of God, unmistakeably pronounced in the conscience; **viz. that they who do such things are worthy of death**: this is the sentence, and must not be enclosed in a parenthesis.

worthy of death: *of what sort of death?* Probably “*death*” is a general term for the *fatal* consequence of sin: that such courses *lead to ruin*. The word can hardly be pressed to its exact meaning: for many of the crimes mentioned could never be visited with judicial capital punishment in this world: nor could the heathen have any definite idea of eternal spiritual death, as the penalty attached to sin; nor again, any idea of the *connexion* between sin and natural death. “Life and Death,” remarks Umbreit, “are ever set over against one another in the Old as well as in the New Testament, the one as including all good that can befall us, the other, all evil.” The description here given by the Apostle of the moral state of the heathen world should by all means be compared with that in Thucydides, at the end of his third book, of the moral state of Greece at the end of the fourth year of the Peloponnesian war. ‘The English reader will find it in Hobbes’s Translation; and a summary of it in Grote’s History of Greece, vol. vi. ch. 50, pp. 375–384. The English historian gives only the political side of the description. There is also a remarkable passage in the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, ch. xiv. 22–31, the opening of which is strikingly similar to our text.

Romans: Chapter 2

CHAP II. 1–29.] Secondly, THE SAME, that all are guilty before God, IS PROVED OF THE JEWS ALSO. And first, verses 1–11, no man (the practice of the Jews being hinted at) must condemn another, for all alike are guilty.

1.] The address passes gradually to the Jews. They were the people who *judged*—who pronounced all Gentiles to be born in sin and under condemnation:—doubtless there were also proud and censorious men among the Gentiles, to whom the rebuke might apply, but these are hardly in the Apostle's mind. This is evident by comparing the charge, “*thou that judgest does the same things*,” with verses 21–23, where the same charge is implied in a direct address to the Jew.

Wherfore] On account of this “*righteous judgment of God*,” decreeing death against the doers of these things—FOR *thou doest them thyself*. Therefore thy setting thyself up as a judge is unjustifiable.

whosoever thou art that judgest] The Jew is not yet named, but hinted at. (see above): not in order to conciliate the Jews, but on account of the as yet purposely general form of the argument. This verse is in fact the major of a syllogism, the minor of which follows, verses 17–20, where the position here declared to be unjustifiable, is asserted to be assumed by *the Jew*.

for wherein] i.e. ‘in the matter in which.’

2. according to truth] i.e. proceeds **according to justice** (John viii. 16).

3.] Here he approximates nearer to the Jews. They considered that because they were the children of Abraham, they should be saved, see Matt. iii. 7, 9.

this] viz., that thou shalt escape, following. **Thou**, in the latter clause of the verse, has the emphasis on it, **thou thyself**,—‘*thou above all others*.’

4. or] (introducing a new error or objection, see ch. iii. 29; vi. 3; xi. 2), ‘*inasmuch as God spares thee day by day* (see Eccles. viii. 11), *dost thou set light by His long-suffering, ignorant that His intent in it is to lead thee to repentance?*’

the riches] A favourite word with the Apostle (see reff.)—the **fulness**, ‘abundance.’

goodness, as shewn by His **forbearance** and **long-suffering**.

not knowing—being blind to the truth, that... some would render it ‘*not considering*:’ but it is a wilful and guilty ignorance, not merely an inconsiderateness, which is blamed in the question.

is leading thee] This is its intent and legitimate course, which thy blindness will frustrate.

5.] I am inclined to regard the question as continued. But the enquiry loses itself in the digressive clauses following, and nowhere comes pointedly to an end. I have therefore not placed a mark of interrogation at the end of ver. 4 or of ver. 5, but have left the construction to explain itself.

after] ie. ‘*i n consonance with*,’—describing the state out of which the action springs.

impenitent] i.e. not admitting that *repentance*, that *change of mind* (for this is the meaning of the word) to which God is leading thee.

wrath in the day of wrath] ‘wrath which shall come upon thee in that day.’ The *day of wrath is the day of judgment*, viewed in its relation to *sinners*.

the revelation, or manifestation (public enforcement, it having been before latent though determined) of **God's righteous judgment** (see ch. i. 32).

6, 7.] This *retribution* must be carefully kept in its place in the argument. The Apostle is here speak-ing *generally*, of the general system of God in governing the world,—the judging according to each man's works—punishing the evil, and rewarding the righteous. No question *at present* arises, *how this righteousness in God's sight is to be obtained*—but the truth is only stated broadly at present, to be further specified by and by, when it is clearly shewn that by *works of the law* no flesh can be justified before God. The neglect to observe this has occasioned two mistakes: (1) an idea that by this passage it is proved that not faith only, but works also in some measure, justify before God; and (2) an idea that by “well-doing” here is meant faith in Christ. However true it be, so much is certainly not *meant* here, but merely the fact, that *every where, and in all, God*

punishes evil, and rewards good.

7, 8.] The more literal rendering of these verses is, **To those who by endurance in good works seek for glory and honour and immortality** (will He render) **eternal life: but to those who are (men) of self-seeking, and disobey the truth, but obey iniquity** (shall accrue) **anger and wrath, &c.** The term rendered well-doing is singular, **good work:** indicating *moral habitude* in the whole, the *general course of life and action.*

glory, *absolute* imparted *glory* like His own, see Matt. xiii. 43; John xvii. 22:—**honour, recognition, relative precedence**, see Matt. x. 32; xxv. 34:—**immortality**, literally, **in corruptibility**: so the aim of the Christian athlete is described, 1 Cor. ix. 25, as being to obtain an *in corruptible crown*.

8.] (literally) **to those who are of self-seeking:** those who live in, act from, are situated in, and do their deeds from a spirit of ambitious seeking of their own interests,—for such is the meaning of the original word.

do not obey the truth] Hinder (see ch. i. 18) the truth which they possess from working, by self-abandonment to iniquity.

indignation (or anger) **and wrath**] The former word denotes the *abiding, settled mind of God towards them* (the anger of God abideth upon him, John iii. 36),—and the latter, the *outbreak* of that anger at the great day of retribution.

9.] tribulation and anguish (or *distress*): the former signifies more the outward weight of objective infliction,—the latter the subjective feeling of the pressure. It is possible, in the case of the *suffering Christian*, for the former to exist without the latter: so 2 Cor. iv. 8, *troubled on every side, yet not distressed*,—where the Greek words are the same. But here the objective weight of infliction and the subjective weight of anguish, are co-existent.

upon every soul of man] Probably a circumlocution for the sake of emphasis and solemnity. Had it been to indicate that the soul is the suffering part of the man, it should have been upon the soul of every man, or, upon every soul of men.

the Jew first] Because the Jew has so much greater advantages, and better opportunities of knowing the divine will: and, therefore, pre-eminent responsibility.

10. peace] Here in its highest and most glorious sense: see ch. 6, x. 15; John xiv. 27.

11.] This remark serves as the transition to what follows, not merely as the confirmation of what went before. As to what *preceded*, it asserts that though the Jew has had great advantages, he shall be justly judged for his use of them, not treated as a favourite of Heaven: as to what *follows*, it introduces a comparison, between him and the Gentile to shew *how fairly* he will be, for those greater advantages, regarded as *first* in responsibility. And thus we gradually (see note on ver. 1) pass to the direct comparison between him and the Gentile, and consideration of his state.

12–16.] *The justice of a GENERAL judgment of ALL, but according to the advantages of each.*

12. For as many as have sinned without (the) **law** (of Moses) **shall also perish without** (the) **law** (of Moses)] i.e. *it shall not appear against them in judgment.* Whether that will *ameliorate* their case, is not even hinted,—but only the *fact*, as consonant with God's justice, stated. That this is the meaning of *without law* is clear from 1 Cor. ix. 21. That even these have sinned against *a law* is presently (ver. 14) shewn. Chrysostom says, “The Greek is judged *without law*: this implies not a more severe, but a milder judgment (this is perhaps saying too much, see above), that is, he has not the law to accuse him. This is the meaning of *without law*, that he is convicted without its condemnation, by the arguments of nature only. But the Jew is judged by the law, ie. the law also, together with nature, accusing him: for the greater care he had bestowed on him, the greater will be his penalty.” It is said, **shall perish**, the *result* of the judgment on them, rather than “*shall be judged*,” its *process*, because the absence of the law would thus seem as if it were the *rule by which they are to be judged*,—whereas it is only an *accident* of that judgment, which *depends on other considerations*.

under (or in, as a condition of being) **the** (Mosaic) **law**; not ‘*a law*,’ which would make the sentence a truism: it is on *that very undeniable assumption*, ‘*that all who have had a law given shall be judged by that law*,’ that the Apostle constructs his argument, asserting it with to the Mosaic law in the ease of the Jews, and proving that the Gentiles have had a law given to them in the testimony of their consciences. These verses are no general assertions concerning men who have, and men who have not, a law revealed (for *all have one*), but a *statement of the case as concerning Jews and Gentiles*. It may safely be assumed that whenever the word “*law*” is used, without any further definition, in this Epistle, the law of Moses is intended by it. These last **shall be judged by the law**: for that will furnish the *measure* and *rule* by which judgment will proceed.

13.] This is to explain to the Jew the fact, that not his mere hearing of the law read in the synagogue, (which is equivalent to his being by birth and privilege a Jew,) will justify him before God, but (still keeping to general principles, and not toning it down)

as yet on the *impossibility of being thus justified*) the doing of the law.

14.] Now, the Apostle speaks of the **Gentiles** in general; see ch. iii. 29; xi. 13; xv. 10, 12.

the law] viz. *of Moses*. A law, they have; see below. **by nature**, i.e. in accordance with the promptings of their own minds.

the things of the law] i.e. the things about which the law is concerned: for example, abstain from stealing, or killing, or adultery. But it by no means follows that the Apostle means that the Gentiles could *fulfil* the law, do *the things*, i.e. *all* the things enjoined by the law: he argues that a conscientious Gentile, who knows not *the law*, does, when he acts in accordance with requirements of the law, so far set up the law to himself. The Apostle does not deny certain virtues to the Gentiles, but maintains the inefficiency of those, and all other virtues, towards man's salvation.

are the law unto themselves (so far), not '*a law*', for *a law* may be just or unjust, God's law or man's law: there is but one law of God, partly written in men's consciences, more plainly manifested in the law of Moses, and fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

15.] **shew, i.e. by their conduct shew forth**,—give an example of.

the work of the law is nearly equivalent to *the things of the law above*: but it is singular, as applying to each of the particular cases supposed in the words of the hypothesis above. If it had here been *the works of the law*, it might have been understood to mean *the whole works of the law*, which the inde-finite nature of the hypothesis prevents above.

written in their hearts] Alluding to the tables of stone on which the 'law was written: see a similar figure, 2 Cor. iii. 3.

their conscience bearing witness thereto] This is a *new* argument, not a mere continuation of 'the "*shewing the work of the law*" above. Besides their giving this example by actions consonant with the law, their *own conscience*, reflecting on the thing done, *bears witness to it as good*.

bearing witness thereto, i.e. **confirming by its testimony**, and signifying the agreement of the witness with the deed: perhaps also referring to the reflective process, in which a man confers, so to speak, with himself.

and their thoughts (*judgments or reflections*, the self-judging voices of the conscience, which being corrupted by sinful desires are often *divided*) **among one another** (i. e. thought against thought in inner strife) **accusing or perhaps excusing** (these two participles are *absolute*, describing the office of these judgments,—and nothing need be supplied, as 'them,' or 'their deeds'). Notice the similarity of this strife of conscience, and its testimony, as here described, to the higher and more detailed form of the same conflict in the Christian man, ch. vii. 16.

16.] *To what has this verse reference?* Hardly to that just preceding, which surely speaks of a process going on in *this life* (so however Chrysostom takes it. See also a fine passage in Bourdaloue's Sermons, vol. i. Serm. ii. p. 27, ed. Paris, 1854): nor, as commonly assumed, to the verb "*shall be judged*" (ver. 12), which only terminates one in a series of clauses connected by "for:"—but to *the great affirmation of the passage, concluding with ver. 10*. 'To this it is bound, it appears to me, by the **words the secrets of men**, answering to "*every soul of man*," ver. 9. This affirmation is the last sentence which has been in the dogmatic form:—after it we have a series of quasi-parenthetical clauses, carrying on the reasoning by for, vv. 11, 12, 13, 14. After it, the reasons, necessitated by the startling assertion, are one after another given, and, that having been done, *the time is specified when the great retribution shall take place*.

by Jesus Christ] viz. as *the Judge*—see John v. 22:—belongs to the verb *shall judge*. See also Acts xvii. 31.

according to (not belonging to the verb "*shall judge*," as the *rule of judgment*, but to the whole declaration, 'as taught in,' 'as forming part of') **the Gospel entrusted to me to teach**.

17–24.] *The pride of the Jews in their law and their God contrasted with their disobedience to God and the law.*

17. **But if**] The Greek for this, and for "*behold*," differ only by one letter. All our older MSS. have *but if*: and the other has been substituted for it in the later ones, possibly by mistake, possibly because the sentence with "*if*" seems at first sight not to be complete. But this incompleteness is more apparent than real. It is only produced by the resumption of the thread of the sentence with "*therefore*," ver. 21. Omit (in the sense) only that word, and all proceeds regularly—'*But if thou art denominated a Jew, and &c..., thou that teachest thy neighbour, dost thou not teach thyself?*' &c. The address in the second person carries on the apostrophe from ver. 5, since when it has been broken off by reference to the great day of retribution and its rule of judgment; the *thou* identifies the person addressed here as the same indicated there, and is here emphatic, as in ver. 1. Thus the Apostle by degrees *sets in his place as a Jew* the somewhat indefinite object of his remonstrances hitherto,—and

reasons with him as such.

restest upon the law] The original word is one used of *false trust*; the Septuagint version uses it where we have “*y et will they lean upon the Lord*,” Micah iii. 11.

18. knowest his will] Literally, **the will**: God having been just mentioned, it is left to be inferred that the word **will** is to be referred to Him.

and approvest things that are more excellent; or, provest (in the sense of sifting and coming to a conclusion on) **things which differ**. The words may be rendered either way; but the translation in the text is preferable: the other being somewhat flat in meaning, and not so applicable.

being (habitually, not in youth only) **instructed** (not merely catechetically but didactically, in the synagogues, &c.) out of the law.

19. a guide of the blind] We can hardly say with Olshausen, that the Apostle *undoubtedly* refers to the saying of our Lord, Matt. xv. 14,—but rather that both that saying and this were allusive to a title “leaders of the blind” given to themselves by the Pharisees, with which St. Paul as a Pharisee would be familiar. Similarly, the following titles may have been well-known and formal expressions of Jewish pride with reference to those who were without the covenant.

20. the form] more properly, perhaps, *the model*: not the mere apparent likeness, but the *real representation*. The law, as far as it went, was a reflexion of the holiness and character of God. Hardly so much is here meant, as that the law *contained a foreshadowing of Christ*,—for the Apostle is speaking now more of *moral* truth and knowledge, by which a rule of judgment is set up, sufficient to condemn the Jew as well as the Gentile.—But after all, this clause is not to be pressed as declaring a fact, but taken subjectively with regard to the Jew, after the words “*thou art confident*,” and understood of *his estimate* of the law. 21.) “And even the righteous rebuke may no longer be restrained. Such advantages and such pretensions ought undoubtedly to be followed and justified by a corresponding course of holy conduct.” Ewbank.

22. thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples?] The contrast here must be maintained; which it will not be if we understand the question to apply to robbing the temple of God of offerings destined for Him (Jos. Ant. xviii. 3. 4). And the mention of *abhorring idols* leads into the kind of robbery which is meant. “Thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou rob their temples?” That it was necessary to vindicate the Jews from such a charge, appears from Acts xix. 37: and Josephus gives as a law, not to rob strange temples, nor take any offering dedicated by name to any god.

23.] ‘This question comprehends the previous ones.

24.] ‘For what is written in the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel (see reff.), is no less true now of you:’ ‘the fact is so, as it is written.’

25–29.] Inasmuch us CIRCUMCISION was the especial sign of the covenant, and as such, a distinction on which the Jewish mind dwelt with peculiar satisfaction: the Apostle sets forth, *that circumcision without the keeping of the law is of no avail, and that true circumcision and true Judaism are matters of the heart, not of the flesh only*. “But,” says the replier, ‘circumcision is a great fact.’ ‘I confess it,’ rejoins the Apostle, ‘but WHEN? When a man has that which is inward in the heart’ And see here the Apostle’s wisdom, how fittingly he has introduced his argument about it. He did not begin with it at once, since it was held in great estimation: but when he has shewn that they were offenders in a still greater matter, and were guilty of blasphemy towards God, then at length, having secured his readers’ condemnation of them, and having lowered them from their preeminence, he introduces his argument about circumcision, confident that no one ever will be found as its unlimited apologist.” Chrysostom.

25. is become uncircumcision] i.e. *counts for nothing*: the Jewish transgressor is no better off than the Gentile transgressor.

26. the uncircumcision] i.e. those who are in the state of uncircumcision.

the ordinances] Plainly the *moral* requirements, not the ceremonial: for one of the very first of the latter was, *to be circumcised*. The case is an *impossible one*: nor does the Apostle put it as possible, only as shewing manifestly, that circumcision, the sign of the covenant of the Law, was *subordinate to the keeping of the Law itself*.

shall not, &c.] i.e. “In such a case would not he be counted as a circumcised person?”

27.] I prefer to regard this verse not as a continuation of the question, but as a separate emphatic assertion, and as leading the way to the next verse.

the uncircumcision which is by nature] i.e. ‘he, who remains in his natural state of uncircumcision’

if it fulfil the law] Such is the supposition—that an uncircumcised man could fully act up to the (moral) requirements of the law.

judge, i.e. ‘rise up in judgment against,’ judge indirectly by his example. See Matt. xii. 41, 42, where the more definite word ‘condemn’ is used in a sense precisely similar.

through is here used of the *state in which the man is* when he does the act, *regarded as the medium* through which the act is done. The “*by*” of the A.V. gives too much the idea of the state being the *instrument, by means of which*.

29.] inwardly or in secret, as a qualification of the Jew, is parallel with **of the heart** as a qualification of *circumcision: both* designating the inner and spiritual reality, of which the name of Jew and the carnal circumcision are only the signs.—“*Circumcision of the heart*” is no new expression:—we have it virtually in Deut. x. 16; Jer. iv. 4: see also Acts vii. 51.

in the spirit, not in the letter] Not merely ‘spiritually, not externally?’ nor does the word “*spirit*” allude to the *necessitating cause* of circumcision (the uncleanness of the inner man):—nor signify the *material*; nor the *rule*; but the *living power or element*, wherewith that inner sphere of being is filled,—in being used as in Acts xvii. 28, of that in which any thing lives and moves,—comp. “*j oy in the Holy Ghost*,” ch. 17,—“*love in the spirit*,” Col. i. 8,—“*to serve in newness of spirit*,” ch. vii. 6,—“*to be in the spirit*,” ch. viii. 9. So that **the spirit here** is not man’s spirit, nor properly the Holy Spirit, but *the spirit*, as opposed to *the letter*, of the Jewish law and of all God’s revelation of Himself.

whose praise] viz. of the true Jew: the circumcision of the heart, as belonging to him, is subordinate.—The praise of such a character, (for *praise* it must be,) can only come from Him who sees in secret (Matt. vi. 4, 6), and can discern the heart.

Romans: Chapter 3

III. 1–20.] TAKING INTO ALL FAIR ACCOUNT THE REAL ADVANTAGES OF THE JEWS, THESE CANNOT, BY THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE ITSELF CONCERNING THEM, EXEMPT THEM FROM THIS SENTENCE OF GUILTINESS BEFORE GOD, IN WHICH ALL FLESH ARE INVOLVED.

1–4.] The circumcised Jew did unquestionably possess great advantages, which were not annulled by the rebellion of some.

1.] then, i.e. seeing that things are so. If true Judaism and true circumcision be merely spiritual, what is the profit of external Judaism and ceremonial circumcision?

advantage] profit, pre-eminence. It is best to take the question, not as *coming from an objector*, which supposition has obscured several parts of this Epistle, but as *asked by the Apostle himself*, anticipating the thoughts of his reader.

2.] The words, **much every way**, answer the first question of ver. 1, but take no account of the second, as it is virtually included in the first. Nor can it be properly regarded as answered in ch. iv. 1 ff. (see there.)

every way] i.e. in all departments of the spiritual life.

first indeed] The Apostle begins as if intending to instance *several* of these advantages, but having mentioned the *greatest*, leaves it to his reader to fill in the rest, and turns to establish what he has just asserted. For the word here can only mean **first**;—‘secondly,’ &c., being to follow: not “chiefly” as A.V. and others. Compare a similar use of “*first*” without being followed by “*second*,” in ch. i. 8.

the oracles of God] These words look very like a reminiscence of Stephen’s apology, see Acts vii, 38. These oracles are not only the law of Moses, but all the revelations of God hitherto made of Himself *directly*, all of which had been entrusted to *Jews only*. By these they were received into a special covenant, which advantage is therefore included in their being entrusted with the divine oracles.

3.] And this advantage is not cancelled, nor the covenant annulled, by their disobedience. The word does not import ‘did not believe,’ which certainly would be out of place here, where the Apostle is not speaking of faith or want of faith as yet, but of *unrighteousness* (ver. 5), and moral guilt. The word seems to be used in the sense of *were unfaithful to the covenant*, the very condition of which was to walk in the ways of the Lord and observe his statutes.

shall their unfaithfulness make void (cancel, nullify) **the faithfulness of God?**] ‘Because they have broken faith on their part, shall God break faith also on His?’

4. God forbid] literally, **let it not be**: see reff. The Apostle uses this expression of pious horror, when he has supposed or mentioned any thing by which the honour, truth, or jus. ice of God would be compromised, as here by His covenant-word being broken.

nay, let God be true] i.e. ‘rather let us believe all men on earth to have broken their word and truth, than God His. Whatever becomes of men and their truth, *His truth must stand fast*.—The citation which follows goes to the depth of the matter. It is the penitent confession of a sinner, that he is sensible how entirely *against God* his sin has been, and how clearly his own unworthiness sets God’s judgment against sin vindicated before him. And to this meaning the objection in the next verse is addressed,—see below. **That thou mightest be justified** (shewn to be just) **in thy words (sentences, words of judgment), and mightest overcome when thou art judged** (the Psalm has, “*in thy judging*,” but here the verb is passive), i.e. ‘when Thy dealings are called in question by men.’

5.] In the citation, the penitent regarded his sin as having been the instrument of bringing out God’s justice into clearer light. On the abuse which might be made of such a view, the Apostle finds another question:—‘It would almost seem as if God would be unjust in inflicting His wrath (the consequences of His wrath) on men whose very impiety has been the means whereby His own righteousness has been shewn forth, and established.’

our unrighteousness] viz. that ‘of *the Jews*,’ not ‘of all men,’ for only to the Jews can ver. 7 apply.

the righteousness of God] viz. that established by the fact of His being justified, as in ver. 4.

I speak as a man] Said, as elsewhere by St. Paul, to excuse a supposition bearing with it an aspect of inconsistency or *impiety*:—not implying that he speaks *in the person of another*, but that he puts himself into the place of the generality of men, and uses arguments such as they would use.

6.] He does not enter into the objection and answer it in detail, but rejects at once the idea of God being *unjust*, alluding probably to Gen. xviii. 25, by recalling to mind, that *the Judge of all the earth must do right*.

for] i.e. ‘if it were so.’

By the world is not meant *the Gentiles*, nor is the respondent in ver. 7 a Gentile, but one of the **us** in ver. 5, only individualized to bring out *one such case* of pretended injustice more strikingly.

7.] This follows (connected by **for**) upon ver. 6, and shews that the supposition, if carried out, would overthrow all God’s judgment, and (ver. 8) the whole moral life of man.

how shall God judge the world? FOR, if the truth (faithfulness) of God abounded (was manifested, more clearly established) **by means of my falsehood** (unfaithfulness), **to His glory** (so that the result was the setting forth of His glory), **why any longer** (this being so,—assuming the premises) **am I also** (i. e. as well as others,—am I to be involved in a judgment from which I ought to be exempt) **judged** (to be judged,—the present tense expressing the rule or habit

of God’s proceeding) **as a sinner? And** (why should we) **not** (in this case rather say), **as we** (I Paul, or we Christians) **are slanderously reported, and as some give out that we** (do) **say**, “**Let us do evil that good may come?**” **whose condemnation** (not that of our slanderers, but that of those who so say and act) **is just** (not only by the preceding argument, but by the common detestation of all men, for such a maxim as doing evil that good may come.)

9–20.] The Jew has no preference, but is guilty as well as the Gentile, as shewn by Scripture; so that no man can by the law be righteous before God.

9.] There is considerable difficulty in the verb rendered, **do we excel them?** I have fully discussed the various renderings in my Greek Test., and have decided for that in the text.

10–18.] Proof of this universal sinfulness from the Scripture, said directly (ver. 19) of the Jews, but a portion including, and taken for granted of, the Gentiles.

11.] In the Psalm,—Jehovah looked down from heaven on the children of men, to see whether there were any, &c. He found *none*. This result is put barely by the Apostle as the testimony of Scripture, giving the sense, but departing from the letter.

13.] The *open sepulchre* is an emblem of *perdition*, to which their throat, as the instrument of their speech, is compared.

19.] He proves the applicability of these texts to the Jews by their being found in the *Jewish Scriptures*: not in any *Gentile representation*, which might exclude Jews, but spoken universally, in those very books which were the cherished possession of the Jews themselves.

the law] Here used in the widest sense, as importing the whole O.T., the law, prophets, and Psalms: see John x. 34, where our Lord cites a Psalm as in ‘*the law*,’

it speaketh] Not merely “*saih*,” the verb is different the second time, and the sense is, that whatever the law says, its speech or address is to, or **for**, i.e. its language belongs to, is true of, when not otherwise specified, **those who are under** (literally, in) **the law**. So that the Jews cannot plead exemption from this description or its consequences.

in order that—not ‘so that.’ the bringing in all the world guilty before God is an especial and direct aim of the revelation of God’s justice in the law,—that His grace by faith in Christ may come on all who abandon self-righteousness and believe the gospel.

every mouth may be stopped] If the Jew’s mouth is shut, and his vaunting in the law taken away, then much more the *Gentile*’s, and the *whole world* (see above, ver. 6) becomes guilty before God.

20.] *The solemn and important conclusion of all the foregoing argument.* But not only the *conclusion from it*: it is also the great truth, which when arrived at, is seen to have necessitated the subordinate conclusion of ver. 19, the stopping of every mouth, &c. And therefore it is introduced, not with an illative conjunction, ‘*wherefore*’ (which the original word will not bear), but with ‘*because*.’ **Because by the works of the law** (GOD’S LAW: whether in the partial revelation of it written in the consciences of the Gentiles, or in the more complete one given by Moses to the Jews,—not, *by works of law*: no such general idea of law seems to have ever been before the mind of the Apostle, but always *the law*, emanating from God) **shall no flesh be justified before Him** (the future as implying impossibility,—perhaps also as referring to the great day when *all flesh* shall stand before God,—perhaps also as a citation from Ps. cxliii. 2, “*In thy sight shall no man living be justified*”).—The Apostle does not here say either (1) that justification by legal works would be impossible if the law could be wholly kept, or (2) that those were not justified who observed the prescribed sacrifices and offerings of the ceremonial law (of which he has never once spoken, but wholly of the moral): but he infers from his argument on *matters of fact*, a result in matter of fact: ‘*Mankind, Jew and Gentile, have all broken God’s law, and are guilty before Him: Man keeps not God’s law. By that law then he cannot arrive at God’s righteousness.*’

for through (by means of) **the law** (as before, whether partially known to the Gentile or more fully to the Jew) **is the knowledge of sin** (whatever knowledge each has,—whether the accusing and excusing of the Gentile’s conscience, or the clearer view of offence against Jehovah granted to the Jew).—The reasoning is:—the law has no such office, in the present state of human nature manifested both in history and Scripture, as to *render righteous*: its office is altogether different, viz., to *defect and bring to light the sinfulness* of man. Compare Gal. ii. 16.

21–26.] *The Apostle resumes the declaration of ch. i. 17* (having proved that man has no righteousness of his own resulting from “the observance of God’s law): viz. that God’s righteousness is revealed by Christ, whose atoning Death is, consistently with God’s justice, sufficient for the pardon of sin to those who believe in Him.

21. **now**] Is this meant of *time*, ‘*now*,’ in contradistinction to ages past, as in ver. 26, ‘*at this time*,’—or is it merely equivalent to ‘as things are, ‘*now we find*? The former is *true* in sense, and applicable to the circumstances of the gospel: but the meaning is *too strong*, where no contrast of time is expressly in view. I therefore prefer the latter, especially as St. Paul’s usage elsewhere justifies it; see ch. vii. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 20.

apart from (i. e. without the help of) **the law**] ‘*independently of the law*;’ not ‘*without the works of the law*:’ for here it is not *the way to the righteousness of God* which is spoken of (which is *faith*), but that righteousness *itself*.

the righteousness of God: in what sense, see ch. i. 17, and note.

hath been manifested] viz. in the facts of the gospel. The perfect tense sets forth the manifestation of this righteousness in history as an *accomplished and still enduring fact*,—on the other hand, the present tense in ch. i. 17 denotes the continual unfolding of this righteousness in the hearts and lives of faithful believers.

being witnessed] being borne witness to (present tense, because the law and prophets remain on record as a revelation of God’s will) **by the law and the prophets** (not merely the types and prophecies, but the *whole body* of the Old Testament; see Matt. xxii. 40).

22. unto all and upon all] these prepositions depend on the verb **hath been manifested** (is revealed); unto (‘towards,’ ‘so as to penetrate to’) **all and upon** (‘over,’ ‘so as to be shed down on,’ but, in the theological meaning, no real difference of sense from ‘unto;’ this repetition of prepositions to give force is peculiar to St. Paul, see ver. 30, and Gal. i. 1) **all who believe.** Probably the repetition of all was suggested by the two kinds of believers, “Jew and Gentile, so as to prepare the way for the next clause, “*there is no distinction*” (but still no essential difference in the interpretations of **unto** and **upon** must be sought).

23. fall short] The reason for substituting this for **come short of** the A.V. is this, the latter may be mistaken for the past tense, after the auxiliary ‘have,’ whereas it is *present*.

the glory of God here appears to mean, *the praise that cometh of God*: not ‘praise in God’s sight;’ nor ‘glory with God,’ as ch. v. 2; for the Apostle is not speaking here of future reward, but of present worthiness; nor *the glorious image of God* which we have lost through sin, which is against both the usage of the word, and the context of the passage.

24.] being justified (*present* here, not past) agrees with **all**, without any ellipsis; nor need it be resolved into ‘*and we justified*:’ the participial sentence is subordinated to the great general statement of the insufficiency of all to attain to the glory of God. It is not necessary, in the interpretation, that the persons importred by **all** and **being justified** should be in matter of fact strictly commensurate:—‘*all* have sinned—*all* are (must be, *if justified*) justified freely, &c.’

freely] ‘without merit or desert as arising from earnings of our own;’ ‘*gratis*.’

by his grace] i.e. ‘His free undeserved Love,’ as the working cause,—**by means of the propitiatory redemption which is in** (has been brought about by, and is now in the Person of) **Christ Jesus.**

redemption] A buying off by means of a price paid, *a propitiation*, &c., as necessarily implied, redemption *from* some state of danger or misery: here,—redemption *from the guilt of sin by the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ’s death*, see Matt. xx. 28. In Eph. i. 7 this **redemption** is defined to be equivalent to *the forgiveness* (remission) *of sins*.

25. set forth] Manifested historically in His incarnation, sufferings, and exaltation.

as a propitiation] Literally, **as a propitiatory offering**. On the word used, see note in my Greek Testament.

through faith, as the subjective means of appropriation of this propitiation. These words are not to be joined (in the A.V.) with “*in his blood*,” as if the faith were exercised on the atoning blood of: Christ:—for such

an expression as *faith*, or *believing, in the blood of Christ*, would be unexampled,—and (which is decisive) the clause ought to be **by his blood**, and requires a primary, not asubordinate place in the sentence, because the next clause, “*to declare his righteousness*,” directly refers to it. As “*through faith*” is the subjective means of appropriation, so “*by his blood*” is the objective means of manifestation, of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice. **Blood** is not equivalent to *death*, but refers to propitiation *by blood*,—the well-known typical use of it is sacrifice.

for the shewing forth of His righteousness: this is the aim of the putting forth of Christ as an expiatory victim.

righteousness, not *truth*,—not *goodness*,—not both these combined with *justice*,—not *justifying*, or *sin-forgiving righteousness*,—not the *righteousness which He gives*,—which last would repeat the idea already contained in ver. 21, and rob the words next following of all meaning,—not *holiness*, which does not correspond to the term *just* and *justifier* used below,—but **judicial righteousness**, JUSTICE. This interpretation alone suits the requirements of the sense, and corresponds to the idea of the verb *to justify*, which is itself judicial. A *sin-offering* betokens on the one side the expiation of guilt, and on the other ensures pardon and reconciliation: and thus the Death of Christ is not only a proof of God’s grace and love, but also of His judicial righteousness which requires punishment and expiation.

because of (not “*for*,” as A.V., nor “*by means of*”) both these renderings are wrong) **the passing over of the former sins...**] i.e. *because God had overlooked the sins that had passed in His forbearance; and the words contain the reason why God would manifest His judicial righteousness; on account of the overlooking of the sins which had passed, in the forbearance of God;* i.e. to vindicate that character for justice, which might seem, owing to the suspension of God’s righteous sentence on sin in former ages in His forbearance, to be placed in question:—to shew, that though He did not then fully punish for sin, and though He did then set forth inadequate means of (subjective) justification,—yet He did both, not because His justice was slumbering, nor because the nature of His righteousness was altered,—but because *He had provided a way* whereby sin might be forgiven, and He might be just. Observe, the facet mentioned is *not forgiveness*, or *remission*, as the A.V. erroneously renders it, but **passing over**, or **overlooking**, which is the work of *forbearance* (see Acts xvii. 30), whereas *forgiveness* is the work of *grace*,—see ch. ii. 4:—nor do **the former sins** mean, ‘the sins of each man which precede his conversion,’ but. *those*

of the whole world before the death of Christ. See the very similar words, Heb. ix. 15.

26.] This second **shewing forth** is distinguished from that in the last verse, as the fuller and ultimate object, of which that was a subordinate part:—**with a view to the** (or His) **manifestation of His righteousness in this present time.** The shewing forth that He was righteous throughout His dealings with the whole world, by means of setting forth an adequate and complete propitiation in the death of Christ, was *towards*, formed a subsidiary manifestation to, *His great manifestation of His righteousness* (same sense as before,—judicial righteousness, *justice under the Gospel*).

(in order) **that he may be** (*shewn to be*:—the whole present concern is with the *exhibitions to men* of the righteousness of God) **just and** (yet, on the other side) **the justifier of him who is of** (the) faith in Jesus (him who belongs to, stands in, works from, as his standing-point, faith in Jesus: see ch. ii. 8, note, and reff.).

27-IV. 25.] JEWISH BOASTING ALTOGETHER REMOVED by *this truth*, NOT however BY MAKING VOID THE LAW, nor BY DEGRADING ABRAHAM FROM HIS PRE-EMINENCE, but BY ESTABLISHING THE LAW, and *shewing that Abraham was really JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, and is the FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL.*

27.] **our** (or, **the**) **boasting**, viz. *of the Jews*, of which he had spoken before, ch. ti.:—not ‘boasting’ in general, which will not suit ver. 29.

By what manner of law (is it excluded)? (is it by that) **of works? Nay, but by the law** (the rule) **of faith.** The contrast is not here between *the law* and *the Gospel* as two dispensations, but between the *law of works* and the *law of faith*, whether found under the law, or the Gospel, or (if the ease admitted) any where else. This is evident by the Apostle proving below that *Abraham was justified*, not by works, so as to have whereof to boast, but by faith.

28.] The verb implies, not ‘we conclude,’ but **we hold, we reckon:** the former is against New Test. usage; and has probably caused the change in some of our MSS. of **for** into *therefore*, by some who imagined that this verse was a conclusion from the preceding argument. **For we reckon** (as explanatory of the verse preceding,—on the other supposition the two verses are disjointed, and the conclusion comes in most strangely) **t hat a man is justified by faith apart from** (*without*; but more than without—so distinctly without, as to be utterly and entirely separate from and independent of) **the works of the law** (not *works of law*); and therefore boasting is excluded.

29.] In showing how completely Jewish boasting is excluded, St. Paul purposes to take* the ground of their own law, and demonstrate it from that. He will shew that God is not (the God) of Jews alone, but of Gentiles, and that *this very point was involved in the promise made to Abraham, by believing which he was justified* (ch. iv.), and therefore that it lies in the *very root and kernel of the law itself.* But, as often elsewhere, he passes off from this idea again and again, recurring to it however continually,—and eventually when he brings forward his proof text (in chap. iv. 17), *Abraham's faith, and not this fact, has become the leading subject.*

30. **seeing that]** literally, **if at least** (if we are to hold to what is manifest as a result of our former argument) **God is one, which shall justify the circumcision** (literally, the Jews, after the analogy of chap. ii. 26) **by (out of,** as the preliminary condition,—the state *out of which* the justification arises) **f aith, and the uncircumcision** (the Gentiles) **through** (by means of their) **faith.** Too much stress must not be laid on the difference of the two prepositions (see ver. 22 and note). The former expresses the *ground* of justification, generally taken, *by*, or *out of faith*: the latter the *means* whereby the man lays hold on justification, *by his faith*: the former is the objective ground, the latter the subjective medium.

31.] But again the Jew may object, if this is the case, if Faith be the *ground*, and Faith the *medium*, of justification for all, circumcised or uncircumcised, *surely the law is set aside and made void.* That this is not so, the Apostle both here asserts, and is prepared to shew by working out the proposition of ver. 29, that the law itself belonged to a covenant whose *original recipient was justified by faith*, and whose main promise was, the *reception and blessing of the Gentiles.*

the law] i.e. the law of Moses, as every where in the Epistle. We may safely say that the Apostle never argues of *law*, abstract, in the sense of a system of precepts,—its attributes or its effects,—but always of THE LAW, concrete,—*the law of God given by Moses*, when speaking of the Jews, as here: *the law of God*, in as far as written in their consciences, when speaking of the Gentiles: and when including both, *the law of God generally*, His written as well as His unwritten will.—Many Commentators have taken this verse (being misled in some cases by its place at the end of the chapter) as standing by itself, and have gone into the abstract grounds why faith, does not make void the law (or moral obedience); which, however true, *have no place here*: the design being to shew that the law itself *contained this very doctrine*, and was founded in the promise to Abraham on a covenant embracing Jews and Gentiles,—and therefore was not degraded from its dignity by the doctrine, but rather established as a part of God’s dealings,—consistent with, explaining, and explained by, the Gospel.

Romans: Chapter 4

IV. 1–5.] Abraham himself was justified by faith.—The reading and punctuation of this verse present some difficulties. As to the former, I may remark that the verb **hath found** is omitted by our oldest MS. authority, and placed variously by others. Omitting it, the sentence will stand, “*What shall we say then concerning Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh?*” If the verb be retained, the punctuation may be, “*What shall we say then? that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found*” (righteousness, or some advantage over Gentiles)? This has been adopted by Grotius and others of some authority. Another mode, slightly differing, may be, “*What then? shall we say, that,*” &c. But as Tholuck well remarks, both these methods of punctuating would presuppose that St. Paul had appeared to give some reason in the preceding verses for imagining that Abraham had gained some advantage according to the flesh: which is not the case.

1. What then] The Apostle is here contending with those under the law *from their own standing-point*: and he follows up his assertion that his argument *established the law*, by **what therefore** (‘this being conceded,’ ‘seeing that you and I are both upholders of the law’) **shall we say**, &c. This verse, and the argument following, are not a *proof*, but a *consequence*, of *we establish the law*, and are therefore introduced, not with *for*, but with **then** or **therefore**.

hath found] viz. *towards his justification*, or more strictly, *earned* as his own, to boast of. The clause, **as pertaining to the flesh**, belongs to the verb **hath found**, not to the appellation “*our father*”? I have, in order to make this clear, transposed them. For the course and spirit of the argument is not to limit the paternity of Abraham to a mere fleshy one, but to shew that he was the spiritual father of all believers. And the question is not one which requires any such distinction between his fleshy and spiritual paternity (as in ch. ix. 3, 5). His being so, what do the words **as pertaining to the flesh** mean? They cannot allude to *circumcision*; for that is rendered improbable, not only by the parallel expression “*by works*” (ver. 2) in the *plural*, but also by the consideration, that circumcision was no *work* at all, but a *seal of the righteousness which he had by faith* being yet uncircumcised (ver. 11),—and by the whole course of the argument in the present place, which is not to disprove the exclusive privilege of the Jew (that having been already done, chapters ii. iii.), but to shew that *the father and head of the race himself was justified not by works but by faith*. Doubtless, in so far as circumcision was a mere *work of obedience*, it might be in a loose way considered as falling under that category: but it came *after justification*, and so is *chronologically* here excluded.

As **pertaining to the flesh** then is in contrast to **as pertaining to the spirit**,—and refers to *that department of our being from which spring works*, in contrast with *that in which is the exercise of faith*: see ch. viii. 4, 5.

2.] For if Abraham was justified (not, ‘were justified,’ as in A.V.: it is assumed, as a fact known to all, that he *was justified* by some means) **by works, he hath ground of boasting** (not expressed here whether *in the sight of men*, or *of God*, but taken generally: the proposition being assumed, ‘He that has earned justification by works, has whereof to boast’). Then in disproof of this,—that Abraham has matter of boasting,—whatever *men* might think of him, or attribute to him (for example, the perfect keeping of the law, as the Jews did), one thing at least is clear, *that he has none before* (in the presence of) *God*. This we can prove (ver. 3), **for what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God** (God’s promise), **and it (his believing) was reckoned unto him for** (ch. ii. 26) **righteousness**.—The whole question so much mooted between Protestants on the one hand, and Romanists, Arminians, and Sovinians on the other, as to whether this righteousness was reckoned (1) *by means of faith*, being *God’s righteousness imputed to the sinner*; or (2) *on account of faith*, so that God made Abraham *righteous on account of the merit of his faith*, lies in fact in a small compass, if what has gone before be properly taken into account. The Apostle has proved Jews and Gentiles to be *all under sin*: utterly unable by works of their own to attain to righteousness. Now *faith*, in the second sense mentioned above, is strictly and entirely *a work*, and as such would be the *efficient cause* of man’s justification,—which, by what has preceded, *it cannot be*. It will therefore follow, that it was not the *act of believing* which was reckoned to him as a righteous act, or on account of which perfect righteousness was laid to his charge, but that the *fact of his trusting God to perform His promise introduced him into the blessing promised*. God declared his purpose (Gen. xii. 3) of blessing all the families of the earth in Abraham, and again (Gen. xv. 5) that his seed should be as the stars heaven, when as yet he had no son, Abraham *believed this promise, and became partaker of this blessing*. But this blessing was, *justification by faith in Christ*. Now Abraham could not, in the strict ‘sense of the words, be justified by faith in Christ,—nor is it necessary to suppose that he directed his faith forward to the promised Redeemer in Person; but in so far as God’s gracious purpose was revealed to him, he grasped it by faith, and that righteousness which was implied, so far, in it, was imputed to him. Some have said (for example, Tholuck) that the parallel is incomplete—Abraham’s *faith* having been reckoned to him for righteousness, whereas, in our case, *the righteousness of Christ* reckoned to us as our righteousness, *by faith*. But the incompleteness lies in the nature of the respective cases. In his case, the *righteousness itself* was not yet manifested. He believed *implicitly*, taking the *promise, with all it involved and implied, as true*. This then was his way of entering into the promise, and by means of his faith was bestowed upon him that full justification which that faith never apprehended. Thus *his faith itself*, the mere fact of implicit trust in God, was counted to him for righteousness. But though *the same righteousness* is imputed to us who believe, and by means of faith also, it is no longer the mere fact of believing implicitly in God’s truth, but the reception of *Christ Jesus the Lord* by faith, which justifies us (see verses 23–25 and note). As it was then the realization of God’s words by faith, so now: but we have the *Person of the Lord Jesus for the object of faith*, explicitly revealed: *he had not*. In both cases justification

is *gratuitous*, and is *by faith*: and so far, which is as far as the argument here requires, the parallel is strict and complete.

4. to him that worketh (him that works “for hire, that earns wages), **his reward is not reckoned in the way of** (as a matter of) **grace** (favour), **but of** (as a matter of) **debt**] The sentence is a *general* one, not with any peculiar reference to Abraham,—except that after the words *in the way of grace* we may supply “as it was to Abraham,” if we will; for this is evidently assumed.

5.] but to him that worketh not (for hire,—is not a *workman* looking for his *wages*), **but believeth on** (casts himself in simple trust and humility on) **him who justifieth** (accounts just, as in ver. 3) **the ungodly** (‘*impious*:’ stronger than ‘unrighteous’—no allusion to Abraham’s having formerly been in idolatry,—for the sentence following on ver. 4, which is *general* and of universal application, *must also be general*,—*including of course* Abraham: *impiousness* is the state of all men by nature),—**his faith is reckoned for righteousness**.—By way of grace is of course implied.

6-8.] *The same is confirmed by a passage from David.* This is not a fresh example, but a confirmation of the assertion involved in ver. 5, that a man may believe on Him who justifies the ungodly, and have his faith reckoned for righteousness. The applicability of the text depends on the persons alluded to *being sinners, and having sin not reckoned to them*. The Psalm, strictly speaking, says nothing of the imputation of *righteousness*,—but it is implied by St. Paul, that the *remission of sin is equivalent to the imputation of righteousness*—that there is *no negative state of innocence*—none intermediate between acceptance for righteousness, and rejection for sin.

6.] literally, **pronounces the blessedness**, ‘*the congratulation*’ in allusion perhaps to the Heb. form, ‘(O) the blessings of?...—It is very clear that this righteousness must be *apart from works*, because its imputation consists in the remission and hiding of *offences*, whereas none can be legally righteous in whom there is any, even the smallest offence.

8.] will not reckon is strictly *future*, and must be referred to the great final judgment. Or we may say, with Olshausen, that the expression is an Old Test. one, regarding sin as lying covered by the divine long-suffering till the completion of the work of Christ, at which time first real forgiveness of sins was imparted to the ancient believers; compare Matt. xxvii. 53; 1 Pet. iii. 18. In this last view the *future* will only refer to all such cases as should arise.

9-12.] *This declaration of blessedness applies to circumcised and uncircumcised alike. For Abraham himself was thus justified when in UNCIRCUMCISION, and was then pronounced the father of the faithful, circumcised as well as uncircumcised.*

this blessing, or blessedness, of course includes the *fact, on account of which* the congratulation is pronounced,—the *justification itself*.

9.] The form of the question, with **or... also**, presupposes an affirmative answer to the latter clause; which affirmative answer is then made the ground of the argumentation in vv. 10, 11, 12:—**upon the uncircumcision (-cised) also? for we say, &c.**—The stress is on the words to **Abraham**, not on *faith*: **for we say that TO ABRAHAM faith was reckoned for righteousness.**

10.] How, ie. under what circumstances?—The interval between the recognition of his faith (Gen. xv. 6) and his circumcision was perhaps as much as twenty-five, certainly not less (Gen. xvii. 25) than fourteen years.

11.] And he received (from God) **the sign** (token, or symbol) **of circumcision, a seal** (the Targum on Song of Solom. iii. 8, has the expression, ‘the seal of circumcision.’ So also Baptism is called sometimes *the seal of the font*, and often in the Fathers simply *the seal*) **of the righteousness** (to stamp, and certify the righteousness) **of the faith**. (i. e. ‘of the righteousness which consisted in his faith,’—not, ‘of his justification by faith;’ the present argument treats of faith *accounted as righteousness*) **which he had while in his uncircumcision.** In literal historical matter of fact, Abraham received circumcision as a seal of the covenant between God and him (Gen. xvii 1–14). But this covenant was only a *renewal of that very one, on the promise of which Abraham’s faith was exercised*, Gen. xv. 5, 6,—and each successive renewal of which was a fresh approval of that faith. The Apostle’s point is,—that the righteousness was reckoned, and the promise made, to Abraham, *not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision*.

in order that he might be the father of all in uncircumcision that believe] Abraham is *the father of the faithful*. But the triumph and recognition of that faith whereby he was constituted so, was not during his circumcision, but during his uncircumcision:—therefore *the faithful, his descendants, must not be confined to the circumcised, but must take in the uncircumcised also.*—On the appellation father in this sense, Tholuck compares the expression Gen. iv. 20; 1 Macc. ii. 54, “*Phinees, our father in being zealous and fervent*,” and a saying of Maimonides, “Moses is the father of all the prophets who succeeded him.” See also our Lord’s saying, John viii. 37, 39. One of the Rabbinical books has a sentiment remarkably coincident with that in our text: “Abraham is the father of all those who follow his faith.”

that the righteousness might be reckoned unto them also] This is in fact parenthetical, whether brackets are used or not; for otherwise the construction from the former to the latter word **the father** would not proceed. **The righteousness**, namely, that which Abraham's faith was reckoned as being,—the righteousness of God, then hidden though imputed, but now revealed in Jesus Christ.

12.] and [that he might be] father of the circumcision (the circumcised) **to them** ('for those,' 'in the case of those') **who are not only (physically) of the circumcision, but to them also who walk in the steps of the faith of our father** (speaking here as a Jew) **Abraham** (which he had) **while in uncircumcision**.

13–17.] Not through the LAW, but through THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH, was **THE INHERITANCE OF THE WORLD promised to Abraham: so that not only they who are of the law, but they who follow Abraham's faith are HEIRS OF THIS PROMISE.**

13.] The argumentation is an expansion of the expression "*father of all that believe*" above. If these believers are Abraham's seed, then his promised inheritance is *theirs*.

through the law] not, '*under the law*,'—nor, '*by works of the law*'—nor, '*by the righteousness of the law*:' but, **through the law**, so that the law should be the *ground*, or *efficient cause*, or medium, of the promise. None of these it was, as matter of historical fact.—**For not through the law was the promise (made) to Abraham, or to his seed, viz. that he should be heir of the world, but by the righteousness of faith.** This specification of the promise has perplexed most of the commentators. The actual promise, Gen. (xii, 2, 3) xiii, 14–17; xv. 18; xvii. 8, was the possession of the *land of Canaan*. But the Rabbis already had seen, and St. Paul, who had been brought up in their learning, held fast the truth,—that much more was intended in the words which accompany this promise, "In thee (or in thy seed) shall all families of the earth be blessed," than the mere possession of Canaan. They distinctly trace the gift of the world to Abraham to *this promise*, not to the foregoing. They say, "The garden is the world, which God delivered to Abraham, to whom it was said, '*And thou shalt be a blessing*' The *inheritance of the world* then is not the possession of Canaan merely, either *literally*, or as a *type* of a better possession,—but that ultimate *lordship over the whole world* which Abraham, as the father of the faithful in all peoples, and Christ, as the of Promise, shall possess: the *former* figuratively indeed and only implicitly, *latter* personally and actually. See ch. viii. 17; Matt. v. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 12; 1 Cor. xy. 24.—Another difficulty, that this promise was *made chronologically before* the reckoning of his faith for righteousness, is easily removed by remembering that the (indefinite) making of the promise is here treated of as the *whole process of its assertion*, during which Abraham's faith was shewn, and the promise continually confirmed.

14.] The supposition is now made which ver. 13 denied,—and its consequences shewn. **For if they which are of the law** (who belong to the law, not 'who keep the law') **be heirs** (i. e. inherit by virtue of the law; they may be inheritors by the righteousness of faith, but not by force of their legal standing), **faith is** (thereby) **made empty** (robbed of its virtue and rendered useless), **and the promise is annulled** (has no longer place). How and why so? The Apostle himself immediately gives the reason.

15.] For the law worketh (brings about, gives occasion to) **wrath** (which from its very nature excludes *promise*, which is an of grace,—and *faith*, which is an attribute of *confidence*):—**but where** (the "for" in the A.V. has perhaps been introduced to suit the idea of the second clause rendering a reason for the first) **there is no law** (lit. '*where the law is not*'), **neither is there transgression.** "We should rather expect (says De Wette) the affirmative clause,*'And where the law is, there is transgression:' but the negative refers to the time

before the Mosaic law, when there was no transgression and therefore also no wrath." Yes; but not because there was *no* transgression then; the purpose of the Apostle here is not to deny the existence of the law of God written in the heart (which itself brings in the knowledge of sin) before Moses, but to shew that no promise of inheritance can be by the law, because the property of the law the more it is promulgated, to *reveal transgression* more,—*not to unfold grace*. So that *comparatively* (see notes on ch. vii.) there was no transgression before the law of Moses; and if we conceive a state in which the law should be *altogether absent*, whether written or unwritten (as in the brute creation), there would be *no transgression whatever*.—But observe (see ch. v. 12–14) that this reasoning does not touch the doctrine of the original taint of our nature in Adam,—only referring to the discrimination of acts, words, and thoughts by the conscience *in the light of the law*: for **TRANSGRESSION** is not *natural corruption*, but *an act of transgression*: nor does the Apostle here deny the former, even in the imaginable total absence of the law of God.

16.] For this (viz. the following) **cause it** (no word is supplied in the original; but we must understand the *inheritance*,—not the *promise*; the promise was not strictly speaking *of faith*; nor must we supply *they were*, meaning the heirs, who although they might fairly be said to be *of faith*, could hardly be without harshness described as being *by grace*) **was of faith, that it might be** (strictly the *purpose*,—not, 'so that it was') **by (according to) grace** (free unmerited favour. As the *law*, bringing the *knowledge of guilt*, works *wrath*,—so the *promise*, awakening *faith*, manifests God's *free grace*,—the end for which it was given); **in order that the promise may be sure** (not, 'so that the promise was sure?' this was the *result*, but the Apostle states

this as the aim and end of the inheritance being by faith,—as regarded *the seed of Abraham*,—that they all might be inheritors, —as the manifestation of God's grace was the higher aim and end) **to all the seed, not only to that (part of it) which is of the law** (see ver. 14), **but to that also which is of the faith** (walks in the steps of the faith, ver. 12) **of Abraham**. The part of the seed which is of the law *here* is of course confined to believing Jews; *the seed* being *believers only*. This has been sometimes lost sight of, and the whole argument of vv. 13–16 treated as if it applied to the doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law, a point *already proved, and now presupposed*,—the present argument being an historical and metaphysical one, proceeding on the facts of Abraham's history, and the natures respectively of the law and grace, to prove him to be the father of all believers, uncircumcised as well as circumcised.

who is the father of us all?] By the last declaration the *paternity* of Abraham, which is co-extensive with the *inheritance*, has been extended to *all who are of his faith*; here therefore it is reasserted: **us** meaning **believers**. **17. as it is written**] The words (ref.) are spoken of the numerous progeny of Abraham according to the flesh: but not out a reference to that covenant, according to the terms of which all nations were to be blessed in him. The Apostle may here cite it as comparing his natural paternity of many nations with his spiritual one of all believers: but it seems more probable that he regards the prophecy as *directly announcing* a paternity far more extensive than mere physical fact substantiated.—‘These words are parenthetical, being merely a confirmation by Scripture testimony of the words foregoing, with which (see below) the following words are immediately connected.

before God in whose sight he believed] ‘he meaning appears to be, ‘Abraham was the father of us all,—though not physically, nor in actuality, seeing that we were not as yet,—yet *in the sight and estimation of God*,—in his relation with God, with whom no obstacles of nature or time have force.’

who quickeneth the dead] A general description of God's almighty creative power (see 1 Tim. vi. 13), applied particularly to the matter in hand—the deadness of generative physical power in Abraham himself, which was quickened by God. The peculiar excellence of Abraham's faith was, that it overleaped the obstacles of physical incapacity, and non-entity, and believed implicitly God's promise. Comp. 2 Cor. i. 9.

and calleth those things which be not as though they were] Much difficulty has been found here: and principally owing to an idea that this clause must minutely correspond with the former, and furnish another instance of God's creative Almightiness. Hence Commentators have given to **call** the sense which it has sometimes, ‘*to summon into being*, and have understood *as though they were* as if it were *so as to be*. I see however in this latter clause not a repetition or expansion of the former, but a new attribute of God's omnipotence and eternity, on which Abraham's faith was fixed. **Who calleth** (nameth, speaketh of) **the things that are not as being** (as if they *were*). This He *did in the present case with regard to the seed of Abraham*, which *did not as yet exist*:—the two key-texts to this word and clause being, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*, ch. ix. 8 (see note there),—and Acts vii. 5, *He promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child*. These *children*, which were at present in the category of *things that were not*, and the nations which should spring, physically or spiritually, from him, God *called as though they were*, spoke of as having an existence, which word Abraham believed. And here, as in the other clause, the *calling the things*

which be not as though they were, is not confined to the case in point, but is a general attribute of all God's words concerning things of time: past, present, and future, being to His Omnipotence and Omniscience, *all one*. His purposes, *when formed*, are accomplished, save in so far as that evolution of secondary causes and effects intervenes, which is also His purpose. This also Abraham apprehended by his faith, which rested on God's absolute power to do what He had promised (see below).

18–22.] A more detailed description of this (Abraham's) faith, as reposed on God's Omnipotence.

18.] who against hope (where there was nothing to hope) **believed in** (the preposition rendered in, in its literal import signifying close adherence, is accordingly used to connect an act with that to which it is immediately attached as its ground or accompaniment. Thus here, the hope existed as the necessary concomitant and in some sense the condition of the faith) **hope, in order to his becoming the father of many nations** (i. e. as a step in the process of his becoming, and one necessary to that process going forward. He would never have become the father of many nations, had he not believed).

So] viz. *as the stars of heaven*: quoted,—and compare Ps. cxlvii. 4.

19.] The reading (with or without **not?**) must first be considered. Reading **not**, the sense will be, **And not being weak in faith, he paid no attention to, &c.** Omitting **not**, ‘*And not being weak in (his) faith, he was well aware of, &c.—but did not,*’ &c. Of these, the second agrees the better with ver. 20,—but the first very much better suits the context; the object being, to extol Abraham's *faith*, not to introduce the new and somewhat vapid notice of his being well aware of those facts of which it may be assumed as a matter of course that he could not be ignorant. The Apostle does not want to prove that Abraham was in his sound senses when he believed the promise, but that he was so strong in faith as to be able to overleap all difficulties in its way. Abraham did indeed feel and express the difficulty (Gen. xvii. 17), but his faith overcame it, and he ceased to regard

it. But most probably St. Paul here refers only to Gen. xv. 5, 6, where his belief was implicit and unquestioning.

about an hundred] Abraham's own expression in the place quoted, where he also describes Sarah as being 90. His exact age was 99, Gen. xvii. 1, 24.

20.] Literally, but with regard to the promise of God, he doubted not through unbelief, but was strong (lit. 'was strengthened,' 'shewed himself strong') **in faith** ('with regard to faith'), **giving glory to God**, (viz. by recognizing His almighty power: see reff., especially Luke).

22.] Wherefore, on account of the nature of this faith, which the Apostle has now since ver. 18 been setting forth;—because it was a simple unconditional credence of God and His promise.

also] besides being thus great and admirable, it was reckoned to him for righteousness.

23–25.] Application of that which is said of Abraham, to all believers in Christ. **23.] was written**, not the more usual 'is written:' so also in the parallel, 1 Cor. x. 11; and in our ch. xv. 4. The words assert the design of God's Spirit at the time of penning the words: the ordinary expression may *imply* that, but more directly *asserts* the intent of our Scriptures as we now find them. **Now it was not written for his sake alone** (merely to bear testimony to him and his faith), **that it was reckoned unto him,—but for our sake also** (for our benefit, to bear testimony to us of the efficacy of faith like his. Observe that "for the sake of" in the two clauses has not exactly the same sense:—(1) 'his sake, meaning, to celebrate his faith,—and (2) 'for our sake,' meaning, *for our profit*; see on ver. 25), **to whom it** (i. e. believing in God, as ver. 22) **shall be reckoned** (for righteousness), **who believe on** (this specifies the **us**: and the belief is not a mere historical, but a *fiducial, trusting belief* **him**, **that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead** (the central fact in our redemption, as the procreation of the seed of promise was in the performance of the promise to Abraham, see ch. i. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 14 ff; and resembling it in the *quickenings of the dead*).

25.] Here we have another example of the alliterative use of the same preposition (**for**) where the meanings are clearly different (see above, verses 23, 24). Our Lord was delivered up (to death) for or on account of our sins (i. e. *because we had sinned*):—He was also raised up (from the dead) for or on account of our justification (i. e. not *because we had been*, but *that we might be justified*). This separate statement of the great object of the death and resurrection of Christ must be rightly understood, and each member of it not unduly pressed to the exclusion of the other. The great complex event by which our justification (death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness) has been made possible, may be stated in one word as the GLORIFICATION of Christ. But this glorification consisted of two main parts,—His Death, and His Resurrection. In the former of these, He was made a sacrifice for sin; in the latter, He elevated our humanity into the participation of that Resurrection-life, which is also, by union with Him, the life of every justified believer. So that, when taking the two *apart*, the *Death of Christ* is more properly placed in close reference to *forgiveness of sins*,—His Resurrection, to *justification unto life* everlasting. And thus the Apostle treats these two great events, here and in the succeeding chapters. But he does not view them respectively as the causes, *exclusively of one another*, of forgiveness and justification: e.g. (1) ch. v. 9, we are said to be justified by *His blood*, and 2 Cor v. 21, God made Him sin for us, *that we might become the righteousness of God* in Him: and (2) 1 Cor. xv. 17, if Christ is not raised, *we are yet in our sins*. So that, though these great events have their separate propriety of reference to the negative and positive sides of our justification, the one of them cannot be treated separately and exclusively of the other, any more than can the negative side of our justification, the non-imputation of our sin, without the positive, the imputation of God's righteousness.—It will be seen from what I have said above that I cannot agree with Bp. Horsley's view, that as our transgressions were the *cause* of Jesus being delivered up, so our justification must be the cause of His being raised again. Such a pressing of the same sense on the preposition **for** is not necessary, when Paul's manifold usages of the same preposition are considered: and the regarding our justification (in the sense here) as a fact past, is inconsistent with the very next words, *being justified by faith*, which that *not the objective fact*, but *subjective realization*, here meant these words (of ver. 25) *The Apostle introduces the great subject of chaps. viii,—DEATH, as connected with SIN,—and LIFE, as connected with RIGHTEOUSNESS*. The various ramifications of this subject see in the headings below.

Romans: Chapter 5

CHAP. V. 1–11.] THE BLESSED CONSEQUENCES OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

1.] Being therefore justified ('*having been justified*':—it is an *act past* on the Christian, not like sanctification, an abiding and increasing work) by (as the ground) **faith, we** (believers in Christ) **have** (almost all our most ancient authorities read for **we have, let us have**). The difference in Greek is only that of one letter, the long 'o,' or omega, for the short 'o,' or omicron. And these two letters are frequently confused in our old manuscripts: so that it may even be doubted whether we can call this a real variation in reading, after all. Certainly in judging between the two, as to which, in this uncertainty of evidence, was most likely to have been written by St. Paul, the indicative *have*, seems to be the preferable form. For the whole passage is *declaratory of the consequences flowing from justification by faith, and does not exhort, but assert*. Nor would it seem, does

the place where these consequences have arrived, till these consequences have been in the fullest and freest manner set forth,—indeed so fully and freely, that the objection arising from their supposed abuse has first to be answered. Add to this that the verbs following are in the indicative, which makes it probable that this also would be) **peace** (‘reconciliation,’ the opposite of wrath, see ver. 9) with (‘in regard of’) **God through** (by means of) **our Lord Jesus Christ**. With regard to the nature of this peace,—‘*s state of reconciliation*,’ ‘no more condemnation,’ as ch. viii. 1,—we may remark, that it regards here the objective fact of God’s reconciliation to us, not as yet the subjective one of our reconciliation to Him: see this fully shewn below in ver. 10.

2.] **through whom we have also** (the also, as in ch. i. 24, iv. 22, serves to shew the coherence and likelihood of that which is asserted—answering almost to our ‘as might be expected’) **had our access** (the persons spoken of having come to the Father by Christ,—see Eph. ii. 18,—the access is treated of as a thing past. The words “*by faith*” appear to have been inserted as explanatory of the method of access. This access would normally take place in baptism) **into this grace** (namely, the grace of justification, apprehended and held fast subjectively, from what follows) **wherein we stand** (i. e. *abide accepted and acquitted with God*; see 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2 Cor. i. 24, also 1 Cor. x. 12, and ch. xi. 20); **and** (coupled to “*we have peace*,” not to “*wherein we stand*”) **we glory in the hope** (compare Heb. iii. 6, where we have “*the glorying of our hope*”) **of the glory of God** (of sharing God’s glory by being with Christ in His kingdom, John xvii. 22).

3.] And not only so (not only do we triumph in hope, which has regard to the future), but **glorying** (so it is literally, the present participle) **in** (not *amidst*; the tribulation is the *ground* of triumph) **our tribulations: knowing** (because we know) **that tribulation worketh patience** (or, **endurance**: supposing, i.e. we remain firm under it); **and patience, approval** (of our faith and trust, 2 Cor. ii. 9; ix. 13: not, ‘*proof*,’ as some; nor ‘*experience*,’ as A.V.); **and approval, (fresh) hope; and hope shames (us) not** (by disappointing us; ‘mocks us not’); **because God’s love** (not, in the ordinary sense, ‘*the love of God*,’ i.e. *man’s love for God*; compare the explicit words, “*His love toward us*,” which answer to this in ver. 8) **is (has been) poured out (poured forth**, not “*shed abroad*.”) The use of this latter term in the Vulgate Latin version perhaps misled Augustine, owing to whose mistake the true interpretation was lost for some centuries, although held by interpreters preceding and contemporary with him. See Trench on St. Augustine, ch. v.p. 89:—i. e. ‘richly imparted’) **in our hearts** (the heart is the locality where the outpouring takes place,—being the seat of our love, and of appreciation and sympathy with God’s love) **by means of the Holy Spirit** (who is the Outpourer, John xvi. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10) **which was given unto us** (not, *is given to us*. ‘The past participle refers to a past fact, viz., the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit). Bengel remarks, that this is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in our Epistle. For when a man has been brought to this point, the work of the Spirit begins to be notably felt within him.

6.] **For (or, if, that is) when we were yet without strength** (weak, ‘powerless for good;’—or even stronger than that:—there seems in this verse to be a tacit reference to Ezek. xvi.—See especially verses 4–8 of that chapter), **in due season** (i. e. at the appointed time: comp. Gal. iv. 4, and ver. 8 in the quotation above) **Christ died for** (‘on behalf of’) **ungodly men** (so literally not “*for us*,” because the Apostle wishes to bring out fully by this strong antithesis, which he enlarges on in the next verses, the greatness of the divine Love to man).

7.] The greatness of this Love, of Christ’s death on behalf of the impious, is brought out by shewing that there is none such among *men*, nay, that such a self-sacrifice,—not unexampled where a *good* man, one loving his fellow-men and loved by them, is to be rescued,—is hardly found to occur on behalf of the pious and just.—**F or hardly will any one die on behalf of a just man—for** (this second ‘*for*’ is exceptive, and answers to ‘but I do not press this without exception,’ understood) **on behalf of a good man** (the article, which is in the original, points him out generally, as in the expression, ‘*the fool*,’ ‘*the wise man*,’ ‘*the righteous*,’ ‘*the wicked*’) **perhaps one doth even dare** (i. e. *is even found to venture*: the present tense implies habituality—it may occur here and there) to die.

8.] **But** (as distinguished from human examples) **God** (or more probably, **He**, the Person intended being supplied from verse 5) **giveth proof of** (‘establishes;’—not ‘commands’) **his own love** (*own*, as distinguished from that of men, in ver. 7) **toward us, in that, while we were yet** (as opposed to “*now*” in the next verse) sinners (this term ranges with “*without strength*,”—“*ungodly*,” ver. 6, and is opposed to “*just*,” and “*good*,” ver. 7), **Christ died for us**.

9–11.] The Apostle further *s hews the blessed fruits of justification*, viz. *salvation*, both *from wrath*, and *with life*. The *argument* proceeds from the beginning of the chapter but the *connexion*, as so frequent with St. Paul, is immediately with the parenthetical sentences just preceding.—**Much more then** (if He died for us when *sinners*, à fortiori will He save us now that we are *righteous* by virtue of that His death), **having been now justified by his blood** (see remarks on ch. iv. 25), **shall we be saved through him from the wrath [to come]**. The original has only **from the wrath**: i.e. the wrath impending,—the wrath of which we all know.

10.] The same is substantiated in another form: ‘we were enemies (see below) when He died and reconciled us: much more now that we have been reconciled, and He lives, shall we by His life be saved.’—**For if, being enemies** (the meaning of **enemies** may either be active, as Eph. ii. 15; Col. i. 21, ‘*haters of God*’ so ‘*enmity*,’ ch. viii. 7: or passive, as ch. xi. 28,—*hated by God*.’ But here the latter meaning alone can apply, for the Apostle is speaking of the Death of Christ and its effects as

applied to all time, not merely to those believers who then lived: and those unborn at the death of Christ could not have been enemies in the active sense), **we were reconciled** (this expression also may be taken in two ways. It may be said of *giving up anger against any one*,—see 1 Cor. vii. 11, or of *being received into favour by any one*, see 1 Sam. xxix. 4,—the latter off which meanings, *were received into favour with God*, must, for the reason above given, **be here adopted to God through** (by means of) **the death of his Son** (this great fact is further explained and insisted on, in the rest of the chapter), **much more, having been reconciled** (but here comes in the assumption that the corresponding subjective part of reconciliation has been accomplished, viz. justification by faith: comp. 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, “*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.... we pray you in Christ's behalf, be ye reconciled to God.*” Both these, the objective reception into God’s favour by the death of Christ, and the subjective appropriation, by faith, of that reception, are included), **shall we be saved through** (by means of) **his life** (not here *that which he now does* on our behalf, but simply *the fact of His Life*, so much enlarged on in ch. vi.: and our sharing in it).

11.] A further step still. Not only has the reconciled man confidence that he shall escape God’s wrath, but *triumphant* confidence,—joyful hope in God.—**And** (literally, but) **not only so, but also glorying in God** (not only shall we be saved, but that in a triumphant manner and frame of mind) **through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now** (not in contrast with the future glory, ‘*even now*, but as in ver. 9) **received (our) reconciliation** (so God: not as in A.V. “*the atonement,*” at least in the common theological acceptation of that term: for that is not here treated of, but our reconciliation to God).

12–19.] *The bringing in of RECONCILIATION and LIFE by CHRIST in its analogy to the bringing in of SIN and DEATH by ADAM.*

12.] This verse is one of acknowledged difficulty. The two questions meeting us directly are (1) To what does **for this cause** refer? (2) **As** may introduce the *first* member of a comparison, *the second being to be discovered*; or may introduce the *second, the first having to be discovered*. I shall endeavour to answer both questions in connexion. (1) I conceive **for this cause** to refer to that blessed state of confidence and hope just described: ‘on this account,’ ‘seeing these things are so,’ ‘this state of things, thus brought about, will justify the following analogy.’ Thus we must take **as** either (a) as beginning the comparison, and then supply, ‘so Christ in His Resurrection came justification into the world, and by justification, life;’ or (b) as concluding the comparison, and supply before it, ‘it was,’ or ‘Christ wrought.’ This latter method seems to me far the best. For none of the endeavours of Commentators to supply the second limb of the comparison from the following verses have succeeded: and we can hardly suppose such an ellipsis, when the next following comparison (ver. 16) is rather a *weakening* than a strengthening the analogy. We have example for this use of “*as*” in Matt. xxv. 14 [see the passage in this work], and **even as**, Gal. iii. 6.—**Consequently** (the method of God’s procedure in introducing life by righteousness resembled the introduction of death by sin: ‘it was’), **like as by one man** (the Apostle regards the *man* as involving generic succession and transmitting the corrupt seed of sin, *not the woman*: but when he speaks of the *personal* share which each had in the transgression, 1 Tim. ii. 14, he says, ‘Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression’), **sin** (as a **POWER** ruling over mankind, see ch. iii. 9, and ver. 21,—partly as a **principle** which exists in us all, and develops itself in our conduct, partly as a **state** in which we are involved; but the idea here must not be *confined to original*

sin, as it reaches much wider, to sin both original and actual: *nor to the habit of sinning*: nor is it merely the *propensity to sin*: nor is sin *personified* merely, as in ch. vii. 8, 11) **entered into the world** (not *begun to be, was first committed*, as some Commentators: but *literally*,—‘entered into,’ ‘gained access into,’ the *moral world*,—for sin involves moral responsibility. So Gal. iii. 23, ‘before the faith *came in*’), **and by means of sin** (as the appointed penalty for sin, Gen. ii. 17; iii. 19), **death** (primarily, but not *only*, physical death: as *sin, so death, is general*, including the lesser in the greater, i. e.: *spiritual and eternal death*. See ch. vi. 16, 21; vii. 10; viii. 6; 2 Cor. vii. 10); and **thus** (by this entering in of sin and death; i.e. in fact, by this *connexion of sin and death*, as’s by the clause following, “*for that all sin sinned*”) **death spread through unto all men** (see reff. De Wette well says that “*all men*” differs from “*the world*,” as the concrete part from the abstract whole, and “entered” from “spread through,” as the going from house to house differs from the entering a town), **because** (literally, ‘*on ground of*,’ ‘*on condition that*,’ which meaning, if rightly applied, suits the case in hand. *Life* depended on a certain condition, viz. obedience: *Death* on another, viz. disobedience. Mankind have disobeyed: the condition of Death’s entrance and diffusion has been fulfilled: Death extended to all men, as a consequence of the fact, that all have sinned) **all sinned** (see ch. iii. 23:—not ‘*were sinful*, or ‘*were born in sin*, as Calvin would restrict the meaning: *sin*, as above remarked, is here, throughout, both *original* and *actual*: in the *seed*, as planted in the nature by the sin of our forefather: and in the *fruit*, as developed by each conscious responsible individual in his own practice. So that Calvin’s argument, “that here there is no question of *actual sin*, because if each man is to be treated as guilty in himself, why should Paul compare Adam with Christ?” does not apply, and the objection is answered by St. Paul himself, where he says, distinguishing between the *trespass* and the *free gift* below, vv. 15, 16, the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. The *trespass* was not only that of one, the original cause of the entry of sin, but the often repeated sins of individual men). Observe how entirely this assertion of the Apostle contradicts the Pelagian or *individualistic* view of men, that each is a separate creation from God, existing solely on his own exclusive responsibility,—and affirms the Augustinian or *traducian* view, that all are evolved by God’s appointment from an original stock, and, though individually responsible, are generically involved in the corruption and condemnation of their original.

13.] How, consistently wish ch. iv. 15 could all men sin, *before the law*? This is now explained.—**For up to (the time of) the law** (equivalent to “*from Adam to Moses*,” ver. 14), **there was sin in the world** (‘men sinned,’ see Gen. vi. 5–13; committed actual sin: not, men were *accounted* sinners because of Adam’s sin: the Apostle reminds us of the *historical fact*, that *there was sin in the world* during this period): **but sin is not reckoned** (as transgression) **where the law is not**. This word **imputed** has given rise to much dispute. Very many Commentators explain it of *consciousness of sin by the sinner himself*, as in ch. vii. 7: but (1) this is not the natural sense of the word, which implies TWO parties, one of whom sets down something to the account of the other: (2) this interpretation would bring in a new and irrelevant element,—for the Apostle is not speaking in this chapter at all of *subjective human consciousness*, but throughout of *objective truths with regard to the divine dealings*: and (3) it would be altogether inconsistent with the declarations of ch. ii. 15,—where the consciousness of sin on the part of those who had not the law is distinctly asserted.—I am persuaded that the right sense is **imputed**, ‘set down as transgression,’—‘put in formal account,’ by God. In the ease of those who had not the written law, sin is not formally reckoned as *transgression*, set over against the command: but in a certain sense, as distinctly proved ch. ii. 9–16, it is **reckoned** and they are condemned for it. Nor is there any inconsistency in this view. Other passages of Paul’s writings support and elucidate it. He states the object of the law to be, ch. vii. 13, *t hat sin may by the commandment become exceeding sinful*. The revelation of the law *exaggerated*, brought into prominent and formal manifestation, the sinfulness of sin, which was *before culpable and punishable*, but in a less degree. With this view also agree Acts xvii. 30; ch. ii. 12; and iii. 25, in so far as they state an analogous case. The objection to taking the words *relatively*, ‘is not fully reckoned,’ will hardly be urged by those who bear in mind the Apostle’s habit of constantly *stating relative truths as positive*, omitting the qualifying particles: see, for example, ch. vii. 7, where with the words “sin,” and “*I had not known*,” both, we must supply qualifications (see notes there).

14.] **Nevertheless** (notwithstanding the last assertion, that sin is not fully reckoned where the law is not) **death reigned** (was a power to which all succumbed) **from Adam to Moses** (the period included is the same as that marked out by the words *until the law* above: i.e. although the full imputation of sin did not take place between Adam and Moses, *the universality of death is a proof that all sinned*,—for death is the consequence of sin:—in confirmation of ver. 12), **even** (notwithstanding the different degrees of sin and guilt out of, and under, the law) **over them that sinned not after the likeness of the TRANSGRESSION of Adam** (the emphasis lies on **transgression**, as distinguished from **sin**. They all *sinned*: had not, like Adam, *transgressed* a positive revealed command. There is no reference here, as some Commentators have supposed, to the ease of *children* and *idiots*,—nor (as others) *to those who lived pious lives*. The aim is to prove, that the seed of sin planted in the race by the one man Adam, has sprung up and borne fruit in all, so as to bring them under death;—death temporal, and spiritual;—of these, some have sinned without the law, i.e. *not as Adam did, and as those after Moses did*: and though sin is not formally reckoned against them, death, the consequence of sin, reigned, as matter of historical fact, over them also. It is most important to the clear understanding of this weighty passage to bear in mind, that the first member of the comparison, as far as it *extends*, is this: ‘As by Adam’s transgression, of which we are by descent inheritors, we have become (not by imputation merely, but by propensity) *sinners*, and have thus incurred *death*, so&c.’..... see below), **who is a type of him that is to come** (or, and perhaps better, **of the future Adam**, the second Adam, viz. Christ). This clause is inserted on the first mention of the name Adam, the *one man* of whom he had been speaking, to recall the purpose for which he is treating of him,—as *the figure of Christ*. It is not of *him that was* to come, as in A.V., but is spoken from the Apostle’s *present* standing, ‘*who is to come*.’ The fulfilment of the type will then take place completely, when, as 1 Cor. xv. 22, *in Christ all shall be made alive*.

15–17.] *Though Adam and Christ correspond as opposites, yet there is a remarkable difference, which makes the free gift of grace much more eminent than the transgression and its consequences, and enhances the certainty of its end being accomplished.* **Howbeit not** (in all points) **as the trespass** (of Adam, as the cause inducing sin and death on his race), **so also is the gift of grace** (i. e. justification: not a direct contrast, as *obedience* in ver. 19: the Apostle has more in mind here the *consequence* of the *trespass*, and to that opposes the *gift of grace*).

15.] **For if, &c. Distinction the first**, in DEGREE:—and in the form of a hypothetical inference, from the less to the greater. **For if by the trespass of the one [man] the many died, much more did the grace of God and his free gift abound unto the many by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ.** (1) The first question regards the expression **much more**. Is it the *à fortiori* of logical inference, or is it to be joined with **did abound** as quantitative, describing the *degree of abounding*? Chrysostom and others adopt the former, and provided only *the same thing is said here as in ver. 17*, the usage there would decide it to be so: for there it cannot be quantitative. But I believe that not to be so. Here, the question is of *abounding*, a matter of *degree*, there, of *reigning*, a matter of *fact*. Here (ver. 16) the contrast is between the judgment, coming of *one* sinner, to condemnation, and the free gift, of (see note below) *many* offences, to justification. So that I think the quantitative sense the better, and join **much more** with **did abound**, in the sense of **much more abundant** (rich in diffusion) **was the gift, &c.** (2) **grace**, not the grace *working in men*, here, but the grace which is *in, and flows from*, God. (3) *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* (His self-offering love, see 2 Cor. viii. 9) is the medium by which the free gift is imparted to men. (4) The *past tense*, **did abound**, should here be kept to its indefinite historical sense, and not rendered, as in the A.V., by a *perfect*, however true the fact expressed. may be: *both* are treated of here as *events*, their time of happening and present reference not being regarded.

16.] Distinction the second, in KIND, The former difference was quantitative: this is modal.—**And not as [it was] through one that sinned, so is the gift.**—It is a question, the words [*it was*] not existing in the original, whether any thing, and what, is to be supplied before the clause, **through one that sinned**. Meyer and others would understand it as if nothing was to be supplied, ‘And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift.’ But this has against it, that since the **for** following *gives the reason* for this sentence, this must *contain implicitly all* that that next expands in detail; which is not merely the distinction between springing from *one man* and out of *many offences*, but much more. Others have supplied the *condemnation*, or the words *death entered*—but inasmuch as it is purposely left indefinite, to be explained in the next verse, it is better to supply in the thought an indefinite phrase which may be thus explained: as, ‘*that which took place*, through one;’ or, ‘as [it was] through one.’ **for the judgment** (pronounced by God upon Adam) **came of** (was by occasion of) **one** (man having sinned, —*one trespass* would be hardly allowable, and would not help the sense, inasmuch as many *sinners*, as well as many sins, are implied in *many trespasses*, below) **unto condemnation** (its result, in his own case and that of his posterity); **but the gift of grace came of** (was by occasion of) **many trespasses** (where sin abounded, ver. 20, there grace much more abounded: the existence of *the law* being implied in the word *trespasses*) **unto justification**.—The only difficulty here is the sense of the word rendered *justification*, respecting which I must refer to the note in my Greek Testament. The strict meaning is a *sentence of acquittal*, which, in fact, amounts to *justification*.

17.] Distinction the third, also in KIND; that which came in by the *one sinner*, was the *reign of DEATH*: that which shall come in by the *One, Jesus Christ*, will be a *reigning in LIFE*.—**For** (carrying on the argument from ver. 15, but not so as to make parenthetical ver. 16) **if by the trespass of the one [man], death reigned through the one [man], much more** (logical à fortiori) **shall they which receive the abundance of the grace and of the free gift of righteousness reign in life** (eternal) **through** (by means of) **the one** (Man), **even Jesus Christ**:—Abundance answers to “*did abound*,” ver. 15; **grace** here to “*the grace of God*” there; only here, as at ch. i. 5, the word signifies not only the grace flowing from God, but the same grace implanted and working in man;—**the free gift** here to the same word there, but qualified by the **words of righteousness**, answering to “*justification*” in ver. 16.

reign in life] “Antithesis to ‘*death reigned*.’ We should expect ‘*life shall reign*;’ but St. Paul designedly changes the form of expression, that he may bring more prominently forward the idea of free personality. **Life** is not only corporeal. (the resurrection), but also spiritual and moral,—as also in ‘*death*’ we must include *through sin*, as in ver. 12. The term **shall reign** is brought in by the antithesis: but it is elsewhere used (compare 1 Cor. iv. 8. Rev. v. 10; xx. 4, 6; xxii. 5) to signify the state of blessedness, partly in an objective theocratic import (of the reign of the saints with Christ), partly in a subjective moral one,—because *reigning* is the highest, development of freedom, and the highest satisfaction of all desires.” De Wette.

18.] Recapitulation and co-statement of the parallel and distinctions.—**Therefore as through one trespass** (not, ‘*the offence of one*,’ as A.V., which is contrary to usage, and to ver. 17, where that meaning is expressed in words. In this summing up, the Apostle puts the antithetical elements *as strongly and nakedly as possible in contrast*; and therefore abridges the ‘*trespass*’ and ‘*the righteous act of one*’ into ‘*one transgression*’ and ‘*one righteous: act*’) **[the issue was]** (in the original there is nothing expressed before **unto all men** in both clauses) **unto all men to condemnation; even so through one righteous act** (the Death of Christ viewed as the highest point of His Obedience, see Phil. ii. 8: equivalent to “*the obedience of the one*,” below; not as in ver. 16,—nor *Righteousness*, which would not contrast with *trespass*, a *single act*) **[the issue was] unto all men (in extent of grace,—possible, not actual, as the other) to justification of** (conferring, leading to) **life**.

19.] For (in explanation of ver. 18) as **through the disobedience of the one man the many** (equivalent to “*all men*” above, but not so expressed here, because in the other limb of the comparison, “*all men*” could not be put, and this is conformed to it: see there) **were made** (not ‘*were accounted as*:’ nor ‘*became by imputation*:’ nor ‘*were proved to be*:’ *the kind of sin* spoken of in this whole passage, is both original and actual) **sinners** (‘*actual sinners by practice*’ is meant, the disobedience of Adam having been the *inlet* to all this: compare ver. 12), **even so** (after the same manner or analogy likewise) **through the obedience** (unto death, see on last verse) **of (the) one [man] shall** (*future*, because, as in ch. iii, 30, justification, as regards the many, is *not yet completed*) **the many** (equivalent to “*many*”: compare Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark x. 45, but thus expressed because “*many*” would not have answered in the other limb of the comparison. *In order to make the comparison more strict*, the “*all*” who have been made sinners are weakened to the indefinite “*the many*,” the “*many*” who shall be made righteous are *enlarged* to the indefinite “*the many*.”) Thus a *common term of quantity* is found for both, the one *extending to its largest numerical interpretation*, the other *restricted to its smallest*) **be made** (see above) **righteous** (not by *imputation* merely, any more than in the other case: but ‘*shall be made really and actually righteous*, as completely so as the others were made really and actually sinners.’ When we say that man has no righteousness *of his own*, we speak of him as *out of Christ*: but *in Christ* and united to Him, he is *made righteous*, not by a fiction, or *imputation only* of Christ’s righteousness, but by a real and living spiritual union with a righteous Head as a righteous member, righteous *by means of*, as an effect of, the righteousness of that Head, but not merely righteous by transference of the Righteousness of that Head; just as in his natural state he is united to a sinful head as a sinful member, sinful by means of, as an effect of, the sinfulness of that Head, but not merely by *transference* of the sinfulness of that Head).

20.] How the law (of Moses) came in, in the divine economy.—**Now** (or, **But**, i.e. the two things spoken of ver. 19 did not

simply and immediately happen) the law (of Moses, not *law* in the abstract, nor ‘the law of nature,’—nor even *the law of God* in its *general* sense, as often in ch. i. ii.;—but here strictly THE LAW OF MOSES, as necessitated by vv. 13, 14 in this same argument) **came in besides** (besides the fact of the many being made sinners, and as a transition point to the other result: formed a *third term*, besides these two, in the summary of God’s dealings with man), **in order that** (its *design*,—not merely its result. So in ver. 21) **the trespass** (*created* by the law; for where no law, no transgression, ch. iv. 15:—not merely the *knowledge of sin*, but *actual transgression*) **might be multiplied** (in *actual fact*: not ‘be abundantly exhibited,’ or any such evasive sense).—No possible objection can be taken to this statement by those who view the Law as a preparation for Christ. If it was so, then the effect of the Law, the creating and multiplying transgression, was *an end in the divine purposes*, to bring out the necessity of One who should deliver from sin, and bring in righteousness. **But** (this terrible end, the multiplying of transgression, was not, however, God’s *ultimate* end: He had a further and gracious one) **where sin** (the generic of the specific word “*trespass*”) **was multiplied**, (God’s) **grace did beyond measure abound** (not ‘*did much more abound*,’ as A.V. The A.V. has likewise destroyed the force of the comparison by rendering two different and distinct verbs in the original words both by one word, ‘*abound*’).

21.] *The purpose of this abounding of grace:—its ultimate prevalence and reign, by means of righteousness, unto life eternal.*
—**That as sin reigned** (the historic indefinite past, because the standing-point of the sentence is, *the restitution of all things hereafter*)

in death (death, *in and by which* the reign was exercised and shewn: *death* was the central act of sin’s reign. He does not here say, as the A.V. renders it, ‘*death reigned by sin*,’ as in vv. 12–14, because *sin* and *grace* are the two points of comparison, and require to be the subjects), **even so grace may reign through** (not “*in*” here, though it might be so, if the term applied to *our being made righteous*; but as it applies to the *Righteousness of Christ* making us righteous, it is **through**) **righteousness, unto** (leading to) **eternal life through** (by means of) **Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Romans: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI.—VIII.] THE MORAL EFFECTS OF JUSTIFICATION. VI. 1–14.] *No encouragement given hereby* (see ch. v. 20) *to a life in sin: for the baptized are dead to sin, and walk in a new (vv. 1–7) life, and one (vv. 8–11) dedicated to God.*

1.] **What then shall we say?**—the introduction of a difficulty or objection arising out of the preceding argument, and referring to ch. v. 20. See ch. iii. 5. **Are we to continue** (‘*M us we think that we may persist*,’—in other words, ‘may we persist’) **in** (our natural state and commission of) **sin, that** (God’s) **grace may be multiplied** (v. 20)?

2.] **God forbid** is the only adequate rendering of the expression in the original, **let it not be**: for it implies a reference to an averting Power: and the occasion is solemn enough to justify in our language the mention of that Power. The phrase is used of some inference in itself abhorrent from reverence or piety, or precluded by some acknowledged fact inconsistent therewith. The latter is here the ground of rejection. An *acknowledged fact* in the Christian life follows, which *precludes* our persisting in our sin.—**We who** (the original word describes *quality*, not merely matter of fact) **died** (not ‘*are dead*, as in A.V.; the true reference is thus most unfortunately lost, the time referred to being that of our *baptism*) **unto sin** (became as separate from and apathetic towards sin, as the dead corpse is separate from and apathetic towards the functions and stir of life), **how shall we live any longer therein?**

3.] **Or** (supposing you do not assent to the argument in the last verse) **know ye not** (the foregoing axiom is brought out into recognition by the further statement of a truth universally acknowledged), **that all we who were** (i. e. all of us, having been: not as A.V. again most unfortunately, “*so many of us as were*,” giving it to be understood that some of them *had not been* thus baptized) **baptized into Jesus Christ** (‘*into participation of*,’ ‘*into union with*,’ Christ, in his capacity of spiritual Mastership, Headship, and Pattern of conformity) **were baptized into** (introduced by our baptism into a state of conformity with and participation of) **his death?**—The Apostle refers (1) to an acknowledged fact, in the signification, and perhaps also in the manner (see below) of baptism,—that it put upon us (Gal. iii. 27) a state of conformity with and participation in Christ;—and (2) that this state involves a death *to sin* even as *He died to sin* (ver. 10);—the meaning being kept in the background, but all the while not lost sight of, that the *benefits of His death* were likewise made ours by our introduction into the covenant.

4.] A further explanation of the assertion in the last verse, proceeding on its concession by the reader.—We were buried therefore with him (Chrysostom says, commenting on John iii., “When we bow our heads under the water, our old man is buried as in a grave, and having been immersed below, is wholly and once for all put out of sight”) **through our baptism into his death** (our baptism into His death belongs together, not *we were buried into His death*, which would hardly bear any sense): **that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory** (the divine **glory** includes all that manifests the Creator to the creature: and hence also his Almightiness; compare the expression “*the might of his glory*,” Col. i, 11) **of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life** (not ‘*a new life*;’—nor are such expressions ever to be diluted away thus: the abstract substantive is used to bring the quality of *newness*, which is the point insisted on, more into prominence; comp. 2

Thess. ii. 11, and note: and 1 Tim. vi. 17, and note.—The comparison is not only between our Lord's *physical* death and resurrection, and our *spiritual*; but reaches far deeper: see notes on vv. 10, 11).

5.] The Apostle confirms the last verse by a necessary sequence, that *those who are united to Him in His Death, shall also be in His resurrection*.—**For** (confirmatory) **if we have become united to the likeness of his death** (the rendering of A.V., ‘planted together,’ is inadmissible: see note in my Greek Test. Observe that, according to the more probable rendering, adopted in the text, Christians partake of the *likeness* only of Christ's *death*, but of His *actual Resurrection itself*), **surely we shall be also to the likeness of his resurrection** (the future is used *perhaps* because of the *inference*, as a logical sequence,—‘If, &c.... A *shall* be equal to *B*:’—but more probably with a deeper meaning, because the participation in His Resurrection, however partially and in the inner spiritual life attained *here*, will only then be accomplished in our entire being, when we ‘shall wake up after his likeness’):

6.] **knowing** (recollecting) **this, that our old man** (former self, personality before our new birth,—opposed to the “*new man*” or “*new creature*”—see Col. iii, 10; 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. iv. 22–21,—not merely the guilt of sin, nor the power of sin, but the *man*) **was** (at our baptism) **crucified with him** (the great key to our text is Gal. ii, 20. As the death of the Lord Jesus was by *crucifixion*, the Apostle uses the same expression of our death to our former sinful self, which is not only by virtue of, but also *in the likeness of*, Christ's death,—as signal, as entire, as much a death of cutting off and putting to shame and pain), **that** (the aim and end of the being crucified with Him) **the body of sin might be destroyed** (the body of sin, i.e. ‘*the body, which belongs to or serves sin*,’ in which sin rules or is manifested, expressed by the “*members*,” ver. 13; in which is “*the body of death*,” eh. vii. 23,—“*the law of sin*,” 24,—“*the deeds of the body*,” ch. viii. 13,—“*the body of the flesh*,” Col. ii. 11. But we must not understand that the body is the *seat of sin*, or at all events must not so understand those words as if the *principle of sin* lay in the *body*, which is not true, for it lies in the *will*. **Might be destroyed**, i.e. **rendered powerless**, annulled, as far as regards activity and energy), **that we might no longer be in bondage to sin** (i. e. that the body should no longer be under the dominion of sin. see below, ver. 12).

7.] The difficulty of this verse arises from the Apostle having in a short and pregnant sentence expressed a whole similitude, joining, as he elsewhere does in such cases, the subject: of the first limb of the comparison with the predicate of the second. Fully expressed, it would stand thus: ‘For, as a man that is dead is acquitted and released from guilt and bondage (among *men*: no reference to *God's judgment* of him): so a man that has died to sin is acquitted from the guilt of sin, and released from its bondage.’ All this is implied in the word used, ‘is acquitted,’ ‘has his quittance,’ from sin, so that Sin (personified) has no more claims on him, either as a creditor or as a master: cannot detain him for debt, nor sue him for service. A larger reference is thus given to the assertion than the purposes of the present argument, which is treating of the power, not the guilt of sin, required: but that it is so, lies in the nature of *sin*, the service of which is guilt, and the deliverance from whose service necessarily brings with it *acquittal*.

8-11.] *This new life must be one dedicated to God.*

8.] **Now** (continuing the train of argument) **if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also** (the future as in ver. 5,—because the life with Him, though here begun, is not here completed: and the term we believe used more of dogmatic belief, than of *crus*?), though the latter meaning is not altogether absent) **live with him**.

9.] This and the following verse explain what sort of a life with Christ is meant, by what we know of the Resurrection-life of Christ Himself.—The only difficulty here is in **death hath dominion over him no more**, as implying that Death *had* dominion over Christ, which we know it had not: see John x. 17, 18; ii. 19; Acts ii. 24. But this vanishes, when we remember that our Lord, by submitting to Death, virtually, and in the act of death, surrendered Himself to the power of Death. Death could not hold Him, and had no power over Him further than by his own sufferance: but power over Him it *had*, inasmuch as **He died**.

10.] **For** (the proof of the foregoing) **the death that he died** (not ‘in that He died,’ as A.V.), **He died unto sin** (De Wette well remarks that we must in *expressing* this verse abide by the *indefinite* reference to sin in which the death of Christ is placed; if we attempt to make it more definite, ‘*for sin*, or ‘*to that state, in which He suffered the punishment of sin*,’ we shall lose the point of comparison, which lies in ‘*to sin*’ and ‘*to God*.’ If we are to *expand* the words ‘*died to sin*,’ we must say that our Lord at death passed into a state in which He had ‘*no more to do with sin*’—either as *tempting* Him [though in vain], or as *requiring to be atoned for* [this having been now effected], or as *met by Him* in daily contradiction which He endured from sinners) **once** (i. e., *once for all*, so that it is not to be repeated): **but the life that he liveth** (see above), *he liveth unto God* (indefinite again, but easily filled up and explained: *to God*,—as being glorified by and with the Father, as entirely rid of conflict with sin and death, and having only God's [properly so called] work to do,—as waiting till, in the purposes of the Father, all things are put under Him:—*and to [for] God*, as being the manifestation and brightness of the Father's glory).

11.] *An exhortation to realize this state of death unto sin and life unto God with Christ. Even so* (after the same manner as Christ) **reckon ye yourselves** (better than ‘*infer yourselves to be*’) **dead** (indeed **unto sin** (as ver. 2 and following), **but alive**

unto God in Christ Jesus (i. e. ‘*by virtue of your union with Him*: not through Christ Jesus; in this chapter it is not Christ’s *Mediatorship*, but His *Headship*, which is prominent).

12, 13.] Hortatory inferences from ver. 11: first negative, answering to our being dead to sin,—then positive, answering to our being alive unto God.

12.] Let not sin reign answers to the imagery throughout, in which Sin is a master or lord. It is hardly right to lay stress on it, and say, as Chrysostom, ‘He does not say, ‘Let not sin live’ or ‘work,’ but, ‘Let not sin reign.’ for He did not come to extinguish nature, but to rectify the will?’ for it is no matter of comparison between *reigning* and *indwelling merely*, but between *reigning* and *being deposed*.—But why *your mortal body*? Origen and others explain it ‘*dead to sin*,’ which it clearly cannot be. Chrysostom and others suppose the word inserted to remind us of *the other life*, and the shortness of the conflict, or of the shortness of sinful pleasures: De Wette, Tholuck, and others, more probably, that the Apostle wishes to keep in view the connexion between *sin and death* on the one hand, and *that life with Christ, which is freed from death* on the other. See 2 Cor. iv. 11 and note.

13.] Neither yield ye (or render;—as a soldier renders his service to his sovereign, or a servant to his master) **your members** (more particular than ‘*your bodies*;’ the individual members being instruments of different lusts and sins) **as instruments** (or, ‘*weapons*,’ many versions and expositors defending this rendering by St. Paul’s fondness for military similitudes, and by the occurrence of the word “*wages*” below, ver. 23;—but the comparison here is to *servitude*, rather than *soldiership*) **of unrighteousness unto sin** (i. e. for the service of sin); **but yield** (in the construction of the original, the former imperative denotes habit,—the exhortation guards against the recurrence of a devotion of the members to sin: this second imperative, on the other hand, as in ch. xii. 1, denotes an *act* of self-devotion to God once for all, not a mere recurrence of the habit) **yourselves** (not merely *your members*, but your whole selves, body, soul, and spirit) **up to God as those that were dead and are alive** (as in verses 4–11, and Eph. ii. 1–5), **and your members as instruments** (see above) **of righteousness unto God** (i. e. for the service, or glory, of God).

14.] An assurance, confirming (by the *for*) the *possibility of the surrender to God* commanded in the last verse, *that sin shall not be able to assert and maintain its rule in those who are not under the law but under grace*.—The future, **shall not have dominion**, cannot be taken as a command or exhortation, which use of the future would if not always, yet certainly here, require the second person,—and would hardly suit a personification such as we find in this clause.—The second part of the verse refers back to ch. v. 20, 21, where the law is stated to be the multiplier of transgression,—and accords with 1 Cor. xv. 56, “*the strength of sin is the law*.” The stress is on the *not having dominion*: as if it had been said, ‘Your efforts to live a life of freedom from the tyranny of sin shall not be frustrated by its after all tyrannizing over you and asserting its dominion: for ye are not under that law which is the strength of sin, but under that grace (here in the widest sense, justifying and sanctifying,—grace in all its attributes and workings) in which is no condemnation, ch. viii, 1.—It will be seen from the above, that I interpret “*having dominion*” rather of the *eventual* triumph of sin by obtaining domination over us, than of its reducing us under its subjection as servants in this life. This is necessary, both to fit this verse into the context, and to snit the question which arises in the next. The discussions as to whether **the law** in this place is the moral or ceremonial law, and as to whether we are bound by the former, are irrelevant here: the assertion being merely that of the general *matter of fact*, about which there can be no question, that we (Christians) are not under *the law*, placed in a covenant of legal obedience, but under grace,—placed in a covenant of justification by faith and under the promise of the indwelling Spirit—subjects of a *higher law*—even the *law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ*, ch. viii. 2. Whether we are *bound* by the law, and how far, depends on how far the law itself spoke the immutable moral truth of God’s government of the world, or was adapted to temporary observances and symbolic rites now abolished,—the whole of which subject is not under consideration here. I make these remarks to justify myself for not entering into those long and irrelevant discussions with which

many of our commentaries are interrupted, and the sense of the Apostle’s argument confounded.

15–23.] The being under grace (free from the condemnation of sin) and not under the law, is no encouragement to sin: for (vv. 16–19) we have renounced the service of sin, and have become the servants of righteousness: and (vv. 20–23) the consequences of the service of sin are terrible and fatal, whereas those of the service of righteousness are blesse and glorious.

15.] are we to sin? i.e. may we sin? Notice, that he is speaking of *committing acts of sin*; not of a habit of living in sin, although that would be involved by such acts. This question is not, any more than that of ver. 1, put into the mouth of an objector, but is part of the Apostle’s own discourse, arising out of what has preceded, and answered by him in the following verses.

16.] ‘You are the servants either of God or of sin,—there is no third course.’ The former part of the verse reminds them merely of an universal truth,—that the yielding ourselves servants for obedience to any one, implies the *serving*, being (in reality) the servants of such person. Then this is implied in the form of a dilemma, implying that there is no third service. ‘Now this must be true of you *with regard either to sin or to God*.’ K **now ye not that to whomsoever ye yield yourselves**

servants to obey (i. e. with a view to obedience), **his servants ye are whom ye obey**, (and in this case) **whether it be** (**servants) of sin unto death** ('with death as the result,'—not physical death merely, nor eternal death merely, but **DEATH** [by sin] in its most general sense, as the contrast to [life by] **RIGHTEOUSNESS**,—the state of misery induced by sin, in all its awful aspects and consequences:—and so throughout this passage and ch. vii.), **or of obedience** (viz. obedience to Him who alone ought to be

obeyed) **unto righteousness** (with righteousness as its result; not imputed merely, nor implanted merely, but **RIGHTEOUSNESS** in its most general sense, as the contrast to *death*,—the state of blessedness induced by holiness, and involving in it, as a less in a greater, *eternal life*: and so throughout this passage)

17, 18.] The dilemma is solved for them by reference to the matter of fact: *that they were once servants of sin, but on receiving the gospel, obeyed its teaching: and consequently were freed from the service of sin, and became the servants of righteousness*:—and this in the form of a thanksgiving to God (1 Cor. i. 14), whose work in them it was.—There is a stress on **were**, as referring to a state *past*. So Eph. v. 8.

17.] ye obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine (the expression is most probably used of the practical rule of life accompanying the doctrine of the gospel. De Wette thinks it is the Pauline form of teaching, of justification by faith, distinguished from the Judaistic) **to which ye were delivered** (not, as A.V., *which was delivered you*. The inversion to the passive agrees admirably with the figure used. The **form** of doctrine is regarded as a mould, exemplar, or pattern after which they were to be fashioned: and the best commentators remark, that they, the disciples taught, are regarded as being as it were pressed into the mould and conformed to its shape: the words **ye were delivered** implying a superior Power, by whose agency this transformation was to be wrought).

18.] And (this verse is closely united with the foregoing; Meyer and others think that it might be stated as a syllogistic conclusion, of which the dilemma is the major, and the *fact* of ver. 17 the minor) **being made free from sin, ye were made servants** (see on the next verse) **to righteousness**.

19.] For the expression, **made servants** (brought under bondage) the Apostle apologizes: 'it is not literally so; the servant of righteousness is *no slave*, under no yoke of bondage; but in order to set the contrast between the former and the new state before you, I have used this word:' **I speak after the manner of men** (according to the requirements of rhetorical antithesis) **on account of the** (intellectual, not moral) **weakness of your flesh** (i. e. 'because you are carnal and not spiritual, and want such figures to set the truth before you'): **for** (explanatory of *brought under bondage*) **as ye** (once) **yielded your members** (**as**) **servants to uncleanness and to iniquity** (lawlessness, two divisions of sin—impurity, against a man's self,—lawlessness, against God) **unto iniquity** (lawlessness, both which, *impurity* and *lawlessness*, *lead to lawlessness, result in it*), **so now yield your members as servants to righteousness** (see ver. 16) **unto** (leading to, having as its result, perfect) **sanctification**—(contrast to *lawlessness*, and both embracing their respective consequences).

20–23.] As a further urging of the above exhortations, the Apostle contrasts the end of their former life with that of their present.

20.] For introduces a *motive* for the foregoing: but the verse properly belongs to the *following*: for ver. 22 is the contrast to it. **For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of** (i. e. **in relation to**) **righteousness**.—There is doubtless a latent irony in the use of the word **free** here: but it must not be brought out too strongly: it does not appear, till the *end* of that freedom is declared.

21.] 'Well, then, ye were free: and what was the benefit?"

then concedes and assumes.—There are two ways of rendering and pointing: (1) that of A.V., carrying (on the question to the word *ashamed*, and supplying *in those* before **things**, adopted by Chrysostom and many others. But this though good as far as construction is concerned, is inconsistent with the New Test. meaning of *fruit*, which is '*actions*,' the *fruit of the man* considered as the tree, not '*wages*,' or '*reward*,' the *fruit of his actions*: see below, ver. 22, and ch. i. 13, note. So even Phil. i. 22 (see note).—So that I much prefer (2) the punctuation of Theodoret and many others,—placing the interrogation at **at that time**, and making the rest the answer. **What fruit then had ye at that time? (Things, deeds) whereof ye are now ashamed.** And then follows the *reason of their present shame*. **For the end** (virtually the same as the *wages*, ver. 23, and would be a mere repetition of *fruit* on the first method of punctuation above) **of those things** (those fruits consisting of sinful acts) **is death** (death in the widest sense, see note on ver. 16,—physical, which has been the end of sin, in which we all are involved, —and spiritual and eternal, which will be the end of actual sin if followed out).

22.] Contrast of your present state to that former one: **freedom from sin as a, master,—servitude** (compare 'the speaking after the manner of men, ver. 19) **to God** (a higher description than merely **righteousness**, the actual antithesis to *sin*, ver. 18. The **devil** would be the corresponding antithetical power: and not unfrequently appears in the teaching of St. Paul: but usually

in casual expressions, as Eph. iv. 27; vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 26, not as the principal figure in a course of argument), fruit (see above on ver. 21,—and remark **your fruit**, fruit actually brought forth, as much ‘as to say, “you have fruit, and your fruit is...”’) unto (leading unto perfect) **sanctification,—and** (ye have) **the end everlasting life.**

23.] The *ends* of the two courses placed, pointedly and antithetically, and the inherent difference, that whereas **death** (see above) is the **wages** (the word means the pay, or ration, of soldiers; compare the similitude in ver. 13, and remarks there) of **sin**, earned and paid down,—**e ternal life is** no such *wages*, nothing earned, but **the free gift of God** to His soldiers and servants;—and that **in** (not ‘through,’—true enough, but not implied in the preposition here: see above on ver. 11) **Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Romans: Chapter 7

VII. 1–6.] The explanation and proof of the assertion ch. vi. 14, “*for ye are not under the law, but under grace:*” the answer to the question of vi. 15 having occupied vi. 16–23.

1–4.] *The Christian is dead to the law by being dead with Christ, and has become His.*

1.] Connect with vi. 14, which is in fact the sentence immediately preceding. The steps of the proof are these: *The law binds a man only so long as he lives* (ver. 1): for example,—a married woman is only bound to her husband so long as he lives (vv. 2, 3):—so also the Christian *being dead* with Christ and alive to Him *is freed from the law* (ver. 4).

brethren] Not addressed particularly to Jewish Christians: see below: but generally to the Roman Church.

I am speaking (writing) **to men acquainted with the law;** i.e. the persons to whom I address this epistle are such as know the law: not, as the A.V. unfortunately, ‘I speak to *them that know* the law,’ as if he were now addressing a different class of persons. Nor does the knowledge of the law, here affirmed of the Romans, prove that the majority of them were Jewish Christians: they may have been Gentile proselytes.

that the (Mosaic: for of that, and not of any other law, is the whole argument) **law hath power over a man for so long time as he** (the man, see verses 4 and 6: not ‘‘it,’’ i.e. *the law*, as some would render it, which would introduce the irrelevant question of the *abrogation of the law*, whereas the whole matter in argument is the *relation of the Christian to the law*) **liveth?**

2.] **For** (not merely an example, but the example is itself the proof) **the woman which hath an husband** (literally, the woman under a husband, in subjection to a husband) **is bound by the law to her husband while he liveth** (literally, **to her living husband**): **but if her husband die, she is loosed from** (literally, annulled from) **the law of** (‘regarding,’ compare “*the law of the leper*,” Levit. xiv. 2) **the husband.**

3.] **Therefore** (‘*from the same consideration it follows that*’), **while her husband lives, she shall be called an adulteress, if she be joined to** (i. e. *attach herself to, become the wife of*) **another man: but if her husband die, she is free from the law** (of her husband), **so that she is not an adulteress, though she be joined to another man**.—So far all is clear. But when we come to the application of the example, *this* must carefully be borne in mind, as tending to clear up all the confusion which has here been found by Commentators:—that the Apostle is insisting on the fact, that **DEATH DISSOLVES LEGAL OBLIGATION**: but he is not drawing an exact parallel between the persons in his example, and the persons in his application. The comparison might be thus made in terms common to both: (1) *Death has dissolved the legal obligation between man and wife: therefore the wife is at liberty to be married to another:*—(2) *Death has dissolved the legal obligation between the law and us: therefore we are at liberty to be married to another.* So far the comparison is strict. Further, it will not hold: for in the *example*, the *liberated person* is the *survivor*,—in the *thing treated*, the *liberated person* is the *dead person*. And so far from this being an oversight or an inaccuracy, it is no more than that to which, more or less, all comparisons are liable; and no more can be required of them than that they should fit, in the kernel and intent of the similitude. If it be required here to apply the example further, there is no difficulty nor inconsistency in saying (as Chrysostom does) that our first Husband was the **Law**, and our second is Christ; but then it must be carefully borne in mind, that we are freed, not by *the law having died to us*, (which matter here is not treated,) but by *our having died to the law*.

4.] **So then** (inference both from ver. 1, the general fact, and vv. 2, 3, the example), **my brethren, ye also** (as well as the woman in my example, who is dead to the law of her husband) **were made dead** (or, *slain*) **to the law** (crucified, see Gal. ii. 19, 20. The *more violent word* is used instead of “*ye died*,” to recall the violent death of Christ, in which, and after the manner of which, believers have been put to death to the law and sin,—and the past tense (not “*are become*,” as A.V.), to remind them of the great Event by which this was brought about) **through (by means of) the (crucified) body** (compare the expression “*through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*,” Heb. x. 10) **of Christ; that you might be joined to another, (even) to him who was raised from the dead** (alluding both to the comparison in verses 2, 3, and to ch. vi. 4, 5), **to the intent that we**

should bring forth fruit (alluding to ch. vi, 22, and at the same time [Luke i, 42] carrying on the similitude of marriage. Not that this latter must be pressed, for there is only an allusion to it: nor on the other hand need the least objection be raised to such an understanding of the words, as any one conversant with St. Paul's way of speaking on this subject will at once feel: comp. 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 30–32) **unto the honour of God.**

5, 6.] *In the fleshly state* (before we died with Christ) *sinful passions which were by the law worked in us and brought forth fruit to death: but now that we are dead to the law, we are no longer servants in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit.*—The Law (ch. v. 20, alluded to again vi. 14) was the *multiplier of sin*. To this thought, and the inferences from it, the Apostle now recurs, and contrasts the state under the law in this respect, with that of the believer in Christ. **For when we were in the flesh** (i. e., virtually “under the law:” see the antithesis in ver. 6; some take it to mean in the mere fleshly state, in which the Spirit is not yet energizing; i.e., the state of the unregenerate. But *how does in the flesh* denote “under the law?” Some say, *on account of its carnality; some on account of the power of sin under the law.* Best of all is it to understand it, as pointing to the period *before death with Christ*, in which we were sensual and sinful: so that *to be in the flesh* forms a contrast with *to be put to death, made dead*, **the stirrings of sins which were through the law** (the *incitements,—not the sins*, in this place, though ultimately it was so,—the incitements *leading* to the sin, are treated of. The full meaning must be kept, ‘which were by means of the law: i.e. the law occasioned them) were active (energized) **in our members** (the instruments of sin, ch. vi. 13) **so as to bring forth fruit unto death** (only a verbal antithesis to the words “unto God:”—‘whose end was death’).

6.] But now (opposed to the time spoken of in ver. 5) **we have been loosed** (annulled) **from the law, having died unto that wherein we were held** (the rendering of the A.V., “*that being dead,*” is without a shadow of authority; the reading on which it is founded having been a conjectural alteration of the sacred text by Beza, and not contained in any ancient copy whatever. It arose from an entire misunderstanding of the text; for it is not the law which is dead, but we who are dead to it, see ver. 4); **so that we serve** (not ‘*that we should serve,*’ as A.V. The present tense describes the actual state:—understand ‘*God*’ after *serve*) **in the newness of the spirit** (i. e. of the Holy Spirit of God, who originates and penetrates the Christian life:—*the first mention* of the Spirit, so much spoken of in ch. viii.), **and not in the oldness of the letter** (the law only a collection of precepts and prohibitions, but the Gospel a service of freedom, ruled by the Spirit, whose presence is liberty), **Newness** and **oldness** are not, as in ch. vi. 4, ‘*newness of life,*’ attributes of the genitives which follow them, but *states in which* those genitives are the *ruling elements.*

7–25.] An explanation of the part which the law has in bringing out sin, by example of the Apostle's own case.—In this most important and difficult passage, it is of the first consequence to have a clear view of the *form* of illustration which the Apostle adopts, and of the *reason why he adopts it.* The former has been amply treated of by almost all Commentators: the latter too generally has escaped their enquiry. But it furnishes, if satisfactorily treated, a key to the other. I ask then first, *why St. Paul suddenly changes here to the first person?* And the answer is, because he is about to draw a conclusion negativing the question, “*Is the law sin?*” upon purely *subjective* grounds, proceeding on that which *passes within*, when the work of the law is carried on in the heart. And he is about to depict this work of the Jaw by an example which shall set it forth in vivid colours, in detail, in its connexion with sin in a man. What example then so apposite, as *his own?* Introspective as his character was, and purified as his inner vision was by the Holy Spirit of God, what example would so forcibly bring out the inward struggles of the man which prove the holiness of the law, while they shew its inseparable connexion with the production of sin?—If this be the reason why the first person is here assumed (and I can find no other which does not introduce into St. Paul's style an arbitrariness and caprice which it least of all styles exhibits), then we must *dismiss from our minds all exposition which explains the passage of any other*, in the first instance, *than of Paul himself:* himself indeed, as an *exemplar*, wherein others may see themselves: but not himself *in the person* of others, be they the Jews, nationally or individually, or *all mankind*, or *individual men.* This being done, there arises now a question equally important,—*Of what self* is it that he speaks throughout this passage? Is it *always the same?* If so, is it always the *carnal, unregenerate self?* or always the *spiritual regenerate?* Clearly not the *latter always*; for to that self the historical account of vv. 7–13 will not apply, and still less the assertion, in the *present*, of ver. 14. Clearly not the *former always*: for to that the assertion of ver. 22 will not apply, nor that of ver. 25. Is it *always*: the *complex self*, made up of the prevailing spiritual-regenerate, with the remains of the carnal-unregenerate? *Not always this:* although this seems nearer to satisfying the conditions: for in the description ver. 9, “*I was alive without the law once,*” and in “*I am carnal, &c.*” ver. 14, there is no complexity, but the “*I*” is *clearly the carnal man.* Therefore not always the same. If not always the same, *where is the distinction?* If we look carefully, the Apostle himself will guide us to it. Having carried on the “*I*” unqualified and unexplained till ver. 18, he there has occasion to say, “*there dwelleth not in me any good.*” But he is conscious that, as he had written to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iii. 16), “*the Spirit of God dwelleth in you;*” he therefore finds it necessary to correct himself by an explanation, *what “I” he meant*, and adds to “*in me,*” **that is, in my flesh.** So that “*I*” there is equivalent to “*my flesh,*” i.e. ‘myself in my state of *life* to the law and sin, and acting according to the motions of sin.’ Again, when the *approval of the law of God* is affirmed (not the mere designing to do His will, verses 15, 16, 19, 20, which I will treat by and by), it is not barely “*I,*” but, to avoid confusion, in ver. 22 the Apostle adds **after the inward man**, and in ver. 25 subjoins **myself**; in both cases shewing that (see notes below) he speaks of the *complex man*, himself made up of an *inward*, and an *outward man*, of *the mind and the flesh.* Are we then justified in assuming, that up to ver. 22 the carnal-unregenerate self is spoken of, but after that the complex self? Such a supposition would not be consistent with the assertion of the *desire* from ver. 15 onwards: *no such will existing in the carnal unregenerate man.* I believe the true account will be

nearly as follows:—from ver. 7–13 incl. is *historical*, and the “*T*” there is the *historical self*, under the working of conviction of sin, and shewing the work of the law; in other words, *the carnal self in the transition state*, under the first motions towards God generated by the law, which the law could never have perfected. Then at ver. 14, St. Paul, according to a habit very common to him, keeps hold of the carnal self, and still having it in view, *transfers himself into his present position*,—altering the past tense into the present, still however meaning by “*T*” (in ver. 14), “*my flesh*.” But, having passed into the present tense, he immediately mingles with this mere action of the law upon the natural conscience, the motions of the will towards God which are in conflict with the motions toward sin in the members. And hence arises an apparent verbal confusion, because the “*I*,” for example, in Ver. 17, of whom it is said, “*it is no longer I that perform it*,” being the entire personality, the *complex self*, is of far wider extent than the “*I*,” of whom it is said, “*in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth not any good*.” But the latter “*I*,” in this part of the chapter, is shewn to be (verses 17, 20) no longer properly “*I*,” but “*sin that dwelleth in me*,”—and so it *passes altogether out of sight* after ver. 20, and *its place is taken by the actual then existing complex self* of Paul compounded of the regenerate spiritual man, sympathizing with God’s law, serving God’s law, in conflict with the still remaining though decadent carnal man, whose essence it is to serve the law of sin, to bring captive to the law of sin. This state of conflict and division against one’s self would infallibly bring about utter ruin, and might well lead to despair (ver. 24), but for the rescue which God’s grace has provided by Jesus Christ our Lord. And this rescue has been such, that I, the “*I myself*” of ver. 25, the *real self*, the nobler and better part of the man, serve, with the *mind* (see there), the law of God: whereas it is only with the flesh, according to which (viii. 4) *I do not walk*, but overcome and mortify it, that I serve (am still subject to) the law of sin. Then this subjection of the flesh to the law of sin, to the *bondage of corruption*, is fully set out, in its *nature*,—*consequences to the carnal*,—and *uses to the spiritual*,—in ch. viii.—Any thing like a summary of the exposition of this passage would be quite beyond my limits. It may suffice here to say, that most of the ancients supposed “*T*” throughout the passage to represent *mankind*, or *the Jews generally*, and the whole to be taken chronologically, to ver. 9, as *before* the law, after ver. 9 as *under* the law. This was once Augustine’s view, but he afterwards changed it, and adopted in the main that advocated above.

7.] See note, ch. vi. 1.

Is the law (not ‘*conscience*,’ but in our case, the revealed law of God, which awoke the conscience to action) **sin?**—not ‘*the cause of sin*,’ which in one sense the Apostle would not have denied,—but *sin*, abstract for concrete, *sinful*, or, as Bengel expresses it, *the sinful cause of sin*. The question itself refers back to ver. 5, where the Apostle had spoken of “*the stirrings of sins which were through the law*.” It is asked, *not by an objector*, but by the Apostle himself, in anticipation of an objection.

Nevertheless] i.e. but what I mean is.....—I say not that, but....

I had not known] The literal rendering of the original sentence is, **I was living in a state of ignorance of sin, were it not** Then what is the **sin** here spoken of? Is it *sin in act*, or *sin in principle*,—the principle of sin? Not *sin in act*, so that *I had not known sin* should mean, ‘*I had not entered into contact with sin*,’ i.e. ‘*had not sinned*.’ for then the law would have truly and actually been the cause of sin: nor, *sin in act*, so that the meaning were, ‘*I had not known the nature of a sinful act*?’ for this would not agree with the subordination of the one particular sin specified below: the *coveting itself* being more general than the particular acts which it induced. But the reference must be to *sin in principle*, the principle of sin: **I had not recognized such a thing as sin, but by means of the law.** **The law** here is in the full sense of *the Mosaic law* as regarded *himself*,—not excluding the wider sense on which I have insisted in the former part of the Epistle when applied to *others*.

for I had not known (by experience: ‘known any thing of’) **coveting** (this rendering is better than “*lust*” of the A.V.: the substantive here being the one corresponding to the verb in the commandment. So also in ver. 8, **coveting** is better than “*concupiscence*.”) The word expresses the motions of the flesh towards sin,—whether acted on or not,—whether consented to or not:—this *motion* he would not have *perceived*, because he was simply *moving with it*), **if the law had not said, Thou shalt not covet** (Exod. xx. 17. Deut. v. 21). ‘*Covet*,’ in the above sense. The Apostle omits all the objects there specified, and merely lays hold of the idea contained in the prohibition. And it may well be said and strictly, that the ‘*coveting*’ there spoken of would lead to all kinds of sin—therefore murder, adultery, &c., if carried out: and that the prohibition of coveting there serves as an example of what the law actually forbids elsewhere.

8.] **But** (proceeding with the development of sin by means of the law) **sin** (the sinful principle or propensity, but without any conscious personification on the part of the Apostle), **having found occasion** (*occasion* means more than mere *opportunity*,—it indicates the furnishing the material and ground of attack, the *wherewithal* and *whence* to attack, The words here are not to be joined with **through the commandment** following, which belongs to the verb **wrought**: see below), **through** (by means of) **the commandment** (meaning, not *the law* generally, but the *tenth commandment*, the prohibition in question) **wrought in me** (not ‘*wrought out*, ‘brought into action,’ but

‘*originated*,’—using this commandment as its instrument) **all (manner of) coveting.** **For without the law sin is** (not ‘*was*:’ the sentence is a general axiom,—compare ch. iv. 15) **dead** (powerless and inactive: comp. 1 Cor. xv. 56, “*the strength of sin is the law*”)).—This *deadness of sin without the law* must not be understood as meaning that sin was committed but not recognized, the conscience being not informed nor awakened: such a statement would be *true*, but would *not touch the matter*

argued here. Erasmus well explains this word **dead**: ‘Before the law was promulgated (but see below) I was ignorant of some sins, and only knew thus much of others, that I thought I might commit them because they were not forbidden: so that my mind was more lightly and languidly moved towards sin; for we ever have colder love towards those things which we can enjoy whenever we like. But when the law marked out so many different forms of sins, the whole band of lusts and desires, irritated by the prohibition, began more eagerly to solicit me towards sin.’ Compare also Prov. ix. 17; and the citations from the classics in my Greek Test., to the effect that prohibition itself irritates and incites towards violation of the command.

9.] It is a great question with Interpreters, *of what period* St. Paul here speaks, Those who sink his own personality, and think that he speaks merely as one of mankind, or of the Jews, understand it of the period before the law was given: some, of Adam in Paradise before (?) the prohibition: those who see St. Paul himself throughout the whole think that he speaks,—some, of his state *as a Pharisee*: this however would necessitate the understanding the legal death which follows, of his *conversion*, which cannot well be: some, of his state as a *child*, before that freedom of the will is asserted which causes rebellion against the law as the will of another. Agreeing in some measure with the last view, I would extend

the limits further, and say that he speaks of *all that time, be it mere childhood or much more, before the law began its work within him*,—before the deeper energies of his moral nature were aroused (see on “*the commandment came*” below).—**And I was alive** (not merely ‘lived’ ‘went on,’ but emphatic, i.e. ‘lived and flourished,’—contrasted with “*died*” below) **without the law** (the law having no recognized place in my moral existence) **once; but when the commandment** (above, ver. 8) **came** (purely subjective; not ‘*was enacted*,’ ‘*came in*,’—but ‘*came to me*,’ as we say, ‘*came home to me*,’ ‘*was brought home to me*’), **sin came to** (sprung into) **life** (not ‘*revived*:’ however *true* it may be that sin was *merely dormant*, the idea insisted on here is, that it was *dead* and *came to life*, began to live and flourish), **and I died** (ceased to live-and-flourish as before,—fell into that state of unhappiness, which ever afterwards under the gospel he calls *death*, ver. 24; ch. viii. 2);

10.] **and** (not an additional particular, but equivalent to ‘and so,’—merely changing the *subject* from ‘I’ to ‘the commandment’) **the very commandment, which was for** (tending to) **life** (comp. ch. x. 5, and references there: the *life* is one of *prosperity* primarily, but capable of, and indeed requiring [x. 5] a higher interpretation), **this (very commandment) I found** (literally, **was found by me**: this *finding* is purely subjective, said of the feeling in his own heart. As Chrysostom says, “he does not say the commandment *became* to me death, but *was found*, thus explaining the novelty and strangeness of the incongruous fact”) **to be for** (tending to) **death** (explained on the word *died* above).

11.] **For** (explanatory how ver. 10 happened) **sin** (the sinful principle within me), **having found an occasion** (connect as in ver. 8, where see note),—**through** (by means of) **the commandment deceived me** (there is a plain reference to the Tempter deceiving Eve, which was accomplished by means of the commandment, exciting doubt of and objection to it, and lust after the forbidden thing: see 2 Cor. xi. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 14), **and through** (by means of) **it slew me** (i. e. brought me into the state of misery and death mentioned in ver. 10;—but there is an allusion again to the effect of the fall as the act of the Tempter).

12.] **So that** (seeing it was not the law in general, nor this particular commandment, that wrought coveting in me, but the *sinful principle in me taking advantage of these*, which themselves were given for life and not for death) **the law is holy, and the commandment** (viz. “*Thou shalt not covet*,” ver. 8) **holy, and righteous, and good** (“he calls it *holy*, as teaching duty: *righteous*, as justly condemning trespasses; and *good*, as bringing life to them that keep it.” See also 1 Tim. i. 8).

13.] **Did then that which is good** (i. e. the commandment, but made abstract for the sake of greater contrast) **become death to me?**—Was it, after all, the *commandment itself* that became to me this death of which I speak?—**God forbid** (far from it: let not such a thing be imagined): **but sin [became death to me] that it might appear (be shewn to be) sin**, (by) **working death to me through that which is good** (see above. The misuse and perversion of good is one of the tests whereby the energy of evil is detected; so that sin, by its perversion of the [good] commandment into a cause [evil] of death, was shewn in its real character *as sin*); **that** (explains and runs parallel with the former *that*) **through the commandment sin might become exceeding** (above measure) **sinful**: i.e. that sin, which was before unknown as such, might, being vivified and brought into energy by (its opposition to) the commandment, be brought out as being (not merely ‘*shewn to be*’) exceedingly sinful (sinful in an exaggerated degree—prominent in its true character as the opponent of God).

14.] On the change into the present tense here, see above in the remarks on the whole section. Hitherto, the passage has been *historical*: now the Apostle passes to the *present time*, keeping hold yet of the carnal self of former days, whose remnants are still energizing in the renewed man.—**For** (by way of explaining and setting in still clearer light the relative positions of sin and the law, and the state of inner conflict brought about by their working) **we know** (it is an acknowledged principle amongst us) **that the law is spiritual** (sprung from God, who is a Spirit, and requiring of men spiritual purity. These meanings, which have been separately held by different commentators may well be united): **but I** (see beginning of section) **am carnal** (subject to the law of the flesh, and in bondage to it, see below), **sold** (into slavery: but the similitude must not be exacted in *all particulars*, for it is only the fact of slavery, as far as its victim, *the man*, is concerned, which is here prominent) **under** (to, and so as to be under the power of) **sin**.—Tholuck (who differs from the view of this section advocated above, yet) adds here: “The ‘I’ appears here in its totality as sinful, while in vv. 16, 20 it is distinguished from sin. That St. Paul does not here bear in

mind this distinction, may be justified by the maxim, that a thing takes its name from its principal component: the ‘*I*’ is a slave, and has not his own will: as ver. 23 shews, the ‘*I*,’ which is hostile to sin, the *law of the mind*, is under coercion, and the man is a captive.” The latter clause of the verse is the very strongest assertion of man’s subjection to the slavery of sin in his carnal nature.

15.] For (a proof of this being sold under sin, viz. not being able to do what I would, verses 15–17) **what I perform, that** (am in the habit of carrying out in my practice: the verb is the same as that rendered in A.V. “*perform*” below, in verse 18) **I know not** (act blindly, at the dictates of another: which is proper to a slave. ‘I am in the dark, he says, I am hurried along, I suffer insolence, I am staggered and struck down I know not how.’ Chrysostom. The meaning, “*I approve not*” (*allow not*, A.V.), introduced by Augustine, and held by many commentators, is not sanctioned by usage, and would make the following clause almost a tautology): **for** (explanation of last assertion, shewing how such blind service comes to pass) **not what I desire, that do I** (this *desire* is not the *full determination of the will*, the standing with the bow drawn and the arrow aimed; but rather the *inclination* of the will,—the taking up the bow and pointing at the mark, but without power to draw it:—we have the same verb, in the sense of *to wish* (“*I would*”) 1 Cor. vii. 7, 32; xiv. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 20); **but what I hate** (the expression answers to “*I desire not*,” ver. 19: no distinction in intensity need be insisted on between the two), **that I do**. The commentators cite several parallel passages from profane writers: for example, Seneca: “I call you to witness, all ye gods, that this very thing which I wish, I desire not:”—Epictetus, “For if the sinner desires not to sin, **but to do right**, it is plain that what he desires, he does not, and what he desires not, he does:”—the well-known lines of Ovid—

“One thing my lust, my mind another prompts: I see the better, and approve it; but The worse my practice follows.”

16.] But if (‘now seeing that:’ takes up the foregoing, and draws an inference from it) **I do that which I desire not, I consent unto** (bear witness to) **the law that it is good** (viz. ‘in that the *law* prohibits what *I also* dislike,—the law and I are as one in proscribing the thing,—the *law*; and *my wish*, tend the same way’).

17.] So now (the **now** is not said of *time*, but is used logically, “seeing that things are so”) **it is no longer** (again, not a chronological, but a logical sequence, ‘*it can no more be said, that*’) **I that perform** (see above, on ver. 15) **it, but sin that dwelleth in me**.—Here the “*I*” is *not the complex responsible self*, by which the evil deed is wrought, and which incurs the guilt of working it: but the *self of the WILL in its higher sense*, the “*inner man*” of ver. 22. The not bearing this in mind has led to error in interpretation and doctrine: for example, when it is supposed that the Christian is not responsible for his sins committed against his spiritual will and higher judgment: whereas we are all responsible for the works of the sin that dwelleth in us, and it is in this very subjection to and entanglement with the law of sin in our

members, that the misery consists, which leads to the cry in ver. 24.

18.] An explanation of the words sin that dwelleth in me, of the last verse.—For I know (by experience, detailed in the next ver.) **that there dwelleth not in me, that is, in my flesh, any good** (thing). I said, *sin that dwelleth in me*, because|feel sure, from experience, that in me (meaning by ‘me’ not that higher spiritual self in which the Spirit of God dwells, but the lower carnal self: see on this important limitation the remarks at the beginning of the section) *dwells no good thing*. And what is my proof of this? How has experience led me to this knowledge?—**For** (the proof from experience) **to desire** (to do good) **is present with me; but to perform that which is good, is not** (present with me). “*I find*” (A. V.) is omitted by our four oldest MSS.

19.] And this non-presence of the doing good is shewn by my acts, in that *I do not* the good that I desire (to do), but the evil which I do not desire, that *I do*.

20.] The inference of ver. 17 restated, with the premiss of ver. 16 in the place of “so now:”—but its meaning is now clearer and deeper than then; we know now that the “*I*” which does not the evil thing, is *the better self of the inner man*,—whereas the “*me*” in which sin dwells and rules, though included in the complex self, is *the lower self, my flesh*. And so the way is now prepared for at once setting forth the *conflict* within us *between these two*.

21.] I find therefore (i. e. as appears from what has been detailed) **this law** (presently to be defined as *the law of sin in my members*), **that** (consisting in this, that) **when I desire** (literally, *to me desiring*) **to do good, evil is present with** (see above, ver. 18) **me**.

22, 23.] Explanation of the conflict above alleged to exist. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man (the inward man is equivalent to *the mind*, ver. 25; compare St. Peter’s “*hidden man of the heart*,” 1 Pet. iii. 4. But not *merely* the *mental and reasoning part of man*:—for that surely *does not* delight in the law of God:—it is *absolutely necessary* to presuppose the *influence of the Holy Spirit*, and to place the man in *a state of grace, before this assertion can be true*. And it is surprising to find Commentators denying the gradual introduction of the *spiritual man* in the description of this conflict. TRUE, THE SPIRIT is not yet introduced, because purposely kept back until treated of as the great Deliverer from this state

of death; the man is as yet described as compounded of the outer and inner man, of the flesh and the mind, and the operations of the two are detailed as *if unassisted*,—even the term *spirit*, for the human spirit, being as yet avoided,—but all this is done, because *the object is to set the conflict and misery, as existing even in the spiritual man, in the strongest light*, so that the question in ver. 24 may lead the way to the *real uses and blessed results* of this conflict in ch. viii.): **but I see** (equivalent to *find*:—as if he were a spectator of that which is going on within) **a different law** (differing in kind and aim, not “*another*” merely) **in my members** (i. e. in my *flesh*, as in ver. 18) **warring against** (in continual dissension and conflict with) **the law of my mind** (the consent, viz. **to the law of God**, which my mind yields; not *the law of God*,—any more than the different law in my members is *the law of sin*,—but *both* meaning the standard or rule set up, which inclination follow:—the one in the mind, *in harmony with the law of God*,—the other in the members or flesh, *subservient*, and causing subservience, *to the principle or law of sin*), and **bringing me** (the whole complex self—the ‘me’ of personality and action) **into captivity to the law of sin** (the sinful principle, of resistance to God’s law: *sin*, as awakened and set energizing, ver. 9, by that law) **which is in my members**.—Commentators have much disputed whether this *different law*, and the *law of sin*, both being in *my members*, are *different*, or *the same*. It appears to me (see above) that the identity cannot be maintained without introducing great confusion into the sentence.

24.] *The division of the man against himself,—his inward conflict, and miserable state of captivity to sin in the flesh, while with the mind he loves and serves the law of God. From this wretched condition, which is a very death in life, who shall deliver him?* The expression **body** cannot, well be figurative, meaning, “*the totality of sins*,” or “*the deadly mass of sin*,” but must, on account of the part which the *flesh* and the *members* have hitherto borne, be *literal*.

The body of this death will mean, ‘the body whose subjection to the law of sin brings about this state of misery,’ compare “*the body of sin*,” ch. vi. 6. From this body, as the instrument whereby he is led captive to the law of sin and death, he cries out for deliverance: i.e. to be *set free*, as ch. viii. 2, *from the law of sin and death*.—The cry is uttered, as De Wette well observes, in *full consciousness* of the *deliverance which Christ has effected*, and as *leading to the expression of thanks* which follows. And so, and no otherwise, is it to be taken.

25.] The thanksgiving sentence is (not, of course, constructionally, but logically) an *answer to the preceding question*: **Thanks be to God** (who hath accomplished this) **through Jesus Christ our Lord**.—This exclamation and thanksgiving more than all convince me, that St. Paul speaks of *none other than himself*, and *carries out as far as possible* the misery of the conflict with sin in his members, *on purpose to bring in the glorious deliverance which follows*.—Compare 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57, where a very similar thanksgiving occurs.

So then, &c.] These words are most important to the understanding of the whole passage. We must bear in mind that it had begun with the question, **IS THE LAW SIN?** The Apostle has proved that it is NOT, but is **HOLY**. He has shewn the *relation that it holds to sin*, viz. that of *vivifying it* by means of man’s natural aversion to the commandment. He has further shewn that in himself, even as delivered by Christ Jesus, a conflict between the law and sin is ever going on: the misery of which would be death itself, were not a glorious deliverance effected. He now sums up his vindication of the law as holy; and at the same time, sums up the other side of the evidence adduced in the passage, from which it appears that the flesh is still, even in the spiritual man, subject (*essentially*, not practically and energetically) to the law of sin,—which subjection, in its nature and consequences, is so nobly treated in chap viii.

—**So then** (as appears from the foregoing), **I myself** (I, who have said all this against and in disparagement of the law; I, who write of justification by faith without the deeds of the law; I, Paul, who am writing to you, and as I write it to you) **with the mind** (the “*mind*” is “*the inward man*,” as in ver. 23) **serves the law of God** (which after the inward man he delights in, ver. 22), **but with the flesh** (the “*I*” of ver. 18; and *the flesh*, throughout, of ch. viii.) **the law of sin**. It remains to be seen, how this latter subjection, which in the *natural man carries all with it*, is *neutralized*, and issues only in the death of the *body* on account of sin, *in those who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.

Romans: Chapter 8

CHAP. VIII. 1–39.] *In the case of those who are in Christ Jesus, this divided state ends in the glorious triumph of the Spirit over the flesh: and that (vv. 1–17), though incompletely, not inconsiderably, even here in this state—and (vv. 18–30) completely and gloriously hereafter. And (vv. 31–39) the Christian has no reason to fear, but all reason to hope; for nothing can sever him from God’s love in Christ.* **1–17.]** *Although the flesh is still subject to the law of sin, the Christian, serving not the flesh, but walking according to the Spirit, shall not come into condemnation, but to glory with Christ.*

1.] There is therefore (an inference from ch. vii. 25, because *with their mind*, and that mind *dwelt in and led by the Spirit of Christ*, they serve, *delight in*, the *law of God*) **now** (this **now** is emphatic, and follows upon the question and answer of vii. 24, 25, *things being so*,—**now** that a deliverance has been effected from the body of this death, by Christ. This is certain from the “*for*” which follows, setting forth the fact of the deliverance) **no condemnation** (that condemnation which is the penal

consequence of sin original and actual) **to them which are in Christ Jesus.** (The expression **in Christ Jesus** refers particularly to the last place where *God's gift of life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord* was spoken of, ch. vi. 23,—and generally to all that was said in that chapter of our incorporation into and union with Him.)—The words “*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,*” are probably an interpolation introduced from ver. 4, right enough in sense (see there), but out of place here, because this *moral* element of ‘those who are in Christ’ is *not yet brought in*: the present assertion is *general*, and is made good in detail by and by. The clause is wanting in almost all our earliest copies.

2.] For (a reason why there is no condemnation) **the law** (method, or influence, as in viii. 23,—used here perhaps for sharper contrast to the *law of sin*, below) **of the Spirit of life** (the Lord and Giver of life—life used in an incipient higher sense than “I was alive,” in ch. vii. 9,—see below) **in Christ Jesus** (which prevails in those who are in Christ Jesus. Or, we may take **in Christ Jesus with life**,—the Spirit of that life which is in Christ Jesus. Or, again, we may, in the original, join these words with the verb: “*set me free in Christ Jesus, from*” &c.) **set me free** (not, as A.V., “*hath made me free:*” he is speaking of a definite time when this took place, and referring to the period of his conversion.—There is no stronger proof to my mind of the identity of the speaker in the first person throughout with the Apostle himself, than this extension of that form of speaking into this chapter: nothing more clearly shews, that there he was describing a really existing state within himself, but insulating, and as it were *exaggerating* it [as so often], to bring out more clearly the glorious deliverance to follow) **from the law of sin** (vii. 25) **and death** (*death* again here bears a higher meaning than in ch. vii. *We are now on higher ground*:—condemnation having been mentioned, which is the punishment of sin, death now *involves that*, and is not only temporal misery, but eternal ruin also).—This ‘*law of the Spirit of life*’ having freed him from the law of sin and death, so that he serves another master, *all claim of sin on him is at an end*—he is acquitted, and there is no condemnation for him.

3.] For (explanation of ver. 2, shewing the method of this liberation) **what the law could not do** (i. e. that which was not in the power of the law. The expression in the original may mean either, ‘*that part of the law which was impossible*,’—‘could not be obeyed,’—or, ‘*the inability of the law?*’—or, ‘*that which was unable to be done by the law*.’ Of these the first is out of the question; the second would give the first clause the meaning, ‘*that wherein the inability of the law shewed itself*,’ viz. its powerlessness through the flesh. The third yields by far the best meaning: see below on the words “*through the flesh*”), in that (i. e. because: not ‘*wherein*,’ as in ch. ii. 1, but ‘*in that*.’ this clause gives a reason and explanation of the inability) **it was weak** (the Apostle keeps in mind his defence of the holiness of the law undertaken in ch. vii., and as Chrysostom observes, “seems indeed to be depreciating the law, but if we pay accurate attention is really giving it the highest praise: for he does not say the *iniquity* of the law, but its *inability*: and again, ‘*in that it was weak*,’ not ‘*in that it wronged us*,’ or, ‘*in that it conspired against us*’”) **through the flesh** (i. e. in *having to act* through the flesh; not, ‘*on account of the flesh*,’ i.e. of the hostility, or weakness, of the flesh. The flesh was the *medium through which* the law,—being a *law of carnal commandment*, Heb. vii. 16, —*wrought*, and *they that are in the flesh, the objects on which*), **God (did) sending his own Son** (the stress is on **His own**, and the word is pregnant with meaning:—His own, and therefore like Himself, holy and *sinless*. This implication should be borne in mind, as the suppressed antithesis to the word sin, three times repeated afterwards. Another antithesis may be implied: **His own**, and therefore *spiritual*, not acting merely through the flesh, though in its likeness, but bringing a higher spiritual life into the manhood) **in the likeness of the flesh of sin** (the flesh, whose attribute and character was SIN. The expression is not equivalent to “*sinful flesh*,” as in A.V., but implies far more:—not merely the contamination by, but the belonging to, and being possessed by, sin.—De Wette observes, ‘The words “*in the likeness of the flesh of sin*,” appear almost to border on Docetism (the heresy which held the Humanity of our Lord to be only apparent, not real); but in reality contain a perfectly true and consistent sentiment.’ “*The flesh of sin*” is *flesh* (human nature, John i. 14; 1 John iv. 2; Heb. ii. 14) *possessed with sin*: the Apostle could not then have said, “*sending His Son in the flesh of sin*,” without making Christ *partaker of sin*: nor could he have said merely “*in the flesh*,” for then the bond between the Manhood of Jesus, and sin, would have been wanting: he says then, **in the likeness of the flesh of sin**,—meaning by that, He had a nature *like*

sinful human nature, but had not Himself a *sinful nature*,—comp. Heb. iv. 15: “*For we have not an High Priest which cannot sympathize with our infirmities, but one who was tempted in all things, like as we are, apart from sin.*” The *likeness* must be referred not only to the word “*flesh*,” but also to the epithet “*of sin*:”—it did not however consist in this, that He took our sins (literally) on Himself and became Himself sinful, which would not amount to likeness of *nature*,—but in this, that He was *able to be tempted*, i.e. subjected to sensuous incitements, e.g. of *pain*, which in other men break out into sin, but in Him did not. See Phil. ii. 7, and note.—“*Flesh*” is not equivalent to “*body*,” but as in John i. 14, the *material*, of which man is in the body compounded),—**and for** (on account of) **sin** (to be joined with “*sending*,” not “*condemned*:” least of all may we understand it as Luther, “*and condemned sin in the flesh by means of sin*.”) The ‘*for*,’ or ‘*on account of*’ sin, is at present *indefinite*, and not to be restricted to Christ’s death as a sin-offering, which is not just now the subject. ‘*On account of sin*’ then, is equivalent to “*to put away sin*,” as Heb. x. 6, 18), **condemned sin in the flesh** (not ‘*the sin which was in the flesh*,’ which is against the context, in which “*sin*” is throughout an *absolute principle*.

In **condemned** we have an allusion to “*condemnation*,” ver. 1. Hence it has been taken to mean that God condemned, *punished*, sin in the flesh by the death of Christ. But that can hardly be the meaning here, for several reasons. 1. The Apostle is not speaking of the removal of the *guilt*, but of the *practice* of sin, and of the real fulfilment of the law in those who are in Christ. It is this which even in ver. 1 is before him, grounding as he does the fact of *no condemnation* on the serving the law of

God, ch. vii. 25; on the *new and sanctifying power of the Spirit by Christ*, in spite of the *continued subjection of the flesh to the law of sin*. 2. The context shews that the weakness of the law was, its having no *sanctifying power*;—it could arouse sin, but it could not condemn and cast it out. This indeed is the burden of ch. vii. The absence of *justifying power* in the law has already been dealt with. 3. The following verse clearly makes the fulfilling the *righteous demand* of the law no matter of mere imputation, but of *walking after the Spirit*.—We must then look for the meaning of the word **condemned** in the *effects* and accompaniments of condemnation,—*victory over*, and *casting out of sin*. See, for example, John xii. 31, where “the judgment of this world” is explained by *the ruler of this world shall be cast out*, and also John xvi. 11. I have dwelt at length on this question, as being very important to the right apprehension of the whole chapter, in this part of which *not the justification*, but the *sanctification*, of Christians is the leading subject. It is a strong confirmation of the above view, that God’s condemnation of sin in the flesh by Christ is stated in ver. 3 as the ground of (ver. 2) my being freed from the *law of sin and death*: because, viz. *Christ’s victory over sin is mine, by my union with Him and participation in His Spirit*. **in the flesh** does not mean ‘*in His flesh*,’ or ‘*by means of his flesh*;’ but ‘*in the flesh*, which Christ and ourselves haye in common):

4.] **(in order) that** (the purpose of God’s condemning sin in the flesh) **the righteous demand** (or, requirement) **of the law** (meaning, all its requirements [statutes], but here *combined in one for the sake of more distinct objectivity*) **might be fulfilled in us** (*find its full accomplishment*:—not merely ‘be performed by us,’—for the Apostle has a much deeper meaning, viz. that the *aim of God in giving the Law* might be *accomplished* in us, in our sanctification, which is the ultimate end of our redemption, Eph. ii. 10; Col. i. 22. The passive is used, to shew that the work is not ours, but that of God by His Grace), **who walk** (not ‘*walking as we do*,’—but a description of *all* those of whom the above is true) **not after the flesh, but after the Spirit** (who, notwithstanding that we are bound up with a *flesh of sin*, do not *walk in our daily life* according to, or led by, the *law of sin which is in our members*, but according to and led by the *law of the Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus—members of Him, and participating in that victory over sin which He obtained, by which the power of sin in our flesh is broken),

5.] **For** (explanation of the last) **they**

that are after (not quite the same as, *walk after*) **the flesh** (*they that are after the flesh* are equivalent to *the carnal*) **do mind** (‘think of,’ ‘care for, and strive after’) **the things of** (belonging to) **the flesh** (its objects of desire); **but they that are after the Spirit** (*the spiritual*: see above) **(mind) the things of** (belonging to) **the Spirit** (the higher aims and objects of desire of the spiritual life).

6.] **For** (the spiritual man cannot seek the things of the flesh, because) **the mind** (*thoughts, cares, and aims*, as above) **of the flesh is** (ends in,—*amounts to, being worked out*) **death** (not merely *physical*, nor mere *unhappiness*, as sometimes in ch. vii., but as in ver. 2, in the largest sense, extending to eternity); but **the mind** (*thoughts, cares, and aims*) **of the Spirit is** (see above) **life and peace** (in the largest sense, as above). In this argument there is a suppressed premiss, to be supplied from ver. 2; viz. ‘The Spirit is the Spirit of life’ Hence it follows that the spiritual man cannot mind the things of the flesh, because such mind is *death*. The addition *and peace* seems to be made to enhance the unlikelihood of such a minding,—the peace of the Spirit being a blessed contrast to the tumult of the fleshly lusts, even in this life.

7.] **Because** (reason why the mind of the flesh is death) **the mind of the flesh is enmity** (contrast to *peace* above) **against God** (it being assumed that *God is the source of life*, and that *enmity* against Him is the absence of all true peace): **for it doth not submit itself** (better than the mere passive of the A.V.) **to the law of God,—for neither can it** (this was proved in ch. vii.):

8.] **and** (as a further consequence, if the mind of the flesh cannot be subject to God’s law, then they who are in the flesh, and are led by that mind, cannot please God. *So then*, in the A.V., is erroneous) **they that are in the flesh** (as their *element of life and thought*: nearly the same as *they that are after the flesh* above, which however denotes the rule which they follow. In 2 Cor. x. 3, the two are distinguished: “*though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh*”) **cannot please God**. Melanchthon remarks, “This passage is a complete refutation of Pelagius, and of all who imagine that men can obey God’s law without the Holy Spirit.”

9.] **But** (opposition to *they that are in the flesh*) **ye are not in the flesh** (see above), **but in the Spirit, if** (i. e. if so be that, ‘*provided that*;’ not ‘*since*.’) That this is the meaning here is evident by the exception which immediately follows) **the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But** (this must be rightly understood: for) **if any man hath not** (not, *have not*, as A.V. The verb in the original is indicative, not subjunctive; because the case is put as an existent one) **the Spirit of Christ** (the same as *the Spirit of God* above. Observe here that the expressions “*the Spirit of God*,” “*the Spirit of Christ*,” and “*Christ*,” are all used of *the Holy Spirit indwelling in the Christian*), **he is none of His** (belongs not to Him, in the higher and blessed sense of being united to Him as a member of Him).

10.] **Now** (in slight contrast to the last verse, he brings out one point, which might seem to be an exception to the blessed consequences of the life-giving power of Christ indwelling in us) **if Christ is in you** (i. e. if the Spirit of God dwelleth in you, see 2 Cor. iii. 17), **the (your) body indeed is dead by reason of sin** (still remains dead, see 2 Cor. iv. 11–14, under the power

of death physical [and eternal?], because of sin which it, *of itself*, stands in, and serves); **but the** (your) **spirit** (perhaps he now uses *spirit*, regarding our spirits as possessed and penetrated by God's Spirit) **is life** (this would hardly be said if *only*

our human spirits were meant, but the participle would be used, is *revived or quickened*) **by reason of righteousness** (not *here* the imputed righteousness of justification, which is not now under treatment, but the *implanted righteousness of the sanctification of the Spirit*. This appears not only from the context, but also from the words, **by reason of sin**, which answer to it).

11.] But (he takes up and continues the supposition in the former verse, with which in fact this is nearly identical, but with the important additional particular [whence the contrast] that Jesus was raised) **if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you** (which Spirit is therefore *powerful over death*, and besides renders you *partakers of Christ's Resurrection*), **He that raised up Christ from the dead** (the personal name, JESUS, reminds us more of the historic fact of the resurrection of the one Person, Jesus: the official and mystical name, CHRIST, of the body of which he is the Head and we the members,—all raised with Him by the one Spirit dwelling in all) **shall quicken** (*make alive*: not merely *shall raise up*, because it is not merely the resurrection of the body which is in the Apostle's view,—see below) **even your mortal bodies** (the higher phase of the quickening takes place in the *spirit* of man: and even of that which takes place in the body, there are two branches—one, the quickening it from being a tool of unrighteousness unto death [eternal],—the other, the quickening it out of death [physical] to be a new and glorified body. And the **even**, joined with *your mortal bodies* here, signifies that the working of the quickening (life-giving) Spirit shall not stop at the purely spiritual resurrection, nor at that of the body from dead works to serve the living God, but shall extend *even to the building up the spiritual body in the future new and glorious life*) **by reason of His Spirit which dwells in you**.—Here the reading in the original is much disputed. One form of it can only mean, 'by means of,' 'through,' His Spirit, &c.: this the other may *include*, (it not being specified *for what reason* it is *on the Spirit's account*, and leaving it open to be His *presence*, or His *agency*,) but must be expressed 'on account of,' or 'because of,' His Spirit. Both expressions *may* imply that the Holy Spirit is the *agent* in the quickening; but the former, *by means of*, cannot bear the other meaning, that God will quicken, &c. *because of* His Spirit, &c. Hence in dispute with the *Macedonian* heretics, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, this reading was important to the orthodox, as expressing agency, and that alone. But it seems pretty clear that the variation was older than the time of this heresy [Cent. IV.]; and, however it may then have been appealed to, its origin cannot be assigned to any falsification by either of the then disputant parties.—As to how far the Holy Spirit is the *direct Agent* in the resurrection of the body, see note on *life-giving, or quickening Spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45, and on 2 Cor. v. 5. Here, His direct agency cannot be in any way surprising, for it is *the whole process of bringing from death to life, extending even to the mortal body*, which is here spoken of—and unquestionably, 'the Lord and Giver of Life' is the agent throughout in this quickening. "He is not speaking," says Calvin, "of the last resurrection, which shall take place in a moment, but of the continued operation of the Spirit, which, extinguishing by degrees the remainder of the fleshly mind, restores in us celestial life:"—but perhaps he had better have said "*not only* of the last resurrection:" for it certainly is *one thing* spoken of.

12, 13.] So then, brethren, we are (inference from the assurance in the last verse) **debtors** (we owe fealty: to what or whom, he leaves the reader to supply from ver. 11), **not to the flesh, to live after the flesh** (Chrysostom well explains the qualification, *to live after the flesh*: "For indeed we are debtors to it in many respects; in the duty of nourishing it, of cherishing it, of refreshing it, of healing it when sick, of clothing it, and paying it a hundred other services. That it may not be imagined that the Apostle is repudiating these obligations, when he has said '*we are not*

debtors to the flesh,' he explains what he means, by adding '*to live after the flesh*': i.e. we must not make it lord of our lives"). **For if ye live after the flesh, ye must** (or **will**,—are sure to,—it will be the *certain* end of your present course) **die** (both **live** and **die** here are in their full and pregnant sense, involving body and soul here and hereafter: but not to be understood as excluding the carnal from *any* resurrection—only from that which is truly *life*,—any more than the spiritual are exempted from *all* death, but only from that which is truly *death*): **but if by the Spirit ye mortify** (literally, **slay, put to death**: i.e. abolish, annul) **the deeds**

(as Col. iii. 9, the whole course of habits and action which has the flesh for its prompter) **of the body** (this amounts to saying "*of the flesh*," but is here put in the concrete, to give more vivid reality. The Apostle calls them *the deeds of the flesh* in Gal. v. 19), **ye shall live** (not "*ye must, or will, live*;" this *Life* being no natural consequence of a course of mortifying the deeds of the body, but the gift of God through Christ: and coming therefore in the form of an assurance, '*ye shall live*,' from Christ's Apostle.—On what is meant by *living*, see above).

14.] For (ground of the assurance contained in the announcement, "*ye shall live*") **as many as are led by** (the slaying the deeds of the body by the Spirit, implies the being under the Spirit's guidance) **the Spirit of God, they** (emphatic—'these and no others') **are sons of God**.—A *son* of God differs from a *child* of God, in implying the higher and more mature, and conscious member of God's family, see Gal. iv. 1–6, and note on 6. Hence *our Lord is never called the Child, but always the Son* of God. This latter, applied to a Christian, signifies 'one born of God' in the deepest relation to Him,—and hence a partaker of His nature, 1 John iii. 9; 1 Pet. i. 23.

15, 16.] Appeal to the CONSCIOUSNESS of the Christian to confirm the assertion assumed for the moment that he is led by God's Spirit) that he is a son of God.—For (confirming what preceded) ye did not receive (at your becoming Christians: not, as A.V., obscuring the sense, "have not received" **the spirit of bondage** (i. e. 'the Spirit which ye received was not a spirit of bondage.' **The spirit** is not merely a spirit, *a disposition*, but evidently refers to the same Spirit which afterwards is "*the Spirit of adoption*," and "*the Spirit itself*." The Apostle seems however in this form of expression, both here and elsewhere, e.g. 2 Cor. iv. 13; Eph. i. 17; 2 Tim. i. 7, to have combined the (objective) *Spirit* given to us by God with our own (subjective) *spirit*. In the next verse they are separated) [**leading**] back (or, **again**). But the latter word is undesirable, as having led to its being imagined here that it must refer to a former bestowal of the *spirit of bondage*, and consequently that the reference is to the Old Test. dispensation. For there seems to me to be no occasion to go back for the reference to the Old Test. The state of the *natural man* is *bondage*: the Holy Spirit given to them, the agent of their birth into, and sustainer of, a new state, was not a spirit of bondage back again into fear, a spirit merely to retain them in, or take them back into their old state, viz. a state of *slavery*:—to whom, or whether to *different masters*, is not here in question, but the *state* merely—the object of the gift of the Holy Spirit was not to lead them *back* into this) **unto fear** (*so as to bring about or result in fear*, see ch. vi. 19); **but ye received the Spirit of** (the Spirit whose effect was, see above) **adoption** (this stricter meaning, and not that of *mere sonship*, is plainly that intended by the Apostle. Of course, the *adoption to be a son involves sonship*, but not the converse), **wherein** (compare "*in the Spirit*," ch. ii. 29, and ver. 9. It is not merely "*whereby*," as A.V. The Spirit is He *in whom*, not merely by whom we use the voice of a son, being not merely an external agent, but an indwelling and pervading power) **we cry** (the earnest expression of supplicating prayer), **Abba, Father** (I have said, on Mark xiv. 36, that **Father** does not appear to be a mere explanation of **Abba**, but to have been joined to it in one phrase, as a form of address: expressing probably a corresponding 'my Father' in the Hebrew expression. Luther, to express the familiarity of Abba, renders this '*dear Father*').—See on the whole, the strictly parallel place, Gal. iv. 6.

16.] And this confidence is grounded on the testimony of the Spirit itself. So Chrysostom: "I assert this, says the Apostle, not merely from the cry itself, but from the cause out of which the cry arises:... for it is not a cry belonging alone to the state of grace, but belonging to the Comforter who gave the gift: for it is He Himself who taught us, being in the state of grace, thus to cry." This verse, being without any conjunction coupling it to what went before, is best understood to refer to the same as the preceding, and the assertion to concern the same fact as the last verb, "*we cry*," grounding that fact on an act of the indwelling Spirit Himself. See again Gal. iv. 6.—**The Spirit itself** (the word *itself* expresses the independence, and at the same time, as coming from God, the preciousness and importance of the testimony) **beareth witness to our spirit** (see ch. ii. 15, and note: not, as in A.V., 'beareth witness with our spirit,' which is not the usage of the verb in the original. It is the same word as in Rev. xxii. 18, "*I bear witness unto*

every one, &c.")**, that we are children of God.**—What is this *witness of the Spirit itself*? All have agreed, and indeed this verse is decisive for it, that it is *something separate from, and higher than, all our own inferences and conclusions*. But on the other hand it does not consist in *mere indefinite feeling*, but in a *certitude of the Spirit's presence and work continually asserted within us*. It is manifested, as Olshausen beautifully says, in His comforting us, His stirring us up to prayer, His reproof of our sins, His drawing us to works of love, to bear testimony before the world, &c. And he adds, with equal truth, "On this direct testimony of the Holy Ghost rests, *ultimately*, all the regenerate man's conviction respecting Christ and His work. For belief in Scripture itself (he means, in the highest sense of the term 'belief,' 'conviction personally applied') has its foundation in this experience of the divine nature of the (influencing) Principle which it promises, and which, while the believer is studying it, infuses itself into him."—The same Commentator remarks, that this is one of the most decisive passages against the pantheistic view of the identity of the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. However the one may by renovating power be rendered like the other, there still is a specific difference. The spirit of man may *sin* (2 Cor. vii. 1), the Spirit of God *cannot*, but can only be grieved (Eph. iv. 30), or quenched (1 Thess. v. 19): and it is by the infusion of this highest Principle of Holiness, that man becomes ONE SPIRIT with the Lord Himself (1 Cor. vi. 17).

children of God] Here it is **children**, not *sons*, because the testimony respects the very ground and central point of sonship, *likeness to and desire for God*: the testimony of the Spirit shewing us by our yearnings after, our confidence in, our regard to God, that we are verily begotten of Him.

17.] CONSEQUENCES of our being children of God.—And if children, then (or, **also**) **heirs** (which is the universal rule of mankind: but the word here must not be carried to the extent of the idea of *heir* in all directions: it is merely the *one side of inheriting by promise*, which is here brought out: the word referring back probably to ch. iv. 13, 14, the promise to Abraham); **heirs of God** (as our Father, giving the inheritance to us), **and joint-heirs**

with Christ (whom God has made *heir of*

all things, Heb. i. 2.—Tholuck remarks: "It is by virtue of their substantial unity with the father, that the children come into participation of his possession. The Roman law regarded them as continuators of his personality. The *dignity* of the inheritance is shewn (1) by its being God's possession, (2) by its being the possession of the Firstborn of God. By the Roman

law, the share of the firstborn was no greater than that of the other children,—and the New Test. sets forth this view, making the redeemed equal to Christ (ver. 29), and Christ's possessions, theirs; 1 Cor. iii. 21–23; John xvii, 22. In the *joint heirship* we must not bring out this point, that Christ is the *rightful Heir*, who shares His inheritance with the other children of God: it is as adoptive children that they get the inheritance, and Christ is so far only the means of it, as He gives them power to become sons of God, John i. 12”); **if (at least)** (on this *if*, see above on ver. 9) **we are suffering with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him**: i.e. ‘if (provided that) we are found in that course of participation in Christ's sufferings, whose aim and end, as that of His sufferings, is to be glorified as He was, and with Him.’ But the **if** does not regard the *subjective* aim, nor does it mean, ‘If at least our *aim* in suffering is, to be glorified,’—but the *fact* of our being partakers of that course of sufferings with Him, *whose aim is, wherever it is found*, to be glorified with Him.—The connexion of *suffering with Christ*, and *being glorified with Him* is elsewhere insisted on, see 2 Tim. ii. 11; 1 Pet. iv. 13; v. 1.—This last clause serves as a transition to vv. 18–30, in which the Apostle treats of the complete and glorious triumph of God's elect, through sufferings and by hope, and the blessed renovation of all things in and by *their* glorification.

18.] For (meaning, this suffering with Him in order to being glorified with Him is no casting away of toil and self-denial, seeing that) **I reckon** (implying, ‘I myself am one who have embraced this course, being convinced’) **that the sufferings of this present time** (of trial and sorrow, contrasted with the period of triumph following the coming of Christ) **are of no account** (literally, **not worthy**) **in comparison with the glory which is to be revealed** (viz. at the *revelation*, or manifestation, of Christ. On the sentiment, see 2 Cor. iv. 17) **in us** (not merely *to us*, as spectators; but, literally, **toward**, or **with regard to**, as the subjects of the revelation. “*In us*” must be thus understood, and not as meaning *within us*, in our hearts, which it does not. St. Bernard amplifies this: “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared to the past sins which are remitted, the present grace of consolation which is imparted, the future glory which is promised”).

19 ff.] *The greatness of this glory is shewn by the fact that ALL CREATION, now under the bondage of corruption, shall be set free from it by the glorification of the sons of God.*—**For** (proof of this transcendent greatness of the glory, not of the certainty of its manifestation, though this secondary thought is perhaps in the background) **the earnest expectation** (or, **patient expectation**, perhaps better: the original word denotes that the expectation continues till the time is exhausted, and the event arrives) **of the creation** (i. e. of *all this world except man*, both animate and inanimate: see an account of the expositions below) **is waiting for** (see above) **the revelation of the sons of God** (“the glory is revealed,” says Bengel, “and simultaneously with it are revealed the sons of God.” It is the **sons**, not the *children*, because their sonship will be complete, and possessed of all its privileges and glories).

the creation has been very variously understood. “The expression has by many been erroneously taken in an arbitrarily limited sense; e.g. as applying only, I. to *inanimate creation*: but against this are the words which follow, *not willingly*, and also the *groaning and travailing together in pain*, implying *life* in the *creation*,—for to set these down to mere personification is surely arbitrary:—and one can imagine no reason why bestial creation should be excluded. II. to *living creation*: (1) to *mankind*. Augustine and others take it of *men not yet believers*: (2) Locke and others, of the *yet unconverted Gentiles*: (3) some, of the *yet unconverted Jews*: (4) others again, of the *converted Gentiles*: or, (5) of the *converted Jews*: or, (6) of *all Christians*.”—But against the whole of these lies this objection, that if the Apostle had wished to speak of the *enslaving and freeing of mankind*, he hardly would have omitted reference to sin as the ground of the one, and faith of the other, and the judgment on unbelievers. But on the other hand we must not extend the idea of the creation *too wide*, as Theodore, who includes the *angels*; others, who understand the *whole Creation*, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational: and others, who include the *unconverted Gentiles*: nor make it *too indefinite*, so as to take in *'the whole universe.'* The right explanation is, *all animate and inanimate nature as distinguished from mankind*. The idea of the renovation and glorification of all nature at the revelation of the glory of our returned Saviour, will need no apology, nor seem strange, to the readers of this commentary, nor to the students of the following, and many other passages of the prophetic Word: Isa. xi. 6 ff.; lxv. 17 ff; Rey. xxi.; 2 Pet. iii. 13; Acts iii. 21.

20.] Explanation of the REASON WHY all creation waits, &c.—**For the creation was made subject to vanity** (vanity, as in Ps. xxxix. 6. So also Eccles. i. 2, and throughout. It signifies the *instability, liability to change and decay*, of all created things), **not willingly** (because all things by nature shrink from corruption), **but by reason of Him who made it subject** (i. e. God, who is the occasion, and His glory the end, of creation's corruptibility—Chrysostom and others suppose the person meant to be *Adam*, who was the occasion of its being subjected; and at first sight the expression *by reason of* seems to favour this. But I very much doubt whether this view can be borne out. For does not the expression **him who made it subject** imply a *conscious act of intentional subjugation*, and not merely an *unconscious occasioning of the subjugation*? Thus we have it said of God, 1 Cor. xv. 27, “*He hath put all things in subjection under his feet.*” and, “*Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that made all things subject unto him.*” And (2) he is speaking of the *originating cause* of this subjection, not of the efficient means of it. He says that creation was not subjected *willingly*, i.e. by reason of its own will, but *by reason of him who made it subject*. At the same time such a way of putting it, removing as it were the supreme will of God to a wider distance from corruption and vanity, and making it not so much the worker as the occasion of it, as well as this indefinite mention of Him, is quite intelligible on the ground of that reverential awe which so entirely characterizes the mind and writings of the Apostle. If the *occasion pointed at* by this *making subject* be required, I should hardly fix it at the Fall of man, but at his

creation, in the eternal counsels,—when he was made *capable of falling, liable to change*.—The explanation of “*he that made it subject*,” as meaning ‘*the devil*’ [Locke and others], hardly needs refutation, See Matt. x. 28, and note) **in** (‘*on condition of*, ‘*in a state of*’) **hope (in hope** must not be joined with the verb “*made it subject*,” because then the hope becomes *the hope of Him*,—but with the former verb, “*was made subject*,” being the hope of the *thing subjected*), **because** (the original word will also admit of being rendered “*that*,” but not so well, for then it is not likely that “*the creation itself*” would be so emphatically repeated: the clause now announces a *new fact*, and thus the emphasis is accounted for. If we adopt the rendering **that**, we must suppose the whole following clause *subjective to the word*

hope, i.e. descriptive of that which is hoped for: and this would be to attribute to the yearnings of creation, *intelligence* and *rationality*,—consciousness of itself and of God) **the creation itself also** (not only we, the sons of God, but even creation itself) **shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption** (its subjection to the law of decay, see Heb. ii. 15) **into** (the construction is that which is called by grammarians a pregnant one: *shall be delivered from, &c., and admitted into*) **the liberty of the glory** (‘*the liberty of the glory*’ is not in any sense equivalent to ‘*the glorious liberty*;’ in the latter, ‘*glorious*’ is merely an epithet whereby the liberty is characterized, as in ‘*His rest shall be glorious*:’ in the former the liberty is described as consisting in, belonging to, being one component part of, the glorified state of the children of God: and thus the thought is carried up to the state to which the freedom belongs) **of the children** (*children* and not *sons* here, perhaps as embracing God’s universal family of creation, admitted, each in their share, to a place in incorruptibility and glory) **of God**.

22.] For we know (said of an acknowledged and patent fact, see ch. ii. 2; iii. 19; vii. 14) **that the whole creation groaneth [together] and travaileth in pain together** (not, groans and travails *with us* or *with* mankind, which would render the “*not only so, but*” of the next verse superfluous. On the figure in the verb **travaileth**, see John xvi. 21, note) **until now** (i. e. **up to this time**: *from the beginning till now*: no reference to time future, because the words “*we know*” express the results of experience):

23.] and (moreover) **not only so** (i. e. not only is this the case with the creation), **but even we ourselves, having** (not ‘*which have*,’ but ‘*though we have*’) **the firstfruit of the Spirit** (i. e. the indwelling and influences of the Holy Spirit *here*, as an earnest of the full harvest of His complete possession of us, spirit and flesh and soul hereafter. That this is the meaning, seems evident from the analogy of St. Paul’s imagery regarding the Holy Spirit: he treats of Him as an *earnest* and *pledge* given to us, Eph. i. 14; 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5, and of His full work in us as the efficient means of our glorification hereafter, ver. 11; 2 Cor. iii. 18. Various other renderings are,— (1) ‘*the first outpouring of the Spirit*,’ in point of time, which would be irrelevant: (2) ‘*the highest gifts of the Spirit*’ The genitive, **of**

the Spirit, may be *partitive* or *subjective*:—the firstfruit of the Spirit,—which *Spirit is the harvest*,—or the firstfruit of the Spirit, which the *Spirit gives*:—or even *in apposition*, the firstfruit of the Spirit, i.e. which *consists in* (the gift of) *the Spirit*. I prefer the first, from analogy—the Spirit being generally spoken of as *given*, not as *giving*,—and God as the Giver), **even we ourselves** (repeated for emphasis, and *we* inserted to involve himself and his fellow-workers in the general description of the last clause. Some have imagined *the Apostles only* to be spoken of: some, that the Apostles are meant in one place, and all Christians in the other) **groan within ourselves, waiting for the end of the (or, our) adoption** (the verb signifies, as above, ver. 19, but even more strongly here, ‘*wait out*,’ ‘*wait for the end of*,’ Our adoption is *come already*, ver. 15, so that we do not wait for *it*, but for the *full manifestation of it*, in our bodies being rescued from the bondage of corruption and sin), **to wit [or namely]**, **the redemption** (‘*expecting that full and perfect adoption which shall consist in the redemption*’) **of our body** (not ‘*rescue from our body*,’ as some render it, which is inconsistent with the doctrine of the change of the vile and mortal into the glorious and immortal body,—Phil. iii. 21: 2 Cor. v. 2–4,—but the [entire] redemption,—rescue,—of the body from corruption and sin).

24, 25.] For (confirmation of the last assertion, proving *hope to be our* present state of salvation)—in **hope were we** (not ‘*are we*,’ nor ‘*have we been*,’) **saved** (i. e. our first apprehension of, and appropriation to ourselves of, salvation which is by faith in Christ, was effected in the condition of *hope*: which *hope is in fact faith*

in its prospective attitude,—that faith which is “*the substance of things hoped for*,” Heb. xi. 1): **but hope that is seen** (the object or fulfilment of which is present and palpable) **is not hope: for that which a man seeth, why doth he also (or, at all) hope for?** The **also** conveys, after an interrogative word, a sense of the utter *superfluity* of the thing questioned about, as being irrelevant, and out of the question.

25.] Literally, But if that which we do not see, we hope for, with (literally, **through**) **patience we wait for it.** Patience (endurance) is the state, in which,—through which as *a medium*,—our waiting takes place.

26.] In like manner (another help to our endurance, co-ordinate with the last—our patience is one help to it, but not the only one) **doth the Spirit also** (the Holy Spirit of God) **help our weakness** (not, help us *to bear* our weakness, as if the weakness were the burden, which the Spirit lifts for and with us,—but, helps *our weakness*,—*us who are weak*, to bear the burden of ver. 23. And this weakness is **not only** inability to pray aright, which is merely an *example* of it, but (*general weakness*): **for**

(example of the help above mentioned;—‘for *this*, viz. what to, &c.’) **we know not what we should pray for as we ought** (two things;—*what* we should pray,—the *matter* of our prayer;—and *how* we should pray for it,—the *form* and *manner* of our prayer): **but the Spirit itself** (Tholuck remarks,—“The addition of **itself** brings into more prominence the idea of the Spirit, so as to express of what dignity our Intercessor is,—an Intercessor who knows best what our wants are”) **maketh intercession [for us]** (these words are omitted in most of our ancient authorities) **with groanings which cannot be uttered**:—i. e. the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in us, knowing our wants better than we, Himself pleads in our prayers, raising us to higher and holier desires than we can express in words, which can only find utterance in sighings and aspirations: see next verse. Chrysostom interprets the words of the spiritual gift of prayer, and adds, “For the man who is granted this grace, standing praying in great earnestness, supplicating God with many mental groanings, asks what is good for all.” Calvin understands, that the Spirit suggests to us the proper words of acceptable prayer, which would *otherwise have been unutterable by us*. Macedonius gathered from this verse that the Holy Spirit is *a creature*, and *inferior to God*, because He *prays to God for us*. But as Augustine remarks, “The Holy Spirit groans not in Himself, with Himself, in the Holy Trinity, but *in us*, in that He makes us to groan.” No *intercession in heaven* is here spoken of, but a *pleading in us* by the indwelling Spirit, of a nature above our comprehension and utterance.

27.] but (opposed to the words “*which cannot be uttered*:” the groanings ‘are indeed unutterable by us, but...’) **He that searcheth the hearts (God) knoweth what is the mind** (*intent*, or *bent*, as hidden in those sighs) **of the Spirit**. A difficulty presents itself in the rendering of the next clause. The particle with which it opens may mean either **because**, or **that**. If it is to be *causal*, **because He (the Spirit) pleads for the saints according to the will of God**, it would seem that **knows** must bear the meaning ‘*approves*,’ otherwise the connexion will not be apparent; and so Calvin and others have rendered it. Hence many render it **that**,—‘*knows what is the mind of the Spirit, that He pleads, &c. with (or, according to) God*.’ But I must confess that the other rendering seems to me better to suit the context: and I do not see that the ordinary meaning of the word **knoweth** need be changed. The assurance which we have that God the Heart-Searcher interprets the inarticulate sighings of the Spirit in us,—is not, strictly speaking, His Omniscience,—but *the fact that the very Spirit who thus pleads, does it according to God*,—in pursuance of the divine purposes and in conformity with God’s good pleasure.—All these pleadings of the Spirit are heard and answered, even when *inarticulately uttered*: we may extend the same comforting assurance to the *imperfect and mistaken verbal utterances* of our prayers, which are not themselves answered to our hurt, but the answer is given to the voice of the Spirit which speaks through them, which we *would* express, but *cannot*. Compare 2 Cor. xii. 7–10, for an instance in the Apostle’s own case.

28.] Having given an example in *prayer*, how the Spirit *helps our weakness*, and out of our ignorance and discouragement brings from God an answer of peace, he now extends this to *all things*—all circumstances by which the Christian finds himself surrounded. These may seem calculated to dash down hope, and surpass patience; but *we know better concerning them*. **Moreover** (or, **but**; and if so, it seems most naturally to apply to ver. 22, the groaning and travailing of all creation) **we know** (as a point of the assurance of faith) **that, to those who love God** (a stronger designation than any yet used for believers), **all things** (every event of life, but especially, as the context requires, those which are adverse. To include, with Augustine, the *sins* of believers in this **all things**, as making them “humbler and wiser,” is manifestly to introduce an element which did not enter into the Apostle’s consideration; for he is here already viewing the believer as *justified by faith, dwelt in by the Spirit, dead to sin*) **work together** (in the sense of all things *co-operating one with another*) **for** (towards, to bring about) **good** (their eternal welfare;—the fulfilment of the purpose of the “love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” ver. 39),—**to those who are called** (not only *invited*, but effectually called—see below) **according to [His]** (the possessive pronoun is not expressed in the original) **purpose**.—In this further description the Apostle designates the believers as not merely *loving God*, but being *beloved by God*. The *divine side* of their security from harm is brought out, as combining with and ensuring the other. They are sure that all things work for their good, not only because *they love Him who worketh all things*, but also because *He who worketh all things hath loved and chosen them*, and carried them through the successive steps of their spiritual life. The *calling* here and elsewhere spoken of by the Apostle (comp. especially ch. ix. 11) is the working, in men, of “the everlasting purpose of God whereby before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation.” Art. X. of the Church of England. To specify the various ways in which this calling has been understood, would far exceed the limits of a general commentary. It may suffice to say, that on the one hand, Scripture bears constant testimony to the fact that all believers are chosen and called by God,—their whole spiritual life in its origin, progress, and completion, being *from Him*:—while on the other hand its testimony is no less precise that He willett all to be saved, and that none shall perish except by *wilful rejection* of the truth. So that, on the one side, GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY,—on the other, MAN’S FREE WILL,—is plainly declared to us. *To receive, believe, and act on both these, is our duty, and our wisdom*. They belong, as truths, no less to *natural* than to revealed religion: and every one who believes in a God must acknowledge both. But all attempts to *bridge over the gulf between the two* are *futile*, in the present imperfect condition of man. The very reasonings used for this purpose are clothed in language framed on the analogies of this lower world, and wholly inadequate to describe God regarded as He is in Himself. Hence arises confusion, misapprehension of God, and disbelief. I have therefore simply, in this commentary, endeavoured to enter into the full meaning of the sacred text, whenever one or other of these great truths is brought forward; not explaining either of them away on account of possible difficulties arising from the recognition of the other, but recognizing as fully the *elective and predestinating decree of God*, where it is

treated of, as I have done, in other places, *the free will of man*. If there be an inconsistency in this course, it is at least one in which the nature of things, the conditions of human thought, and Scripture itself, participate, and from which no Commentator that I have seen, however anxious to avoid it by extreme views one way or the other, has been able to escape.

29, 30.] The Apostle now goes backward from the word **called**, to explain *how this CALLING came about*. It sprung from God's *fore-knowledge*, co-ordinate with His *fore-determination* of certain persons to be conformed to the image of His Son, that Christ might be exalted as the Head of the great Family of God. These persons, thus foreknown and pre-determined, He, in the course of His Providence actually, but in His eternal decree implicitly, called, bringing them through justification to glory;—and all this is spoken of *as past*, because *to Him who sees the end from the beginning,—past, present, and future*, ARE NOT, but ALL IS ACCOMPLISHED WHEN DETERMINED.—**Because whom He foreknew** (but in what sense? This has been much disputed: the Pelagian view,—“*those who He foreknew would believe*,” is taken by Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, and others; the sense of *fore-loved*, by Grotius, and others: that of *fore-decreed*, by Stuart and others: that of *elected, adopted as His sons*, by Calvin, who says, “The foreknowledge of God, of which Paul here makes mention, is not bare prescience, as some ignorant persons foolishly pretend, but adoption, whereby God hath ever distinguished His sons from the wicked.” That this latter is *implied*, is certain: but I prefer taking the word in the ordinary sense of **foreknew**, especially as it is guarded from being a “*bare prescience*” by what follows: see below and Gal iv. 9). **He also foreordained** (His foreknowledge was not a mere *being previously aware* how a series of events would happen: but was co-ordinate with, and inseparable from, His having *pre-ordained* all things) **to bear the likeness of the image of His Son** (the *image of Christ* here spoken of is not His moral purity, nor His sufferings, but as in 1 Cor. xv. 49, that entire form, of *glorification in body and sanctification in spirit*, of which Christ is the perfect pattern, and all His people shall be partakers. To accomplish this transformation in us is the end, *as regards us*, of our election by God; not merely to rescue us from wrath. Compare 1 John iii. 2, 3; Phil. iii. 21: and on the comprehensive meaning, Phil. ii. 6, 7,—where “*form*” expresses both the ‘*form of God*’ in which Christ was, and ‘*the form of a servant*,’ in which He became incarnate), **that He might** (or, *may*, as Calvin, but the reference is to the *past* decree of God) **be the firstborn among many brethren** (i. e. that He might be shewn, acknowledged to be, and glorified as, THE Son OF GOD, pre-eminent among those who are by adoption through Him the sons of God. This is the further end of our election, *as regards Christ*: His glorification in us, as our elder Brother and Head):

30.] And whom He foreordained, those He also called (in making the decree, He left it not barren, but provided for those circumstances, all at His disposal, by which such decree should be made effectual in them).

called, supply “*to His own kingdom and glory*,” 1 Thess. ii. 12; other expressions are found in 1 Cor. i. 9; 2 Thess. ii, 14; 1 Tim. vi. 12; 1 Pet. v. 10):

and whom He called, these He also justified (the Apostle, remember, is speaking entirely of *God's acts* on behalf of the believer: he says nothing *now* of that faith, through which this justification is, *on his part*, obtained): **and whom He justified, them He also glorified** (He did not merely, in His premundane decree, acquit them of sin, but also clothe them with glory: the past tense being used, as the other past tenses, to imply the completion in the divine counsel of all these,—which are to us, in the state of time, so many successive steps,—simultaneously and irrevocably).

31.] What then shall we say to these things (what answer can the hesitating or discouraged find to this array of the merciful acts of God's love on behalf of the believer)? **If God is for us** (and this He has been proved to be, vv. 28–30,—in having foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified us), **who shall be** (or, is: there is no verb expressed in the original) **against us?**

32.] He (in the original **He**)

at least) that (taking one act as a notable example out of all) **spared not His own Son** (HIS OWN,—His only-begotten, the only one of God's sons who is One with Him in nature and essence, begotten of Him before all worlds. No other sense of **own** will suit its position here, in a clause already made emphatic by **at least**, in consequence of which whatever epithet is fixed to **son** must partake of the emphasis), **but delivered Him up** (not necessarily *to death* only, but generally, as “*gave*,” in John iii. 16: granted Him, when He might have withheld Him) **on behalf of us all** (so that every one of us believers, even the most afflicted, has an equal part in Him. Of others, nothing is said here), **how shall He not** (how can it be that He will not) **also with Him** (in consequence of and in analogy with this His greatest gift: it is a question arguing *from the greater to the less*) **give freely to us all things** (all that we need or hope for; or even more largely, all created things, for ours, to subserve our good, and work together for us: comp. 1 Cor. iii. 22)?

33.] The punctuation of these verses is disputed. Many follow, in verses 33, 34, the undoubted form of ver. 35, and place an interrogation after each clause, as in the text; while others make “*God that justifieth*,” and “*Christ that dieth, &c.,*” the *reply to* and *rejection of* the questions preceding them. The former method is preferable, as preserving the form of ver. 35, and involving no harshness of construction, which the other does: see my Greek Testament. **Who shall lay any charge against the elect of God? Shall God who justifies them** (Chrysostom strikingly says, “He saith not, ‘God who remitteth sins,’ but

which is much more, ‘God who justifieth.’ For when the vote of the judge himself acquits, and of Such a Judge, of what weight is the accuser?”? **Who is he that condemns them? [Is it] Christ who died, yea, who is also risen again, who is also at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?** “All the great points of our redemption are ranged together, from the death of Christ to His still enduring intercession, as reasons for negativing the question above.” De Wette.

35.] Who (i. e. *what*: but masculine, for uniformity with verses 33, 34) **shall separate us from the love of Christ?**—Is this (1) *our love to Christ*, or (2) *Christ's love to us*, or (3) *our sense of Christ's love to us*? The first of these is held by Origen, Chrysostom, and others. But the difficulty of it lies in consistently interpreting ver. 37, where not our *endurance in love to Him*, but our *victory by means of His love to us*, is alleged. And besides, it militates against the conclusion in ver. 39, which ought certainly to respond to this question.—The third meaning is defended by Calvin. But the second, maintained by Beza, Grotius, and many others, appears to me the only tenable sense of the words. For, having shewn that God's great love to us is such that none can accuse nor harm us, the Apostle now *asserts the permanence of that love* under all adverse circumstances—that none such can affect it,—nay more, that it is by that love that we are enabled to obtain the victory over all such adversities. And finally he expresses his persuasion that no created thing shall ever separate us from that Love, i. e., shall ever be able to pluck us out of the Father's hand.

36.] The quotation here expresses,—‘all which things befall us, as they befell God's saints of old,—and they are no new trials to which we are subjected:—What, if we verify the ancient description?

37.] Nay (negation of the question preceding), **in all these things we are more than conquerors** (or, and perhaps better, **we are far the conquerors**) **through Him who loved us** (i. e. so far from all these things separating us from His love, that very love has given us a glorious victory over them).—It is doubted whether ‘*He who loved us*’ be the Father, or our Lord Jesus Christ. This is, I think, decided by “to Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,” Rey. i. 5. The use of such an expression as a title of our Lord in a doxology, makes it very probable that *where unexplained*, as here, it would also designate Him.

38.] For I am persuaded (a taking up and amplifying of the being ‘far the conquerors,’—our victory is not only over these things, but I dare assert it over greater and more awful than these), **that neither death, nor life** (well explained by De Wette as the two principal possible states of man, and not as equivalent to ‘any thing dead or living,’ as Calvin and others), **nor angels, nor principalities** (whether good or bad; the word is used of good, Eph. i. 21; Col. i. 16; of bad, 1 Cor. xv. 24? Col. ii. 15; Eph. vi. 12; here,

generally.—**Angels**, absolutely, seems never to be used of *bad* angels: if it here means good angels, there is no objection to the rhetorical supposition that they might attempt this separation, any more than to that of *an angel from heaven preaching another gospel*, Gal. i. 8), **nor things present, nor things to come** (no vicissitudes of *time*), **nor powers** (some confusion has evidently crept into the arrangement. I follow the very strong consent of the ancient MSS.), **nor height, nor depth** (no extremes of *space*), **nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord** (here plainly enough *God's love to us in Christ*,—to us, as we are in Christ, to us, manifested in and by Christ).

Romans: Chapter 9

CHAP. IX.—XI.] The Gospel being now established, in its fulness and freeness, as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,—a question naturally arises, not unaccompanied with painful difficulty, respecting the exclusion of that people, as a people, to whom God's ancient promises were made. With this national rejection of Israel the Apostle now deals: first (ix. 1–5) *expressing his deep sympathy with his own people: then (ix. 6–29) justifying God, who has not (verses 6–13) broken His promise, but from the first chose a portion only of Abraham's seed, and that (verses 14–29) by His undoubted elective right, not to be murmured at nor disputed by us His creatures: according to which election a remnant shall now also be saved.* Then as to the rejection of so large a portion of Israel, *their own self-righteousness* (verses 30–33) *has been the cause of it*, and (x. 1–13) *their ignorance of God's righteousness,—notwithstanding that (verses 13–21) their Scriptures plainly declared to them the nature of the Gospel, and its results with regard to themselves and the Gentiles, with which declarations Paul's preaching was in perfect accordance. Has God then cast off His people (xi. 1–10)? No—for a remnant shall be saved according to the election of grace, but the rest hardened, not however for the purpose of their destruction, but (xi. 11–24) of mercy to the Gentiles: which purpose of mercy being fulfilled, Israel shall be brought in again to its proper place of blessing (xi. 25–32).* He concludes the whole with a *humble admiration of the unsearchable depth of God's ways, and the riches of His Wisdom* (xi. 33–36). In no part of the Epistles of St. Paul is it more requisite, than in this portion, to bear in mind his habit of *INSULATING the one view of the subject under consideration, with which he is at the time dealing*. The divine *side* of the history of Israel and the world is in the greater part of this portion thus *insulated*: the facts of the divine dealings and the divine decrees insisted on, and the *mundane or human side* of that history kept for the most part out of sight, and only so much shewn, as to make it manifest that the Jews, on their part, failed of attaining God's righteousness, and so lost

their share in the Gospel. It must also be remembered that, whatever inferences, with regard to God's disposal of *individuals*, may justly lie from the Apostle's arguments, the assertions here made by him are universally spoken with a *national* reference. Of the eternal salvation or rejection of any individual Jew there is here no question: and however logically true of any individual the same conclusion may be shewn to be, we know as matter of fact, that in such cases *not the divine, but the human side*, is that ever held up by the Apostle—the universality of free grace for all—the riches of God's mercy to all who call on Him, and consequent exhortations to all, to look to Him and be saved. The apparent inconsistencies of the Apostle, at one time speaking of absolute decrees of God, and at another of culpability in man,—at one time of the election of some, at another of a hope of the conversion of all,—resolve themselves into the necessary conditions of thought under which we all are placed, being compelled to acknowledge the divine Sovereignty on the one hand, and human free will on the other, and alternately appearing to lose sight of one of these, as often as for the time we confine our view to the other.

IX. 1–5.] *The Apostle's deep sympathy with his own people Israel.* The subject on which he is about to enter, so unwelcome to Jews in general, coupled with their hostility to himself, and designation of him as a *deceiver* (2 Cor. vi. 8: comp. also 2 Cor. i. 17; ii. 17; iv. 1, 25 vii. 2), causes him to begin with a previous apology or depreciation, bespeaking credit for simplicity and earnestness in the assertion which is to follow. This depreciation and assertion of sympathy he puts in the forefront of the section, to take at once the ground from those who might charge him, in the conduct of his argument, with hostility to his own alienated people.—**I say [the] truth in Christ** (as a Christian,—as united to Christ; the ordinary sense of the expression “*in Christ*,” so frequent with the Apostle),—**I lie not** (confirmation of the preceding, by shewing that he was aware of what would be laid to his charge, and distinctly repudiating it),—**my conscience bearing me witness of the same** (not, “*also bearing me witness*,” as A.V. It is *accordance with the fact*, not *joint testimony*, which is asserted) **in the Holy Spirit** (much as “*in Christ*” above:—a conscience not left to itself, but informed and enlightened by the Spirit of God), **I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart**, The reason of this grief is reserved for a yet stronger description of his sympathy in the next verse.

3.] For I could wish (literally, **I was wishing**). This imperfect tense is not *historical*, alluding to his days of Pharisaism as some have supposed, but implies, as very often, a half-expression-of a desire: ‘*I was wishing, had it been possible.*’ The sense of the imperfect tense in such expressions is the proper and strict one,—and no new discovery, but common enough in every schoolboy's reading: the act is unfinished, an obstacle intervening) **that I myself** (see ch. vii. 25; it gives emphasis, as ‘I, Paul,’ 2 Cor. x. 1, Gal. y. 2: ‘I, the very person who write this, and whom ye know’) **were accursed** (a thing accursed, “*anathema*,” in the original: an irrevocable devotion to God, or, a thing or person so devoted. All *persons* and *animals* thus devoted were put to death; none could be redeemed, Lev. xxvii. 28, 29. The subsequent scriptural usage of the word arose from this. It never denotes simply an exclusion or ex-communication, but always devotion to perdition,—a curse. Attempts have been made to explain away the meaning here, by understanding *excommunication*; or even *natural death* only: but excommunication included cursing and delivering over to Satan:—and the mere wish for natural death would, as Chrysostom eloquently remarks, be altogether beneath the dignity of the passage. Perhaps the strangest, interpretation is that of Dr. Burton: “St. Paul had been set apart and consecrated by Christ to His service; and he had prayed that this devotion of himself might be for the good of his countrymen:”—it is however no unfair sample of a multitude of others, all more or less shrinking from the full meaning of the fervid words of the Apostle) **from Christ** (i. e. cut off and separated from Him for ever in eternal perdition. No other meaning will satisfy the plain sense of the words. On this wish, compare Exod. xxxii, 32) **in behalf of** (in the place of: or, if thus I could benefit, deliver from perdition) **my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh**—The wish is evidently not to be pressed as entailing on the Apostle the charge of inconsistency in loving his nation more than his Saviour. It is the expression of an affectionate and self-denying heart, willing to surrender all things, even, if it might be so, eternal glory itself, if thereby he could obtain for his beloved people those blessings of the Gospel which he now enjoyed, but from which they were excluded. Nor does he describe the wish as ever actually formed; only as a conceivable limit to which, if admissible, his self-devotion for them would reach. Others express their love by professing themselves ready to give their life for their friends; he declares the intensity of his affection by reckoning even his *spiritual* life not too great a price, if it might purchase their salvation.

4.] Not only on their relationship to himself does he ground this sorrow and this self-devotion: but on the recollection of their ancient privileges and glories—**Who are Israelites** (a name of honour, see John i. 47; 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5); **whose (is) the adoption** (see Exod. iy. 22; Deut. xiv. 1; xxxii. 6; Isa. i. 2), **and the glory** (perhaps their general preference and exaltation, consequent on the adoption,—but far more probably, as all the other substantives refer to separate matters of fact,—the Shechinah, or visible manifestation of the divine Presence on the mercy-seat between the cherubim; see references), **and the covenants** (not, *the two tables of the law*,—as some understand it,—which formed but one covenant, and are included in “*the giving of the law*;” nor, *the Old and New Testament Covenants*,—as others,—see Gal. iv. 24 ff.: but *the several renewals of the covenant* with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and finally with the whole people at Sinai:—see Gen. xv. 9–21; xvii. 4, 7, 10; xxvi. 24; xxviii. 13; Exod. xxiv. 7, 8), **and the giving of the law** (“if others boast of their Solons and Lycurguses, how far juster ground of boasting: is there of the Lord as Lawgiver?” Calvin. The word includes both the act of giving the Law, and the Law thus given), **and the service** (ordinances of worship: see Heb. ix. 1, 6: the words in brackets are not expressed in the original, but are implied in the word used), **and the promises** (probably only those to the patriarchs, of a Redeemer to come, are here thought of, as the next two clauses place the patriarchs and Christ together without any mention of the prophets. So Abraham

is described, Heb. vii. 6, as “*he that had the promises*”),—**w hose are the fathers** (probably to be limited to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—but Stephen gives the appellation a much wider meaning in Acts vii. 11, 12, 19, 39, 44, and so apparently St. Paul himself, Acts xiii. 17. In all those places, however, except Acts vii. 19, “*our*” is joined with the word “*fathers*,” whereas here it is absolute: so that the above limitation may be true),—**and of whom is Christ, so far as regards the flesh** (the expression implies that He was not *entirely* sprung from them, but had another nature; “*on His human side*”—“*as far as pertains to His human body*”), **who is God over all** (this word *all* is of uncertain gender in the original, but must be probably taken as neuter: **all things**, not “*all persons*:” compare ch. xi. 36), **blessed for ever. Amen.**—The punctuation and application of this doxology have been much disputed. By the early Church it was generally rendered as above, and applied to Christ. Passages, it is true, have been collected from the fathers to shew that they applied the words “*God over all*” to the FATHER alone, and protested against their application to the SON; but these passages themselves protest only against the erroneous Noetian or Sabellian view of the identity of the Father and the Son, whereas in Eph. iv. 5, 6, “*one Lord*,” “*one God and Father of all, who is over all*,” are plainly distinguished. That our Lord is not, in the strict exclusive sense, “*the God who is over all*,” every Christian will admit, that title being reserved for the Father: but that He is “*God over all*” none of the above-mentioned passages goes to deny.—The first trace of a different interpretation, if it be one, is found in an assertion of the Emperor Julian, who says that our Lord is never called God by St. Paul, nor by St. Matthew, or St. Mark, but by St. John only. The next is in the punctuation of two of our later manuscripts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which arrange the sentence thus: of whom as concerning the flesh is Christ. God over all [be] blessed for ever.” This is followed by several among the moderns, and generally by Socinians. The objections to this rendering are, (1) ingenuously suggested by Socinus himself, and never yet obviated,—that without one exception in Hebrew or Greek, wherever an ascription of blessing is found, the predicate **blessed precedes** the name of God. (2) That the words **who is** on this rendering, would be superfluous altogether (see below). (3) That the doxology would be unmeaning and frigid in the extreme. It is not the habit of the Apostle to break out into irrelevant ascriptions of praise; and certainly there is here nothing in the immediate context requiring one. If it be said that the survey of all these privileges bestowed on his people prompts the doxology,—surely such a view is most unnatural: for the sad subject of the Apostle’s sympathy, to which he immediately recurs again, is the apparent *inanity* of all these privileges in the exclusion from life of those who were dignified with them. If it be said that the *incarnation of Christ* is the exciting cause, the words “*according to the flesh*” come in most strangely, depreciating, as it would on that supposition, the greatness of the event, which then becomes a source of so lofty a thanksgiving. (4) That the expression “*blessed for ever*” is twice besides used by St. Paul, and each time unquestionably not in an ascription of praise, but in *an assertion regarding the subject of the sentence*. The places are, ch. i. 25, and 2 Cor. xi. 31: whereas he uses the phrase “*Blessed be God*” as an ascription of praise, without joining “*for ever*.” See the rest of the discussion in my Greek Test. I have shewn there, that the rendering given in the text is not only that most agreeable to the usage of the Apostle, *but the only one admissible by the rules of grammar and arrangement*. It also admirably suits the context: for, having enumerated the historic advantages of the Jewish people, he concludes by stating one which ranks far higher than all,—that from them sprung, according to the flesh, He who is God over all, blessed for ever.—**Amen** is the accustomed ending of such solemn declarations of the divine Majesty: compare ch. i. 25.

6–13.] God has not broken his promise: for He chose from the first but a portion of the seed of Abraham (6–9), and again only one out of the two sons of Rebecca (10–13).

6.] Not as though (i. e. ‘*but I do not mean such a thing, as that....*’ or ‘*the matter however is not so, as that.. .*’) **the word** (i. e. the promise) **of God hath fallen to the ground** (or, **to nothing**, viz. by many, the majority of the nominal Israel, missing the salvation which seemed to be their inheritance by promise).—For not all who are sprung from Israel (Israel meaning Jacob, according to Tholuck: but this does not seem necessary: Israel here as well as below may mean the people, but here in the popular sense, there in the divine idea), (**these are Israel** (veritably, and in the sense of the promise).

7.] Nor, because they are (physically) the seed of Abraham, are they all children (so as to inherit the promise): **but** (we read) “**In Isaac shall thy seed be called**” (i. e. those only shall be called truly and properly, for the purposes of the covenant, thy seed, who are descended from Isaac, not those from Ishmael or any other son).

8.] That is (that amounts, when the facts of the history are recollected, to saying), **Not they which are the children of the flesh** (begotten by natural generation, compare John i. 13, and Gal. iv. 29) **are the children of God; but the children of the promise** (begotten not naturally, but by virtue of the divine promise [Gal. iv. 23], as Isaac) **are reckoned for seed.**

9.] For this word was (one) of promise (not, ‘*For this is the word of promise.*’) The stress is on *promise*: the children of *promise* are reckoned for seed: for this word, in fulfilment of which Isaac was born, was a word of *promise*). **According to this time** (literally in the Hebrew, ‘when the time (shall be) reviviscent,’ i.e. next year at this time. The change into “*Sarah shall bear a son*” is probably made for the sake of emphasis—the promise was *to Sarah*) **I will come, and there shall be a son to Sarah** (so literally in the Greek).

10, 11.] And not only (so) (i. e. not. only have we an example of the election of a son of Abraham by one woman, and the rejection of a son by another, but also of election and rejection of the *children of the same woman*, Re-becca, and that *before they were born*); **but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man** (in the former case, the children were by *two wives*;

the difference between that case and this being, that there, was diversity of parents, here, identity. The points of contrast being then this diversity and identity, the *identity of the father* also is brought into view. “For Rebecca was Isaiae’s only wife, and had both her children by Isaac: and yet these children by the same father and the same mother, the issue of the same birth,—own brothers on both sides, and twins besides, had not the same destiny”), **our father Isaac** (“*our father*” is probably said without any special reference, the Apostle speaking as a Jew. If with any design, it might be to shew that even among the *Patriarchs*’ children such distinction took place.—Christians being *children of promise*, the expression might apply to them: but the argument here is to shew that not *all the children of promise* belonged to the election. See ch. iv. 1–12),—**for without their having been yet born** (the subject, “*the children*,” is to be supplied partly from the fact of her pregnancy just stated, partly from the history, well known to the readers), **or having done any thing good or ill, to the end that the purpose of God according to** (purposed in pursuance of, or in accordance with, or with reference to His) **election may** (not *might*; *the purpose* is treated as *one* in all time, which would be nullified if once thwarted) **abide** (stand firm),—**not depending on works** (ch. iii. 20; iv. 2), **but on him that calleth** (this is decisive against the Pelagianism of the Romanists, who by making our faith as foreseen by God the cause of our election, affirm it to be dependent on works); **it was said to her, “The elder shall serve the younger”** (this prophecy is distinctly connected in Gen. xxv. 23 with the prophetic description of the children as two *nations*,—‘the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger.’) But the nations must be considered as spoken of in their progenitors, and the elder nation is in fact that sprung from the elder brother. History records several subjugations of Edom by the kings of Judah; first by David (2 Sam. viii. 14);—under Joram they rebelled (2 Kings viii. 20), but were defeated by Amaziah (2 Kings xiv. 7), and Elath taken from them by Uzziah (2 Kings xiv. 22); under Ahaz they were again free, and troubled Judah (2 Chron. xxviii. 16, 17, comp. 2 Kings xvi. 6, 7)—and continued free, as prophesied in Gen. xxvii. 40, till the time of John Hyrcanus, who reduced them finally, so that thenceforward they were incorporated among the Jews): **as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated** (there is no necessity here to soften the ‘*hated*? into ‘*loved less*:’ the words in Malachi preveed on the fullest meaning of hate, see ver. 4, “The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever”).

14–29.] This election was made by the indubitable right of God, Who is not therefore unjust.

14.] What then shall we say (anticipation of a difficulty or objection,—but not *put into the mouth of an objector*)? **Is there unrighteousness** (injustice) **with** (in) **God** (viz. in that He chooses as He will, without any reference to previous desert)? **God forbid.**

15.] For He saith to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomsoever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomsoever I have compassion” (the meaning apparently is, ‘whenever I have mercy on any, it shall be *pure mercy*, no human desert contributing; which agrees better with the next verse than the ordinary rendering, which lays the stress on the “*whomsoever*;” and is not inconsistent with ver. 18, “*he hath mercy on whom he will*”; because if God’s mercy be pure mercy without any desert on man’s part, it necessarily follows that He has mercy on whom He will, His will being the only assignable cause of the selection).

16.] So then (inference from the citation) **it is not of** (God’s mercy ‘does not belong to,’—‘is not in the power of’) **him that willeth** (any man willing it), **nor yet of him that runneth** (any man contending for it, see reff. and Phil. iii. 14. There hardly can be any allusion to Abraham’s wish for Ishmael, Gen. xvii. 18, and Esau’s running to hunt for venison, as some think), **but of God that hath mercy.**—I must pause again here to remind the student, that I purposely do not enter on the disquisitions so abundant, in some commentaries on this part of Scripture, by which it is endeavoured to reconcile the sovereign election of God with our free will. *We shall find that free will asserted strongly enough for all edifying purposes by this Apostle, when the time comes.* At present, he is employed wholly in asserting the divine Sovereignty, the glorious vision of which it ill becomes us to distract by continual downward looks on this earth. I must also protest against all endeavours to make it appear, that no inference lies from this passage as to the *salvation of individuals*. It is most true (see remarks at the beginning of this chapter) that *the immediate subject is the national rejection of the Jews*: but we must consent to hold our reason in abeyance, if we do not recognize the inference, that the sovereign power and free election here proved to belong to God extend to *every exercise* of His mercy—whether temporal or spiritual—whether in Providence or in Grace—whether national or individual. It is in parts of Scripture like this, that we must be especially careful *not to fall short of what is written*: not to allow of any compromise of the plain and awful words of God’s Spirit for the sake of a caution which He Himself does not teach us.

17.] The same great truth shewn on its *darker side*:—as regards not only God’s *mercy*, but His *wrath* also.—**For** (confirmation of the universal truth of the last inference) **the scripture** (identified with God, its Author: the case is different when merely something *contained* in Scripture is introduced by “*the Scripture saith*:” there *the Scripture* is merely personified. The justice of this remark will be apparent, if we reflect that this expression could not be used of the *mere ordinary words of any man* in the historical Scriptures, Ahab, or Hezekiah,—but only where *the text itself* speaks, or where *God spoke*, or, as here, *some man under inspiration of God saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up* (literally in the Hebrew, “*made thee stand*;” the Septuagint have “*thou wert preserved to this day*” they apparently understood it of Pharaoh being kept safe through the plagues. This has perhaps been done to avoid the strong assertion which the Apostle here gives, purposely deviating from the Septuagint, that Pharaoh was ‘*raised up*,’ called into action in his office, to be an example of God’s dealing

with impenitent sinners), **that I may shew forth my power** (those deeds of miraculous power, of which Egypt was then witness) **in thee** ('in thee as an example,'—'in thy case,'—'by thee'), **and that my name may be published abroad in all the earth** (compare as a comment, the words of the song of triumph, Exod. xv. 14–16).

18.] Therefore he hath mercy on whom he will (ref. to ver. 15, where see note), **and whom he will he hardeneth.**—The frequent recurrence of the expression "to harden the heart" in the history of Pharaoh should have kept Commentators from attempting to give to **harden** here the sense of *treating hardly*, against which the next verse would be decisive, if there were no other reason for rejecting it. Whatever difficulty there lies in this assertion, that God *hardeneth* whom He will, lies also *in the daily course of His Providence*, in which we see this hardening process going on in the case of the prosperous ungodly man. The fact is patent, whether declared by revelation or read in history: but to the solution of it, and its reconciliation with the equally certain fact of human responsibility, we shall never attain in this imperfect state, however we may strive to do so by subtle refinements and distinctions. The following is the admirable advice of Augustine, from whom in this case it comes with double weight, seeing that he was a strenuous upholder of God's sovereign grace: "Let it be enough for the Christian, living as yet by faith, and not yet seeing what is perfect, but knowing it only in part, to know, or to believe, that God acquits none except of His free mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and condemns none, except of most equitable justice, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. But why He acquits or does not acquit one rather than another, let him who can, search into the so great deep of His judgments: but—let him beware of the precipitous descent."

19.] Thou wilt say then unto me (there seems no reason to suppose the objector a Jew:—the objection is a *general one*, applying to all mankind, and likely to arise in the mind of any reader. The expression "*O man*" seems to confirm this), **Why then** (then is omitted in our received text, but is found in our principal authorities) **doth he yet find fault** (yet, as ch. iii. 7: assuming your premises,—'if this be so: at the same time it expresses a certain irritation on the part of the objector)? **For who resisteth** (not, '*hath resisted*', which is a mistake on the part of the A.V.) **his will** (i. e. if it be His will to harden the sinner, and the sinner goes on in his sin, he does not resist, but goes with the will of God)? **Yea rather** (or, **Nay but**: these words take the ground from under the previous assertion and supersede it by another: implying that it has a certain shew of truth, but that the proper view of the matter is yet to be stated. They thus convey, as in Luke xi. 28, an intimation of rebuke; here, with severity: 'that which thou hast said, may be correct human reasoning—but as against God's sovereignty, thy reasoning is out of place and irrelevant'), **O man** (perhaps without emphasis implying the contrast between man and God,—for this is done by the emphatic **thou** following, and we have the same address, "*O man*," unemphatic in ch. ii. 1), **who art THOU that repliest against God?**—(implying, 'thou hast neither right nor power to call God to account in this manner')—Notice, that the answer to the objector's question does not lie in these verses 19–21, but in the following (see there);—the present verses are a rebuke administered to the *spirit* of the objection, which forgets the immeasurable distance between us and God, and the relation of Creator and Disposer in which He stands to us. As Chrysostom and Calvin well remark, "he first by this rebuke humiliates the objector, and prepares his mind to receive the answer to his impious cavil")—**Shall the thing formed** (properly of a production of *plastic* art moulded of clay or wax) **say to him that formed it, "Why didst thou make me thus?"**—These words are slightly altered from Isa. xxix. 16, "Shall the work say of him that made it, *He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?*"—**Or** (intro-duces a new objection, or fresh ground of rebuke, see ch. ii. 4; iii. 29; vi. 3; xi. 2) **hath not the potter power over the clay** (the similitude from Isa. xlvi. 9. In Eccl. xxiii. 13, we have a very similar sentiment

"As the clay is in the potter's hand, to fashion it at his pleasure, so man is in the hand of him that made him, to render to them as liketh him best."—And even more strikingly so, Wisd. xv. 7: "For the potter, tempering soft earth, fashioneth every vessel with much labour for our service: yea, of the same clay he maketh both the vessels that serve for clean uses, and likewise also all such as serve to the contrary: but what is the use of either sort, the potter himself is the judge." See also Jer. xviii. 6), **out of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour** (honourable uses), **and another unto dishonour** (dis-honourable uses. See 2 Tim., in the reff.—The honour and dishonour are not here the *moral purity* or *impurity* of the human vessels, but their *ultimate glorification or perdition*. The Apostle, in asking this question, rather aims at striking dumb the objector by a statement of God's undoubted right, against which it does not become us men to murmur, than at unfolding to us the actual state of the case. This he does in the succeeding verses; see above)?

22.] What if (1) God, purposing to shew forth His wrath, and to make His power (that which He could do) **known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted** (prepared, made complete and ready) **for destruction: and** (what if this took place) **(2) to the end that He might make known the riches of His glory on** (i. e. 'toward,' 'with regard to') **the vessels of mercy, which He before prepared for glory** (I have given the whole, that my view of the construction might be evident: viz. that (1) and (2) are parallel clauses, both dependent on **what if; purposing** giving the intent of the first, and **to the end that he might make known** that of the second).—The argument is, 'What if God, in the case of the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, has, in willing to manifest His power and wrath, also exhibited towards them longsuffering (to lead them to repentance, ch. ii. 4,—a mystery which we cannot fathom), and in having mercy on the vessels of mercy prepared for glory, has also made manifest the riches of His glory?' Then in both these dispensations will appear, not the arbitrary power, but the rich goodness of God.—The theological difficulties in the words **fitted for destruction, and which he before prepared for glory** (mind, in both cases God is the agent: He fits the one for destruction, and prepares the other for glory), are

but such as have occurred repeatedly before, and are inherent, not in the Apostle's argument, nor even in revelation, but in *any consistent belief of an omnipotent and omniscient God*. See remarks on ver. 18.—**Vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy** are *vessels prepared to subserve*, as it were to hold, His wrath and mercy: hardly, as Calvin, *instruments to shew them forth*: that is *done*, over and above their being vessels, but is not necessary to it.—These vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy are not to be, with a view to evade the general application, confined to the instances of Pharaoh and the Jews: these instances give occasion to the argument, but the argument itself is general, extending to all the dealings of God).

24.] whom (viz. vessels of mercy) He also called, [even] us, not from among the Jews only, but also from among the Gentiles? It being entirely in the power of God to preordain and have mercy on whom He will, He has exercised this right by calling not only the remnant of His own people, but a people from among the Gentiles also,

25, 26.] It is difficult to ascertain in what sense the Apostle cites these two passages from Hosea as applicable to the Gentiles being called to be the people of God. That he *does* so, is manifest from the words themselves, and from the transition to the Jews in ver. 27. In the prophet they are spoken of *Israel*; see ch. i. 6–11, and ch. ii. throughout: who after being rejected and put away, was to be again received into favour by God. Two ways are open, by which their citation by the Apostle may be understood. Either (1) he brings them forward to shew that it is consonant with what we know of God's dealings, to *receive as His people* those who *were* formerly *not His people*—that this may now take place with regard to the Gentiles, as it was announced to happen with regard to Israel,—and even more,—that Israel in this, as in so many other things, was the prophetic mirror in which God foreshewed on a small scale His future dealings with mankind,—or (2) he adduces them from mere applicability to the subject in hand, implying, 'It has been with us Gentiles, as with Israel in the prophet Hosea.' I own I much prefer the former of these, as more consonant with the dignity of the argument, and as apparently justified by the **also**,—as He saith *also* in Hosea, implying perhaps that the matter in hand was not that directly prophesied in the citation, but one analogous to it. Chrysostom takes the same view. **Her** is used, because the Jewish people was typified by the *daughter* of the prophet, Hos. i. 6, who was called Lo-ruhamah, 'not having obtained mercy.'—By **in the place... there**, must not I think be understood, in any particular place, as *Judea*, nor among any peculiar people, as the Christian Church: but as a general assertion, that in every place where they were called 'not His people,' there they shall be called 'His people.'

27.] A proof from Scripture of the fact, that a part of Israel are excluded. Here again the analogy of God's dealings, in the partial deliverance of Israel from captivity, and their great final deliverance from death eternal, is the key to the interpretation of the prophecy cited. The words are spoken by Isaiah of the return from captivity of a remnant of Israel.

28.] The reference of this latter part of the citation is not very plain. It is almost verbatim from the Septuagint, the **for** being inserted by the Apostle as continuing the testimony, 'for the prophet proceeds.' The literal rendering

of the Hebrew is, "The consummation (or consumption) decided, overfloweth with righteousness: for a decision (or consumption)

and a decree shall the Lord Jehovah of Sabaoth make in the midst of all the land." As it stands in the Septuagint, the meaning seems to be, *the Lord will complete and soon fulfil His word in righteousness* (viz. his denunciation of consuming

the Assyrian and liberating the remnant

of His people): *for the Lord will make a rapidly-accomplished word in the midst of all the land.* If the above interpretation

be correct, and the view which I have taken of the analogy of prophecy, it will follow that this verse is adduced by the Apostle as confirming the certainty of the salvation of the remnant of Israel, seeing that now, as then, He with whom a thousand years are as a day, will swiftly accomplish

His prophetic word in righteousness.

29.] Another proof of a *remnant* to be saved, from a *preceding* part of the same prophecy. The citation is verbatim from the Septuagint, who have put "seed" for that which is in the Hebrew "*a remnant*," i.e. something left.

30–33.] *The Apostle takes up again the fact of Israel's failure, and shews how their own pursuit of righteousness never attained to righteousness, being hindered by their self-righteousness and rejection of Christ.* These verses do not contain, as Chrysostom and others think, the solution of the whole difficulty; this solution is simply in the creative right of God, as declared ver. 18;—but they are a comment on ver. 16, that it is not of him that *willetteth*, nor of him that *runneth*: the same similitude of running being here resumed, and it being shewn that, so far from man's running having decided the matter, the Jews *who pressed forward* to the goal attained not, whereas the Gentiles, *who never ran*, have attained. If this is lost sight of, the connexion of the whole is much impaired, and from doctrinal prejudice, a wholly wrong turn given to the Apostle's line of

reasoning,—who resolves the awful fact of Israel's exclusion not into any causes arising from man, but into the supreme will of God,—which will is here again distinctly asserted in the citation from Isaiah (see below).—**What then shall we say?** This question, when followed by *a question*, implies of course a *rejection* of the thought thus suggested—but when, as here, by an *assertion*, introduces a further unfolding of the argument from what has preceded. **That the Gentiles, which pursue not after** (see Phil. iii. 13) **righteousness** (*not justification*, which is merely ‘the being accounted righteous,’ ‘the way in which righteousness is ascribed;’ not this, but *righteousness itself*, is the aim and end of the race), **attained to** (the whole transaction being regarded as a historical fact) **righteousness, even** (righteousness—not however that arising from their own works, but the righteousness, &c.) **the righteousness which is of faith.**

31.] But Israel, pursuing after the law of righteousness (what is the *law of righteousness*? It may mean either (1) an *ideal law of righteousness, a justifying law*,—or (2) *the law of Moses*, thus described: or (3) which I believe to be the true account of the words, “*the law of righteousness*” is put regarding the Jews, rather than merely “*righteousness*,” because in their case there was a prescribed *norm* of apparent righteousness, viz. the law, in which rule and way they, as *matter of fact, followed after it*. *The above, as I believe, mistaken interpretations arise from supposing the law of righteousness to be equivalent to righteousness itself*, which it is not. The Jews followed after, aimed at the fulfilment of ‘*the law of righteousness*,’ thinking by the observance of that law to acquire righteousness. See ch. x. 3, 5, and note; and compare John’s coming ‘*in the way of righteousness*,’ Matt. xxi. 32), **arrived not at** (the word is not the same as that rendered “*attained to*” in the preceding verse) **the law** (fell far short even of that law, which was given them, The words “*of righteousness*,” which follow here in the A.V., are omitted by nearly all our most ancient authorities. The sense is more difficult, but in reality more complete, without these words. The Jews followed after, thinking to perform it entirely, their *law of righteousness*: which the Apostle defines, ch. x. 5, to be *righteousness which is by the law*. But they did not arrive at, come up to the requirements of,—**the law**—they therefore never attained righteousness), **Wherefore? because [pursuing after it] not by faith, but as** (used subjectively, as ‘if about to obtain their object by’) **by [the] works [of the law]** (these words, *of the law*, are omitted by some ancient authorities, but inserted by others. If we omit them, the clause will stand, **but as by works**), **they stumbled at the stone of stumbling** (the similitude of a race is still kept up. The “*for*” found here in the A.V., is omitted by nearly all our ancient authorities. Its insertion has arisen from a period being placed at the word **law**. It confuses the sense, making it appear as if the stumbling was the cause of, or at all events coincident with, their pursuing not by faith, but&c., whereas it was this mistaken method of pursuing which caused them to stumble against the stone of stumbling. We have instances in the Greek chariot races, of competitors, by an error in judgment in driving, striking against the pillar round which the chariots were to turn, There is a close analogy between our text and the exhortation in Heb. xii 1 f. There, after the triumphs of faith have been related, we are exhorted to run with patience the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of *our faith*; where notice, that the sacred Writer seems to have had in his mind the same comparison of Him to the pillar or goal, to which the eyes of the runners would be exclusively directed).

33.] Appeal to the prophecy of Isaiah, as justifying this comparison of Christ to a stone of stumbling. The citation is gathered from: two places in Isaiah, The ‘stone of stumbling and rock of offence,’ mentioned ch. viii. 14, is substituted for the ‘cornerstone elect, precious,’ of ch. xxviii. 16. The solution of this is very simple. Isa. viii. 14 was evidently interpreted by the Jews themselves of the Messiah: for Simeon, Luke ii. 34, when speaking of the child Jesus as the Messiah, expressly adduces the prophecy as about to be fulfilled. Similarly Isa. xxviii. 16 was interpreted by the Chaldee Targum, the Babylonish Talmud, &c, What was there then to prevent the Apostle from giving to this Stone, plainly foretold as to be laid in Zion, that designation which prophecy also justifies, and which bears immediately on the matter here in hand? See 1 Pet. ii. 6–8, where the same two texts are joined, and also Ps. cxviii. 22. **Shall not be put to shame** seems to be a secondary meaning of the Hebrew word, which signifies, as in our version of Isa. xxviii. 16, ‘shall not make haste: i.e. shall not fly in terror, shall not be confounded.

Romans: Chapter 10

CHAP. X. 1–13.] *The Jews, though zealous for God, are yet ignorant of God's righteousness (1–3) as revealed to them in their own Scriptures (4–18).*

1.] Brethren (“now, as if the severity of the preceding argument were passed over, he affectionately addresses them as *brethren*.” Bengel), **the inclination (or, desire) of my heart and my supplication to God on their behalf** (Israel, se ch. ix. 32; the insertion of “*Israel*” in the text is against the authority of all our oldest MSS. and versions) (**is**) **for (their) salvation** (lit. ‘towards salvation.’ The Apostle’s intention seems to be, to destroy any impression which his readers may have received un-favourable to his love of his own people, from the stern argument of the former chapter).

2.] For (reason why I thus sympathize with their efforts, though misdirected) **I bear witness to them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to** (in accordance with, founded upon, and carried on with) **knowledge** (accurate apprehension of the way of righteousness as revealed to them).

3.] **For** (ex-planation of not according to knowledge) **not knowing** (i. e. not recognizing; the A.V., ‘*being ignorant of*,’ is liable to the objection that it may represent to the reader a state of *excusable ignorance*, whereas they *had it before them*, and *overlooked it*) **the righteousness of God** (not, the *way of justification* appointed by God, as Stuart and others; but that only *righteousness* which avails before God, which becomes ours in justification; see De Wette’s note, quoted on ch. i. 17), **and seeking to set up their own righteousness** (again, not *justification*, but *righteousness*: that, namely, described ver. 5; not that it was ever theirs, but the Apostle speaks subjectively), **they were not subjected** (the passive, **were not subjected**,—not as in A.V., “*have not submitted themselves*,”—expresses the *result only*; it might be themselves, or it might be some other, that should have subjected them,—but the historical fact was, that *they were not subjected*) **to the righteousness of God** (the “*righteousness of God*” being considered as a *rule or method*, to which it was necessary to conform, but to which they were never subjected, as they were to the law of Moses).

4–13.] The “*righteousness of God*” is now explained to be summed up in that Saviour who was declared to them in their own Scriptures.—**For** (establishing what was last said, and at the same time unfolding the “*righteousness of God*” in a form which rendered them inexcusable for its non-recognition) **Christ is the end of the law** (i. e. *the object at which the law aimed*: compare the similar expression 1 Tim. i. 5, “*the end of the commandment*.”) Various meanings have been given to the word **end**. (1) *End*, “finis,” *chronological*: ‘Christ is the termination of the law. So Augustine, Luther, and others. But this meaning, unless understood in its pregnant sense, that Christ, who has succeeded to the law, was also the object and aim of the law, says too little. In this pregnant sense Tholuck takes the word ‘end,’ *the end in time and in aim*. It may be so; but I prefer simply to take in the idea of Christ being the end, i.e. aim of the law, as borne out by the citations following, in which nothing is said of the *transitoriness* of the law, but much of the notices which it contains of righteousness by faith in Christ. (2) Clement of Alexandria, Calvin, and others, take **end** for ‘*accomplishment*,’ a sense included in the general meaning, but not especially treated here,—the quotations following not having any reference to it. (3) The meaning, *end in the sense of object or aim*, above adopted, is that of Chrysostom, Beza, and others. Chrys. observes: “For if Christ is the end of the law, he who has not Christ, although he may seem to possess righteousness, possesses it not: but, he who has Christ, even if he have not thoroughly observed the law, has all. To take an example. The end of the art of medicine is health. As, therefore, he who is able to produce health, even if he know nothing of medicine, has all: but he who knows not how to produce health, however he may seem to study the art, fails altogether: so it is with the law and faith: he who has the latter, has the end of the former: but he who has not the latter, is stranger to both”) **unto righteousness** (i. e. so as to bring about righteousness, which the law could not do) **to every one that believeth**.—‘Had they only used the law, instead of abusing it, it would have been their best preparation for the Saviour’s advent. For indeed, by reason of man’s natural weakness, it was always powerless to justify. It was never intended to make the sinner righteous before God; but rather to impart to him a knowledge of his sinfulness, and to awaken in his heart earnest longings for some powerful deliverer. Thus used, it would have ensured the reception of the Messiah by those who now reject Him. Striving to attain to real holiness, and increasingly conscious of the impossibility of becoming holy by an imperfect obedience to the law’s requirements, they would gladly have recognized the Saviour as the end of the law for righteousness.’ Ewbank. 5.] **For** (proof of the impossibility of legal righteousness, as declared even in the law itself) **Moses describeth the righteousness which is of** (abstract,—not implying that it has ever been attained, but rather presupposing the contrary) **the law, saying] That the man which hath done them** (the ordinances of the law) **shall live in** (in the strength of, by means of, as his status) **it** (the “righteousness accruing by such doing of them. The reading “*them*,” in A.V., is against the authority of our most ancient MSS.).—As regards the *life* here promised, the Jewish interpreters themselves included in it more than mere earthly felicity in Canaan, and extended their view to a better life hereafter. Earthly felicity it doubtless *did* impart, comp. Deut. xxx. 20; but even there ‘*life*’ seems to be a general promise, and length of days a particular species of felicity. ‘In the New Test.,’ Tholuck observes, “this idea (of life) is always exalted into that of life blessed and eternal:—see Matt. vii. 14; xviii. 8, 9; Luke x. 28.” 6–8.] **The righteousness which is of faith is described, in the words spoken in Scripture by Moses of the commandment given by him,—as not dependent on a long and difficult process of search, but near to every man, and in every man’s power to attain.** I believe the account of the following citation will be best found by bearing in mind that the Apostle is speaking of Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to the believer. He takes as a confirmation of this, a passage occurring in a prophetic part of Deuteronomy, where Moses is foretelling to the Jews the consequences of rejecting God’s law, and His mercy to them even when under chastisement, if they would return to Him, He then describes the law in nearly the words cited in this verse. Now the Apostle, regarding Christ as the end of the law, its great central aim and object, quotes these words not merely as suiting his purpose, but as bearing, where originally used, an *a fortiori* application to faith in Him who is the end of the law, and to the commandment to believe in Him, which (1 John iii. 23) is now ‘*God’s commandment*.’ If spoken of *the law* as a manifestation of God in man’s heart and mouth, much more were they spoken of Him, who is *God manifest in the flesh, the end of the law and the prophets*. This view is, it is true, different from that of almost all eminent Commentators, ancient and modern,—who regard the words as merely *adapted* or *parodied* by the Apostle as suiting his present purpose. But, we must remember that it is in this passage St. Paul’s object not merely to *describe* the righteousness which is of faith in Christ, but to *shew it described already in the words of the law*.—**But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise** (personified, as Wisdom in the Proverbs), **Say not in thine heart** (i. e. think not, a Hebrew idiom. The original in Deuteronomy has merely, “*that thou shouldest say*.” The Apostle cites freely, giving the explanation of this *saying*, viz. *thinking*), **Who shall ascend into heaven? that is** (see note above;—that imports in its full and unfolded meaning), **to bring down Christ:—or, Who shall descend into the deep (or, the abyss)?—that is, to bring up Christ from the dead.**—There is some difficulty in assigning the precise view with which the Apostle introduces

these questions. Tholuck remarks, "The different interpretations may be reduced to this, that the questions are regarded either (1) as questions of *unbelief*, or (2) as questions of *embarrassment*, or (3) as questions of *anxiety*." The first view is represented by De Wette, who says, "In what sense these questions, from which the righteousness which is of faith dissuades men, are to be taken, is plain from ver. 9, where the Resurrection of Christ is asserted as the one most weighty point of historical Christian belief—they would be *questions of unbelief*, which regards this fact as not accomplished, or as now first to be accomplished. Thus, also, probably, are we to understand the *first question*, as applying to the *Incarnation of Christ*." This is more or less also the view of many other Commentators. (2) The second view, that they are questions of *embarrassment*, is taken by Stuart, who says, "The whole (of Moses's saying) may be summed up in one word, omitting all figurative expression: viz. *the commandment is plain and accessible*. You can have, therefore, no excuse for neglecting it. So in the case before us. *Justification by faith in Christ* is a plain and intelligible doctrine. It is not shut up in mysterious language.... It is like what Moses says of the statutes which he gave to Israel, plain, intelligible, accessible.... It is brought before the mind and heart of every man: and thus he is without excuse for unbelief." (3) The third view, that they are questions of *anxiety*, is that of Calvin, Tholuck, and others: by none perhaps better expressed than by Ewbank, Comm. on the Ep. to the Rom. p. 74: "Personifying the great Christian doctrine of free justification through faith, he represents it as addressing every man who is anxious to obtain salvation, in the encouraging words of Moses: 'Say not in thine heart, (it says to such an one,) &c....' In other words, 'Let not the man, who sighs for deliverance from his own sinfulness, suppose that the accomplishment of some impossible task is re-quired of him, in order to enjoy the blessings of the Gospel. Let him not think that the personal presence of the Messiah is necessary to ensure his salvation. Christ needs not to be brought down from heaven, or up from the abyss, to impart to him forgiveness and holiness. No. Our Christian message contains no impossibilities. We do not mock the sinner by offering him happiness on conditions which we know that he is powerless to fulfil. We tell him that Christ's word is near to him: so near, that he may speak of it with his mouth, and meditate on it with his heart.... Is there any thing above human power in such a confession, and in such a belief? Surely not. It is graciously adapted to the necessity of the very weakest and most sinful of God's creatures.' I will now take up the three views afresh and state the objections. (1) The objection to this view, as alleged by Tholuck, is, that in it the contrast with ver. 5 is lost sight of. And this is so far just, that it must be confessed we thus lose the ideas which the Apostle evidently intended us to grasp, those of insuperable difficulty in the acquisition of righteousness by the law and of facility,—by the gospel. Also,—it puts *too forward* the allegation of the great matters of historical belief, which are not here the central point of the argument, but introduced as the objects which *faith, itself that central point*, apprehends. (2) The last objection has some force as against *this* view. The regarding the questions as mere questions of difficulty and intellectual bewilderment does not adequately represent the *zeal for God* predicated of the Jews, on the assumption of which the whole passage proceeds. Here, however, it seems to me, we have more truth than in (1): for the plainness and simplicity of the truths to be believed is unquestionably one most important element in the righteousness which is of faith. (3) Here we have the important element just mentioned, not indeed made the prominent point of the questions, but, as it appears to me, properly and sufficiently kept in view. The anxious follower after righteousness is not disappointed by an impracticable code, nor mocked by an unintelligible revelation: the word is *near him*, therefore *accessible; plain and simple*, and therefore *apprehensible*; and, taking (1) into account, we may fairly add,—deals with *definite historical fact*, and therefore *certain*: so that his salvation is not contingent on an amount of performance which is *beyond him*, and therefore *inaccessible; irrational*, and therefore *inapprehensible; undefined*, and therefore *involved in uncertainty*.—Thus, it seems to me, we satisfy all the conditions of the argument: and thus also it is clearly brought out, that *the words themselves could never have been spoken by Moses of the righteousness which is of the law*, but of that which is *of faith*.

8.] But what saith it? The word is near thee, in thy mouth (to confess), and in thy heart (to believe): that is (see above), the word of faith (which forms the substratum and object of faith, see Gal. iii. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 6), which we (ministers of Christ: or perhaps, I Paul) preach (this ver. has been explained in dealing with vv. 6, 7);

9.] because (explanation of the word being near thee. Others, seeing that the same word in the original means "*because*," and "*that*," take the latter meaning here, and regard this verse as merely giving the import of the "*word of faith which we preach*." But as Tholuck observes, (1) the duty of confessing the Lord Jesus can hardly be called part of the contents of the preaching of faith, but the prominence given to that duty shews a reference to the words of Moses: (2) the making the word render a reason for the fact above stated, suits much better the context and form of the passage: (3) the fact of the confession with the mouth standing first, also shews a reference to what has gone before: for when the Apostle brings his own arrangement in ver. 10, he puts, as natural, the belief of the heart first) **if thou shalt confess with thy mouth** (same order as ver. 8) **the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead** (here, as in 1 Cor. xv. 14, 16, 17, regarded as the great central fact of redemption), **thou shalt be saved** (inherit eternal life)—Here we have the two parts of the above question again introduced: the confession of the Lord Jesus implying His having come down from heaven, and the belief in His resurrection implying His having been brought up from the dead.

10.] For (refers back to ver. 6, where the above words were ascribed to the righteousness which is of faith, and explains how believing with the heart refers to the acquiring of righteousness) **with the heart faith is exercised** (the original verb is impersonal, **it is believed**: i.e. as in the text, **man believeth unto** (so as to be available to the acquisition of) **righteousness**; **and** (literally **but**: as if it were said, 'not only so: but there must be an outward confession, in order for justification to be carried forward to salvation') **with the mouth confession is made unto salvation**.—Clearly the words **righteousness** and

salvation are not used here, as De Wette and others maintain, merely as different terms for the same thing, for the sake of the parallelism: but *salvation* is the end and topstone of justification, consequent not merely on the act of justifying faith, as the other, but on a good confession before the world, maintained unto the end.

11.] For (proof of the former part of ver. 10) **the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.**

12.] For (an explanation of the strong expression ‘**whosoever** believeth,’ as implying the *universal* offer of the riches of God’s mercy in Christ) **there is no distinction of Jew and Greek** (Gentile—See ch. iii. 22): **for the same Lord of all** (viz. *Christ*, who is the subject here: verses 9, 11, 13 cannot be separated. So Origen, Chrysostom, and most of the ancients. So “*Lord of all*” is said of Christ, Acts x. 36. Most modern Commentators would render the words, “*the same [Person] is Lord of all*.” But I prefer the usual rendering, both on account of the strangeness of “*the same*” thus standing alone, and because this Apostle uses the expression “*the same Lord*,” 1 Cor. xii. 5, and even “*the same God*,” 1 Cor. xii. 6) **is rich unto all** (‘by unto’ is signified the direction in which the stream of grace rushes forth.’ Olshausen) **who call upon Him:**

13.] for (Scripture proof of this assertion) **every one whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord** (Jehovah,—but used here of Christ beyond a doubt, as the next verse shews. There is hardly a stronger proof, or one more irrefragable by those who deny the Godhead of our Blessed Lord, of the unhesitating application to Him by the Apostle of the name and attributes of Jehovah) **shall be saved.**

14, 15.] It has been much doubted to whom these questions refer,—to Jews or to Gentiles? It must, I think, be answered, To *neither exclusively*. They are generalized by the “*whosoever*” of the preceding verse, to mean all, both Jews and Gentiles. And the inference in what follows, though mainly concerning the rejection of the unbelieving Jews, has regard also to the reception of the Gentiles: see below on verses 19, 20.—At the same time, us Meyer remarks, “the necessity of the Gospel *mission* must first be laid down, in order to bring out in strong contrast the disobedience of some.”—**How then** (i. e. it being conceded that the foregoing is so) **can** (I have followed the majority of the chief MSS in reading **can** throughout this passage instead of “*shall*”) **they** (men, represented by the “*whosoever*” of ver. 13) **call on Him in whom they have not believed** (i. e. begun to believe: so ch. xiii. 11)? **But** (in an English version we are obliged to render these **but**s by **and**; and so of those which follow. In the original, they are not copulatives, but dis-junctives) **how can they believe (in Him) of whom they have not heard?** **But how can they hear without a preacher? But how can men preach unless they shall have been sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them who bring glad tidings of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!**—The Apostle is shewing the *necessity* and *dignity* of the preachers of the word, which leads on to the *universality* of their preaching, leaving all who disobey it without excuse. He therefore cites this, as shewing that their instrumentality was one recognized in the prophetic word, where their office is described and glorified.—The applicability of these words to the preachers of the Gospel is evident from the passage in Isaiah itself, which is spoken indeed of the return from captivity, but in that return has regard to amore glorious one under the future Redeemer. We need not therefore say that the Apostle uses Scripture words merely as expressing his own thoughts in a well-known garb; he alleges the words as a prophetic description of the preachers of whom he is writing.

16.] In this preaching of the Gospel some have been found obedient, others disobedient: and this was before announced by Isaiah. The persons here meant are as yet kept indefinite,—but evidently the Apostle has in his mind the unbelieving Jews, about whom his main discourse is employed.—**Howbeit not all hearkened to** (historic: during the preaching) **the glad tidings** (and this too was no unlooked—for thing, but predetermined in the divine counsel): **for Isaiah saith, Lord** (the word Lord is not in the Hebrew), **who [hath] believed the hearing of us** (i. e. as in our version, *our report*: but it is important in this passage to keep the word one and the same throughout, as it is in the original; otherwise we lose the force of the Apostle’s argument)?

17.) Faith then (conclusion from ver. 16, “*who believed our report?*”) **is from hearing** (i. e. the *publication* of the Gospel produces belief in it), **and the hearing** (the effect of the publication of the Gospel) **is through** (not, ‘in obedience to,’ but ‘by means of,’ as its instrument and vehicle) **the word of Christ** (such is the reading of our oldest authorities. ‘*God*’ has probably been a rationalizing correction, to suit better the sense of the prophecy).

18.] But (in anticipation of an objection that Israel, whom he has especially in view, *had not sufficiently heard* the good tidings), **I say, Did they not hear** (the “*hear*” of ver. 14 is carried on through verses 16 and 17 to this in ver. 18)? **Nay, verily** (ch. ix. 20, note), **Into all the earth went forth their voice, and to the ends of the world their words.**—Psal. xix. is a *comparison of the sun, and glory of the heavens, with the word of God*. As far as ver. 6 the glories of nature are described: then the great subject is taken up, and the parallelism carried out to the end. So that the Apostle has not, as alleged in nearly all the Commentators, merely accommodated the text allegorically, but *taken it in its context*, and followed up the comparison of the Psalm.—As to the assertion of the preaching of the Gospel having gone out into all the world, when as yet a small part of it only had been evangelized,—we must remember that it is not the *extent*, so much as the *universality in character*, of this preaching, which the Apostle is here asserting: that word of God, hitherto confined within the limits of Judea, had now broken those bounds, and was preached in all parts of the earth. See Col. i. 6, 23.

19.] But (in anticipation of another objection, that this universal evangelizing and admission of all, had at any rate *taken the Jews by surprise*,—that they had not been forewarned of any such purpose of God) **I say, Did Israel** (no emphasis on Israel—they are not *first here introduced*, nor have the preceding verses been said only of the Gentiles; but they have been during those verses in the Apostle's mind, and are now *named for distinctness' sake*, because it is not now a question of their having *heard*, which they did in common with all, but of their having *been aware* from their Scriptures of God's intention with regard to themselves and the Gentiles) **not know** (supply, not 'the Gospel,' "the hearing," as Chrysostom and others,—but, *the fact that such a general proclamation of the Gospel would be made* as has been mentioned in the last verse, raising up the Gentiles into equality and rivalry with themselves. Others supply variously, 'the truth of God,'—so as to have an advantage over the Gentiles: "the righteousness of God,"&c.)*—First (in the order of the prophetic roll; i.e. in their very earliest prophet. Tholuck observes, 'The Apostle has in his mind a whole series of prophetic sayings which he might adduce, but gives only a few instead of all, and would shew by the 'first,' that even in the earliest period the same complaint [of Israel's unbelief] is found") **Moses saith, I will provoke you** (the Hebrew and Septuagint have 'them') **to jealousy against (those who are) no nation** (the Gentiles, as opposed to *the people of God*), **against a nation that hath no understanding** (the spiritual fool of Ps. xiv. 1; lii. 1; Prov. xvii. 21) **will I provoke you**. The original reference of these words, as addressed to Israel by Moses, is exactly apposite to the Apostle's argument. Moses prophetically assumes the departure of Israel from God, and his rejection of them, and denounces from God that, as they had moved Him to jealousy with their 'no-gods' (idols) and provoked Him to anger by their vanities,—so He would, by receiving into his favour a 'no-nation,' make them jealous, and provoke them to anger by adopting instead of them a foolish nation.

20.] But (even more than this: there is stronger testimony yet) **Isaiah is very bold and saith** (i. e. as we say, 'dares to say,' 'ventures to speak thus plainly'), **I was found** (so the Septuagint, the Hebrew has 'I was sought: but apparently in the sense of Ezek. xiv. 3; xx. 3, 'enquired of:?' which amounts to *being found*) **by those who sought me not; I became manifest to those who asked not after me**. De Wette und other modern Commentators have maintained that Isa. lxv. 1 is spoken of the Jews, and not of the Gentiles; their main argument for this view being the connexion of ch. lxiv. and lxv. But even granting this connexion, it does not follow that God is not speaking in reproach to Israel in ch. lxv. 1, and reminding them prophetically, that while they, His own rebellious people, provoke Him to anger, the Gentiles which never sought Him have found Him. 'The nation which was not called by my Name,' in lxv. 1, can only primarily mean the Gentiles.

21.] But in regard of (not, as A.V. 'co,' but 'with regard to.' The words are not an *address*) **Israel** (evidently emphatic;—the former words having been said of the Gentiles) **he saith** (Isa. lxv. 2), **All the day I stretched forth my hands** (the attitude of gracious invitation) **to a people disobedient and gainsaying** (rebellious; the same word occurs Deut. xxi. 18).

Romans: Chapter 11

CHAP. XI. 1–10.] Yet God has not cast off His people, but there is a remnant according to the election of grace (1–6),—the rest being hardened (7–10).

1.] I say then (a false inference from ch. x. 19–21,—made in order to be refuted), **Did** (meaning, It cannot surely be, that **God cast off His people** (as woUld almost appear from the severe words just adduced)? **It is not so (God forbid). For I also am an Israelite** (see Phil. iii. 5), **of the seed of Abraham** (mentioned probably for solemnity's sake, as bringing to mind all the promises made to Abraham), **of the tribe of Benjamin** (so Phil. iii. 5).—There is some question with *what intent* the Apostle here brings forward *himself*. Three answers are open to us: either (1) it is as *a case in point*, as an example of an Israelite who has *not been rejected*, but *is still one of God's people*: so almost all the Commentators—but this is hardly probable,—for in this case (a) he would not surely bring one only example to prove his point, when thousands might have been alleged,— (4) it would be hardly consistent with the humble mind of St. Paul to put himself alone in such a place,—and (c) "*God forbid*" does not go simply to *deny* a hypothetical *fact*, but: applies to *some deprecated consequence* of that which is hypothetically put:—or (2) he implies, '*How can I say such a thing, who am myself an Israelite?*'&c.? 'Does not my very nationality furnish a security against my entertaining such an idea—or (3) which I believe to be the right view, but which I have found only in the recent commentary of Mr. Ewbank,—as implying that if such a hypothesis were to be conceded, it would exclude from God's kingdom the *writer himself, as an Israelite*. This seems better to agree with "*God forbid*," as deprecating the *consequence* of such an asser-tion.—But a question even more important arises, not unconnected with that, just discussed: viz. **who are His people?** In order for the sentence to bear the meaning just assigned to it, it is obvious that **His people** must mean the people of God *nationally* considered. If Paul deprecated such a proposition as the rejection of *God's people*, because he himself would thus be *as an Israelite cut off from God's favour*, the rejection assumed in the hypothesis must be a *national rejection*. It is against *this* that he puts in his strong protest. It is *this* which he disproves by a cogent historical parallel from Scripture, shewing that there is a remnant even at the present time according to the election of grace: and not only so, but that that part of Israel (considered as having continuity of national existence) which is for a time hardened, shall ultimately come in, and so all Israel (nationally considered again, Israel *as a nation*) shall be saved. Thus the covenant of God with Israel, having been *national*, shall ultimately be fulfilled to them *as a nation*: not by the gathering in merely of *individual* Jews, or of

all the Jews individually, into the Christian Church,—but by the national restoration of the Jews, not in unbelief, but as a Christian believing nation, to all that can, under the gospel, represent their ancient pre-eminence, and to the fulness of those promises which have never yet in their plain sense been accomplished to them. I have entered on this matter here, because a clear understanding of it underlies all intelligent appreciation of the argument of the chapter. Those who hold *no national restoration of the Jews to pre-eminence*, must necessarily confound *the present remnant according to the election of grace*, with the remainder, who nationally shall be grafted in again. See this more fully illustrated where that image occurs, ver. 17 ff.

2.] God did not cast away his people which he foreknew (i. e. ‘which, in His own eternal decree before the world, He selected as the chosen nation, to be His own, the depositary of His law, the vehicle of the theocracy, from its first revelation to Moses, to its completion in Christ’s future kingdom.’ It is plain that this must here be the sense, and that the words must not be limited, with Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, and Calvin, to the elect Christian people of God from among the Jews, with Paul as their representative: see on ver. 1. On this explanation, the question of ver 1 would be *self-contradictory*, and this negation a *truism*. It would be inconceivable, that God should cast off His elect).—**Or** (see ch. ix. 21—introduces a new objection to the matter impugned. This particle cannot well be introduced here in an English version) **know ye not what the Scripture saith in [the history of] Elijah** (better thus than ‘with regard to, or ‘of Elias, A.V.)? **how he pleads with** (see ch. viii. 26) **God against Israel, &c.**—The citation is a free one from the Septuagint.—The altars, as De Wette observes, were those on the high places, dedicated to God.

4.] But what saith the divine response to him? I have left to myself (here the Apostle corrects a mistake of the Septuagint, who have for “I have left,” “thou shalt leave: and he has added “to myself,” a simple and obvious filling up of the sense) seven thousand men. **who** (the sense of the saying, as far as regards the present purpose, is to shew that *all these were faithful men*; in the original text and Septuagint (see also the English version), it is implied that *these were all the* faithful men. But this was not necessary to be brought out here) **never bowed knee to Baal.**

5.] Thus then (analogical inference from the example just cited) **in the present time also** (or, even in the present time, viz. of Israel’s national rejection) **there is a remnant** (literally, there has become a remnant: a part has remained faithful, which thus has become a remnant) **according to** (in virtue of,—in pursuance of) **the election** (selection, choice of a few out of many) **of grace** (made not for their desert, nor their foreseen congruity, but of God’s free unmerited favour).

6.] ‘And let us remember, when we say an election of grace, how much those words imply: viz. nothing short of the entire exclusion of all human work from the question. Let these two terms be regarded as, and kept, distinct from one another, and do not let us attempt to mix them, and so destroy the meaning of each.’ So that the meaning of the verse is to clear up and remove all doubt concerning the meaning of ‘election of grace,’—and to profess on the part of the Apostle perfect readiness to accept his own words in their full sense, and to abide by them.—The clause enclosed in brackets does not exist in most of our ancient MSS. and versions: it exists in the oldest of all, the Vatican MS., and in the Syriac, which is the oldest of the versions. The object being precision, it is much more probable that the Apostle should have written both clauses in their present formal parallelism, and that the second should have been early omitted from its seeming superfluity, than that it should have been inserted from the margin. Besides which, the words do not correspond sufficiently with those of the first clause to warrant the supposition of their having been constructed to tally with it.—**But** (directing attention to the consequence of the admission, *the election of grace if by grace* (the selection has been made), **it is no longer** (when we have conceded that, we have excluded its being) **of** (arising out: of, as its source) **works: for** (in that case) grace no longer becometh (literally, i.e. becomes no longer—loses its efficacy and character as) grace (the freedom and spontaneous character, absolutely necessary to the idea of grace, are lost, the act having been prompted from without):—**but if of** (arising out of, as the cause and source of the selection) **works, no longer**

is it (the act of selection) **grace: for (in that case) work no longer is work** (the essence of work, in our present argument, being ‘that which earns reward,’ and the reward being, as supposed, the election to be of the remnant,—if so earned, there can be no admixture of divine favour in the matter; it must be *all earned, or none:*

none conferred by free grace, or all). These cautions of the Apostle are decisive against all attempts at compromise between the two great antagonist hypotheses, of salvation by God’s free grace, and salvation by man’s meritorious works. The two cannot be combined without destroying the plain meaning of words.—If now the Apostle’s object in this verse be to guard carefully the doctrine of election by free grace from any attempt at an admixture of man’s work, why is he anxious to do this just at this point? I conceive, because he is immediately about to enter on a course of exposition of the divine dealings, in which, more than ever before, he rests all upon God’s sovereign purpose, while at the same time he shews that purpose, though apparently severe, to be one, on the whole, of grace and love.

7.] What then (what therefore must be our conclusion from what has been stated? We have seen that God hath not cast off his own chosen nation, but that even now there is a remnant. This being so, what aspect do matters present? This he asks to bring out an answer which may set in view the rest who were hardened)? **That which Israel is in search of** (viz. righteousness, see ch. ix. 31; x. 1 ff.), **this it** (as a nation) **found not, but the election** (the abstract, because Israel has been spoken of in the

abstract, and to keep out of view for the present the mere individual cases of converted Jews in the idea of an *elected remnant*) found it;

8.] but the rest were hardened (not ‘blinded.’ This meaning, frequently given to the word here occurring in the original, is now generally acknowledged to be a mistake. **Were hardened** is passive, and implies *God as the agent*), according as it is written (if we are to regard these passages as merely *analogous instances* of the divine dealings, we must remember that the perspective of prophecy, in stating such cases, *embraces all analogous ones*, the divine dealings being self-consistent,—and especially that great one, in which the words are most prominently fulfilled),—**God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear; unto this present day.**—These last words are not, as in A.V., to be separated from the citation, and joined to “were hardened.” they belong to the words in Deuteronomy, and are adduced by St. Paul as applying to the day then present, as they did to the when Moses spoke them: see 2 Cor. 15.

9.] And David saith, Let their table be made a snare and a trap (or, **net**: the word more usually signifies ‘a hunt,’ or the act of taking or catching,—but here a *net*, the instrument of capture. It is not in the Hebrew nor in the Septuagint, and is perhaps inserted by the Apostle to give emphasis by the accumulation of synonymes), **and a stumblingblock, and a recompence to them:**

10.] let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and their back bow thou down always. (“Instead of bending the back, the Hebrew text speaks of *making the loins to tremble*. This elsewhere is a sign of great terror, Nah. ii. 10; Dan. v. 6: and the *darkening of the eyes* betokens in the Psalm, a weakened, humbled, servile condition, just, as in Deut. xxviii. 65–67. It is plain from the word *always*, that we must not suppose the infirmities of age to be meant. The Apostle might well apply such a description to the servile condition of the bondmen of the law, see Gal. iv. 24.” Tholuck.)

11–24.] Yet this exclusion and hardening has not been for their destruction, but for mercy to the Gentiles, and eventually for their own restoration.

11.] I say then (see on ver. 1), **Did they** (who? see below) **stumble in order that they should fall** (not, “so that they fell,” as Origen, Chrysostom, and others, denoting the *result* merely: neither the grammar nor the context will bear this: the Apostle is arguing respecting *God’s intent* in the *trespass* of the Jewish nation. He here calls it by this mild name, to set forth that it is not final. The *persons who stumbled* are those who are designated by “they” in the following verses, i.e. the *Jews as a people*: not the *unbelieving individuals*, who are characterized as “they which fell,” ver. 22. He regards the “rest” as the representatives of the Jewish people, who have *nationally stumbled*, but not *in order to their final fall*, seeing that God has a gracious purpose towards the Gentiles even in this “stumbling” of theirs, and intends to raise *them nationally from it* in the end. This distinction, between the *stumblers, the whole nation as a nation*, and the *fallen, the unbelieving branches who have been cut off*, is most important to the right understanding of the chapter, and to the keeping in mind the separate ideas, of the *restoration of individuals* here and there throughout time, and the *restoration of Israel* at the end.—The stress here is on the word **fall**, and it is the *fall* which is denied: not on the words “*in order that*,” so that the *purpose* merely should be denied, and the fall admitted)? **God forbid: but** (the truer account of the matter is) **by their trespass** (not *fall*, as E. V.) **salvation [is come] to the Gentiles, for to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy.**—Two gracious purposes of God are here stated, the latter wrought out through the former. By this stumble of the Jews out of their national place in God’s favour, and the admission of the Gentiles into it, the very people thus excluded are to be stirred up to set themselves in the end effectually to regain, as a nation, that preeminence from which they are now degraded.

12.] Then the Apostle argues on this, as Meyer well says, “from the

prosperous effect of a worse cause, to the more prosperous effect of a better cause.”—**But** (‘taking for granted, that’—as in last verse—taking for granted the historical fact, that the stumble of the Jews has been coincident with the admission of the Gentiles) **if their trespass is the riches of the world** (the *occasion* of that wealth,—the wealth itself being the participation in the unsearchable riches of Christ), **and** (this latter clause parallel to and explanatory of the less plainly expressed one before it) **their diminishing, the riches of the Gentiles, how much more (shall) their fulness (be all this)?**—On the words here used, **diminishing** and **fulness**, much question has been raised. I have taken both as answering strictly to the comparison here before the Apostle’s mind, viz. that of impoverishing and enriching, the possessives **their**, and **of the world, of the Gentiles**, as *subjective*: ‘*if their impoverishment be the wealth of the Gentiles, how much more shall their enrichment be!*’—But several other interpretations are possible. (1) **Diminishing** may mean, as in 1 Cor. vi. 7, *degradation*, and **fulness** would then be *re-exaltation* to the former measure of favour,—or perhaps ‘*their completion*,’ ‘*their highest degree of favour*.’ (2) If we regard the meaning of “*fulness*” in ver. 25, we shall be tempted here to understand it ‘*full number*,’ and **similarly diminishing**, ‘*small number*.’ So the majority of Commentators. Thus the argument will stand: ‘If their unbelief (i. e. of one part of them) is the world’s wealth, and their small number (i. e. of believers, the other part of them), the Wealth of the Gentiles, how much more their full (restored) number!’ i.e. as Olshansen explains it, ‘If so few Jews can do so much for the Gentile world, what will not the whole number do?’ But thus we shall lose the argument, from the less to the greater,—‘*if their sin has done so much, how much more their conversion?*’ unless indeed it be said that reduction of numbers *implies* a national trespass. Besides, it can

hardly be shewn that the original word rendered **diminishing** will bear this meaning of ‘a small number.’ (3) Tholuck, from whom mostly this note is taken, notices at length the view of Olshausen, after Origen, that the idea of a *definite number of the elect* is here in the Apostle’s mind,—that the falling off of the Jews produces a deficiency in the number, which is filled up by the elect from the Gentiles, as ver. 25: understanding by **fulness** both there and here, if I take his meaning aright, the *number required to fill up the roll of the elect*, whether of Jews, as here, or Gentiles, as there. Tholuck, while he concedes the legitimacy of the *idea of a fulness of the elect*, maintains, and rightly, that in this section *no such idea is brought*

forward: and that it would not have been intended, without *some more definite expression of it than we now find.*—I have thought it best, as above, considering the very various meanings and difficulty of the word **fulness**, to keep here to that which seems to be indicated by the immediate context, which is, besides, the primitive meaning of the word.—It must be noticed, that the fact, of *Israel being the chosen people of God*, lies at the root of all this argument. Israel is *the nation*, the covenant people,—the vehicle of God’s gracious purposes to mankind. Israel, nationally, is deposed from present favour. That very deposition is, however, accompanied by an outpouring of God’s riches of mercy on the Gentiles; not as rivals to Israel, but *still considered as further from God, formally and nationally, than Israel.* If then the *disgrace of Israel* has had such a blessed accompaniment, how much more blessed a one shall *Israel’s honour* bring with it, when His own people shall once more be set as a praise in the midst of the earth, and the glory of the nation.

13.] ‘Why, in an argument concerning the *Jews*, dwell so much on the reference to the *Gentiles* discernible in the divine economy regarding Israel? Why make it appear as if the treatment of God’s chosen people were regulated not by a consideration of *them*, but of the less favoured Gentiles?’ The present verse gives an answer to this question.—**But** (such, and not “*for*,” is the reading of our most ancient MSS. and versions. The disjunctive conjunction introduces an apology for the foregoing verse: i.e. “in thus speaking, let it be understood that”...) **I am speaking to you (the) Gentiles: inasmuch therefore** (this word, which is not in the received text, is read by our oldest MSS.) **as I am [the] Apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify mine office** (by striving for their conversion and edification at all times,—by introducing a reference to them and their part in the divine counsels, even when speaking of mine own people), **if by any means I may** (regarding it as a real service done on behalf of Israel, thus to honour mine office by mentioning the Gentiles, if this mention may) **provoke to jealousy mine own flesh (the Jews), and may save some of them.**

15.] **For** (a reason for my anxiety for the salvation of Israel: not merely for the sake of mine own kinsmen, but because their recovery will bring about the blessed consummation of all believers. Verses 13, 14 should not then be in a parenthesis, as sometimes printed) **if the rejection of them** (not ‘*their loss*,’ as Luther and others, by which the antithesis to what follows is weakened) **be** (the occasion of) **the reconciliation of the world** (of the Gentiles, viz. to God), **what** (‘*of what, kind,’ in its effect)* **will be the receiving of them, but** (the occasion of) **life from the dead?**—**Life from the dead** may be variously taken. (1) It may be metaphorical, as in ch. vi. 13, and may import, that so general a conversion of the world would take place, as would be like life from the dead. So, more or less, many Commentators, who explain it of a joy like that of the resurrection. But against this interpretation lies the objection, that *this is already involved in the reconciling of the world*, and thus no new idea would be brought out by the words, which stand in the most emphatic position. (2) It may mean that ‘*life from the dead*’ *literally* should follow on the restoration of the Jewish people; i.e. that the Resurrection, the great consummation, is bound up with it. So Chrysostom, Origen (who says, “Then will take place the receiving of, Israel, when the dead also shall receive life, and the world from corruptible shall be made incorruptible, and mortals shall be endowed with immortality”), and many others. The objection to this view seems to be, that the Apostle would hardly have used **life from the dead** thus predicatively, if he had meant by it a fixed and predetermined *event*;—but that, standing as it does, it must be *qualitative*, implying *some further blessed state* of the reconciled world, over and above the mere reconciliation. This might well be designated ‘*life from the dead*,’ and in it may be *implied* the glories of the first resurrection, and deliverance from the bondage of corruption, without supposing the words **life from the dead** to be equivalent to *the resurrection of the dead*.—Stuart well compares Ezek. xxxvii. 1–14, which was perhaps before the mind of the Apostle.

16–24.] *Such a restoration of Israel was to be expected from a consideration of their destination and history. This is set forth in similitudes, that of the root and branches being followed out at some length,—and their own position, as engrafted Gentiles, brought to the mind of the readers.*—**Moreover** (a further argument for their restoration, following on ver. 11) **if the firstfruit be holy, so also is the lump** (not here the firstfruit of the *field*, as some have understood it, nor does **the lump** mean the cake made by the priests out of the firstfruits which fell to them, Deut. xviii. 4;—but the portion of the kneaded lump of dough, which was offered as a heave-offering to the Lord, and so sanctified for use the rest: see the reference where the same words occur):—**and if the root be holy, so also are the branches.**—**Who are the firstfruit and the root?** First of all, there is no impropriety in the two words applying to the *same thing*. For though, the branches being *evolved from the root*, it rather answers to the *lump* than to the *firstfruit*, and though the firstfruit succeeds the lump in time, while the root precedes the branches,—*yet the holiness is the point of comparison*, and in *holiness* the *firstfruit* precedes and gives existence to the *lump*. This being so, (1) the *firstfruit* and *root* have generally been taken to represent the *patriarchs*; and I believe rightly (except that perhaps it would be more strict correct to say, *Abraham himself*). The words, “*beloved for the fathers’ sake*,” in ver. 28, place this reference almost beyond doubt. Origen explains the *root* to be *our Lord*. But He is Himself a *branch*, by descent from Abraham and David (Isa. xi. 1; Matt. i. 1), if genealogically considered; and if mystically, *the whole tree* (John xv. 1). De

Wette prefers to take as the firstfruit and root, the *ideal theocracy* founded on the patriarchs,—the *true, faithful children* of the patriarchs, and as the branches, those united by mere external relationship to these others. This he does, because in the *common acceptation*, the *branches* who are cut off ought to be severed *from their physical connexion* with Abraham, &c., which they *are not*. This objection I do not conceive applicable here: because, as we see evidently from ver. 23, the severing and re-engrafting are types, not of *genealogical* disunion and reunion, but of *spiritual*. Meanwhile, this view appears less simple than the ordinary one, which, as I hope to shew, is borne out by the whole passage. (2) Then, *who are indicated by the lump*

and the branches? ISRAEL, considered as the people of God. The lump, which has received its *holiness* from the *firstfruit*, is Israel, beloved for the father's sakes: the assemblage of branches, evolved from Abraham, and partaking of his holiness. But one thing must be especially borne in mind. As Abraham himself had an outer and an inner life, so have the branches. They have an *outer life*, derived from Abraham by *physical descent*. Of this, *no cutting off can deprive them*. It may be compared to the very organization of the wood itself, which subsists even after its separation from the tree. But they have, while they remain in the tree, an *inner life*, nourished by the circulating sap, by virtue of which they are constituted *living parts* of the tree: see our Lord's parable of the vine and the branches, John xv. 1 ff. It is of *this life*, that their severance from the tree deprives them: it is *this life*, which they will *re-acquire*, if grafted in again.—The *holiness* then here spoken of, consists in their *dedication to God as a people*—in their being *physically evolved from a holy root*. This peculiar *holiness* (see 1 Cor. vii. 14, where the children of one Christian parent are similarly called *holy*) renders their *restoration to their own stock* a matter, not of wonder and difficulty, but of reasonable hope and probability.—I notice in passing, that those expositors who do not hold a restoration of the Jewish people to national preeminence, find this passage exceedingly in their way, if we may judge by their explanations of this *holiness*. E.g. Mr. Ewbank remarks: ‘Holy they are, inasmuch as there is *no decree against their restoration to their place of life and fruitfulness*.’ Surely this is a new meaning of ‘*holy*;’ the same would be true of a Hottentot: in his case, too, there is no decree against his reception into a place (and in Mr. E.’s view, the restoration of the Jew is nothing more) of life and fruitfulness in the Church of God.

17.] But (introduces a hypothesis involving a seeming inconsistency with the *holiness* just mentioned) **if some of the branches** (the word **some** depreciates the number, in order to check the Gentile pride) **were broken out** (so literally: broken off from the tree), **and thou** (a Gentile believer), **being a wild olive** (i. e. a sprout or branch of a wild olive), **wast grafted in** (there is an apparent difficulty here: that the Apostle reverses the natural process in grafting. It is the *wilding*, in practice, which is the *stock*, and the graft inserted is a sprout of the *better tree*. I believe that he *does not here regard* what is the fact in nature: but makes a supposition perfectly legitimate,—that a wilding graft, on being inserted into a good tree, thereby becomes partaker of its qualities. No allusion can be intended to a practice mentioned by Columella, of inserting a wilding graft into a good tree to increase the vigour and growth of the tree: for this would completely stultify the illustration—the point of which is, a benefit *received* by the wilding from the tree, not one *conferred* by the wilding on it) **among them** (i. e. among the branches: or perhaps **them** may imply the *remnants* of the branches broken off), **and wast made a partaker of the root** (most of our oldest MSS. omit the word “*and*,” here found in the revised text) **of the fatness** (of that root, on union with which all the development of life and its fertility depend: which is the source of the fatness. With “*and*,” it will mean, of the source of life, and also of the development of that life itself in all richness of blessing) **of the olive tree**;

18.] boast not against the branches (which were broken off). **But if thou boastest against them** (know that..., or let this consideration humble thee, that... Similarly 1 Cor. xi. 16, “*But if any man seemeth to be contentious,... we have no such custom*”), **it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee.**—The ground of humiliation is—“‘Thou partakest of thy blessings solely by union with God’s spiritual church, which church has for its root that Father of the faithful,

from whom they are descended. Regard them not therefore with scorn.’” This is expanded further in ver. 20.

19.] Thou wilt then (it being supposed that thou boastest, and defendest it) **say, The branches** (viz. which were broken off—not the whole branches) **were broken off, that I** (emphatic) **might be grafted in.**

20.] Well (the fact, involving even the *purpose*, assumed by the previous speaker, is conceded. The *prompting cause* of their excision, their disbelief, is distinct from the *divine purpose* of their excision, the admission of the Gentiles, and belongs to a different side of the subject);—**because of their unbelief** (or perhaps, ‘*through unbelief*,’ abstract) **they were broken off, but thou by thy faith standest** (in thy place in the tree, opposed to *being broken off*. Tholuek prefers the sense of *standing* and *falling* in ch. xiv. 4, and certainly the adoption of the word “*fell*” ver. 22, seems to shew that the figurative diction is not strictly preserved).—**Be not high-minded, but fear:**

21.] for if God spared not the natural branches (the branches which grew according to natural development, and were not engrafted), **[take heed]** (there is no word representing “*take heed*” in the original. We may supply ‘I fear,’ or ‘it is to be feared, or simply ‘fear’) **lest He spare not THEE** also.

22.] The caution of the preceding: verse is unfolded into a setting before the Gentile of the true state of the matter.—**Behold**

therefore (i. e. assuming that thou enterest into the feeling prompted by the last verse) **the goodness and the severity of God:—towards those who fell** (see on ver. 11.—Here they who fell are opposed to the person addressed, the figure being for the moment dropped: for the expression “*who fell*” can hardly be used of the *branches*, but of *men*), **severity; but toward thee, God’s** (this genitive, omitted in the received text, is found in all our oldest MSS. The repetition is quite in the manner of the Apostle: see 1 Cor. i. 24, 25) **goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; for** (we supply, **otherwise**: i.e. assuming that thou dost *not* continue in that goodness) **thou also shalt be cut off.**

23.] And they moreover, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. (Some represent this last clause as implying, that God’s power to graft them in again has always been the same, but has waited for their change of mind, to act. ‘But surely the other interpretation is far better, viz. that the Apostle obscurely includes in the term “grafting in,” the removal of their unbelief and the awakening of faith, and this last especially he looks for from above:’—for the *power* of God would not be put forward, if the other were the meaning.)

24.] For (proof that, besides God’s undoubted power to re-engage them, the idea of their being so re-engrafted is not an unreasonable one) **if THOU wast cut off from the olive tree which is by nature wild, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?** It is a question, as Tholuck remarks, whether **by nature** and **contrary to nature** denote merely *growth in the natural manner and growth* (by engraving) *in an unnatural* (i. e. artificial) *manner*,—or that the *wild* is the *nature of the Gentile*, and the *good olive that of the Jew*, so that the sense would be—‘If thou wert cut out of the wild olive which is thine naturally, and wert engrafted contrary to (thy) nature into the good olive, how much more shall these, the natural branches,’ &c. But then the latter part of the sentence does not correspond with the former. We should then expect it to stand, ‘How much more these, who shall, agreeably to (their) nature, be grafted, &c. Tholuck describes the question as being between a comparison of *engrafting* and *not engraving*, and one of engraving the *congruous* and the *incongruous*: and, on the above ground, decides in favour of the former,—**by nature** signifying merely *natural growth, contrary to nature, unnatural growth*, i.e. the growth of the *grafted scion*. But however this may fit the *former* part of the sentence, it surely cannot satisfy the requirements of the *latter*, where the *natural branches* are described as being *engrafted* (which would be in this view *contrary to nature*) *into their own olive tree*. We must at least assume a mixture of the two meanings, the antithesis of *by nature* and *contrary to nature*, being rather verbal than logical,—as is so common in the writings of the Apostle. Thus in the former case, that of the Gentile, the fact of *natural growth* is set against that of *engrafted growth*: whereas in the latter, the fact of *congruity of nature (their own olive tree)* is set against *incongruity*,—as making the re-engrafting more probable.

25–32.] Prophetic announcement that this re-engrafting SHALL ACTUALLY TAKE PLACE (25–27), and explanatory justification of this divine arrangement (28–32).

25.] For (I do not rest this on mere hope or probability, but have direct revelation of the Holy Spirit as to its certainty) **I would not have you ignorant, brethren** (an expression used by the Apostle to announce, either as here some authoritative declaration of divine truth, or some facts in his own history not previously known to his readers), **of this mystery** (the meanings included in the word **mystery** may be thus classified: (1) *such matters of fact as are inaccessible to reason, and can only be known through revelation*: (2) *such matters as are patent facts, but the process of which cannot be entirely taken in by the reason*. We may add a third sense,—that, which is no mystery *in itself*, but *by its figurative import*. Of the first, we may cite ch. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7–10; Eph. i. 9; iii. 4; vi. 19; Col. i. 26, as examples: of the second, 1 Cor. xiv. 2; xiii. 2; Eph. v. 32; 1 Tim. iii. 9, 16: of the third, Matt. xiii. 11; Rev. i. 20; xvii. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 7.—The first meaning is evidently that in our text:—‘a prophetic event, unattainable by human knowledge, but revealed from the secrets of God’), **lest ye should be wise in your own conceits** (that ye do not take to yourselves the credit for wisdom superior to that of the Jews, in having acknowledged and accepted Jesus as the Son of God,—seeing that ye merely have received mercy through their unbelief, ver. 30),—**that hardening** (not ‘blindness,’ see above on ver. 7, and Eph. iv. 18, note) **is come upon Israel in part** (i. e. a *portion* of Israel have been hardened), **until** (this until has been variously understood by those who wish to escape from the prophetic assertion of the restoration of Israel. So Calvin says, “*until*” has no reference to progress or order of *time*, but rather means *in order that* the fulness of the Gentiles may come in. Others interpret it, “*while the fulness... shall come in:*” but all these are mere evasions) **the fulness (completion) of the Gentiles** (shall have) **come in** (to the Church or Kingdom of God, where we, the Apostle and those whom he addresses, are already: as we use the word ‘*come in*,’ with reference to the place in which we are. Or the word may be used absolutely, as it seems to be in Luke xi. 52, of *entering into the Kingdom of God*).—In order to understand **the fulness of the Gentiles**, we must bear in mind the character of the Apostle’s present argument. He is dealing with *nations*: with the Gentile nations, and the Jewish nation. And thus dealing, he speaks of *the fullness of the Gentiles* coming in, and *of all Israel* being saved: having *no regard* for the time to the *individual destinies* of Gentiles or Jews, but regarding nations as each included under the common bond of consanguinity according to the flesh. The **fulness of the Gentiles** I would regard then as signifying ‘*the full number, the totality,*’ of the nations, i.e. *every nation under heaven*, the prophetic subjects (Matt. xxiv. 14) of the preaching of the gospel. The idea of an *elect number*, however true in, itself, does not seem to belong to this passage.

26.] And thus (when this condition shall have been fulfilled) all Israel shall be saved (*Israel as a nation*, see above: not

individuals,—nor is there the slightest ground for the notion. This prophecy has been very variously regarded. Origen, understanding by the all Israel which shall be saved, the *elected remnant*, yet afterwards appears to find in the passage his notion of the final purification of all men,—of the believing, by the word and doctrine: of the unbelieving, by purgatorial fire—Chrysostom gives no explanation: but on our Lord's words in Matt. xvii. 11, he says, “When He says that Elias shall come and restore all things, He speaks of Elias himself, and of the conversion of the Jews which shall then take place,”—and shortly after calls him *the Forerunner of the Lord's second coming*. Similarly Theodore and Gregory of Nyssa; so also Augustine, saying, “That in the last times, before the judgment, the Jews (by means of Elias who shall expound the law to them) shall believe in Christ, is a thing much asserted in the sayings and hearts of the faithful.” Similarly most of the fathers and schoolmen. Jerome, however, on Isa. xi. 11, says, “By no means, as our Judaizers say, shall all Israel be saved at the end of the world when the fulness of the nations shall have come in; but we understand all this of the first advent.” Grotius and Wetstein believe it to have been fulfilled after the destruction of Jerusalem, when, as Eusebius relates, thousands of the circumcision became believers in Christ. But Tholuck has shewn that neither could the number of Gentiles received into the Church before that time have answered to the *fulness of the Gentiles*, nor those Jews to *all Israel*, which expression accordingly Grotius endeavours to explain by a Rabbinical formula, that “all Israel have a part in the Messiah;” and this saying he supposes the Apostle to have used in a spiritual sense, meaning the Israel of God, as Gal. vi. 16.—The Reformers for the most part, in their zeal to impugn the millenarian superstitions then current, denied the future general conversion of the Jews, and would not recognize it even in this passage:—Luther *did so recognize it*, at one time, but towards the end of his life spoke most characteristically and strongly of what he conceived to be the impossibility of such national conversion.—Calvin says: “Many understand this of the Jewish people, as if Paul said that they should be restored to religion as before; but I extend the name of Israel to all the people of God, in this sense, when the Gentiles shall have entered in, the Jews also from their defection shall betake themselves to the obedience of the faith, and thus will be completed the salvation of all the Israel of God, which must be compounded of both: but so that the Jews shall have the prior place as being the firstborn in the family of God.” Bengel and Olshausen interpret *all Israel* of the *elect believers of Israel*:—Beza, Tholuck, and many others, hold that the words refer, as I have explained them above, to a national restoration of Israel to God's favour.—I have not mixed with the consideration of this prophecy the question of the restoration of the Jews to *Palestine*, as being clearly irrelevant to it: the matter here treated being, *their reception into the Church of God*:

as it is written] This quotation appears to have for its object to shew that the Redeemer was to come *for the behoof of God's own chosen people*.—For **out of Sion**, the Septuagint have ‘*for the sake of Sion*,’ the A.V. ‘*to Zion*.’ The Apostle frequently varies from the Septuagint, and a sufficient reason can generally be assigned for the variation: here, though this reason is not apparent, we cannot doubt that such existed, for the Septuagint version would surely have suited his purpose even better than “*out of*,” had there been no objection to it. It may be that the whole citation is intended to express the sense of prophecy rather than the wording of any particular passage, and that the Apostle has, in the words “*out of Sion*,” summed up the prophecies which declare that the Redeemer should *spring out of Israel*. The Hebrew and A.V. have, ‘*and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob.*’

27. when I take away] from another place in Isa. (ref.),—hardly from Jer. xxxi. 34, as Stuart thinks;—and also containing a general reference to the character of God's new covenant with them, rather than a strict reproduction of the original meaning: of any particular words of the prophet. “How came the Apostle, if he wished only to express the general thought, that the Messiah was come for Israel, to choose just this citation, consisting of two combined passages, when the same is expressed more directly in other passages of the Old Testament? I believe that the term ‘*shall come?*’ gave occasion for the quotation: if he did not refer this directly to the second coming of the Messiah, yet it allowed of being indirectly applied to it.” Tholuck.

28.] With regard indeed to the gospel (i. e. ‘viewed from the gospel-side,’)—looked on as we must look on them if we confine our view solely to the principles and character of the Gospel), **they** (the Jewish people considered as a whole) **are enemies** (i. e. hated by God, i.e. in a state of exclusion from God's favour) **for your sakes: but with regard to the election** (viz. of Israel to be God's people, see verses 1, 2—not that of Christians:—i. e. ‘looked on as God's elect people’), **they are beloved for the fathers' sakes** (i. e. not *for the merits* of the fathers, but because of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so often referred to by God as a cause for His favourable remembrance of Israel).

29.] For (explanation how God's favour regards them still, though for the present cast off) **the gifts** (generally) **and calling** (as the most excellent of those gifts. That calling seems to be intended, by which God adopted the posterity Abraham into covenant. A very similar sentiment is found ch. iii. 3, where the same is called “*the faithfulness of God*.” But the words are true not only of this calling, but of every other. Bengel says, ‘**gifts**, toward the Jews: **calling**, toward the Gentiles.’ But thus the point of the argument seems to be lost, which is, that the Jews being once chosen as God's people, will never be entirely cast off) **of God cannot be repented of** (i. e. are irretactable: do not admit of a change of purpose. The E.V., ‘*without repentance*,’ is likely to mislead. Compare Hosea xiii. 14).

30.] For (illustration of the above position) **as ye in times past were disobedient to God** (nationally—as Gentiles, before the Gospel), **but now by** (as the occasion; the breaking off of the natural branches giving opportunity for the grafting in of you) **the disobedience of these** (i. e. unbelief, considered as an act of resistance to the divine will: see 1 John iii. 23), **have**

obtained mercy (viz. by admission into the church of God) : even so have these also now (under the Gospel) been **disobedient** (are now in a state of unbelieving disobedience), **that by the mercy shewn to you** (viz. on occasion of the fulness of the Gentiles coming in) **they also may obtain mercy.**

32.] For (foundation of the last stated arrangement in the divine purposes) **God shut up** (the indefinite past tense, which should be kept in the rendering, refers to the time of the act in the divine procedure) **all men in disobedience** (general here,—every form, unbelief included), **that He may have mercy on all.**—No mere *permissive* act of God must here be understood. The Apostle is speaking of the divine arrangement, by which the guilt of sin and the mercy of God were to be made manifest. He treats it, as elsewhere (see ch. ix. 18 and note), entirely with reference to the *act of God*, taking no account, for the time, of human agency; which, however, when treating of us and our responsibilities, he brings out into as prominent a position: see as the most eminent example of this, the closely following ch. xii 1, 2—But there remains some question, *who are the all men of both clauses?* Are they *the same?* And if so, *is any support given to the notion of a general restoration of all men?* Certainly they are identical: and signify *all men*, without limitation. But the ultimate difference between the *all men* who are shut up under disobedience, and the *all men* upon whom mercy is shewn is, that by all men *this mercy is not accepted*, and so men become *self-excluded* from the salvation of God. GOD's ACT remains the same, equally gracious, equally universal, whether men accept His mercy or not. This contingency is *here not in view*: but simply God's *act itself*.—We can hardly understand the **all men nationally**.

The marked universality of the expression recalls the beginning of the Epistle, and makes it a solemn conclusion to the argumentative portion, after which the Apostle, overpowered with the view of the divine Mercy and Wisdom, breaks forth into the sublimest apostrophe existing even in the pages of Inspiration itself.

33–36.] Admiration of the goodness and wisdom of God, and humble ascription of praise to Him.

33.] There is some doubt whether the words **wisdom** and **knowledge** are genitives *after riches*, as in A.V., or *parallel with* it, as in the Revised Text. See the matter discussed in full in my Greek Test.; where Larrive at the conclusion that the three genitives are all co-ordinate: the first denoting the **riches of the divine goodness**, in the whole, and in the result just arrived at, ver. 32: the second, the divine **wisdom** of proceeding in the apparently intricate vicissitudes of nations and individuals: the third (if a distinction be necessary, which can hardly be doubted) the divine **knowledge** of all things from the beginning,—God's comprehension of the end and means together in one unfathomable depth of Omniscience.—**How unsearchable are His judgments** (the determinations of His wisdom, regarded as in the divine Mind. Some however deny this meaning, and render the word *decrees*, referring it to the blinding of the Jews), **and His ways unable to be traced out** (His methods of proceeding!).

34.] For (confirmation of what is said in the preceding verse, by a citation from Scripture. It is made from two separate places in the Septuagint, more perhaps as a reminiscence than as a direct quotation) **who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?**

35.] Or who hath previously given to Him, and shall have recompence made to him again?—From Job xli. 2 (11 of our version), where the Septuagint. have “who shall withstand me, and endure?” But the Hebrew is nearly as our A.V., ‘*who hath anticipated* (i. e. by the context, *conferred a benefit on*) *me, that I may repay him?*’ And to this the Apostle alludes, using the third person.—We can hardly doubt that this question refers to the freeness and richness of God's mercy and love.

36.] For (ground of verses 33–35. Well may all this be true of Him, for) **of Him** (in their origin. “See how in these last words he sets forth what he has alluded to in all that he has said above, the mystery of the Trinity. For as here that which he says, ‘for of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things,’ agrees with what the same Apostle says elsewhere, as 1 Cor. viii. 6, and that all things are revealed by the Spirit of God; so when he says, ‘O the depth of the riches!’ he signifies the Father, of whom are all things: and ‘the depth of the wisdom,’ he signifies Christ, who is the wisdom of God: and ‘the depth of the knowledge,’ he signifies the Holy Spirit, who knows

even the deep things of God,” Origen), **and through him** (in their subsistence and dis-posal), **and unto Him** (for His purposes and to His glory), **are all things** (not only, though chiefly, *men*,—but the whole creation). And, if this be rightly understood,—not of a *formal allusion* to the Three Persons in the Holy Trinity, but of an *implicit reference* to the *three attributes of Jehovah* respectively manifested to us by the Three coequal and coeternal Persons,—there can hardly be a doubt of its correctness.—Only those who are dogmatically prejudiced can miss seeing that, though St. Paul has never *definitively expressed* the doctrine of the Holy Trinity a definite formula, yet he was conscious of it as a living reality

Romans: Chapter 12

XII. 1–XV. 13.] PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS FOUNDED ON THE DOCTRINES BEFORE STATED. And first, ch. xii.

general exhortations to a Christian life.

1.] therefore may apply to the whole doctrinal portion of the Epistle which has preceded, which, see Eph. iv. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 1, seems the most natural connexion,—or to ch. 3 xi. 35, 36,—or to the whole close of ch. xi. Theodorest remarks: “What the eye is in are body, that faith is to the soul, and the knowledge of divine things. Yet it has need of practical virtue, as the eye has need of hands and feet and the other parts of the body. And therefore the divine Apostle to his doctrinal argument subjoins ethical instruction also.”

by] This particle introduces an idea, the consideration of which is to give force to the exhortation.

the mercies of God] viz. those detailed and proved throughout the former part of the Epistle. “By these very facts, he says, I beseech you, by which ye were saved: as if any one wishing to make an impression on one who had received great benefits, were to bring his Benefactor himself to supplicate him. Chrysostom.

to present] ‘The verb used is the regular word for *bringing to offer in sacrifice*.

your bodies] Most Commentators say, merely for “*yourselves*,”—to suit the metaphor of a *sacrifice*, which consisted of a body: some, because the body is the *organ of practical activity*, which practical activity is to be dedicated to God: better still, as an indication that the sanctification of Christian life is to extend to that part of man’s nature which is most completely under the bondage of sin.

a living sacrifice] Chrysostom strikingly says, “How can the “body become a *sacrifice*? let the eye look upon nothing evil, and it has become a sacrifice: let the tongue speak nothing shameful, and it has become an offering: let the hand do nothing unlawful, and it has become a burnt-offering. Nay, this is not sufficient, but we need the active practice of good,—the hand must do alms, the mouth must bless them that curse, the ear must give attention without ceasing to divine lessons. For a sacrifice hath nothing impure, a sacrifice is the firstfruit of other things. And let us therefore with our hands, and our feet, and our mouth, and all our other members, render firstfruits unto God.”

living] In opposition to the *Levitical* sacrifices, which were *slain animals*. Our great sacrifice, the Lord Jesus, having been slain for us, and by the shedding of His Blood perfect remission having been obtained by *the mercies of God*, we are now enabled to be offered to God no longer by the shedding of blood, but as *living sacrifices*.

your rational service] **rational** is opposed to *carnal* or *fleshly*, see Heb. vii. 16, So Chrysostom, “having in it nothing corporeal, nothing gross, nothing subject to sense.” Theodoret and others take it as ‘*having reason*,’ opposed to sacrifices of animals which have no reason: Basil and Calvin, as opposed to superstitious. But the former meaning is far the best, and answers to the “*spiritual sacrifices*” of 1 Pet. ii. 5.

2.] this world, here, the *whole world of the ungodly*, as contrasted with the spiritual kingdom of Christ.—The *renewing of your mind* is not the instrument by which, but the *manner in which* the metamorphosis takes place: that wherein it consists.

that ye may discern, viz. in this process and the active Christian life accompanying it: not ‘*that ye may be able to prove*,’ ‘acquire the faculty of proving,’ as some Commentators: the Apostle is not speaking of acquiring wisdom here, but of practical proof by experience.

good and wellpleasing, and perfect are not epithets of *the will of God*, as in A.V., for in that case they would be superfluous, and in part inapplicable (seeing that that which is perfect does not require further specification): but abstract neuters, see verse 9, **that ye may prove what is the will of God** (viz. that which is) **good and wellpleasing** (to Him) **and perfect**.

3-21.] *Particular exhortations grounded on and expanding the foregoing general ones.* This is expressed by the **for**, which *resumes*, and binds to what has preceded. And first, *an exhortation to humility in respect of spiritual gifts*, vv. 3-8.

3.] I say, a mild expression for ‘I command;’ enforced as a command by the following words, **through the grace given to me**, i.e. ‘by means of my apostolic office,’ of the grace conferred on me to guide and exhort the church.’ reff.

to every man that is among you,—a strong bringing out of the *individual* application of the precept. “He says it not to this person or that person only, but to ruler and ruled, to bond and free, to simple and wise, to woman and man.” Chrysostom.

not to be highminded, &c.] There is a play on the words here in the original, which can only be clumsily conveyed in another language: ‘not to be high-minded, above that which he ought to be minded, but to be so minded, as to be sober-minded.’ **His measure of faith** is his *receptivity* of graces of the Spirit, itself no inherent congruity, but the gift and apportionment of God. It is in fact the *subjective designation of the grace which is given us*, verse 6. But we must not say, with Ewbank, that “faith, in

this passage, means *those gifts or graces which the Christian can only receive through faith:*" this is to confound the receptive faculty with the thing received by it, and to pass by the great lesson of our verse, that *this faculty* is nothing to be proud of, but God's gift.

4.] **For**, elucidating the fact, that God apportions variously to various persons: because the Christian community is like a *body* with many members having various duties. See the same idea further worked out, 1 Cor. xii. 12 ff.

5. severally] i. e., as regards individuals.

members one of another is equivalent, to *fellow-members with one another*,—members of the body of which we one with another are members.

6.] The **and** is more than a mere copula: 'and not only so, but'.... **grace**, see above ver. 3, on the "*measure of faith*." These **gifts** are called, 1 Cor. xii. 7, "*the manifestation of the Spirit*." On **prophecy**, see note, Acts xi. 27.

[**let us prophesy**] according to the proportion of faith] But what faith? *Objective* ('faith which is believed'), or *subjective* ('faith by which we believe')? the faith, or *our* faith? The comparison of "*the measure of faith*" above, and the whole context, determine it to be the latter; the measure of *our* faith: 'let each contain himself within the limits of his own lot, and keep the measure of his revelation, and let not one seem to himself to know all things.' To understand the words objectively, as 'the rule of faith,' as many R.-Cath. expositors, and some Protestant, e.g. Calvin, seems to do violence to the context, which aims at shewing that the measure of faith, itself the gift of God, is the receptive faculty for all spiritual gifts, which are therefore not to be boasted of, nor pushed beyond their provinces, but humbly exercised within their own limits.

7. **ministry**] any subordinate ministration in the Church. In Acts vi. 1 and 4, we have the word applied both to the lower ministration, that of alms and food, and to the higher, the *ministry of the word*, which belonged to the Apostles. But here it seems to be used in a more restricted sense, from its position as distinct from prophecy, teaching, exhortation, &c.

in our ministry] Let us confine ourselves humbly and orderly to that kind of ministration to which God's providence has appointed us, as profitable members of the body.

he that teacheth] The *prophet* spoke under *immediate inspiration*; the *teacher* under inspiration working by the secondary instruments of his will and reason and rhetorical powers. Paul himself seems ordinarily, in his personal ministrations, to have used *teaching*. He is nowhere called one of the *prophets*, but appears as distinguished from them in several places: e.g. Acts xi. 27; xxi. 10, and apparently xiii. 1. Of course this does not affect the appearance of *prophecies*, commonly so called, in his writings. The inspired *teacher* would speak, though not technically *prophecies*, yet the mind of the Spirit in all things: not to mention that the apostolic office was one in dignity and fulness of inspiration far surpassing any of the subordinate ones, and in fact including them all.

in his teaching] as before: he is to teach in the sphere, within the bounds, of the teaching allotted to him by God,—or for which God has given faculty.

8.] The **exhorter** was not necessarily distinct from the *prophesier*,—see 1 Cor. xiv. 31.

he that giveth appears to be the *giver of the alms to the poor*,—either the deacon himself, or some distributor subordinate to the deacon. This however has been doubted, and not without reason: for a transition certainly seems to be made, by the omission of the "or," from *public* to *private* gifts. We cannot find any ecclesiastical meaning for **sheweth mercy** (though indeed Calvin and others understand by it, "widows and others who, according to the ancient custom of the Church, were appointed over ministrations to the sick"),—and the very fact of the three preceding being all limited to their respective official spheres, whereas these three are connected with qualitative descriptions, speaks strongly for their being *private acts*, to be always performed in *the spirit* described. On the rendering the original word **liberality**, and not *simplicity*, see note in my Greek Test.

He that ruleth or presideth—but over what? If over the *Church* exclusively, we come back to *offices* again: and it is hardly likely that the rulers of the Church, as such, would be introduced so low down in the list, or by so very general a term, as this. In 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, 12, we have the verb used of *presiding over a man's own household*: and in its absolute usage here, I do not see why that also should not be included.

with diligence] implying that he who is by God set over others, be they members of the Church or of his own household, must not allow himself to forget his responsibility, and take his duty indolently and easily, but must rule with earnestness, making it a serious matter of continual diligence.

he that sheweth mercy] This is the very best rendering: and I cannot conceive that any *officer of the Church* is intended, but every private Christian who exercises compassion. It is in exhibiting compassion, which is often the compulsory work of one obeying his conscience rather than the spontaneous effusion of love, that *cheerfulness* is so peculiarly required, and so frequently wanting. And yet in such an act it is even of more consequence towards the effect,—consoling the compassionated, than the act itself. “*A word is better than a gift,*” Eccl. xviii. 16.

9–21.] Exhortations to various Christian principles and habits.

9. Abhor that which is evil] This very general exhortation is probably, as Bengel says, an explanation of “*without dissimulation,*”—our love should arise from a genuine cleaving to that which is good, and aversion from evil: not from any by-ends.

10.] The word rendered **affectionate** is properly used of the love of near relatives to one another, and agrees therefore exactly with **brotherly love.**

out-doing one another] Not, as A.V., “*preferring one another:*” but as Chrysostom explains it, “do not wait to be loved by another, but thyself spring forward to the act, and make the beginning.”

11.] in diligence (or, zeal: not ‘*business,*’ as A.V., which seems to refer it to the affairs of this life, whereas it relates, as all these in verses 11, 12, 13, to Christian duties *as such*: as ‘*fervency of spirit,’ ‘acting as God’s servants,’ ‘rejoicing in hope,’ &c.) **not slothful; in spirit, fervent** (this expression is used of Apollos in Acts xviii. 25. The Holy Spirit lights this fire within: see Luke xii. 49; Matt. iii. 11).*

serving the Lord] There is a remarkable variety in reading here. Some of our ancient MSS. here have **kairo**, “*time,*” instead of **kurio**, “*Lord,*” “*serving the time,*” or, “*the opportunity.*” But the weight of external authority is strongly in favour of the ordinary reading. The balance of internal probability, though not easy at once to settle, is I am persuaded on the same side. The main objection to the words, “*serving the Lord,*” has ever been, that thus the Apostle would be inserting here, among particular precepts, one of the most general and comprehensive character. But this will be removed, if we remember, *of what he is speaking:* and if I mistake not, the other reading has been defended partly owing to forgetfulness of this. The *present subject* is, the *character of our zeal for God.* In it we are not to be *slothful*, but *fervent in spirit,—and that, as servants of God.* A very similar reminiscence of this relation to God occurs Col. iii. 22–24. The command, *to be servants of the time, or opportunity,* would surely come in, very inopportune in the midst of exhortations to the *zealous service of God.* As to its applicability at all to Christians, De Wette well remarks, “The Christian may and should certainly *employ* (Eph. v. 16) time and opportunity, but not *serve it.*”

13. given to hospitality] This is but a feeble rendering of the original, which is, **pursuing**, making earnestly a point of **hospitality;** and on which Chrysostom remarks, “He does not say, *practising,* but *pursuing,* teaching us not to wait for those that are in need, but rather to run after them and track them out.”

14.] “The Sermon on the Mount must have been particularly well known; for among the few references in the N.T. Epistles to the direct words of Christ there occur several to it: e.g. 1 Cor. vii. 10. James iv. 9; v. 12 (we may add iv. 3; i. 2, 22; ii. 5, 13; v. 2, 3, 10). 1 Pet. iii. 9, 14; iv. 14.” Tholuck.

16.] Having the same spirit towards one another, i.e. actuated by a common and well-understood. feeling of mutual allowance and kindness,

condescending to men of low estate] It is a question, whether this is the rendering, or whether it should not be “*inclining unto the things that be lowly.*” I have discussed the two in the note in my Greek Test., and found reason to uphold the rendering of the A.V. The other however is perfectly legitimate, and appears to suit better the former part of the sentence. But the Apostle’s antitheses do not require such minute correspondence as this. The sense then must decide. The insertion of the seemingly incongruous “*Be not wise in your own conceits*” is sufficiently accounted for by reference to ch. xi. 25, where he had stated this frame of mind as one to be avoided by those whose very place in God’s church was owing to His free mercy. *Being uplifted one against another* would be a sign of this fault being present and operative.

17.] The Apostle now proceeds to exhort respecting conduct *to those without.*

Provide things honourable] from the Septuagint version of Prov. iii. 4, which has “*provide things honourable before the Lord and men.*” The A.V. there gives a totally different rendering.

18.] The condition attached to this com: mand is *objective only*—not ‘*if you can,*’ but **if it be possible**—if *others will allow it.* And this is further defined by **as much as dependeth on YOU;** all *YOUR part is to be peace:* whether you actually live

peaceably or not, will depend then solely on how *others* behave towards *you*.

19.] So Matt. v. 39, 40.

dearly beloved] “The more difficult this duty, the more affectionately does the Apostle address his readers, with this word.” Tholuck.

give place] **allow space**, i.e. ‘*interpose delay*,’ **to wrath**. We must not understand **wrath** to mean ‘*your anger*,’ nor (though it comes to that) ‘*God’s anger*,’ but ‘*anger*,’ generally;—‘*give wrath room*:’ ‘proceed not to execute it hastily, but leave it for its legitimate time, when He whose it is to avenge, will execute it: make not the wrath your own, but leave it for God.’ So in the main, but mostly understanding the wrath to be exclusively that of God, Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodore, and the great body of Commentators.—Some Fathers interpret it, ‘*yield to the anger (of your adversary)*;’ but this meaning for the words is hardly borne out.—The citation varies from the Septuagint, which has, “*in the day of vengeance I will repay*,” and is nearer the Hebrew, “*mine is revenge and requital*.” It is very remarkable, that in Heb. x. 30 the citation is made in the same words.

20.] **Nay rather**, if is the reading of our three oldest MSS.; the *therefore* (A. V.) is very variously read and placed by the later ones.—*What is meant by thou shalt heap coals of fire?* The expression “*coals of fire*” occurs more than once in Ps. xviii., of the *divine punitive judgments*. Can those be meant here? Clearly not, in their bare literal sense. For however true it may be, that ingratitude will add to the enemy’s list of crimes, and so subject him more to God’s punitive judgment, it is impossible that to *bring this about* should be set as a precept, or a desirable thing among Christians. Again, can the expression be meant of the *glow and burn of shame* which would accompany, even in the case of a profane person, the receiving of benefits from an enemy? This *may* be meant; but is not probable, as not sufficing for the majesty of the subject. Merely to *make an enemy ashamed of himself*, can hardly be upheld as a motive for action. I understand the words, ‘*For in thus doing, you will be taking the most effectual vengeance*:’ as effectual as if you heaped coals of fire on his head.

21.] If you suffered yourselves to be provoked to revenge, you would be yielding to the enemy,—overcome by that which is evil: do not thus,—but in this, and in all things, **overcome the evil (in others) by your good**.

Romans: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII. 1–7.] *The duty of cheerful obedience to the authorities of the state*, It has been well observed that *some special reason* must have given occasion to these exhortations. We can hardly attribute it to the seditious spirit of the *Jews at Rome*, as their influence in the Christian Church there would not be great; indeed, from Acts xxviii. the two seem to have been remarkably distinct. But disobedience to the civil authorities may have arisen from mistaken views among the Christians themselves as to the nature of Christ’s kingdom, and its relation to existing powers of this world. And such mistakes would naturally be rife there, where the fountain of earthly power was situated: and there also best and most effectually met by these precepts coming from apostolic authority. The way for them is prepared by verses 17 ff. of the foregoing chapter. 1 Pet. ii. 13 ff. is parallel: compare notes there.

1.] **submit himself**, i.e. ‘be subject of his own free will and accord.’—**For there is no authority** (in heaven or earth—no power at all) **except from God: those that be** (the existing powers which we see about us), **have been ordained by God**. We may observe that the Apostle here pays no regard to the question of the duty of Christians in revolutionary movements. His precepts regard an *established power*, be it what it may. *It*, in all matters lawful, *we are bound to obey*. But even the parental power does not extend to things unlawful. If the civil power commands us to violate the law of God, we must obey God before man. If it commands us to disobey the common laws of humanity, or the sacred institutions of our country, our obedience is due to the higher and more general law, rather than to the lower and particular. These distinctions must be drawn by the wisdom granted to Christians in the varying circumstances of human affairs: they are all only subordinate portions of the great duty of *obedience to LAW*. To obtain, by lawful means, the removal or alteration of an unjust or unreasonable law, is another part of this duty: for all authorities among men must be in accord with the highest authority, the moral sense. But even where law is hard and unreasonable, not *disobedience*, but *legitimate protest*, is the duty of the Christian.

2.] **shall receive to themselves condemnation**, viz. *punishment from God*, through His minister, the civil power.

3.] And the *tendency* of these powers is *salutary*: to encourage good works, and discourage evil. Tholuck observes, that this verse is a token that the Apostle wrote the Epistle *before the commencement of the Neronian persecution*. Had this been otherwise, the principle stated by him would have been *the same*: but he could hardly have passed so apparent an exception to it without remark.

4.] **the sword**, perhaps in allusion to the dagger worn by the Cæsars, which was regarded as a symbol of the power of life and death. In ancient and modern times, the sword has been carried before sovereigns. It betokens the power of capital

punishment: and the reference to it here is among the many testimonies borne by Scripture against the attempt to abolish the infliction of death for crime in Christian states.

for wrath seems to be inserted for the sake of parallelism with “*for good*” above: it betokens the *character* of the vengeance,—that it *issues in wrath*. The wrath is referred to in “*the wrath*,” ver. 5.

5.] Wherfore, because of the divine appointment and mission of the civil officer.

ye must needs submit yourselves—there is a moral necessity for subjection:—one not only of terror, but of conscience: compare “*for the Lord’s sake*,” 1 Pets ii. 13.

6.] For this cause also is parallel with “*wherfore*” ver. 5,—giving another result of the divine appointment of the civil power;—not dependent on ver. 5.

for they (the authorities) **are ministers of God, attending continually to this very thing**, viz. *ministration*. Tertullian remarks, that what the Romans lost by the Christians refusing to bestow gifts on their temples, they gained by their conscientious payment of taxes.

7.] tribute is *direct* payment for state purposes: **custom** is **toll**, or tax on produce.

fear, to those set over us and having power: **honour**, to those, but likewise to all on whom the state has conferred distinction.

8–10.] Exhortation to universal love of others.

8.] ‘Pay all other debts: *be indebted* in the matter of love *alone*.’ This debt increases the more, the more it is paid: because the practice of love makes the principle of love deeper and more active. By the word **law** is meant, not the Christian law, but *the Mosaic law* of the decalogue. “He who practises Love, *the higher duty*, has, even before he does this, fulfilled the law, *the lower*.” De Wette.

9.] The words “*thou shalt not bear false witness*,” inserted in the A.V., are omitted in almost all our most ancient authorities.

comprehended, i.e. brought under one head,—‘united in the one principle from which all flow.’

10.] All the commandments of the law above cited are *negative*: the formal fulfilment of them is therefore attained, *by working no ill* to one’s neighbour. What *greater things* Love works, he does not now say: it *fulfils the law*, by *abstaining from that which the law forbids*.

11–14.] Enforcement of the foregoing, and occasion taken for fresh exhortations, by the consideration that THE DAY OF THE LORD IS AT HAND.

11.] And this, i.e. ‘*and let us do this*,’ viz., live in no debt but that of love, for other reasons, and especially for this following one.

sleep here imports the state of worldly carelessness and indifference to sin, which allows and practises the *works of darkness*. The imagery seems to be taken originally from our Lord’s discourse concerning His coming: see Matt. xxiv. 42; Mark xiii. 33, and Luke xxi. 28–36, where several points of similarity to our verses 11–14 occur.

salvation] as “*your redemption*,” Luke xxi, 28, and ch. viii. 23, is said of the *accomplishment of salvation*.—Without denying the legitimacy of an individual application of this truth, and the importance of its consideration for all Christians of all ages, a fair exposition of this passage can hardly fail to recognize the fact, that the Apostle here as well as elsewhere (1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 51), speaks of the coming of the Lord as *rapidly approaching*. Prof. Stuart and others are shocked at the idea, as being inconsistent with the inspiration of his writings. How this can be, I am at a loss to imagine. “OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN, NO NOT THE ANGELS IN HEAVEN, NOR EVEN THE SON, BUT THE FATHER,” Mk. xiii. 32.—And to reason, as Stuart does, that because St. Paul corrects in 2 Thess. ii, the mistake of imaging it to be *immediately at hand* (or even *actually come*, see note there), therefore he did not himself expect it soon, is surely quite beside the purpose. The fact, that the nearness or distance of that day was *unknown to the Apostles*, in no way affects the prophetic announcements of God’s Spirit by them, concerning its preceding and accompanying circumstances. The ‘*day and hour*’ formed no part of their inspiration;—*the details of the event, did*. And this distinction has singularly and providentially turned out to the edification of all subsequent ages. While the prophetic declarations of the events of that time remain to instruct us, the *eager expectation* of the time, which *they expressed in their day*, has also remained, a token of the true frame of mind in which each succeeding age (and each succeeding age more strongly than the last) should contemplate the ever-approaching

coming of the Lord. On the *certainty of the event*, our faith is grounded: by the *uncertainty of the time* our hope is stimulated, and our watchfulness aroused.

12.] **The night**, the *lifetime of the world*,—the power of darkness, see Eph. vi. 12 **the day**, the *day of the resurrection*, 1 Thess. v. 4; Rev. xxi. 25; of which resurrection we are *already partakers*, and are to *walk as such*, Col. iii. 1–4; 1 Thess. y. 5–8. **Therefore**,—let us lay aside (as it were a clothing) **the works of darkness** (see Eph. v. 11–14, where a similar strain of exhortation occurs), and put on the **armour of light** (described Eph. vi. 11 ff.—the arms *belonging to a soldier of light*—one who is of the “sons of light” and “sons of the day,” 1 Thess. v. 5).

13.] **chambering**, in a bad sense: the act itself being a defilement, when unsanctified by God’s ordinance of marriage. The words are both *plural* in the original, **chamberings and wantonesses**: i.e. various kinds, or frequent repetitions, of these sins.

14.] Chrysostom says, on Eph. iv. 24, “So we say of friends, ‘Such an one has put on such an one,’ when we mean to describe great love and unceasing intercourse.”

Romans: Chapter 14

CHAP. XIV. 1–XV. 13.] ON THE CONDUCT TO BE PURSUED TOWARDS WEAK AND SCRUPULOUS BRETHREN.—There is some doubt who the **weak in faith** were, of whom the Apostle here treats; whether they were *ascetics, or Judaizers*. Some habits mentioned, as e.g. the abstinence from *all meats*, and from *wine*, seem to indicate the former: whereas the *observation of days*, and the use of such expressions as “*unclean*,” ver. 14, and again the argument of ch. xv. 7–13, as plainly point to the latter. The difficulty may be solved by a proper combination of the two views. The over-scrupulous Jew became an ascetic by compulsion. He was afraid of pollution by eating meats sacrificed or wine poured to idols: or even by being brought into contact, in foreign countries, with casual and undiscoverable uncleanness, which in his own land he knew the articles offered for food would be sure not to have incurred. He therefore abstained from *all prepared food*, and confined himself to that which he could trace from natural growth to his own use. We have examples of this in Daniel (Dan. i.), Tobit (Tob. i. 10, 11), and in some Jewish priests mentioned by Josephus, who having been sent prisoners to Rome, “did not forget their piety towards God, but lived on figs and walnuts.” And Tholuck refers to the Mishna as containing precepts to this effect. All difficulty then is removed, by supposing that of these over-scrupulous Jews some had become converts to the gospel, and with neither the obstinacy of legal Judaizers, nor the pride of ascetics (for these are not hinted at here), but in *weakness of faith*, and the scruples of an over-tender conscience, retained their habits of abstinence and observation of days. On this account the Apostle characterizes and treats them mildly: not with the severity which he employs towards the Colossian Judaizing ascetics, and those mentioned in 1 Tim. iv. 1 ff.—The question treated in 1 Cor. viii. was somewhat different: there it was, concerning meat *actually offered* to an idol. In 1 Cor. x. 25–27, he touches the same question as here, and decides against the stricter view.

1–12.] EXHORTATION TO MUTUAL FORBEARANCES, ENFORCED BY THE AXIOM, THAT EVERY MAN MUST SERVE GoD ACCORDING TO HIS OWN SINCERE PERSUASION.

1.] *The general duty of a reconciling and uncontroversial spirit towards the weak in faith*.—In the original this verse is connected with the last by the particle “but:” and it is thus bound on to the *general exhortations to mutual charity* in ch. xiii.: as if it had been said, ‘in the particular case of the weak in faith,’ &c.: but also implies a contrast, which seems to be, in allusion to the Christian perfection enjoined in the preceding verses,—‘but do not let your own realization of your state as children of light make you intolerant of shortcoming and infirmity in others.’ The particular weakness consisted in a want of broad and independent principle, and a consequent bondage to prejudices.

faith therefore is used in a general sense, to indicate the moral soundness conferred by faith,—the whole character of the Christian’s conscience and practice, resting on faith.

weak in the faith imports holding THE FAITH imperfectly, i.e. not being able to receive the faith in its strength, so as to be above such prejudices.

receive ye] ‘*give him your hand*,’ as the old Syriac Version renders it: ‘count him one of you:’ so far from rejecting or discouraging him.

[yet] **not for**] i.e. **but not with a view to**: ‘do not adopt him as a brother, in order then to begin’ ...

deciding of doubts] literally, **discernments of thoughts**, i.e. ‘*disputes in order to settle the points on which he has scruples*.’ Namely, *those scruples* in which his weakness consists,—and *those more enlightened views in you*, by which you would fain

remove his scruples. Do not let your association of him among you be *with a view to settle these disputes*.

2. eateth herbs] See remarks introductory to this chapter.

3.] despise, for his weakness of faith,—**judge**, for his laxity of practice.—**For God hath received** (adopted into his family) **him** (i. e. the *eater*, who was *judged*,—his place in God's family doubted: *not the abstainer*, who was only despised, set at nought,—and to whom the words cannot, by the construction apply).

4.] Who art thou (see ch. ix. 20) **that judgest the servant of another** (viz. of *Christ*,—for **the lord** in this passage is marked, verses 8, 9, as being Chirst,—and the Master is the same throughout. “*God*,” mentioned before, is unconnected with this verse)? **to his own lord** (i. e. ‘it i own master’s matter, and his alone, that’) **he standeth** (remains in the place and estimation of a Christian, from which thou wouldest eject him; not, ‘stands hereafter in the judgment,’ which is not in question here: see 1 Cor. x. 12) **or falleth** (from his place, see above). **But he shall be made to stand** (notwithstanding thy doubts of the correctness of his practice): **for the Lord** (or, *his Lord*, in allusion to the words “*to his own Lord*” above) **is able to make him stand** (in faith and practice. These last words are inapplicable, if standing and falling at the great day are meant).—Notice, this argument is entirely directed *to the weak*, who uncharitably judges the *strong*,—not vice versa. The *weak* imagines that the *strong* cannot be a true servant of God, nor, retain his amidst such temptation. To this the Apostle answers, (1) *that such judgment belongs only to Christ, whose servant he is*: (2) *that the Lord’s almighty Power is able to keep him up, and will do so*.

5.] One man (the weak) **esteemeth** (selects for honour) **one day above another** [day]: **another** (the strong) **esteemeth** (worthy of honour) **every day**. **Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind.**—It is an interesting question, what indication is here found of the observance or non-observance of days of obligation in the apostolic times. The Apostle *decides nothing*: leaving *every man’s own mind* to guide him in the point. He classes the observance or non-observance of particular days, with the eating or abstaining from particular meats. In both cases, he is concerned with things which he evidently treats as of *absolute indifference in themselves*. Now the question is, supposing the divine obligation of one day in seven to have been “*recognized by him in any form*, could he have thus spoken? The obvious inference from his strain of arguing is, that he *knew of no such obligation*, but believed *all times and days to be*, to the Christian strong in faith, ALIKE. I do not see how the passage can be otherwise understood. If any one day in the week were invested with the sacred character of the Sabbath, it would have been *wholly impossible* for the Apostle to commend or uphold the man who judged *all days worthy of equal honour*,—who, as in ver. 6, paid *no regard* to the (any) day. He must have visited him with his strongest, disapprobation, as violating a command of God. *I therefore infer, that sabbatical obligation to keep any day, whether seventh or first, was not recognized in apostolic times.* It must be carefully remembered, that this inference does not concern the question of the observance of the *Lord’s Day as an institution of the Christian Church, analogous to the ancient Sabbath, binding on us from considerations of humanity and religious expediency, and by the rules of that branch. of the Church in which Providence has placed us*, but *not in any way* inheriting the divinely-appointed obligation of the other, or the strict prohibitions by which its sanctity was defended. The reply commonly furnished to these considerations, viz. that the Apostle was speaking here only of *Jewish* festivals, and therefore cannot refer to Christian ones, is a quibble of the poorest kind: its assertors themselves distinctly maintaining the obligation of one such Jewish festival on Christians. What I maintain is, that had the Apostle believed as they do, he could not by any possibility have written thus. Besides, in the face of the words **every day**, the assertion, that Jewish festivals only were contemplated, is altogether precluded.

6.] The words in brackets do not occur in most of our early authorities. They were probably omitted from the similar ending of both clauses in the original having misled some early copyists, and the eye having passed from one to the other (a very usual mistake); but perhaps, it may have been intentionally done, after the observation of the Lord’s Day came to be regarded as binding.

giveth thanks, adduced as a practice of both parties, shews the universality among the early Christians of *thank God at meals*: see 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.—The “*saying grace*” of the *abstainer*, was over his ‘dinner of herbs.’”

the Lord throughout the verse is CHRIST.

7.] This verse illustrates the former, and at the same time sets in a still plainer light than before, that *both parties*, the *eater* and the *abstainer*, are servants of another, even Christ.—**Liveth** and **dieth** represent the whole sum of our course on earth.

8.] The inference,—that we are, under all circumstances, living or dying (and much more *eating or abstaining, observing days, or not observing them*), CHRIST’ S: His property.

9.] And this lordship over all was the *great end* of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. By that Death and Resurrection, the crowning events of his work of Redemption, He was manifested as the righteous Head over the race of man, which now, and in consequence man’s world also, belongs by right to Him alone.

lived, viz. after His death; lived again.

both of the dead and of the living] These terms are repeated here for uniformity with what has gone before in verses 7, 8: in sense comprehending *all created beings*.

10.] He returns to the duty of abstaining,—the *weak*, from *judging* his stronger brother; the *strong*, from *despising* the weaker.

11.] The citation is nearly according to the A.V., except that **as I live** is “*I have sworn by myself*,” and **make confession to God** is “*swear*.”

12.] The stress is on **concerning himself**: and the next verse refers back to it, laying the emphasis on **one another**. ‘Seeing that our account to God will be of *each man’s own self*, let us take heed lest by judging *one another* (**judging** here in the general sense of ‘pass judgment on,’ including both the despising of the strong and the *judging* of the weak) *we incur the guilt of destroying one another*.’

13–23.] EXHORTATION TO THE STRONG TO HAVE REGARD TO THE CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES OF THE WEAK, AND FOLLOW PEACE, NOT HAVING RESPECT MERELY TO HIS OWN CONSCIENCE, BUT TO THAT OF THE OTHER, WHICH IS HIS RULE, AND BEING VIOLATED LEADS TO HIS CONDEMNATION.

13.] See above: the second exhortation, **let this be your judgment**, is used as corresponding to the first, and is in fact a play on it. The former word, the *stumblingblock*, seems rather to refer to an occasion of sin in *act*: the latter, to offence in *thought, scruple*. **14.]** *The general principle laid down*, that *nothing is by its own means*,—i. e. for any thing in itself,—*unclean, but only in reference to him who reckons it to be so*.

am persuaded in (not, as A.V., *by*) **the Lord Jesus]** These words give to the persuasion the weight, not merely of Paul’s own opinion, but of apostolic authority. He is persuaded, in his capacity as connected with Christ Jesus,—*as having the mind of Christ*.

15.] The **for** here is elliptical, depending on the suppressed re-statement of the precept of ver. 13: ‘But this knowledge is not to be your rule in practice, but rather,’ &c., as in ver. 13: ‘*for if, &c.—Meat, or food*, is thus *barely put*, to make the contrast greater between the *slight occasion*, and the *great mischief done*. The mere grieving your brother, is an offence against *love*: how much greater an offence then, if this *grieving end in destroying*—in ruining (causing to act against his conscience, and so to commit sin and be in danger of quenching God’s Spirit within him) by a *MEAL* of thine, a brother, for whom Christ died! “Value not thy meat more than Christ valued His life.” Bengel. See an exact parallel in 1 Cor. viii. 10.

16.] *Your strength of faith is a good thing; let it not pass into bad repute*: use it so that it may be honoured, and encourage others.

17.] For it is not worth while to let it be disgraced and become useless for such a trifle; for no part of the advance of Christ’s gospel can be bound up in, or *consist in, meat and drink*: but in **righteousness** (of course to be taken in union with the doctrine of the former part of the Epistle—*righteousness by justification*,—*bringing forth the fruits of faith*, which would be hindered by faith itself being disturbed), **peace** (“with our brethren, to which is opposed this love of controversy,” Chrysostom), **and joy** (“arising from unanimity, which this wrangling annuls,” Chrysostom) **in the Holy Ghost**:—in connexion with, under the indwelling and influence of the Holy Ghost.

18. approved of men] as a man of *peace* and *uprightness*: “for all men will yield admiration, not so much to perfection, as to peace and unanimity. For in the benefits of this latter all can share, but in that other, no one,” Chrysostom.

19.] Inference from the foregoing two verses, **mutual edification**, i.e. the work of edification, finding its exercise in our mutual intercourse and allowances.

20.] the work of God has been variously understood: as *righteousness, peace, and joy; or, the Christian standing of the offended brother*, so as to be parallel to ver. 15: or as *the faith of thy fellow-Christian*: or as *the kingdom of God, ‘the spread of the Gospel’* But I believe the expression **edification** having just preceded is the clue to the right meaning: and that this word represents *edification* in the Apostle’s mind. He calls Christians in 1 Cor. iii. 9, “*God’s husbandry, God’s building*” (the same word as *edification* here). ‘Thus it will mean, *thy fellow-Christian, as a plant of God’s planting, a building of God’s raising. All things indeed are clean; nevertheless it is evil to the man* (‘there is criminality in the man’) **who eateth with offence** (i. e. giving offence to his weak brother. That this is the right interpretation is shewn by the sentence standing between two others, *both addressed to the strong, who is in danger of offending the weak*. But Chrysostom and others take the sense of ‘receiving offence,’ and understand it of the *weak*).’

21.] It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [to do] **any thing** (the Apostle, as so often, is deducing a general duty from the particular subject) **wherein** (in the matter of which) **thy brother stumbleth, or is offended** (see on ver. 13), **or is weak** (Tholuck remarks that the three verbs form a gradual *anti-climax* from greater to less; “stumbleth, or even is offended, or even is weak”).

22. The faith which thou hast, have [it] to thyself before God ‘*Before God*,’—because He is the object of faith: hardly, as Erasmus, “because he wishes to repress the vain-glory which usually accompanies knowledge,”—for there is *no trace of a depreciation* of the strong in faith in the chapter,—only a *caution as to their conduct* in regard of their weaker brethren.—With the word **Blessed** begins the closing and general sentence of the Apostle with regard to *both*: it is a blessed thing to *have no scruples* (the *strong in faith* is in a situation to be envied) about things in which we allow ourselves (Olshausen refers to the addition in one of our ancient MSS. at Luke vi. 4,—where our Lord is related to have seen a man tilling his land on the Sabbath, and to have said to him, “*If thou knowest what thou art doing, blessed art thou; but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed, and a transgressor of the law*”). **But he that doubteth** (he that is not in that situation) **incurs condemnation by eating** (the case in point is here particularized), **because [he eateth] not of faith** (i. e. as before, from a *persuasion of rectitude* grounded on and consonant with his life of faith. That ‘*faith in the Son of God*’ by which the Apostle describes his own life in the flesh as being lived (Gal. ii. 20), informing and penetrating the motives and the conscience, will not include, will not sanction, an act done against the testimony of the conscience); **but** (introducing an *axiom*, as Heb. viii. 13) **whatsoever is not of** (grounded in, and therefore consonant with) **faith** (the great element in which the Christian lives and moves and desires and hopes), **is sin**.—Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and others, have taken this text as shewing that “the whole life of unbelievers is sin.” Whether that be the case or not, cannot be determined from this passage, any more than from Heb. xi. 6, *because neither here nor there is the unbeliever in question*. Here the Apostle has in view two *Christians*, both living by faith, and by faith doing acts pleasing to God:—and he reminds them that whatever they do *out of harmony* with this great principle of their spiritual lives, belongs to the category of sin. In Heb. xi. he is speaking of one who had the testimony of having (eminently) pleased God: this, he says, he did by faith; for *without faith* it is impossible to please Him. The question touching the *unbeliever*

must be settled by another enquiry: Can he whom we thus name *have faith*,—such a faith as may enable him to do acts which are not sinful? a question impossible for *us* to solve.

Romans: Chapter 15

CHAP. XV. 1–13.] FURTHER EXHORTATIONS TO FORBEARANCE TOWARDS THE WEAK,—FROM THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (1–3),—AND TO UNANIMITY (4–7) AA BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE, SEEING THAT CHRIST WAS PROPHETICALLY ANNOUNCED AS THE COMMON SAVIOUR OF BOTH (8–13).

1.] By the words **we that are strong**, the Apostle *includes himself among the strong*, as indeed he before indicated, ch. xiv. 14.

the infirmities are *general*, not merely referring to the scruples before treated.

2.] The qualification, **for his good with a view to edification**, excludes all *mere pleasing of men* from the Christian’s motives of action. The Apostle repudiates it in his own case, Gal. i. 10.

3. Christ pleased not himself] for, “He might have escaped reproach, He might have avoided suffering what He did, if He had consulted His own pleasure: howbeit He willed not thus, but looking at our good, He overlooked His own pleasure,” Chrysostom. The words in the Messianic Psalm are addressed to *the Father*, not to those *for whom* Christ suffered: but they prove all that is here required, that He did not please *Himself*; His sufferings were undertaken on account of the Father’s good purpose—mere work which *He gave Him to do*.

4.] The Apostle both justifies the above citation, and prepares the way for the subject to be next introduced, viz. the *duty of unanimity*, grounded on the testimony of these Scriptures to Christ. The expression, **whatsoever things were written aforetime**, applies to the *whole ancient Scriptures*, not to the prophetic parts only.

our, viz. of *us Christians*.

patience, as well as **comfort**, is to be joined with **of the scriptures**,—otherwise it stands unconnected with the subject of the sentence. The genitives then mean, **the patience and the comfort arising from the scriptures**, produced by their study.

5, 6.] *Further introduction of the subject, by a prayer that God, who has given the Scriptures for these ends, might grant them*

unanimity, that they might with one accord shew forth His glory.—In the title given to God, the *patience* and *comfort* just mentioned are taken up again: q.d. “The God who alone can give this patience and comfort.”

according to (the spirit and precepts of) **Christ Jesus.**

6.] We may also render this expression, here and elsewhere, ‘*God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*’ But the ordinary rendering, **the God and Father**.... is preferable on account of its simplicity.

7.] **Wherfore** (on which account, viz. that. the wish of the last verse may be accomplished) **receive ye** (see ch. xiv. 1) **one another, as Christ also received you,—to the glory of God** (i. e. **with a view to God’s glory**). That this is the meaning, “that the Gentiles *glorify God* for His mercy,” appears by ver. 9. The Apostle does not expressly name *Jewish and Gentile converts* as those to whom he addresses this exhortation, but it is evident from the next verse that it is so.

8.] **For** (reason for the above exhortation) **I say that Christ hath been made** (i.e. come as: the effects still enduring) **a minister** (He came *to minister*, Matt. xx. 28) **of the circumcision** (an expression nowhere else found, and doubtless here used by Paul to humble the pride of the *strong*, the Gentile Christians, by exalting God’s covenant people to their true dignity), **for the sake of God’s truth** (i. e. for the fulfilment of the Divine pledges given under the covenant of circumcision), **in order to confirm the promises made unto the fathers** (literally, **the promises of the fathers**; so “*the blessing of Abraham,*” Gal. iii. 14, Christ came to the *Jews* in virtue of a *long-sealed compact, to the fulfilment of which God’s truth was pledged*): **and** (I say) **that the Gentiles glorified God** (meaning, that ‘*each man at his conversion did so.*’) These words cannot by any possibility be rendered as in the A.V., “*that the Gentiles might glorify God*”) **on account of [His] mercy** (the emphasis is on **mercy**: the Gentiles have no *covenant*

promise to claim,—they have nothing but the pure mercy of God in grafting them in to allege—therefore the Jew has an advantage), &c.—The citations are from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. The first, originally spoken by David of his joy after his deliverances and triumphs, is prophetically said of Christ in His own Person. It is adduced to shew that among the Gentiles Christ’s triumphs were to take place, as well as among the Jews.

10.] **again he saith**,—or, *it saith*, viz. the Scripture, which is in substance the same.

11, 12.] The *universality* of the praise to be given to God for His merciful kindness in sending His Son is prophetically indicated by the first citation. In the latter a more direct announcement is given of the *share which the Gentiles were to have in the root of Jesse.* The version is that of the Septuagint, which here differs considerably from the Hebrew. The latter is nearly literally rendered in A.V.: “And in that day there shall be a root (Hebrew, ‘and it shall happen in that day, the branch’) of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek.”

13.] The hortatory part of the Epistle, as well as the preceding section of it (ver. 5), concludes with a solemn wish for the spiritual welfare of the Roman Church.—The words **of hope** connect with “*shall hope*” of the foregoing verse, as was the case with “*of patience and comfort*” in ver. 5.

joy and peace, as the happy result of faith in God, and unanimity with one another: see ch. xiv. 17.

XV. 14–XVI. 27.] CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE. PERSONAL NOTICES, RESPECTING THE APOSTLE HIMSELF (xv. 14–33), **RESPECTING THOSE GRELTED** (xvi. 1–16), **AND GREETING** (xvi. 16–28);—**AND CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY** (xvi. 24–27).

14–33.] He first (14–16) *excuses the boldness of his writing*, by the allegation of *his office as Apostle of the Gentiles.*

14.] **even I myself** (i. e., ‘notwithstanding what I have written:’ see ch. vii. 25, note. It may mean, ‘*without information from others*,’ ‘I, on my own account’). **ye also yourselves**, i.e. without exhortation of mine.

15.] The words **in some measure** restrict the character of “*more boldness*” to certain parts of the Epistle, e.g. ch. xi. 17 ff. 25; chaps. xiii. and xiv. **because of the grace,&c.**, i.e. ‘my apostolic office was the ground and reason of my boldness.’

16.] **ministering as a priest in the gospel of God** (the Apostle is using a figure in which he compares himself to a priest, and the Gentiles to the sacrifice which he was offering: see below), **that the offering up of the Gentiles** (genitive of apposition: *the Gentiles themselves are the offering*; so Theophylact, “This is my priesthood, to preach the Gospel. My knife is the word, ye are the sacrifice”) **may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Ghost.**—The language is evidently figurative, **and can** by no possibility be taken as a sanction for any view of the Christian minister as a *sacrificing priest*, otherwise than *according to that figure*—viz. that he offers to God *the acceptable sacrifice of those who by his means believe on Christ.*

17–22.] *The Apostle boasts of the extent and result of his apostolic mission among the Gentiles, and that in places where none had preached before him—I have then* (consequent on the grace and ministry just mentioned) **my boasting** (i. e. ‘I venture to boast:’ not ‘*I have whereof I may glory*,’ as A.V.) **in Christ Jesus** (there is no stress on this:—it merely qualifies the boasting as no vain glorying, but grounded in, consistent with, springing from, his relation and subserviency to Christ) **in (concerning) the things which pertain to God** (my above-named sacerdotal office and ministry)

18.] In our English text, this verse has been put into the affirmative form, in which alone it can be made to convey a clear sense to the English reader: see below. The connexion is: ‘I have *real* ground for glorying’ (in a legitimate and Christian manner; and the literal rendering of the original which follows is nearly as in A.V.). **For I will not** (as some false apostles do, see 2 Cor. x. 12–18) **allow myself to speak of those things which Christ has nor done by me** (but by some other), **in order to the obedience** (subjection to the Gospel) **of the Gentiles** (then, as if the sentence were in the affirmative form, ‘I will only boast of what Christ has veritably done *by me* towards the obedience of the Gentiles,’ he proceeds), **by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the [Holy] Spirit.**—The signs and wonders are not spiritual, but external miraculous acts,—see 2 Cor. xii. 12. **19.] So that** (result of this working of Christ by him) **from Jerusalem** (the eastern boundary of his preaching) **and round about** (Jerusalem: *round about* is not to be joined with *as far as Illyricum*, but refers to Jerusalem, meaning perhaps its immediate neighbourhood, perhaps Arabia (?), Gal. i. 17,—but hardly Damascus and Cilicia, seeing that they would come into the route afterwards specified, from Jerusalem to Illyricum), **as far as Illyricum** (Illyricum bordered on Macedonia to the South. It is possible that St. Paul may literally have advanced to its frontiers during his preaching in Macedonia; but I think it more probable, that he uses it broadly as the ‘terminus of his journeys,’ the next province to that in which he had preached), **I have fully preached (literally, fulfilled) the Gospel of Christ;**

20.] yet limits the foregoing assertion) **on this wise** ‘after the following rule) **making it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ was (previously) named, that I might not build upon another man’s foundation: but according as it is written** (i. e. according to the following rule of Scripture: I determined to act in the spirit of these words, forming part of a general prophecy of the dispersion of that Gospel which I was preaching).**&c.**—The citation is from the Septuagint. Our A.V. renders: “That: which had not been told them, shall they see: and that which they had not heard, shall they consider.”

22.] For which cause,—not, *because a foundation had been already laid at Rome by another*: this would refer to merely a secondary part of the foregoing assertion: the expression refers to the primary, viz. his having been so earnestly engaged in preaching elsewhere. **these many times:** not, ‘*for the most part*,’—or, ‘*the greater number of times*,’ which would suggest the idea that there had been other occasions on which this hindrance had not been operative.

23.] I have no more place, or occasion (viz. of apostolic work).—On the construction of this sentence, see note in my Greek Test.).—Respecting the question whether this journey into Spain was ever taken, the views of Commentators have differed, according to their conclusion respecting the liberation of the Apostle from his imprisonment at Rome. I have discussed this in the Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles,§ii.

24.] some-what is an affectionate limitation of the expression **I be filled**, implying that he would wish to remain much longer than he anticipated being able to do,—and also, as Chrysostom says, “because no length of time ean fill me, nor cause in me satiety of your company.”

25.] See Acts xix. 21; xxiv. 17; 2 Cor. viii. 19. **ministering**, not *to minister*, because he treats the whole action as already begun.

26.] See 2 Cor. ix. 1 ff. **the poor among the saints which are at Jerusalem**] Olshausen remarks, that this shews the community of goods in the church at Jerusalem not to have lasted long: compare. Gal. ii. 10.

27.] The *fact* is re-stated, with a view to an inference from it, viz. that their *good pleasure* was not merely a matter of benevolence, but of *repayment*: the Gentiles being debtors to the Jews for spiritual blessings. This general principle is very similarly enounced in 1 Cor. ix. 11. It is suggested by’ Grotius and others, that by this St. Paul wished to hint to the Romans the duty of a similar contribution.

28.] fruit, probably said generally,—*fruit of the faith and love of the Gentiles. secured*] literally, *sealed*: “as if he were laying it up into royal treasures, in an inviolable and safe place.” Chrysostom. **by you** (i. e. through your city).

29.] The **fulness of the blessing of Christ** imports that richness of apostolic grace which he was persuaded he should impart to them. So he calls his presence in the churches a “*benefit*,”—

literally, a *grace or favour*, 2 Cor. i. 15. See also ch. i. ll. **30–32.] the love of the Spirit, the love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost**;—a love which teaches us to look not only on our own things, but on the things of others.

31.] Compare Acts xx. 22; xxi. 10–14. The exceeding hatred in which the Apostle was held by the Jews, and their want of fellow-feeling with the Gentile churches, made him fear lest even the ministration with which he was charged might not prove acceptable to them.

32.] **and may with you find rest** ‘that we may mutually refresh ourselves, I after my dangers and: deliverance, you after your anxieties for me.’

Romans: Chapter 16

CHAP. XVI. 1–16.] RECOMMENDATION OF PHEBE: GREETINGS.

1, 2.] In all probability Phebe was the bearer of the Epistle, as stated in the subscription. **deaconess**] See 1 Tim. iii. 11, note. Pliny in his celebrated letter to Trajan says, “I thought it requisite to enquire the truth even by torture, from two handmaids who were called ministrae (deaconesses).” The deaconesses must not be confounded with the *widows* of 1 Tim. v. 3–16, as has sometimes been done.—CENCHREE, the port of Corinth, on the Saronic gulf of the Ægean, for commerce with the east (Acts xviii. 18), nine of our miles from Corinth. The Apostolical Constitutions make the first bishop of the Cenchrean church to have been Lucius, consecrated by St. Paul himself.

2.] **in the Lord**, i.e. *in a Christian manner*,—as mindful of your common Lord: as becometh saints, i.e. “*as saints ought to do*,”—refers *their* conduct to her;—not, ‘as saints *ought to be received*.’ **assist her**] Her business at Rome may have been such as to require the help of those resident there. **a succourer of many**] This may refer to a part of the deaconess’s office, the attending on the poor and sick of her own sex. **of myself also**] when and where, we know not. It is not improbable that she may have been, like Lydia, one whose heart the Lord opened at the first preaching of Paul, and whose house was his lodging.

3, 4.] The form Prisca is also found 2 Tim. iv. 19. On Prisca and Aquila see note, Acts xviii. 2. They must have returned to Rome from Ephesus since the sending of the first Epistle to the Corinthians:—see 1 Cor. xvi. 19: and we find them again at Ephesus (?), 2 Tim. iv. 19.—Their endangering of their lives for Paul may have taken place at Corinth (Acts xviii. 6 ff.) or at Ephesus (Acts xix). See Neander, Pfl. u. Leit., p. 441.—The ‘*churches of the Gentiles*’ had reason to be thankful to them, for having rescued the *Apostle of the Gentiles* from danger.—It seems to have been the practice of Aquila and (1 Cor. xvi. 19) and some other (Col. iv. 15, Philem. 2) to hold assemblies for worship in their houses, which were saluted, and sent salutations as one body in the Lord. Some light is thrown on the expression by the following passage from the Acts of the Martyrdom of Justin: “The answer of Justin Martyr to the question of the prefect (Rusticus) ‘Where do you assemble?’ exactly corresponds to the genuine Christian spirit on this point. The answer was, ‘Where each one can and will. You believe; no doubt, that we all meet together in one place; but it is not so, for the God of the Christians is not shut up in a room, but, being invisible, He fills both heaven and earth, and is honoured every where by the faithful.’ Justin adds, that when he came to Rome, he was accustomed to dwell in one particular spot, and that those Christians who were instructed by him, and wished to hear his discourse, assembled at his house. (This assembly would accordingly be ‘The Church in the house of Justin’) He had not visited any other congregations of the Church.”

5.] Epænëtus is not elsewhere named. **the firstfruits**, the same metaphor being in the Apostle’s mind as in ch. xv. 16,—*the first believer*. **Asia**, not *Achaia*, is read by all our most ancient MSS.

6.] *None of the names occurring from ver. 5–15 are mentioned elsewhere* (except possibly Rufus: see below).

7.] The person to be saluted may be **Junia**, feminine, in which case she is probably the wife of Andronicus,—or **Junias**, masculine. It is uncertain also whether the word **Kinsmen** means *fellow-countrymen*, or *relations*. Aquila and Priscilla were Jews: so would Mary be, and probably Epænëtus, being an early believer. If so, the word may have its strict meaning of ‘*relations*.’ But it seems to occur in verses 11, 21 in a wider sense. **fellow prisoners**] When and where uncertain. **of note among the apostles**] Two explanations are given, (1) that they *themselves are counted among* the Apostles: thus Chrysostom: “To be Apostles at all is a great thing; but to be also of note among them, mark what an encomium it is:” (2) ‘*noted among the Apostles*,’ i.e. *well known and spoken of* by the Apostles. Thus many Commentators.—But, as Tholuck remarks, had this latter been the meaning, we should have expected some expression like *in all the Churches* (2 Cor. viii. 18). I may besides remark, that for St. Paul to speak of any persons as *celebrated among the Apostles* in sense (2), would imply that he had more frequent, intercourse with the other Apostles, than we know that he had; and would besides be improbable on any supposition. The whole question seems to have sprung up in modern times from the idea that *the Apostles* must mean *the Twelve only*. If the wider sense found in Acts xiv. 4, 14; 2 Cor. viii. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 6 (compare i. 1), be taken, there need be no doubt concerning the meaning. **which also**] refers to Andronicus and Junia, not to the Apostles.

8 ff.] **beloved in the Lord**, i.e. **beloved in the bonds of Christian fellowship**. **fellow labourer in** (the work of) **Christ**.—Origen and others have confounded Apelles with the well-known Apollos, but apparently without reason.

10.] approved (by trial) in (the work of) **Christ**.—It does not follow that either Aristobulus or Narcissus were *themselves Christians*. Only those of their *families* are here saluted who were **in the Lord**: for we must understand this also in the case of Aristobulus' household: see above. Grotius, Neander, and others, have taken Narcissus for the well-known freedman of Claudius. But this can hardly be, for he was executed in the very beginning of Nero's reign, i.e. about 55 a.D., whereas (see Introduction, §iv. 4, and Chronol. Table) this Epistle cannot have well been written before 58 A.D. Perhaps the family of this Narcissus may have continued to be thus known after his death.

13.] Rufus may have been the son of Simon of Cyrene, mentioned Mark xv, 21: but the name was very common, **the elect**,—not to be softened to merely *excellent*, a sense unknown to our Apostle;—**elect**, i.e. one of the elect of the Lord. **and mine** the Apostle adds from affectionate regard towards the mother of Rufus: ‘my mother,’ in my reverence and affection for her. Jowett compares our Lord's words to St. John, John xix. 27.

14.] These Christians of whom we have only the names, seem to be persons of less repute than the former. Hermas thought by Origen to be the author of the book called “The Shepherd of Hermas.” But this latter is generally supposed to have been the brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, about 150 A.D. **The brethren which are with them**, of ver. 14, and **all the saints which are with them**, of ver. 15, have been taken to point to some separate associations of Christians, perhaps assemblies as in ver. 5: or unions for missionary purposes.

16.] The meaning of this injunction seems to be, that the Roman Christians should take occasion, on the receipt of the Apostle's greetings to them, to testify their mutual love, in this, the ordinary method of salutation, but having among Christians a Christian and holy meaning, see *reff.* It became soon a custom in the churches at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. **All the churches of Christ salute you**] This assurance is stated evidently on the Apostle's authority, speaking for the churches; not implying those only whom he himself had visited, ch. 26; but vouching for the brotherly regard in which the Roman church was held by all churches of Christ. The above misunderstanding has led to the exclusion of the word **all**, which is read in all our oldest MSS.

17–20.] WARNING AGAINST THOSE WHO MADE DIVISIONS AMONG THEM.—To what persons the Apostle refers, is not plain. Some think the Judaizers to be meant, not absolutely within the Christian pale, but endeavouring to sow dissension in it. Others think that St. Paul merely gives this warning in case such persons came to Rome. *Judging by the text itself*, we infer that these teachers were similar to those pointed out in Phil. iii. 2, 18; 1 Tim. vi. 3 ff.; 2 Cor. xi. 13, 20: *unprincipled and selfish persons, seducing others for their own gain*: whether Judaizers or not, does not appear: but considering that the great opponents of the Apostle were of this party, we may perhaps infer that they also belonged to it.

17.] The doctrine here spoken of is probably rather ethical than doctrinal; compare Eph. iv. 20–24.

19.] See ch. i. 8. Their obedience being matter of universal notoriety, is the ground of his confidence that they will comply with his entreaty, ver 17,—Some slight reproof is conveyed in **I rejoice... yet...** They were well known for obedience, but had not been perhaps cautious enough with regard to these designing persons and their pretended wisdom. See Matt. x. 16, of which words of our Lord there seems to be here a reminiscence.

20.] “Seeing that he had mentioned those who caused divisions and offences, he says **the God of peace** that he might encourage them to expect liberation from these persons.” Chrysostom: and so most Commentators. De Wette prefers taking **the God of peace** more generally, as ‘the God of salvation,’ and the usage of the expression (see references) seems to favour this. **shall bruise Satan** is a similitude from Gen. iii. 15. It does not express any *wish*, but a prophetic assurance, and encouragement in bearing up against all adversaries, that it would not be long before the great Adversary himself would be bruised under their feet. **The grace, &c.]** It appears as if the Epistle was intended to conclude with this usual benediction, but the Apostle found occasion to add more. This he does also in other Epistles: see 1 Cor. xvi. 23, 24; similarly Phil. iv. 20, and vv. 21–23 after the doxology,—2 Thess. iii. 16, 17, 18:—1 Tim. vi. 16, 17 ff.:—2 Tim. iv. 18, 19 ff.

21–24.] GREETINGS FROM VARIOUS PERSONS.

21.] Lucius must not be mistaken for Lucas (or Lucanus),—but was probably Lucius of Cyrene, Acts xiii. 1, see note there—Jason *may* be the same who is mentioned Acts xvii. 5, as the host of Paul and Silas at Thessalonica.—A ‘*Sopater (son) of Pyrrhus of Berea*’ occurs Acts xx. 4, but it is quite uncertain whether this Sosipater is the same person. **my Kinsmen**, see above, ver. 7. These persons may have been Jews; but we cannot tell whether the expression may not be used in a wider sense.

22.] There is nothing strange (as Olshausen supposes) in this salutation being inserted in the first person. It would be natural enough that Tertius the amanuensis, inserting the words, should change the form into the first person, and afterwards proceed from the dictation of the Apostle as before. Some suppose him to have done this on transcribing the Epistle.—Tholuck notices this irregularity as a corroboration of the genuineness of the chapter. On the supposed identity of Tertius with Silas, see note

on Acts xv. 22.

23.] Gaius is mentioned 1 Cor. i. 14, as having been baptized by St. Paul. **The host of the whole Church** probably implies that the assemblies of the church were held in his house:—or perhaps, that his hospitality to Christians was universal.—Erastus, holding this office, can hardly have been the same who was with the Apostle in Ephesus, Acts xix. 22. It is more probable that the Erastus of 2 Tim. iv. 20 is identical with this than with that other. **our brother]** See 1 Cor. i. 1: one among the brethren. The rest have been specified by their services or offices.

24.] *The benediction repeated*; see above on ver 20.

25–27.] CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY. The genuineness of this doxology and its position in the Epistle have been much questioned. From the external evidence, which may be seen in the various readings in my Greek Test., it is plain that *its genuineness* as a part of the Epistle *is placed beyond all reasonable doubt*. This unusual character of the position and diction of this doxology has been used as an internal argument against the genuineness of the portion. St. Paul never elsewhere ends with such a doxology. His doxologies, when he does use such, are simple, and perspicuous in construction, whereas this is involved, and rhetorical. This objection however is completely answered by the supposition that the doxology was the effusion of the fervent mind of the Apostle, on taking a general survey of the Epistle. We find in its diction striking similarities to that of the pastoral Epistles: a phenomenon occurring in several places where St. Paul writes in a fervid and impassioned manner,—also where he writes *with his own hand*. ‘That the doxology is made up of unusual expressions taken from Paul’s other writings, that it is difficult and involved, are facts, which if rightly argued from, would substantiate, *not its interpolation, but its genuineness*: seeing that an interpolator would have taken care to conform it to the character of the Epistle in which it stands, and to have left in it no irregularity which would bring it into question. The construction is exceedingly difficult: but the reader must be referred to the notes on the Greek Test. in order to appreciate its difficulty. In an English version we are obliged to adopt one hypothesis or other as to the construction, and thus translate more plainly than the literal rendering would warrant

25.] **according to**, i.e. **in reference to**, ‘in sub-ordination to,’ and according to the requirements of. **the preaching of Jesus Christ** can hardly mean, ‘*the preaching which Jesus Christ hath accomplished by me*’ (ch. xv. 18)—**but the preaching of Christ**, i.e. making known of Christ, as the verb is used 1 Cor. i. 23; xv. 12, and in many other places. **according to the revelation]** This second **according to** is best taken, not as co-ordinate to the former one, and following the verb “*to*

establish you,” nor as belonging to “*him that is able*,” which would be an unusual limitation of the divine Power,—but as subordinate to what has gone immediately before,—**t he preaching of Jesus Christ according to, &c. the mystery]** The *mystery* (sec ch. xi. 25, note) of the *Gospel* is often said to have been thus *hidden From eternity* in the counsels of God—see Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 26; 2 Tim. i. 9; Tit. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 20; Rev. xiii. 8.

26.] See ch. i. 2. The prophetic writings were the storehouse out of which the preachers of the gospel took their demonstrations that Jesus was the Christ see Acts xviii. 28; more especially, it is true, *to the Jews*, who however are here included among **all the nations. ac-cording to the commandment]** may refer either to the *prophetic writings* being drawn up by the command of God,—or to the *manifestation of the mystery by the preachers of the gospel* thus taking place. The latter seems best to suit the sense. **eternal** refers back to **eternal ages** before. The word is the same in the original, and should have been kept scrupulously the same in the English, not, as here and in Matt. xxii. 46, rendered by two different English terms.

27.] The words **through Jesus Christ** must, by the requirements of the construction, be applied to the **only wise God**, and not (as in the A.V.) to **glory**. It must be rendered **to the only wise God through Jesus Christ**, i. e, Him who is revealed to us by Christ as such.—The **to whom** cannot without great harshness be referred to *Christ*, seeing that the words **to the only wise God** resume the chief subject of the sentence, and to them the relative pronoun must apply.

1 CORINTHIANS

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THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

1 Corinthians: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1–3.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1.] The words **through the will of God** point probably to the depreciation of Paul's apostolic authority at Corinth. In Gal. i. 1 we have this much more strongly asserted. But they have a reference to Paul himself also: "as they point in their aspect of authority, towards the churches, so, in their aspect of a humble and earnest mind, they come from Paul himself," says Bengel. Chrysostom, referring the words to called, says, "Because it was His will we were called, not because we were worthy." **Sosthenes** can hardly be assumed to be identical with the ruler of the synagogue in Acts xviii. 17: see note there. He must have been some Christian well known to the church at Corinth. Thus Paul associates with himself Silvanus and Timotheus in the Epistles to the Thessalonians: and Timotheus in 2 Cor. Chrysostom attributes it to modesty, that he associates with himself one by far his inferior. Some have supposed Sosthenes to be the *writer* (i. e. the amanuensis) of the Epistle, see Rom. xvi. 22. Possibly he may have been one of the household of Chloe (ver. 11) through whom the intelligence had been received, and the Apostle may have associated him with himself as approving the appeal to apostolic authority. Perhaps some slight may have been put upon him by the parties at Corinth, and for that reason St. Paul puts him forward. our brother as 2 Cor. i. 1, of Timothy.

2.] On the words **the church of God which is at Corinth**, Calvin remarks; "It may perhaps seem strange that he should call by the name of the Church of God that assembly of men among whom so many corruptions were rife, that Satan seemed to reign there rather than God. And it is certain that he had no design of flattering the Corinthians; for he speaks by the Spirit of God, who does not use flattery. Yet, among so many defilements, what kind of an appearance of a Church can any longer be found? I answer, that, however many vices had crept in, however many corruptions of doctrine and of morals, there were yet some signs of a true Church. This passage is carefully to be noted, to keep us from requiring in this world a Church without any spot or wrinkle; or refusing this title to any assembly in which all is not according to our wish. For this is a dangerous temptation, to think that there is no Church, unless where there appears perfect purity. For whoever persuades himself of this, will at length find it necessary to separate off from all other men, and give himself out for the only holy man in the world, or else to found a peculiar sect with a few hypocrites for his followers. If we ask what cause had St. Paul to recognize the Church at Corinth? the answer is, because he saw among them the doctrine of the Gospel, Baptism, the Supper of the Lord; symbols by which the Church ought to be discerned." On the words of God, Chrysostom remarks, "not of this man and of that man, but of God," taking the expression as addressed to the Corinthians to remind them of their position as a congregation belonging to GOD, and *not to any head of a party*. Perhaps this is too refined, the words "*the Church of God*" being so usual with St. Paul, —see references.

sanctified in Christ Jesus] (i. e. hallowed, dedicated) **to God in** (in union with and by means of) **Jesus Christ**. See Rom. i. 7, note.

called [to be] saints, with all, &c.] These words do not belong to the designations just preceding, '*as are all, &c.*', but form part of the address of the Epistle, so that these all are partakers with the Corinthians in it. They form a weighty and precious addition,—made here doubtless to shew the Corinthians, that membership of God's Holy Catholic Church consisted not in being planted, or presided over by Paul, Apollos, or Cephas (or their successors), but in *calling on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The Church of England has adopted from this verse her solemn explanation of the term, in the 'Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men.' "More especially, we pray for the good estate of *the Catholic Church*: that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that *all who profess and call themselves*

Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." The phrase "*to call upon the name of the Lord*," was one adopted from the Old Test.: see Joel ii. 32; the adjunct **our Lord Jesus Christ**, defines that Lord (Jehovah) on whom the Christians called, to be Jesus Christ,—and is a direct testimony to the divine worship of Jesus Christ, as universal in the Church. **in every place, both their's** (in their country, wherever that may be) **and our's**. This connexion is far better than to join **both their's and our's** with **Lord**, thereby making the first our superfluous. **their's**, refers to *the all that call, &c., our's* to Paul, and Sosthenes, and those whom he is addressing. 3.] See Rom. i. 7, note. Olshausen remarks, that **peace** has peculiar weight here on account of the dissensions in the Corinthian Church.

4-9.] THANKSGIVING, AND EXPRESSION OF HOPE ON ACCOUNT OF THE SPIRITUAL STATE OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH. There was much in the Corinthian believers for which to be thankful, and on account of which to hope. These things he puts in the foreground, not only to encourage them, but to appeal to their better selves, and to bring out the following contrast more plainly.

4.

my God] so Rom. i. 8; Phil. i. 3.

always] expanded in Phil. i. 4 into “*always in every prayer of mine.*”

in Christ Jesus] This **in** must not, as in A.V., be rendered “by;” the grace had been given to them **in Christ**, as *members of Christ*. So also below.

5. in every thing] general: particularized by **in all teaching, and all knowledge.** The former represents *the truth preached*; the latter, *the truth apprehended*. They were rich in the *preaching* of the word, had among them able preachers: and rich in the *apprehension* of the word, were themselves intelligent hearers. See 2 Cor. viii. 7, where to these are added faith, zeal, and love.

6. the testimony of Christ] the witness concerning Christ delivered by me. **was firmly established,—took deep root** among you; i.e. ‘as was to have been expected, from the impression made among you by my preaching of Christ.’ This confirmation was *internal*, by faith and permanence in the truth, not external, by miracles.

7.] so that ye come not behind (others) **in any gift [of grace];—gift [of grace]** here has its widest sense, *of that which is the effect of grace*,—not meaning ‘spiritual gifts,’ in the narrower sense, as in ch. xii. 4. This is plain from the whole strain of the passage, which dwells not on outward gifts, but on the inward graces of the Christian life.

waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ] which is the greatest proof of maturity and richness of the spiritual life; implying the coexistence and co-operation of *faith*, whereby they believed the promise of Christ,—*hope*, whereby they looked on to its fulfillment,—and *love*, whereby that anticipation was lit up with earnest desire; compare the words, “*to all them that love His appearing,*” 2 Tim. iv. 8.

8. who] viz. God, ver. 4, not Jesus Christ, in which case we should have “*in the day of His appearing,*” or, “*in His day.*” The **also** besides shews this.

until the end, i.e. to the end of the world, not merely ‘to the end of your lives.’

9.] See Phil. i. 6; 1 Thess. v. 24. **The fellowship of His Son**, as Meyer well remarks, is the *glory of the sons of God*, Rom. viii. 21: for they will be *joint-heirs with Christ, glorified together*,—see Rom viii. 17, 23; 2 Thess. ii. 14. The mention of *fellowship* may perhaps have been intended to prepare the way, as was before done in ver. 2, for the reproof which is coming.—Chrysostom remarks respecting verses 1–9, “See how he is always riveting them close with the name of Christ. He makes mention, not of any apostle or teacher, but evermore of Him who is their desire, as if he were endeavoring to bring back men after a debauch to their sound state. For nowhere in any other epistle is the name of Christ so often repeated. Here in a few verses it occurs many times, and is in fact the connecting link of almost all the introductory part of the Epistle.”

10—IV. 21.] Reproof OF THE PARTY-DIVISIONS AMONG THEM: BY OCCASION OF WHICH, THE APOSTLE EXPLAINS AND DEFENDS HIS OWN METHOD OF PREACH-ING ONLY CHRIST TO THEM.

10.] by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (as “*by the mercies of God,*” Rom. xii. 1): “as the bond of union, and as the most holy name by which they could be adjured.” Stanley.

that ye all speak the same thing is a contrast to what follows, “*I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, I of Christ,*” ver. 12,—but further implies the *having the same sentiments* on the subjects which divided them: see Phil. ii. 2.

in the same mind regards **disposition, in the same judgment, opinion.**

11.] We cannot fill up them [**which are of the house] of Chloe** (simply **them of Chloe** in the original), not knowing whether they were *sons or servants*, or other members of her family. Nor can we say whether Chloe was an *inhabitant of Corinth, or some Christian woman known to the Corinthians elsewhere, or an Ephesian*, having friends who had been in Corinth.

12.] Respecting the matter of fact to which the verse alludes, I have given references in the Introduction, §ii. 10, to the principal theories of the German critics, and will only here re-state the conclusions which I have there endeavored to substantiate: (1) that these designations are *not used* as pointing to *actual parties formed and subsisting* among the Corinthians, but (2) as representing the SPIRIT WITH WHICH THEY CONTENDED against one another, being the sayings of *individuals*, and *not of parties*: as if it were said, ‘You are all in the habit of alleging against one another, some your special attachment to Paul, some to Apollos, some to Cephas, others to no mere human teacher, but barely to Christ, to the exclusion of us his Apostles.’ (3) That these sayings, while they are not to be made the basis of any hypothesis respecting *definite parties* at Corinth, do nevertheless *hint at matters of fact*, and are *not merely* by way of example: and (4) that this view of the verse, which was taken by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, and Calvin, is *borne out*, and indeed *necessitated*, by ch. iv. 6 (see there).

I am of Paul] This profession, of being guided especially *by the words and acts of Paul*, would probably belong to those who were the first **fruits of, or directly converted under, his** ministry. Such persons would contend for his apostolic authority, and maintain doctrinally his teaching, *so far being right*; but, as usual with partisans, would magnify into importance practices and sayings of his which were in themselves indifferent, and forget that theirs was a service of perfect freedom under one Master, even Christ. With these he does not deal *doctrinally* in the Epistle, as there was *no need for it*: but involves them in the same censure as the rest, and shews them in ch. ii., iii., iv. that he had no such purpose of gaining personal honor among them, but only of building them up in Christ.

I of Apollos] Apollos (Acts xviii. 24, ff.) had come to Corinth after the departure of Paul, and being eloquent, might attract some, to whom the bodily presence of Paul seemed weak and his speech contemptible. It would certainly appear that some occasion had been taken by this difference, to set too high a value on external and rhetorical form of putting forth the gospel of Christ. This the Apostle seems to be blaming (in part) in the conclusion of this, and the next chapter. And from ch. xvi. 12, it would seem likely that Apollos himself had been aware of the abuse of his manner of teaching which had taken place, and was unwilling, by repeating his visit just then, to sanction or increase it.

I of Cephas] All we can say in possible explanation of this is, that as Peter was the *Apostle of the circumcision*,—as we know from Gal. ii. 11 ff. that his course of action on one occasion was reprehended by Paul, and as that course of action no doubt had influence and found followers, it is very conceivable that some of those who in Corinth lightly esteemed Paul, might take advantage of this honored name, and cite against the Christian liberty taught by their own spiritual founder, the stricter practice of Peter. If so, these persons would be mainly found among the Jewish converts or Judaizers; and the matters treated in ch. vii.—ix. may have been subjects of doubt mainly with these persons.

and I of Christ] A rendering has been proposed which need only be mentioned to be rejected: viz., that St. Paul having mentioned the three parties, then breaks off, and adds, *speaking in his own person*, “*and I (I Paul) am of Christ*,” *not of any of these preceding*. The words seems to apply to those who make a merit of *not being attached to any human teacher*,—who therefore slighted the apostleship of Paul. To them frequent allusion seems to be made in this and in the second Epistle, and more especially in 2 Cor. x. 7–11. For a more detailed discussion of the whole subject, see the Introduction, as referred to above.

13.] Is Christ (the *Person* of Christ, as the centre and bond of Christian unity,—not, the *gospel* of Christ, nor the *Church* of Christ, nor the *power* of Christ, i. e His right over all) **divided** (‘into various parts,’ one under one leader, another under another,—which in fact amounts to His being divided against Himself)? The question applies to *all/addressed*, not to the last. In that case the words would mean ‘Has Christ become the property of one part only? which they cannot do.

was Paul crucified for you?] literally, **Surely Paul was not crucified for you?** By repudiating all possibility of *himself* being the Head and *name-giver* of their church, he does so even more strongly for Cephas and Apollos: for he *founded* the church at Corinth. On the expression, *baptized into the name of*, see **Matt. xxviii. 19.**

14.] It may seem surprising that St. Paul should not have referred to the *import of baptism itself* as a reason to substantiate his argument. He does not this, but tacitly assumes, between ver. 13 and 14, the probability that his having baptized any considerable number among the Corinthians would naturally have led to the abuse against which he is arguing.

I thank God, &c.] ‘*I am (now) thankful to God, who so ordered it that I did not*,’ &c. Crispus, the former ruler of the synagogue, Acts xviii. 8. Gaius, afterwards the host of the Apostle, and of the church, Rom. xvi. 23.

15.] lest represents the purpose, not of the Apostle’s conduct at the time, but of the divine ordering of things: ‘God so arranged it, that none might say,’ &c.

16.] He subsequently recollects having baptized Stephanas and his family (see ch. xvi. 15, 17),—perhaps from information derived from Stephanas himself, who was with him:—and he leaves an opening for any others whom he may possibly have

baptized and have forgotten it. The last clause is important as against those who maintain the *absolute omniscience* of the inspired writers on *every topic which they handle*.

17.] This verse forms the transition to the description of his preaching among them. His mission was *not to baptize*:—a trace already, of the separation of the offices of baptizing and preaching.

Chrysostom says: “To baptize a man under instruction, and already believing, is in the power of any one whatever: for the free will of the candidate does all, and the grace of God: but when the instruction of unbelievers is to be carried on, much toil is needed, and much skill: and in those days personal danger was besides incurred.” It is evident that this is said in no *derogation* of Baptism, for he did on occasion baptize,—and it would be impossible that he should speak lightly of the ordinance to which he appeals (Rom. vi. 3) as the seal of our union with Christ.

not in wisdom of speech] It seems evident from this apology, and other hints in the two Epistles, e.g. 2 Cor. x. 10, that the *plainness and simplicity of Paul's speech* had been one cause among the Corinthians of alienation from him. Perhaps, as hinted above, the eloquence of Apollos was extolled to St. Paul's disadvantage.

in (as the element in which: better than ‘*with*’) **wisdom of speech** (i. e. the speculations of philosophy: that these are meant, and not mere eloquence or rhetorical form, appears by what follows, which treats of the *subject*, and not merely of the *manner* of the preaching), **lest the Cross of Christ** (the great central point of his preaching; exhibiting man’s guilt and God’s love in their highest degrees and closest connexion) **should be made of none effect**.

This would come to pass rather by *philosophical speculations* than by *eloquence*.

18.] For (explanation of the foregoing clause,—and that, assuming the *mutual exclusiveness* of the *preaching of the Cross* and *wisdom of speech*, and the identity of “*they that are perishing*” with the lovers of *wisdom of speech*, as if it were said, ‘*wisdom of speech* would nullify the *Cross of Christ*: for the doctrine of the *Cross* is to the lovers of that *wisdom*, folly. The reasoning is elliptical and involved) **the preaching** (literally, *speech or doctrine*). “There is a word, an eloquence, which is most powerful, the eloquence of the *Cross*: referring to the term *wisdom of speech*.” Stanley) of the cross is to them that are perishing (those who are through unbelief on the way to everlasting perdition), **foolishness; but to us who are being saved** (those who are *being saved* are *those in the way of salvation*:—who by faith have laid hold on Christ, and are by Him in the course of *being saved*) **it is the power** (see Rom. i. 16, and note: i.e. *the perfection* of God’s Power—the Power itself, in its noblest manifestation) **of God**.

19.] For (continuation of reason for not preaching in *wisdom of speech*: because it was prophesied that such *wisdom* should be brought to nought by God) **it is written, &c.**

The citation is after the Septuagint, with the exception of “*I will destroy*,” for “*I will hide*.” The Hebrew is ‘the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the prudence of the prudent shall disappear.’ But as Calvin truly says, “the wisdom perishes because the Lord destroys it; the prudence disappears because it is blotted out and annihilated by God.”

20.] The question implies disappearance and exclusion.

the wise, generally: the **scribe**, the Jewish interpreter of the law; the **disputer**, the Greek arguer.

made foolish] “Shewn to be foolish in comparison with the embracing of the doctrine of the *Cross*.” Chrysostom. **21.] For** (explanation of “*hath made foolish*”) when (not *temporal*, but equivalent to ‘seeing that’) **in the wisdom of God** (as part of the wise arrangement of God. Some render it, ‘*by the revelation of the wisdom of God*,’ which was made to the Gentiles, as Rom. i., by creation, and to the Jews by the law:—Chrysostom takes it for the wisdom manifest in His *works only*. But I very much doubt the legitimacy of this use of *wisdom*, as equivalent to those things by which the *wisdom* is manifested) **the world** (Jew and Gentile, see next verse) **through its wisdom** (as a means of attaining knowledge: or, but I prefer the other, “through the wisdom [of God] which I have just mentioned:” so Stanley) **knew not** (could not find out) **God, God was pleased by the foolishness of preaching** (literally, ‘of the proclamation;’ by that preaching which is reputed folly by the world) **to save them that believe.**—Rom. i. 16 throws light on this last expression as connected with ‘*the power of God*.’ in our ver. 18, and with what follows here. There the two are joined: “*for it* (the Gospel of Christ) *is the power of God to every one that believeth*.”

22. ask for signs] see Matt. xii. 38, xvi. 1; Luke xi. 16; John ii. 18, vi. 30. The sign required was not, as I have observed on Matt. xii. 38, a mere miracle, but some token from Heaven, substantiating the word preached.

23.] Still the expansion of the words, “*the foolishness of preaching*.” Now, a **stumbling block** as regards the Jews, and foolishness as regards the Gentiles, correspond to the general term foolishness before.

24.] This verse plainly is a continuation of the opposition to ver. 22 before begun, but itself springs by way of opposition out of the words “*a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to Greeks,*”—and carries the thought back to verses 18 and 21.

power, as fulfilling the requirement of the seekers after a *sign*:—**wisdom**,—of those who sought *wisdom*.—The repetition of **Christ** gives solemnity, at the same time that it concentrates the *power* and *wisdom* in the Person of Christ; as if it had been said, ‘*Christ, even in His humiliation unto death, the power of God and wisdom of God.*’

25.] Because (reason why Christ [crucified] is the power and wisdom of God) **the foolishness of God** (that act of God which men think foolish) **is wiser than men** (surpasses in wisdom, not only *all which they call* by that name, but *men*, all possible wisdom of mankind); **and the weakness of God** (that act of God which men think weak) **is stronger than men** (not only surpasses in might all which *they think powerful*, but *men themselves*,—all human might whatsoever. The latter clause introduces a fresh thought, the way for which however has been prepared by the mention of power in verses 18, 24. The Jews required a proof of *divine Might*: we give them *Christ crucified*, which is to them a thing weak: but this *weak thing* of God is stronger than men).

26.] See a similar reminder on the part of the Apostle, 1 Thess. i. 4. **For** seems best to apply to what has immediately gone before. As a proof that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men, he calls attention to the fact that the Christian church, so full of divine wisdom and strength by the indwelling Spirit of God, consisted for the most part, not of the wise or mighty among men, but of those whom the world despised.

your calling—the vocation and standing of Christian men.

how that not many [of you] are wise according to the flesh (“he means, in that wisdom which may be acquired by human diligence without the teaching of the Holy Spirit.” Estius), **not many mighty, not many noble**. ‘This is far better than to supply (as A.V., and most Commentators) *were*, or, *are called* after *noble*. Olshansen observes: “The ancient Christians were for the most part slaves and men of low station; the whole history of the expansion of the church is in reality a progressive victory of the ignorant over the learned, the lowly over the lofty, until the emperor himself laid down his crown before the cross of Christ.”

27, 28.] the foolish things (nenter for more generalization, but in fact equivalent to *the foolish men*. This is shewn by the *wise men* following, in that case it being necessary to use the masculine, as “*wise things*” could not well be said) **of** (belonging to) **the world**: not in *the eyes of the world*, which would not fit the *sense*: for they were not only *seemingly* but *really* foolish, when God chose them. **put to shame**, by shewing to the wise and the strong, the foolish and the weak entering the kingdom of heaven before them.

the base things, matter of *fact*—**the low-born: the things which are despised**, matter of *estimation*. Omitting the “*and*” (see the A.V.), which is certainly the true reading, **the things which are not** may belong to all four, the foolish, the weak, the base, and the despised,—but more probably it has reference only to the last two. The expression **are not**, means, **as good as have no existence**. Olshausen refines on the expression too much, when he explains it of those who have lost their old carnal life, and have not yet acquired their new spiritual one: it more probably means, things (persons) of absolutely *no account* in the world, unassignable among men, which the *base* and *despised* are—Meyer remarks, that the threefold repetition of *God chose*, with the three “contrasts to *wise, mighty, and noble*”, announces the fact with a triumphant emphasis.

bring to nought] reduce to the state of *things that are not*.’ All the **things that are**, all the *realities*, of the world, are of absolutely *no account*, unassignable, in God’s spiritual kingdom. Literally, **That all flesh may have no ground of boasting before God**; i.e. may be deprived of all ground of boasting.

30.] But (contrast to the boasting just spoken of) **of Him are ye** (from Him ye, who once were as *things that are not*, now *are*.—He is the Author of your spiritual life) **in** (in union with) **Christ Jesus, who was made** (not, ‘is made’) **wisdom** (standing us in stead of all earthly wisdom, and raising us above it by being **from God**);—Wisdom—in His incarnation, in His life of obedience, in His teaching, in His death of atonement, in His glorification and sending of the Spirit: and not only Wisdom, but all that we can want to purify us from guilt, to give us righteousness before God, to sanctify us after His likeness) **unto us from God, both righteousness and sanctification** (the source of our justification before God) **and redemption** (by His Spirit: observe the rendering, implying that in these two, righteousness and sanctification, The Christian life is complete—that they are so joined as to form one whole—**our righteousness as well as our sanctification**. As Bisping well remarks, “righteousness and *sanctification* are closely joined, and form but one idea, that of Christian justification: *righteousness* the negative side, in Christ’s justifying work—*sanctification* the positive, the imparting to us of sanctifying grace”), **and redemption** (by satisfaction made for our sin: or perhaps *deliverance*, from all evil, and especially from eternal death, as Rom. viii. 23: but I prefer the other). See this construction of the sentence, as against that in A.V., justified, in the note in my Greek Test.

31.] The citation is freely made from the *Septuagint*. This verse, declaring, in opposition to ver. 29, the only true ground of

boasting, viz. in God and His mercies to us in Christ, closes the description of *God's dealing* in this matter. He now reverts to the subject of *his own preaching*.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 2

II. 1–5.] ACCORDINGLY, PAUL DID NOT USE AMONG THEM WORDS OF WORLDLY WISDOM, BUT PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED ONLY, IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

1.] **And I** (as one of the *we* of i. 23, and also with reference to the preceding verse, *He that glorieth, let Him glory in the Lord*), **when I came to you, brethren, came declaring unto you the testimony of God, not with excellency of speech or of wisdom.**

2.] Literally, **For I did not resolve to know any thing** (meaning, “*the only thing that I made it definitely my business to know, was*”) **among you, save Jesus Christ** (His Person), **and Him** (as) **crucified** (His Office). It would seem that the historical facts of redemption, and especially the crucifixion of Christ, as a matter of offence, had been kept in the background by these professors of human wisdom. “We must not overlook, that Paul does not say ‘to know *any thing of* or *concerning* Christ,’ but to know **HIM HIMSELF**, to preach **HIM HIMSELF**. The *historical Christ* is also the *living Christ*, who is *with His own till the end of time*; He works personally in every believer, and forms Himself in each one. Therefore it is universally **CHRIST HIMSELF**, the Crucified and the Risen One, who is the subject of preaching, and is also Wisdom itself: for His history evermore lives and repeated itself in the whole church and in every member of it: it never waxes old, any more than does God Himself;—it retains at this day that fulness of power, in which it was revealed at the first foundation of the church.” Olshausen.

3.] **And I;** in the original the personal pronoun is repeated for emphasis, the *nature of his own preaching* being the leading subject-matter here.—The **weakness and fear and much trembling** must not be exclusively understood of his *manner of speech* as contrasted with the rhetorical preachers, for these follow in the next verse,—but partly of this, and principally of his *internal deep and humble persuasion* of his own weakness, and the mightiness of the work which was entrusted to him. So in Phil. ii. 12, 13, he commands the Philippians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, for it was God that wrought in them. The *weakness* may have reference to the *weak bodily presence* of 2 Cor. x. 10. Chrysostom and others understand it of *persecutions*: but in the places to which he refers, it has a far wider meaning,—viz. *infirmities*, including those resulting from persecution.

4.] **And** (following naturally on the weakness, &c., just mentioned—‘as corresponding to it) **my speech and my preaching** (in the original **speech** refers to the *course of argument and inculcation of doctrine*, **Preaching** to the *announcement of facts*) **Was not with** (literally, *in*: did not consist of, was not set forth in) **persuasive words of [man's] wisdom** (see margin), **but with** (in, see above) **demonstration of the Spirit and of power**: i.e. either, taking the genitives as objective, demonstration having for its object, *demonstrating, the presence or working of the Spirit and Power of God*:—or, taking them subjectively, demonstration (of the truth) *springing from the Spirit and Power of God*. I prefer the latter. It can hardly be understood of the *miracles* done by the Spirit through him, which companied his preaching (so Chrysostom and others), for he is here simply speaking of the preaching itself.

5.] **may not stand in**, i.e. may not be grounded on,—owe its origin and stability to. “The Spirit is the original Creator of Faith, which cannot be begotten of human caprice, though man has the capability of *hindering its production*: and it depends for its continuance on the same mighty Spirit, who is almost without intermission begetting it anew.” Olshausen.

6–16.] YET THE APOSTLE SPOKE WISDOM AMONG THE PERFECT, BUT OF A KIND HIGHER THAN THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD; *a wisdom revealed from God by the Spirit, only intelligible by the spiritual man, and not by the unspiritual*. The Apostle rejects the imputation, that the Gospel and its preaching is *inconsistent with wisdom*, rightly understood: nay, shews that the wisdom of the Gospel is of a far higher order than that of the wise in this world, and far above their comprehension.

6.] Yet contrasts with the foregoing.

we] viz. ‘*we Apostles*:’ not “*I Paul*, though he often uses the plural with this meaning:—for, ch. iii. 1, he resumes “*And I, brethren...*”

among the perfect] i.e. when discoursing to those who are not babes in Christ, but of sufficient maturity to have their senses exercised (Heb. v. 14) so as to discern good and evil. That this is the right interpretation, the whole following context shews, and especially ch. iii. 1, 2, where a difference is laid down between the *milk administered to babes*, and the *strong meat to men*. ‘The difference is in the *matter of the teaching itself*: there is a lower, and there is a higher teaching. On the other hand,

Chrysostom and many others understand the difference to be merely in the *estimate formed of the same* teaching according as men were spiritual or unspiritual, interpreting **among the perfect** to mean ‘*in the estimation of the perfect*,’ which is allowable, but plainly irreconcilable with the whole apologetic course of the chapter, and most of all with ch. iii. 1, where he asserts that *he did not speak this wisdom* to the Corinthians.—We are then brought to the enquiry,—*what was this wisdom?* “Meyer limits it too narrowly to *consideration of the future kingdom of Christ*. Riickert adds to this, *the higher views of the divine ordering of the world* with respect to the unfolding of God’s kingdom,—of the meaning of the preparatory dispensations before Christ, e.g. the law,—of the manner in which the death and resurrection of Christ promoted the salvation of mankind. According to ver. 12, the knowledge of the blessings of salvation, of the glory which accompanies the kingdom of God, belongs to this higher species of teaching. Examples of it are found in the Epistle to the Romans, in the setting forth of the doctrine of justification,—of the contrast between Christ and Adam,—of predestination (compare the word ‘*mystery*,’ Rom. xi. 25), and in the Epistles to the Eph. and Col. (where the word ‘*mystery*’ often occurs) in the declarations respecting the divine plan of Redemption and the Person of Christ; nay, in our Epistle, ch. xv. Of the same kind are the considerations treated, Heb. vii.—x.: cf. iv. 11 ff” De Wette.

but a wisdom not of this world,—not, as A.V., ‘*not the wisdom of this world*,’ which loses the peculiar force of the negative.—These **rulers** are parallel with the “wise,” “mighty,” “noble,” of ch. i. 26, and are connected with them expressively by the words **that are coming to nought**, referring to “*that He might bring to nought the things that are*,” ch. i. 28. They comprehend *all in estimation and power*, Jewish or Gentile. Chrysostom says, “*By rulers of the world* here he does not mean any spiritual beings, as some say: but those in estimation, those in power, those who think worldly matters worth contending for, philosophers and rhetoricians and authors: for these men have often ruled, and proved demagogues.” **who are coming** (more literally, **being brought**) **to nought**, viz. by God making choice of the weak and despised, and passing over them, ch. i. 28: not said of *their transitoriness generally*,—nor of *their power being annihilated at the coming of Christ*,—nor of *their having indeed crucified Christ*, but of their being brought to nought by *His Resurrection and the increase of His Church*.

7.] But we speak GOD’s **wisdom** (emphasis on the word **God’s**):—the wisdom which **God** possesses and has revealed) **in a mystery** (i. e. as handling a mystery, dealing with a mystery. So we have “*my understanding in the mystery of Christ*,” Eph. iii. 4.—The Romanist expositors, taking the connexion rightly, have wrested the meaning to support the idea of the secret discipline which they imagine to be here hinted at, explaining the words *in a mystery* to mean, “not openly and promiscuously among all, because all cannot receive it: but secretly and to the few, namely, those who are spiritual and perfect.” So Estius), **even the (hitherto) hidden wisdom** (see Rom. xvi. 25; Col. i. 26):—**which God foreordained before the worlds** (literally, **the ages of time**) **unto** (*in order to*, the purpose of this preordination) **our glory** (our participation in the things which He has prepared for them that love Him, ver. 9: glory, as contrasted with the bringing to nought of the rulers).

8.] Which is in apposition with the former *which*, and does not refer to *glory*, as Tertullian supposed, saying, “he adds concerning our glory, that none of the princes of this world knew it:” for this would be departing from the whole sense of the context, which is, that *the wisdom of God was hidden* from men.

for had they known it,&c., is a *proof from experience*, that the rulers of this world, of whom the Jewish rulers were a representative sample, were ignorant of the wisdom of God. Had they known it, they would not have put to a disgraceful death Him who was the Lord of glory,—i. e. who possesses in His own right glory eternal, see John xvii. 5, 24.—These words are not a parenthesis, but continue the sense of the foregoing, completing the proof of man’s ignorance of God’s wisdom;—even this world’s *rulers* know it not, as they have shewn: how much less then the rest.

9 f.] But (opposition to ver. 8) **a s it is written**, **Things which the eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, hath God revealed unto us through His Spirit**.—*Whence is the citation made?* Origen says, “that it is found in no canonical book, but in the ‘secrets of Elias the prophet.’” a lost apocryphal book:—Chrysostom and Theophylact give the alternative, either that the words are a paraphrase of Isa. lii. 15, or that they were contained in some lost book, of which Chrysostom argues that there were very many, and that but few remain to us. Jerome believes the words to be those of Isa. Ixiv. 4, paraphrased.—I own that probability seems to me to incline to Jerome’s view, especially when we remember, how freely St. Paul is in the habit of citing. The words of Isa. Ixiv. 4, are quite as near to the general sense of the citation as is the case in many other instances, and the words **have not entered into the heart of man** may well be a reminiscence from Isa. Ixv. 17, not far from the other place: see A.V., in the margin of that place. Such minglings together of clauses from various parts are not unexampled with the Apostle, especially when, as here, he is not citing as *authority*, but merely *illustrating his argument by Old Test. expressions*.

10. the Spirit] the Holy Spirit of God but working in us and with our spirits, Rom. viii. 16.

searcheth] the original verb is used of active research, implying accurate knowledge

the deep things] literally, **the depths**: see reff. There is a comparison here between the *Spirit of God* and the *spirit of a man*,

which is further carried out in the next verse. And thus, as the *spirit of a man* knows the *depth* of a man, all that is in him, so the *Spirit of God* searches and knows the manifold and infinite depths of God—His Essence, His Attributes, His Counsels: and being the *Spirit which is in us*, besides being the *Spirit of God*, *teaches us*, according to our capacity, *those depths of God*.

11.] For who among MEN knoweth the things of a MAN (the emphasis is on **men** and **man** as compared with **God**), **except the spirit of a man which is in him? So also the things of God knoweth none, save only the Spirit of God.**—We may remark that the comparison here must not be urged beyond what is intended by the Apostle. He is speaking of the impossibility of any but the *Spirit of God conferring a knowledge of the things of God*. In order to shew this, he compares human things with divine, appealing to the fact that none but the spirit of a man knows *his matters*. But further than this he says nothing of the *similarity of relation of God and God's Spirit with man and man's spirit*: and to deduce more than this, will lead into error on one side or the other. In such comparisons as these especially, we must bear in mind the constant habit of our Apostle, to contemplate the thing adduced, *for the time, only with regard to that one point* for which he adduces it, to the disregard of all other considerations.

12. the spirit of the world] Not merely, the mind and sentiments of unregenerate mankind, but **the spirit** (personally and objectively taken) **of the world**,—the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2, where it is strictly personal. On the other hand, we have received, not only ‘*the Spirit of God*,’ but **the Spirit which is FROM God**,—shewing that we have received it only by the will and imparting of Him whose Spirit it is. And this expression prepares the way for the *purpose* which God has in imparting to us His Spirit, that we may know the things freely given to us by God, i. e. the treasures of wisdom and of felicity which are the free gifts of the gospel dispensation, “the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him,” ver. 9.

13.] Which things also we speak, viz. *the things freely given to us by God*: we not only *know* them by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, but also *speak* them, **not in words** (arguments, rhetorical forms, &c.) **taught by man's wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit**.

interpreting spiritual things to the spiritual] There considerable difficulty about the rendering of this clause. I have discussed the various proposals in the note in my Greek Test., and seen reason to adopt that represented in the text. ‘The others may be briefly stated to be (1) that of the A.V., “*c omparing spiritual things with spiritual:?*” (2) that of Chrysostom and others, “*explaining spiritual things by spiritual things,*” e.g. difficult spiritual truths of the New Test. by Old Test. testimonies and types: (3) that of Erasmus, Calvin, and the best recent German expositors, “*attaching spiritual words to spiritual things,*” which we should not do, if we used words of worldly wisdom to expound them.

14.] He now prepares the way for shewing them that he could not give out the depths of this spiritual wisdom and eloquence to *them*, because they were *not* fitted for it, being carnal (ch. iii. 1–4).

The **natural**, or *animal* man, as distinguished from the *spiritual* man, is he, whose governing principle and highest reference of all things is the *animal soul*, that which animates his fleshly body. In him, the *spirit*, being univified and uninformed by the Spirit of God, is *overborne* by the animal soul, with its desires and its judgments,—and is in *abeyance*, so that he may be said to have it not; see on Jude 19. The *animal soul* (*psyche* in Greek) is that side of the human soul, so to speak, which is *turned towards the flesh, the world, the devil*: so that the *psychical* man is necessarily in a measure *carnal* (ch. iii. 3), also *earthly*, and *devilish*, as James iii. 15.

receiveth not i.e. *rejects*,—not, *cannot receive, understands not*, which is against the context,—for we may well *understand* that which seems folly to us, but we *reject* it, as unworthy of our consideration:—and it besides would involve a tautology, this point, of *inability to comprehend*, following by and by.

he cannot know them (viz. *the things of the Spirit*, the matter of our spiritual teaching, itself furnished by the Spirit), because they are **spiritually** (by the *spirit* of a man exalted by the Spirit of God into its proper paramount office of judging and ruling, and inspired and enabled for that office) **discerned**.

15.] But (on the contrary) **he that is spiritual** (he, in whom the spirit rules: and since by man's fall the spirit is overridden by the animal soul, and in abeyance, this *always presupposes* the infusion of the Holy Spirit, to quicken and inform the spirit—so that there is no such thing as an unregenerate spiritual man) **discerneth all things** (not merely all *spiritual* things; for the Apostle is generalizing, and shewing the high position of the spiritual man, who alone can judge things by their true standard), **yet he himself is discerned by none** (who is not also spiritual, see ch. xiv. 29; 1 John iv. 1, where such judgment is expressly attributed to Christian believers). “For,” says Chrysostom, “he that can see, discerns all belonging to him who cannot see, but by none of these latter is he himself discerned.”

16.] PROOF OF THE ASSERTION, THAT HE HIMSELF IS DISCERNED BY NONE. In order for an *unassisted* man, not *gifted from Christ*, to judge the spiritual man, he must *know the mind of the Lord*, the intent and disposition of Christ; *yea*

more, must be able to teach, to instruct, Christ—being not, as the spiritual man, taught by Him, he must have an independent wisdom of his own, which Christ has not:—and who is there, of whom this can be said? But we (the spiritual, among whom he includes himself and the other Apostles) have (not a wisdom independent of Christ, nor do we know His mind, nor can we teach Him, but) the mind of Christ: the same mind, in our degree of apprehensiveness of it, by the imparting of His Spirit, which is in Him:—and so can judge all things. The mind of the Lord is the spiritual intent and designs of Christ.—THE LORD, in the prophecy, is spoken of JEHOVAH; but in the whole of Isa. xl., the incarnate Jehovah is the subject.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 3

III. 1-4.] HE COULD NOT SPEAK TO THEM IN THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL MANNER ABOVE DESCRIBED, SEEING THAT THEY WERE CARNAL, AND STILL REMAINED SO, AS WAS SHEWN BY THEIR DIVISIONS.

1.] And I, or as it may be rendered, I also; i.e. as well as the *natural* man, was compelled to stand on this lower ground,—he, because *he cannot understand* the things of the Spirit of God: 1, because *you could not receive* them. But it is perhaps better to render as in the text, and understand it, with Stanley, And I, as in ch. ii, 1, “What I have just been saying, was exemplified in our practice.”

as unto men of flesh] The Apostle uses two different words here and in ver. 3 to convey the idea of carnality. Here it is the more gross and material word, signifying *made of flesh*: there it is the finer and figurative word *carnal*, partaking of the character, and under the influence of the flesh. And there is a propriety in this distinction. Here, he says that he was compelled to speak to them as if they were *only of flesh*,—as if they were *babes*, using in both cases the material comparison, and the particle of comparison, “as.” But in ver. 3 he drops comparison, and asserts matter of fact—‘Are ye not *still* fleshly, carnal, living after the flesh, resisting the Spirit?’ as if it had been said, ‘I was obliged to regard you as mere *men of flesh*, without the Spirit: and it is not far different even now: ye are yet *fleshly*—ye retain the same character.’

as unto babes in Christ] The opposite term, “*perfect in Christ*,” is found Col. i. 28 and in connexion with this, Heb. v. 13, 14. The Jews called the novices in their schools “sucking babes.” A recent proselyte also was regarded by them as a new-born infant.—He speaks of his first visit to Corinth, when they were recently admitted into the faith of Christ.—and excuses his merely elementary teaching by the fact that they then required it. *Not this*, but their *still requiring it*, is adduced as matter of blame to them.

2.] See the same figure in Heb. v. 12.

3.] On carnal, see above, ver. 1.

after the manner of (unrenewed and ungodly) men, equivalent to “according to the flesh,” Rom. viii. 4; see note on ch. xv. 32.

4.] He names *but two* of the foregoing designations, ch. i. 12: intending, both there more fully, and here briefly, rather to give a *sample of the sectarian spirit* prevalent than to describe, as matter of tact, any sects into which they were actually divided: see note there, and on ch. iv. 6. Meyer sees in the mention here of Paul and Apollos only, a reference to the two methods of teaching which have been treated of in this section: but as I have before said, the German Commentators are misled by too *definite* a view of the Corinthian parties. **men**, i.e. walking after the manner of men, carnal. The reading “*carnal*,” in the A.V., is against the authority of all our most ancient MSS.

5-15.] HE TAKES OCCASION, BY EXAMPLE OF HIMSELF AND APOLLOS, TO EXPLAIN TO THEM THE TRUE PLACE AND OFFICE OF CHRISTIAN TEACHERS: THAT THEY ARE IN THEMSELVES NOTHING (VV. 5-8), BUT WORK FOR GOD (vv. 9, 10), EACH IN HIS PECULIAR DEPARTMENT (ver. 10; cf. ver. 6) EACH REQUIRING SERIOUS CARE AS TO THE MANNER OF HIS WORKING, SEEING THAT A SEARCHING TRIAL OF ITS WORTH WILL BE MADE IN THE DAY OF THE LORD (vv. 10-15).

5.] This inference follows on the assumption of the truth of the divided state of things among them: ‘Who then...., seeing that ye exalt them into heads over you?’ The question is not asked by an objector, but by St. Paul himself; when an objector is introduced he notifies it, as ch. xv. 35; Rom. ix. 19.

ye believed, as in the references: **ye became believers**. In the A.V., the question is carried on to the end of the verse, but against the authority of all our most ancient MSS.

6.] The similitude is to a *tilled field*: the *plants* are the Corinthians, as members of Christ, vines bearing fruit: these do not yet appear in the construction: so that I prefer supplying nothing after **planted** and **watered**, regarding merely the *acts*

themselves. Apollos was sent over to Corinth after St. Paul had left it (Acts xviii. 27), at his own request, and remained there preaching during Paul's journey through Upper Asia (ib. xix. 1).

7.] After the words **God that giveth the growth**, supply in the mind **in every thing**.

8.] are one in the nature of their ministry,—generically, for both are the servants of the divine will.

but each...] Here he introduces a new element—the *separate* responsibility of *each minister* for the results of his own labour, so that, though in their service they are one,—in their *work* they are diverse. ‘The stress is twice on his own.

9.] Proof of the last assertion, and introduction of *Him*, from Whom each shall receive. The stress thrice on **God's:—shall receive, &c.,—for it is of GOD that we are the fellow-labourers** (in subordination to Him, as is of course implied: but to render it ‘fellow-workers *with one another*, under God,’ is contrary to usage, and not at all required, see 2 Cor. v. 20; vi. 1), **of GOD that ye are the tillage, of GOD that ye are the building.** This last new similitude is introduced on account of what he has presently to say of the different kinds of teaching, which will be more clearly set forth by this, than by the other figure.

10.] **According to the grace of God,**&c., as an expression of humility, fitly introduces the assertion of wisdom which follows. The **grace** is not *the peculiar grace of his apostleship*—for an Apostle was not always required to lay the foundation, e.g., this was not so in Rome:—but that given to him in common with all Christians (ver. 5), only in a degree proportioned to the work which God had for him to do.

wise, i.e. skilful. The proof of this skill is given, in his *laying a foundation*: the unskilful master-builder *lays none*, see Luke vi. 49. The foundation (ver. 11) was and must be, JESUS CHRIST: the facts of redemption by Him, and the reception of Him and His work by faith.

another, ‘*whoever comes after me*,’ not only Apollos.

buildeth, present tense, as the necessary state and condition of the subsequent teacher, be he who he may. *The building on, over the foundation*, imports the carrying them onward in knowledge and intelligent faith.

how, emphatic, meaning here, *with what material*.

11.] ‘I speak of superimposing merely, for it is unnecessary to caution them respecting the foundation itself: there *can be but one*, and that one HAS ALREADY BEEN (objectively, for all, see below) LAID BY GOD.’ At the same time, in taking this for granted, he implies the strongest possible caution against attempting to lay any other.

can no man lay, not no man lay, for it would be unlawful: for it is assumed, that **God's building** is to be raised—and it *can* only be raised on this one foundation All who build on other foundations are not *God's fellow-labourers*, nor is their building His at all.

that which

is laid] not, ‘*by me*,’ but ‘*by God*,’ for universal Christendom; but *actually laid*

in each place, as regards *that church*, by the minister who founds it.

Jesus Christ, THE PERSONAL, HISTORICAL CHRIST, as the object of all Christian faith. Not any *doctrine*, even that of the Messiahship of Jesus, is the foundation, but JESUS HIMSELF.

12.] The but implies that though there can be but one foundation, there are *many ways of building upon it*. To the right understanding of this verse it may be necessary to remark, (1) that the similitude is, not of *many buildings*, but of one, see ver. 16,—and that one, raised on *Christ as its foundation*:—different parts of which are built by the ministers who work under Him,—some well and substantially built, some ill and unsubstantially (2) That gold, silver, &c., refer to the *matter* of the ministers’ teaching *primarily*; and by inference, to those whom that teaching penetrates and builds up in Christ, who should be the living stones of the temple: not, as many of the ancients thought, to the moral fruits produced by the preaching in the individual members of the church: (3) that the builder of the worthless and unsubstantial *is in the end SAVED* (see below): so that even *his* preaching was *preaching of Christ*, and *he himself was in earnest*. (4) That what is said does not refer, except, by accommodation, to the *religious life of believers in general*;—but to the DUTY AND REWARD OF TEACHERS. At the same time, such accommodation is legitimate *in so far as each man is a teacher and builder of himself*. (5) That the various materials specified must not be fancifully pressed to indicate *particular doctrines or graces*, as e.g. Schrader (in his life of St. Paul) has done, “Some build with the gold of faith, with the silver of hope, with the imperishable costly stones of love,—

others again with the dead wood of unfruitfulness in good works, with the empty straw of a spiritless, ostentatious knowledge, and with the bending reed of a continually-doubting spirit." This, however ingenious, is beside the mark, not being justified by any indications furnished in our Epistle itself.

costly stones] Not, *precious stones*, as commonly understood, i.e. 'gems,' but 'costly stones,' as marbles, porphyry, jasper, &c.: compare 1 Kings vii. 9 ff.—**By the wood, hay, straw**, he indicates the various perversions of true doctrine, and admixtures of false philosophy which were current: so Estius, "not heretical and pernicious doctrine, for such would destroy the foundation: but that which wanted purity and solidity: as for example that which was too much mingled with human and philosophical or even Jewish opinions: that which was more curious than useful: that which occupied Christian men's minds with vain amusement."

13.] The work of each man (i. e. that which he has built: *his part* in erecting the building of God) **shall** (at some time) **be made manifest** (shall not always remain in the present uncertainty but be tested, and shewn of what: sort it is): **for the day shall declare it** (*the day of the Lord*: so most Commentators ancient and modern. The other interpretations are (1) '*the day of the destruction of Jerusalem*, which shall shew the vanity of Judaizing doctrines: but this is against both the context, and our Apostle's habit of speaking, and goes on the assumption, that nothing but Jewish errors are spoken of.—(2) '*the lapse of time*', as in the Latin proverb ('*the day shall teach*'), which is still more inconsistent with the context, which necessitates a definite *day*, and a definite fire:—(3) '*the light of day*', i.e. of clear knowledge, as opposed to the present time of obscurity and night:—but the fire here is not a *light-giving*, but a *consuming* flame: and, as Meyer remarks, even in that case the "*day*" would be that of Christ's appearing, see Rom. xiii. 12:—(4) '*the day of tribulation*':—so Augustine: but this again is not definite enough: the words "*shall receive wages*" can hardly be said of mere abiding the test of tribulation):—**because it** (the day—not, the *work*, which would introduce a mere tautology with the next clause) **is [to be] revealed** (in the original, *is revealed*, the present tense, expressing the definite certainty of prophecy: or perhaps rather the *attribute* of that day, which is, to be revealed, &c.) **in fire** ('accompanying,' 'clothed,' 'girt,' 'with fire;') i.e. fire will be the *element* in which the day will be revealed. See 2 Thess. i. 8, and Mal. iii. 2, 3, iv. 1, to which latter place the reference is. But notice, that this is not *the fire of hell*, into which the gold, silver, and costly stones will never enter, but the *fire of judgment*, in which Christ will appear, and by which *all works will be tried*. This *universality* of trial by fire is equally against the idea of a *purgatorial fire*,

which most convenient and lucrative fiction has been mainly based by the Romanists on a perversion of this passage. Their own Commentators are divided on the question whether there is any allusion to it in this passage); **and each man's work, of what sort it is, the fire itself shall prove (the fire itself, of its own power, being a consuming fire).**

14.] If any man's work shall endure (i. e. stand the fire,—being of inconsumable materials) **which he built on the foundation,—he shall receive wages** (as a builder;—i. e. 'shall be rewarded for his faithful and effectual work as a teacher'):

15.] if any man's work shall be burned up (i. e. consist of such materials as the fire will destroy: Stanley adds, "It is possible that this whole image, as addressed to the Corinthians, may have been suggested, or at least illustrated, by the conflagration of Corinth under Mummius: the stately temples [one of them remaining to this day] left standing amidst the universal crash and destruction of the meaner buildings"), **he shall suffer loss** (literally, **be mulcted**, viz. of the wages which would otherwise have been his): **but he himself shall be saved** (having held, and built on, the true foundation Jesus Christ, he shall not be excluded from that salvation which is the free gift of God to all who believe on Christ, but shall get no *especial reward* as a faithful and effectual teacher. Compare 2 John 8, "*Look to yourselves that we lose not the things which we have wrought, but receive full wages*:" so literally. Meyer remarks, that our Lord hints at such persons under the name of "the last," Matt. xx. 16: Mark x. 31), **yet so as through fire**:—i. e. as a builder whose building was consumed would escape with personal safety, but with the loss of his work.—Chrysostom, and others of the ancients, strangely understand it, that he shall not be consumed like his works, but shall be saved from this, and burnt for ever in the fire of Hell, unconsumed. But (1) *the fire of Hell* is quite alien from the context (see above),—and (2) the meaning *thus given to being saved* is unexampled,—and least of all could be intended where the coming of the Lord is spoken of: compare among other places, ch. v. 5. Grotius and others explain the words as a proverb, '*as out of a fire*', i.e. 'with difficulty.' But this is needless here, as the *figure itself* is that of a fire. The whole imagery of the passage will be best understood by carefully keeping in mind the *key*, which is to be found in the words *God's building*, and the *temple of God*, as connected with the prophecy of Malachi iii. 1–3 and iv. 1. The Lord thus coming to His temple in flaming fire, all the parts of the building which will not stand that fire will be consumed the builders of them will escape with personal salvation, but with the loss of their work, through the midst of the conflagration.

16–23.] THE FIGURE IS TAKEN UP AFRESH AND CARRIED FURTHER: AND MADE THE OCCASION OF SOLEMN EXHORTATION, SINCE THEY WERE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, NOT TO MAR THAT TEMPLE, THE HABITATION OF HIS SPIRIT, BY UNHOLINESS OR BY EXALTATION OF HUMAN WISDOM: WHICH LAST AGAIN WAS IRRELEVANT AS WELL AS SINFUL; FOR ALL THEIR TEACHERS WERE BUT THEIR SERVANTS IN BUILDING THEM UP TO BE GOD'S TEMPLE,—YEA ALL THINGS WERE FOR THIS END, TO SUBSERVE THEM, AS BEING CHRIST'S, BY THE ORDINANCE, AND TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER,

16.] The foregoing figures, with the occasion to which they referred, are now dropped, and the **building of God** recalled, to do further service. This *building* is now, as in Mal. iii. 1, and as indeed by implication in the foregoing verses, the *temple* of God (the stress on the word *temple*, not on “God”), the *habitation of His Spirit*.

Are ye ignorant that... an expression of surprise arising out of their conduct.—Meyer rightly remarks, that “the expression is *the temple* of God, not *a* temple of God: for St. Paul does not conceive of the various churches as *various temples* of God, which would be inconsistent with a Jew’s conception of God’s temple, but of each Christian church as, in a mystical sense, *the temple of Jehovah*. So there would be, not many temples, but many churches, each of which is, ideally, the same temple of God.” And, we may add, if the figure is to be strictly justified in its widest acceptation, that all the churches are built together into one vast temple: compare Eph. ii. 22.

17.] destroyeth, or, marreth, whether as regards its *unity and beauty*, or its *purity and sanctity*: here, the meaning is left indefinite, but the latter particulars are certainly hinted at,—by the word *holy*, below.

shall God destroy, or, mar, either by *temporal death*, as in ch. xi. 30; or by *spiritual death*, which is more probable seeing that the *figurative* temple is spoken of, not the material temple:—and as *temporal death* was the punishment for defiling the material temple (Exod. xxviii. 43. Levit. xvi. 2), so *spiritual death* for marring or defiling of God’s spiritual temple.

holy is the constant epithet of the *temple* in the Old Test., see Ps. xi. 45 lxxix. 1. Hab. ii. 20, and *passim*.

the which, i.e. *holy*; not, ‘*which temple ye are*, which would be tautological after ver. 16, and would hardly be expressed by the word in the original. Meyer well remarks that this clause is the minor proposition of a syllogism:—‘Whoever mars the temple of God, him will God destroy, because His temple is *holy*: but ye also, as His ideal temple, are *holy*:—therefore, whoever mars you, shall be destroyed by God.’

18–20.] A warning to those who would be leaders among them, against self-conceit.

18.] deceive himself, not meaning, with reference to what the Apostle has just laid down, but generally, viz. by thinking himself wise, when he must become a fool in order to be wise.—**If any man seemeth to be (i. e. thinks that he is) wise among you in this world** (the whole assumption of wisdom made by the man, as made in *this present world*, must be false), **let him become a fool** (by receiving the gospel in its simplicity, and so becoming foolish in the world’s sight), **that he may become (truly) wise**.

19.] Reason why this must be:—shewn from Scripture. **with God**, i. e in the judgment of God.—The sense is, ‘If God uses the craft of the wise as a net to catch them in, such wisdom is in His sight folly, since He turns it to their confusion’

20.] In the Psalm it is, *the thoughts of man*; the Psalmist however is speaking of the *proud*, ver. 2 f., and such, when these high thoughts are in question, would be the *worldly wise*.

21–23.] A warning to them in general, not to boast themselves in human teachers.

21.] So then, viz. seeing that this world’s wisdom is folly with God: or perhaps as a more general inference from what has gone before since ch. i., that as the conclusion there was, “*he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*,”—so now, having gone into the matter more at length, he concludes, **Let no man glory in men**. This *boasting in men* is explained in ch. iv. 6 to mean, “*not to be puffed up each for one against another*.”

For all things are your’s] ‘For such boasting is a *degradation* to those who are *heirs of all things*, and *for whom all*, whether ministers or events, or the world itself, *are working together*: see Rom. viii. 28; and iv. 13,

22, 23.] Specification of some of the things included under all things; and first of those teachers in whom they were disposed to boast,—in direct reference to ch. i. 12. But having enumerated Paul, Apollos, Cephas, he does not say “*or Christ*,” but adding the world itself and its events and circumstances, he reiterates the **all are your’s**, as if to mark the termination of this category, and changing the form, concludes with **and ye** (not only one part of you) **are Christ’s: and Christ is God’s** (see below).—The expressions **life, death, things present, things to come**, have no special reference to present circumstances but are perfectly general.

23.] On the change of the possessives see above:—*Christ* is not *yours*, in the sense in which *all things are*,—not *made for and subserving you—but you are His*—and even that does not reach the Highest possession: He possesses not you *for Himself*: but *the Head of Christ is God*, ch. xi. 3—**CHRIST HIMSELF**, the Incarnate God the Mediator, *belongs to God*, is subordinate to the Father, see John xiv. 28; and xvii. But this mediatorial subordination is in no way inconsistent with His eternal and co-equal Godhead: see note on Phil. ii. 6–9; and on ch. xv. 28, where the subjection of all things to Christ, and His subjection to

the Father, are similarly set forth—There is a striking similarity in the argument in this last verse to that in our Lord's prohibition Matt. xxiii. 8–10.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 4

IV. 1–5.] HE SHEWS THEM THE RIGHT VIEW TO TAKE OF CHRISTIAN MINISTERS (vv. 1, 2); BUT, FOR HIS PART, REGARDS NOT MAN' S JUDGMENT OF HIM, NOR EVEN JUDGES HIMSELF, BUT THE LORD IS HIS JUDGE (vv. 3, 4). THEREFORE LET THEM ALSO SUSPEND THEIR JUDGMENTS TILL THE LORD' S COMING, WHEN ALL SHALL BE MADE PLAIN.

1.] so, emphatic, preparatory to "as," in ch. iii. 15.

a man is used in the most general and indefinite sense, as '*man*' in German.—The whole is opposed to glorying in men: the ministers of Christ are but subordinates to Him, and accountable to God.

us, here, not '*us ministers generally*,' see below, ver. 6, but '*myself and Apollos*,' as a sample of such.

ministers of Christ, see ch. iii. 5, 22, 23. But in the words, **stewards of the mysteries of God**, we have a new figure introduced. The Church, 1 Tim. i. 15, is the "*house of God*,"—and those appointed to minister in it are *stewards* and *dispensers* of the property and stores of the *Master of the house*. These last are the mysteries, hidden treasures, of God,—i. e. the riches of his grace, *now manifested* in Christ, ch. ii. 7; Rom. xvi. 25, 26, which *they* announce and distribute to all, having received them from the Spirit for that purpose. "These mysteries are those of the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ, of our Redemption, of the calling of the Gentiles, and the rest which is included in Evangelical doctrine." Estius: who also, as a Romanist, attempts to include the *sacraments* among the mysteries in this sense. The best refutation of this is given by himself: "Since Paul himself has said in the first chapter, Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, it is more correct to understand by these mysteries of God the doctrines of our faith." It may be doubted, whether, *in the New Test. sense of mysteries*, the sacraments can be in any way reckoned as such: for the word signifies a (*usually divine*) *proceeding, once hidden, but now revealed, or now hidden, and to be revealed*; under neither of which categories can the sacraments be classed.

2.] Moreover it is required in (the case of) **stewards** (literally, **it is sought for**: *enquiry is made* in the case of stewards) **here [on earth] (here [on earth])** is emphatic and points to what follows, that though in the case of stewards enquiry was necessarily made *here below*, yet he, God's steward, awaited no such enquiry from the day of man's judgment, but one at the coming of the Lord) **that a man be** found (proved to be) **faithful** (emphatic).

3.] But to me (contrast to the case of the stewards into whose faithfulness enquiry is made here on earth) **it is (amounts to) a very small thing,—very little,—that I should be judged** (enquired into, as to my faithfulness) **by you, or by (literally) the day of man, i.e. of man's judgment** (in reference to **here** above, and contrast to the day of the Lord, to which his appeal is presently made, ver. 5, and of which, as testing the worth of the labour of teachers, he spoke so fully ch. iii, 13–15), **nay, I do not even judge** (hold not an enquiry on: literally, '*but neither do I, &c.*') **myself**:

4.] for I know nothing against myself (the A.V., '*I know nothing by myself*', was a phrase commonly used in this acceptation at the time; compare Ps. xv. 4, Com. Prayer Book version, 'He that setteth not by himself, i.e. is not wise in his own conceit. 'I know no harm by him,' is still a current expression in the midland counties See Deut. xxvii. 16; Ezek. xxii. 7, in A.V. So Donne, Serm. lvii., "If thine own spirit, thine own conscience, accuse thee of nothing, is all well? why, *I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby Justified.*" This meaning of 'by' does not appear in our ordinary dictionaries), **yet am I not hereby justified** (i. e. it is not *this circumstance* which clears me of blame—*this* does not decide the matter. There can be no reference to *forensic justification* here, by the very conditions of the context: for he is speaking of that *wages* of the teacher, which may be lost, and yet personal salvation be attained, see ch. iii. 15); **but he that judgeth** (holds an enquiry on) **me is the Lord** (Christ, the judge).

5.] So then (because the Lord is the sole infallible dijudgetor) **judge nothing** (concerning us, of merit or demerit) **before the time, until the Lord [shall have] come, who shall both bring to light** (throw light on) **the hidden things of darkness** (general—all *things* which are hidden in darkness), **and make manifest the counsels of the hearts** (then first shewing, what your teachers really are, in heart): **and then shall each man have his (fitting) praise from God.**—**Praise** is not a word which may be taken either way, praise or blame, as the ease may be, but strictly *praise*. He refers to glorying in men:—they, their various parties, gave *exaggerated praise* to certain teachers: let them wait till the day when the fitting praise (be it what it may) will be adjudged to each from God; Christ being the Judge appointed by God, Acts x. 42, and so His sentences being from God. See also Acts xvii. 31, and Rom. ii. 16, *God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.*

6–13.] HE EXPLAINS TO THEM (ver. 6) THAT THE MENTION HITHERTO OF HIMSELF AND APOLLOS (and by parity of reasoning, of Cephas and of Christ, in ch. i, 12) HAS A MORE GENERAL DESIGN, viz. TO ABSTRACT THEM FROM ALL PARTY SPIRIT AND PRIDE: WHICH PRIDE HE THEN BLAMES, AND PUTS TO SHAME BY DEPICTING, AS A CONTRAST, THE LOW AND AFFLICTED STATE OF THE APOSTLES THEMSELVES.

6.] Now (he comes to the conclusion of what he has to say on their party divisions) **these things** (many expositors limit “*these things*” to what has been said since ch. iii. 5. But there surely is no reason for this. The Apostle’s meaning here must on all hands be acknowledged to be, ‘I have taken out two names as samples, that you may not attach yourselves to and be proud of any party leaders, one against another.’ And if these two names which had been last mentioned, why not analogously, *those four which he had also alleged in ch. i, 12?*) **have I transferred to myself and Apollos** (i. e. when I might have set them before you generally and in the abstract as applying to all teachers, I have preferred doing so by taking two samples, and *transferring to them* what was true of the whole. ‘This is far more probable than the explanation of Chrysostom and others, that he put in his own name and that of Apollos instead of those of the real leaders of sects, concealing them on purpose) **for your sakes; that in us ye** (as your example: by having our true office and standing set before you) **may learn this** (so literally), “**Not above those things which are written**” (i. e. not to exceed in your estimate of yourselves and us, the standard of Scripture,—which had been already in part shewn to them in the citations ch. i. 19, 31; iii. 19; *not, what has been written in this Epistle*: for the term “*it is written*” in these New Test. books always refers to the Old Test. Some suppose the words cited from Deut. xvii. 20,—whereas it is far better to give them a perfectly general reference. Chrysostom and others refer *it to words of our Lord in the New Test.*, such as Matt. vii. 1, 3; xxiii. 12; Mark x. 43, 44, but these could not be indicated by “*it is written:*” compare ch. vii. 10 and note), **that ye be not puffed up each for one against another** (i. e. ‘that you may not adhere together in parties to the detriment or disparagement of a neighbour who is attached to a different party’).

7.] **For** (reason why this puffing up should be avoided) **who distinguisheth thee** (from others? meaning, that all such conceits of pre-eminence are unfounded. That pre-eminence, and not merely distinction is meant, is evident from what follows)?—**And what hast thou that thou didst not receive** (‘*from God*’—not, ‘from me as thy father in the faith’)? **but if** (which I concede) **thou receivedst it, &c.**—He speaks not only to the leaders, but to the members of parties,—who imagined themselves superior to those of other parties,—as if all, for every good thing, were not dependent on God, the Giver.

8.] The admonition becomes ironical: “You behave as if the trial were past, and the goal gained; as if hunger and thirst, after righteousness were already filled, and the Kingdom already brought in.” The emphases are on **already** in the two first clauses, and on **without us** in the third. The three verbs form a climax. Any interpretation which stops short of the full meaning of the words as applied to the triumphant final state (*explaining them of Knowledge, of security, of the lordship of one sect over another*), misses the force of the irony, and the meaning of the latter part of the verse.

without us] or, apart from us: ‘because *we*, as your fathers in Christ, have ever looked forward to *present you*, as our glory and joy, in that day.’—There is an exquisite delicacy of irony, which Chrysostom has well caught: “He shews their unreasonableness and their exceeding folly. In trials and troubles, he says, all has been in common to us both: but in the reward and the crown, ye are first.”—The latter part of the verse is said *bonā fidē* and with solemnity; **And I would indeed that ye did reign** (that the Kingdom of the Lord was actually come, and ye reigning with Him), **that we also might reign together with you** (that we, though deposed from our *proper place*, might at least be vouchsafed a humble share in your kingly glory).

9.] **For** (and there is abundant reason for this wish which I have just uttered, in our present afflicted state) **methinks,—God hath set forth** (before the eyes of the world) **us the Apostles** (meaning all the Apostles, principally himself and Apollos) **last** (*last and vilest*: not, in respect of those who went before,—*last, as the prophets were before us*), **as men sentenced to death; for we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels** (*good angels*: the word put absolutely, never either includes, or signifies, *bad angels*), **and to men** (the general term, **the world**, is afterwards specialized into *angels* and *men*).

10.] Again, the bitterest irony: ‘how different our lot from yours! How are you to be envied—we, to be pitied!—There is a distinction in **for Christ’s sake**, and in **in Christ**: **We are foolish for Christ’s sake** (on account of Christ,—our connexion with Him does nothing but reduce us to be fools), **whereas you are wise in Christ**, have entered into full participation of Him, and grown up to be **wise**, subtle Christians.

weak and **strong** are both to be understood *generally*: the weakness is not here that of persecution, but that of ch. ii. 3: the **strength** is the high bearing of the Corinthians.

ye are in honour (in glorious repute, party leaders and party men, highly honoured and looked up to), **whereas we are despised** (without honour). Then this last word leads him to enlarge on the disgrace and contempt which the Apostles met with at the hands of the world.

11–13.] *He enters into the particulars of this state of affliction, which was not a thing past, but enduring to the present*

moment.

11.] Even unto this present hour is evidently not to be taken strictly as indicative of the situation of Paul at the *time of writing the Epistle*, but as generally describing the kind of life to which, then and always, he and the other Apostles were exposed. See, on the subject matter, 2 Cor. xi. 23–27.

are naked] i.e. in want of sufficient clothing: cf. “*in cold and nakedness*,” 2 Cor. xi. 27.

are buffeted], i.e. suffer insult: there is no need to press the strict meaning.

12.] As testimonies to *Paul’s* working with his own hands, see Acts xviii. 3; xx. 34; ch. ix. 6; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8. That the other Apostles did the same, need not *necessarily* be inferred from this passage, for he may be describing the state of all by himself as a sample: but it is conceivable, and indeed probable, that they did.

being reviled, &c.] ‘So far are we from vindicating to ourselves places of earthly honour and distinction, that we tamely submit to reproach, persecution and evil repute;—nay, we return blessing, and patience, and soft words.’

13.] we intreat, i.e. we answer with mild and soothing words.

as the filth of the world] A climax of disgrace and contempt summing up the foregoing particulars: we are become as it were the refuse of the whole earth. The original word means that which is removed by a thorough purification, the **offal or refuse**. Some suppose it to imply that they were the *expiation* of the world, and shew that it was used of persons offered to the gods as expiation in a pestilence or other public calamity.

the offscouring of all things, means much the same as the former designation,—but the expression is more contemptuous.

14–21.] CONCLUSION OF THIS PART OF THE EPISTLE:—IN WHAT SPIRIT HE HAS WRITTEN THESE WORDS OF BLAME: viz. IN A SPIRIT OF ADMONITION, AS THEIR FATHER IN THE FAITH, WHOM THEY OUGHT TO IMITATE. TO THIS END HE SENT TIMOTHY TO REMIND THEM OF HIS WAYS OF TEACHING.—WOULD SOON, HOWEVER, COME HIMSELF,—IN MILDNESS, OR TO PUNISH, AS THE CASE MIGHT REQUIRE.

14. not... to shame you] literally, not as one who shames yon, see ch. vi. 5: xv. 34,

15.] Justification of the expression “*my beloved children*.” **ten thousand**, the greatest possible number—see ch. xiv. 19.

schoolmasters] He was their spiritual *father*: those who followed, Apollos included, were but *tutors*, having the care and education of the children, but not the rights, as they could not have the peculiar affection of the father. He evidently shews by the word *ten thousand*, that these *schoolmasters* were *more in number than he could wish*,—including among them doubtless the false and party teachers: but to refer the word *only* to them and their despotic leading or to confine its meaning to the stricter sense of the word used in the original, the slave who led the child to *school*, is not here borne out by the facts. See Gal. iii. 24, 25, and note.

for in Christ Jesus (as the spiritual element in which the begetting took place: so commonly “*in Christ*,” applied to relations of life, see ver. 17, twice) **through the gospel** (the preached word being the instrument) **I** (emphatic) **begat you** (there is also an emphasis on **you**,—*in your case*, I it was who begot you).

16.] therefore, because I am *your father*. imitators, not only, nor perhaps chiefly, in the things *just mentioned*, vv. 9–13,—but as ver. 17, in *my ways in Christ, my manner of life and teaching*.

17.] For this cause,—in order that you may the better imitate me by being put in mind of my ways and teaching. On the *fact*, see Introduction, §ii. 2.

my child] see 1 Tim. i, 2, 18; 2 Tim. i. 2. Meyer remarks, that by the strict use of the word child (distinct from “son”) in this passage (compare verses 14, 15) we have a certain proof that Timothy was *converted by Paul*: see Acts xiv. 6, 7, and note. “The phrase seems to be used here in reference to ‘beloved children,’ ver. 14: ‘I sent ‘Timotheus, who stands to me in the same relation that you stand in’” Stanley.

in the Lord] points out the spiritual nature of the relationship.

shall remind you] Timothy, by being himself a close imitator of the Christian virtues and teaching of his and their spiritual father, would bring to their minds his well-known character, and way of teaching, which they seemed to have well-nigh

forgotten. See 2 Tim. iii. 10.

every where in every church.] To shew the importance of this his manner of teaching, he reminds them of his *unvarying* practice of it:—and as he was guided by the Spirit, by inference, of its universal necessity in the churches.

18–20.] To guard against misrepresentation of the coming of Timothy just announced, by those who had said and would now the more say, ‘Paul dare not come to Corinth,’ *he announces the certainty of his coming, if the Lord will.*

shortly] How soon, see ch. xvi. 8. **I will “know,** i.e. **I will inform myself of—not the words of them which are puffed up** (*those I care not for*), **but the power:** whether they are really mighty in the Spirit, or not. This general reference of *power* must be kept, and not narrowed to the *power of working miracles*: or *energy in the work of the gospel*: he leaves it general and indefinite.

20.] Justification of this his intention, by the very nature of that kingdom of which he was the ambassador.

the kingdom of God, (*the kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17 and passim; of God, Mark i. 15, al.) announced by the prophets, preached by the Lord and the Apostles, being now prepared on earth and received by those who believe on Christ, and to be consummated when He returns with His saints: see Phil. iii, 20, 21; Eph. v. 5.

is not (i. e. does not consist in, has not its conditions and element of existence) **in** (mere) **word, but in power**—is a kingdom of *power*.

21.] He offers them, with a view to their amendment, the alternative: ‘shall his coming be in a judicial or in a friendly spirit?’ as depending on themselves. It is literally, **must I come?**

with a rod; but not *only* ‘with,’ as accompanied with: the preposition in the original gives the idea of the element: *in which*, much as “*with glory*” not only *with* a rod, *but in such purpose as to use it*. He speaks *as a father*.

the Spirit of meekness] generally explained, a *gentle spirit*, meaning by the word *spirit*, his own spirit: but Meyer has remarked, that in every place in the New Test. where spirit is joined with an abstract genitive, it imports *the Holy Spirit*, and the abstract, genitive refers to the specific working of the Spirit in the case in hand. So *the Spirit of truth* (John xv. 26; xvi. 13; 1 John iv. 6), *of adoption* (Rom. viii. 15), *of faith* (2 Cor. iv. 13), *of wisdom* (Eph. i. 17), *of holiness* (Rom. i. 4). There may seem to be exceptions to this; as, e.g. *a spirit of weakness*, Luke xiii. 11; *of bondage*, Rom. viii. 15; *of slumber*, Rom. xi. 8; *of fear*, 2 Tim. i. 7; *of error*, 1 John iv. 6. We may indeed say, that in none of these cases is the *spirit* subjective or the phrase a mere circumlocution; but the *spirit* is objective, a possessing, indwelling spirit, whether of God or otherwise.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 5

V. 1–18.] CONCERNING A GROSS CASE OF INCEST WHICH HAD ARISEN, AND WAS HARBOURED, AMONG THEM (verses 1–8): **AND QUALIFICATION OF A FORMER COMMAND WHICH HE HAD GIVEN THEM RESPECTING ASSOCIATION WITH GROSS SINNERS** (9–13). The subject of this chapter is bound on to the foregoing by the question of ch. iv. 21: and it furnishes an instance of those things which required his apostolic discipline.

1.] hath (as wife most probably, not merely *as concubine*: the word in Such cases universally in the New Test. signifying *to possess in marriage*: and the words, *he that did this deed*, ver. 2, *and him that hath so done this deed*, ver. 3, seem to point to a consummation of marriage, not to mere concubinage) **his father’s wife** (i. e. his step-mother, see Lev. xviii. 8: the Apostle uses the designation, *his father’s wife*, to point out the disgrace more plainly. It may seem astonishing that the authorities in the Corinthian church should have allowed such a case to escape them, or if known, should have tolerated it. Perhaps the universal laxity of morals at Corinth may have weakened the severity even of the Christian elders: perhaps as has often been suggested, the offender, if a Jewish convert, might defend his conduct by the Rabbinical maxim that in the case of a proselyte, the forbidden degrees were annulled, *a new birth* having been undergone by him. This latter however is rendered improbable by the fact that the Apostle says nothing of the *woman*, which he would have done, had she been a Christian:—and that Jewish maxim was taxed with the condition, that a proselyte might marry any of his or her former relatives, only provided they came over to the Jewish religion. The father was living, and is described in 2 Cor. vii. 12, as “he that suffered wrong;” and from the Apostle saying there that he did not write on *his account*, he was probably a Christian.

2. ye are puffed up] Not, which would be absurd,—at the occurrence of this crime, nor as Chrysostom and some others fancy, because the offender was a party teacher: but, as before, with a notion of their own wisdom and spiritual perfection: the being puffed up is only a fault which co-existed with this disgrace, not one founded upon it.

and did not rather mourn (viz. when the crime became first known to you), that (your mourning would be because of the existence of the evil, i.e. with *a view to its removal*) **he who did this deed might be removed from among you** (viz. by your casting him out from your society).

3-5.] justifies the expression just used, by declaring the judgment which the Apostle, although absent, had already passed on the offender.

3.] I verily, I for my part.. hath so done...] The **so** may point to *some peculiarly offensive method* in which he had brought about the marriage, which was known to the Corinthians, but unknown to us. Or we may understand it, ‘*under such circumstances*,’ ‘being such as he is, a member of Christ’s body.’ But this, being before patent, would hardly be thus emphatically denoted. Perhaps after all, it refers merely to the peculiar heinousness of the kind of offence: compare “*such fornication*,” in ver. 1.

4.] ‘This sentence stands thus: In the name of our Lord Jesus belongs to the clause to **deliver such an one,&c.**, that which intervenes being parenthetical (**when ye have been assembled together and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus**).

my spirit, i.e. ‘I myself, in spirit, endowed by our Lord Jesus with apostolic power:’ and then the words **with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ** belong to **my spirit**, and are not to be taken as indicating a mere element in the assembly. *What does the sentence here prescribed import?* Not mere excommunication, though it is doubtless included. It was a delegation to the Corinthian church of a *special power, reserved to the Apostles themselves, of inflicting corporeal death or disease* as a punishment for sin. Of this we have notable examples in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and Elymas, and another hinted at 1 Tim. i. 20. The congregation itself could *expel from among themselves*,—but it could not *give over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh*, without the authorized concurrence of the Apostle’s *spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ*. What the *destruction of his flesh* was to be, does not appear: certainly more than the mere destruction of his pride and lust by repentance, as some suppose: rather, as Chrysostom suggests, “that Satan might afflict him with a malignant ulcer, or other disease.” Estius’s objection to this, that in 2 Cor. ii. and vii. we find no trace of such bodily chastisement is not to the point,—because we have no proof that this delivering to Satan *was ever inflicted*,—nor does the Apostle *command it*, but only describes it as his own determination, held as it were *in terrorem* over the offender. See note on ver. 13.—Observe, destruction of his **flesh**, the offending element, not of his body. St. Paul could not say this, seeing that the body is to partake of the salvation of the spirit;—but not the *flesh*, see ch. xv. 50.

5.] The aim of the destruction of the flesh,—which he said, as Chrysostom remarks, “to put bounds to the devil, and not to allow him to advance further.” Thus the proposed punishment, severe as it might seem, would be in reality a merciful one, tending to the eternal happiness of the offender. A greater contrast to this can hardly be conceived, than the terrible forms of excommunication subsequently devised, and even now in use in the Romish church, under the fiction of delegated apostolic power. The delivering to Satan *for the destruction of the spirit*, can belong only to those who *do the work of Satan*.

6.] ‘How inconsistent with your harbouring such an one, appear your high flown conceits of yourselves!’

Your glorying: literally, **your matter of glorying. Are you not aware that a little leaven imparts a character to the whole lump?** That this is the meaning, and not, ‘that a little leaven *will*, if not purged out, leaven the whole lump,’ is manifest from the point in hand, viz. the inconsistency consistency of their *boasting*: which would not appear by their *danger of corruption hereafter*, but by their *character* being *actually lost*. One of them was a fornicator of a fearfully depraved kind, tolerated and harbored: by this fact, the *character of the whole was tainted*.

7.] The old leaven is not the *man*, but the *crime*, attaching to their character as a church, which was a remnant of their unconverted state, their “*old man*.” This they are to purge out from among them. The command alludes to the careful ‘purging out’ from the houses of every thing leavened before the commencement of the feast of unleavened bread.—**That ye may be a new lump** (opposed to the “*old man*” of old and dissolute days), **as ye are** (normally, and by your Christian profession) **unleavened** (i. e. dead to sin and free from it). This indicating the state by profession the *normal state*, as a fact, and the *grounding of exhortations on it*, is common enough with our Apostle,—see Rom. vi. 3, 4: ch. iii. 16, and other places, and involves no tautology here, any more than elsewhere.—An unfortunate interpretation has been given to these words,—as *ye are now celebrating the feast of unleavened bread*;’ and has met with some recent defenders. See in my Greek Test. the reasons which have led me to decide against this view. I can only say here, that the reference is one *wholly alien from the habit and spirit of our Apostle*. The ordinances of the old law are to him *not points on whose actual observance to ground spiritual lessons*, but things passed in, their literal acceptance, and become *spiritual verities* in Christ. He thus regards the Corinthian church as (normally) *the unleavened lump* at the Passover; he beseeches them to put away the old leaven from among them, to correspond with this their normal state: **for**, he adds, it is high time for us to be unleavened in very deed, seeing that **our passover was sacrificed** (see reff.: and compare Heb. ix. 26, 28), **even Christ** (the days of unleavened bread began with the Passover-sacrifice): **so then let us keep the feast** (not the *actual* Passover, but the continued Passover-feast of Christians on whose behalf Christ has died. There is no change of metaphor: the Corinthians are the living *loaves of bread*, as

believers are the living stones of the spiritual temple), **not with** (literally, **in**, as our element) **the old leaven** (general—our old unconverted state), **neither** (particular) **with** (**in**, see above) **the leaven of malice and wickedness** (the genitives are of apposition,—‘the leaven which is vice and wickedness’); **but with (in) the unleavened bread** (literally, unleavened things, see Exod. xii. 15, 18) **of sincerity and truth.** 9–18.] *Correction of their misunderstanding of a former command of his respecting keeping company with fornicators.*

9.] **I wrote unto you in my letter** (*not this present epistle*,—for there is nothing in the preceding part of this Epistle which can by any possibility be so interpreted,—certainly not either ver. 2 or ver. 6, which are commonly alleged by those who thus explain it—and “in my epistle” would be a superfluous and irrelevant addition, if he meant the letter on which he was now engaged:—but, a former *epistle*, which has not come down to us:—compare the similar expression, 2 Cor. vii. 8, used with reference to *this epistle*,—and see note on 2 Cor. i. 15, 16) **not to company with fornicators:** 10.] **not absolutely limits the prohibition**, which perhaps had been complained of owing to its strictness, and the impossibility of complying with it in so dissolute a place as Corinth, and *excepts* the fornicators of this world, i.e. who are *not professing Christians*: **not under all circumstances with the fornicators of this world.**

of this world, *belonging to the number of unbelievers*,—*Christians who were fornicators being expressly excluded*. So St. Paul ever uses this expression, ch. iii. 19; (2 Cor. iv. 4;) Eph. ii. 2.

covetous and **extortioners** are joined by **and**, as belonging to the same class—that of persons greedy of money.

for then must ye needs go out of the world] i.e. to search for another and purer one.

11. **as it is, I wrote unto you**] i.e. **my meaning was....**;—‘**but**, the case being so, that ye must needs consort with fornicators among the heathen, I wrote to you, not to consort, &c.’—That this is the meaning, and not, as A.V., ‘But *now I have written*, &c., seems plain; I have given the reasons in my note in the Greek Test. Thus by the right rendering, we escape the awkward inference deducible from the ordinary interpretation,—that the Apostle had previously given a command, and now retracted it.

an idolater] One who from any motive makes a compromise with the habits of the heathen, and partakes in their sacrifices: Chrysostom well remarks, “He introduces by anticipation the subject of things offered to idols, which he is about to treat by and by.” Seeing that **no not to eat** must imply *a more*

complete separation than not to company, it cannot be applied to the *agape*, or *love-feasts* only, but must keep its general meaning,—**not even to sit at table with such an one**.—This rule, as that in 2 Thess. iii. 15, regards only their *private* intercourse with the offending person: nothing is *here* said of public excommunication, though for some of these crimes it would be implied.

12.] *Ground of the above limitation. them that are without*] It was among the Jews the usual term for the Gentiles. He means, ‘this might have been easily understood to be my meaning: for what concern have I with pronouncing sentence on the world without, or with giving rules of discipline for *them*? I could only have referred to persons *among yourselves*. ‘My judgment was meant to *lead your judgment*. This being the case, what concern had I with *those without*? Is it not on *those within*, that your judgments are passed?’

13.] **But them that are without GOD judge them.** The present tense expresses the attribute and office of God. ‘*To judge those without is God’s matter?* These remarks about *judging* form a transition point to the subject of the next chapter. But having now finished his explanation of the prohibition formerly given, and with it the subject of the fornicator among them, he gives, before passing on, a plain command in terms for the excommunication (but no more: *not the punishment* mentioned in vv. 3–5) of the offender. And this he does in the very words of Deut. xxiv. 7. The “*therefore*,” in the A.V., has absolutely no authority in its favour. The “*received text*” reads “And ye shall put away....:” but all the ancient authorities read as our text.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. 1–11.] PROHIBITION TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES IN THE LEGAL COURTS OF THE HEATHEN: RATHER SHOULD THESE BE ADJUDGED AMONG THEMSELVES (1–6): BUT FAR BETTER NOT TO QUARREL—RATHER TO SUFFER WRONG, WAITING FOR JUSTICE TO BE DONE AT THE COMING oF THE LORD, WHEN ALL WHO DO WRONG SHALL BE EXCLUDED FROM HIS KINGDOM (6–11).

1.] **Dare:** the word appears to be used to note, by so strong an expression, the offended Christian sense of the church. He points at no particular *individual*, but any one: for he proceeds in the plural, in verses 4, 7. Chrysostom remarks that the Apostle uses the term the **unjust**, and not. the *unbelievers*, to put the matter before them in its strongest light, seeing that it

was *justice* of which they were in search in going to law.—The Rabbinical books prohibited the going to law before Gentiles. In adding, and **not before the saints**, the Apostle does not mean that the Christians had their *courts of law*, but that they should submit their differences to *courts of arbitration* among themselves. Such courts of arbitration were common among the Jews.

2.] know ye not (appeals to an axiomatic truth) **that the saints shall judge the world?**—i. e. as assessors of Christ, at His coming: so Daniel vii. 22; see also Matt. xix. 28. All attempts to elude this plain meaning of the words are futile: whether by understanding that Christians shall *condemn the world by their holy lives*, or that they would *become magistrates and judges in the world*. The context shews plainly, that the saints are to be the judges, sitting in judgment.

are ye unworthy of (i. e. to hold or pronounce) **the smallest judgments?** These judgments are called **smallest**, in comparison with the weighty judgments which shall be held hereafter: see ver. 4.

3.] The same glorious office of Christians is again referred to, and even a more striking point of contrast brought out.

angels] always, where not otherwise specified, *good angels*: and therefore here; the “*ministering spirits*” of Heb. i. 14: but exactly *how* we shall judge them, is not revealed to us. Chrysostom and most Commentators, interpret, it of *bad angels*, or of *bad and good together*.

things that pertain to this life: properly, matters relating to *a man's livelihood*.—The meaning is, **civil causes**, matters of *mine and thine*.

4.] The description of these secular causes is emphatically repeated as being the only sort of judgments which were in question here.—On the possibility of rendering this verse in two ways, see in my Greek Test. The context, and arrangement of words in the original, favour that in our text. The context is this: ‘Your office is to judge *angels'* mere business causes of this world are almost beneath your notice. If such causes arise among you (he continues in a lofty irony), set those to judge them who are of no account among you:—do not go out of your own number to others to have them judged: the meanest among you is capable of doing it. Let it be noticed that he is passing to ver. 7, where he insists on the impropriety of judgments in this life's matters between Christians *at all*, and is here depreciating them ironically.

5.] The opening words refer to the ironical command in ver. 4—**I say this to put you to shame.**

Is there so completely a lack of all wise men among you... He now suggests the more Christian way of settling their differences, viz. *by arbitration*: and asks, ‘Are you come to this, that you are obliged to *set any to judge* at all,—**have you no wise man among you, who shall be able** (in such event) to decide (as arbitrator) **between his brethren** (literally, his brother: which expression is not without use: it prevents the apparent inference, which might be made if “*his brethren*” were used, that *one wise man was to be appointed universal arbitrator*,—and confines the appointment of the arbitrator to each possibly arising case respectively)?

6.] (*It seems not to be so*): **nay, &c.,** as implied in ver. 1.

7.] He gives his own censure of their going to law at all.

altogether, i.e. without the aggravation of its being *before unbelievers*.

a fault, literally, a falling short, viz. of your inheritance of the kingdom of God—a hindrance in the way of your salvation: see ver. 9:—not, as ordinarily understood, a *moral delinquency*.

8.] The YE is emphatic, and the account of it is to be found in an ellipsis after the end of ver. 7, to the effect, ‘as our Lord commanded us His disciples,’ or ‘as it behoves the followers of Christ.’ Then this comes in contrast: You on the **contrary do wrong, and defraud, and that (your) brethren.**

9.] ‘*Ye commit wrong*:’ this looks as if you had forgotten the rigid seclusion from the kingdom of God of *all wrong-doers* of every kind; see Gal. v. 21.

Be not deceived] This caution would be most salutary and needful in a dissolute place like Corinth. It is similarly, and with an express reference to evil communications, ch. xv. The mention of **fornicators** refers back to ch. v., and is taken up again, verses 12 ff.

drunkards, see on ch. v. 11.

11.] ‘These things were the *former state* of some among you: but ye are now in a far different state.’ I cannot think with Meyer that **such things** is used in contempt, *such a horde, or rabble*: it is rather ‘*of such a kind,*’ **these things, were some of you: but ye washed them off** (viz. at your baptism). The verb in the original cannot by any possibility be passive in signification, as it is generally, for doctrinal reasons, here rendered. It regards the fact of their having submitted themselves to Christian baptism. See ref. Acts), **but** (there is, in the repetition of but, the triumph of one who was under God the instrument of this mighty change) **ye were sanctified** (not in the doctrinal sense of progressive sanctification, but so that whereas before you were unholy, by the reception of the Holy Ghost you became *dedicated to God and holy*), **but ye were justified** (by faith in Christ, you received the “*righteousness of God,*” Rom. i. 17), **in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the** (working of the) **Spirit of our God.** These two last clauses must not be fancifully assigned amongst the preceding. They belong to *all*. The spiritual washing in baptism, “the sanctification of the children of God, the justification of the believer, are all wrought in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and are each and all the work of the Spirit ‘of our God.—By the **our** again, he binds the Corinthians and himself together in the glorious blessings of the gospel-state, and mingles the oil of joy with the mourning which by his reproof he is reluctantly creating.

12–20.] CORRECTION OF AN ABUSE OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM WHICH SOME AMONG THEM HAD MADE, THAT, AS MEATS WERE INDIFFERENT, SO WAS FORNICATION (vv. 12–17). STRONG PROHIBITION OF, AND DISSUASIVE FROM THIS SIN (vv. 18–20).

12.] *Statement of the true doctrine of Christian freedom*

All **things are lawful unto me** are the bona fide words of the Apostle himself, not, as some have understood them, the saying of an opponent cited by him. For (1) the sentiment is a true Christian axiom: all things being of course understood, as it evidently was even by the abusers of the doctrine, of things (supposed by them) indifferent. (2) It is not introduced by any clause indicative of its being the saying of another, which is St. Paul’s habit in such cases, see Rom. xi. 19. (3) The Apostle does not either deny or qualify the *lawfulness*, but takes up the matter from another point of view, the *expediency*. The “me” is spoken in the person of Christians generally. So also in ver. 15, ch. vii. 7, viii. 13, x. 23, 29, 30, xiv.

11. not all things are expedient, or advantageous—in the most general sense: distinguished from “*are edifying,*” ch. x. 23, where the words again occur. The assertion is equivalent to **I will not be deprived of my freedom by any practice;**—i. e. indulge in any practice which shall mar this liberty and render it no real freedom, making me to be one *under power*, instead of one exercising it.

13, 14.] The argument is,—meats (of which he doubtless had often impressed on them that *t hey were indifferent*, whence the abuse) are expressly created for the belly, and the belly for them, by its organization being fitted to assimilate them; and both these are of a transitory nature: in the change to the more perfect state, God will do away with both. Therefore meats *are indifferent*. But neither is the body created for fornication nor can this transitoriness be predicated of *it*: the body is *for the Lord*, and the Lord (in His mediatorial work) for the body: and God raised up the Lord, and will raise up us (i. e. our bodies): so that, the body is not perishable, and (resumed ver. 18) he that fornicates, sins against his *own body*. THEREFORE, fornication is not an *indifferent thing*. It is very remarkable how these verses contain the germ of three weighty sections of the Epistle about to follow, and doubtless in the Apostle’s mind when he wrote them, (1) the relation between the sexes: (2) the question of meats offered to idols: (3) the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body.

13.] The belly is the appointed receptacle for meats—they, its appointed nourishment.

God shall destroy...] viz. *at the appearing of the Lord:* when, ch. xv. 51, 52, we shall be changed from a *spiritual body*, to be a *natural body*: not, *at death*. But, on the other hand, the body was not made for the practice of fornication. The reciprocal subserviency of the belly and meats is shewn by their coextensiveness in duration, and perishing together: but when *fornication* (and even that lawful use which is physical the same, but which is not ere contemplated) shall have for ever passed away, the body shall be subserving its real use—that of being an instrument for the Lord’s work.

and the Lord for the body] not, *only* for the body; but for the body; to sanctify our bodies by His Spirit, and finally to glorify them for Himself, see Rom. viii. 11. This final reference must not be *excluded* here, though it is not the principal thought:—rather the redemption of the body from sin, and making it into a member of Himself by the Spirit.

14.] So far from the case of the Lord and the body answering to the other, God **raised up the Lord** (Rom. viii. 11), **and will raise us up too by His Power.**

15.] Resumption of the fact that the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. The two are so intimately connected, that the Lord is *a mystical Body*, of *which our bodies*, parts of ourselves in our perfect organization, *are members*. This Christian axiom is introduced as before by **Know ye not that...** (literally) **Having then** (i. e. granted that my body is a member, and my members are members of Christ) **alienated** (or **taken away**). This word is not merely superfluous, ‘*Shall I take... and make*

them...,” as A.V.) **Christ’s members** (i. e. my own members), **shall I make them an harlot’s members?**—The expression is put as coarsely and startlingly as possible, with the emphasis on the word **harlot’s**.

16.] Explanation and justification of the expression, **members of an harlot**. As if he had said, “Do you think the expression ‘make them members of an harlot’ too strong?”

one body, viz. ‘*with her.*’ The full construction would be “*that he which is joined to an harlot, and the harlot, are one body.*” but he is here bringing out the criminality of the fornicator and leaves the other out of view.—The citation is spoken of *marriage*; but here as above (see on ver. 13) he is treating merely of the physical union, which is the same in both cases.

saieth he, viz. GOD, who is the speaker in the Scriptures so in citing the same words, our Lord gives them to “*Him that made them from the beginning.*” Matt. xix. 5. They were spoken by the mouth of Adam, but prophetically, under God’s inspiration. The words they two are not in the Hebrew, but in the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch, and are found in the Rabbinical citations of the passage. See note on Matt. xix. 5.

17.] Union to God, His service, His ways, is often expressed by this word (joined or attached in the Septuagint, but here *that inner union with Christ in spirit is* meant, and of which is the normal state of every believer, and of which it may be said that *he is one spirit with Christ.* See John xvii. 21, and the parable of John xv. 1–7. Meyer rightly remarks, that the mystical marriage between Christ and His Church must not be pressed here, as the relations of the compared are not correspondent. Still however, the inner verity of that mystical relation is the *ground* of both passages.

18–20.] *Direct prohibition of fornication, and its grounds.*

18.] **Flee** might be followed by *therefore*, but is more forcible in this disconnected form.

Every sin...] The assertion, which has surprised many of the Commentators, is nevertheless *strictly true*. Drunkenness and gluttony, e.g. are sins done *in and by* the body, and are sins *by abuse* of the body. but they are still **outside the body**,—introduced *from without*, sinful *not in their act*, but in their *effect*, which effect it is each man’s duty to foresee and avoid. But fornication is the *alienating that body which is the Lord’s, and making it a harlot’s body*—it is sin against a *man’s own body*, in its very nature,—against *the verity and nature* of his body; not an *effect on* the body from participation of things without, but a *contradiction of the truth* of the body, wrought *within itself*. When *man and wife* are one in the Lord,—united by *His ordinance*,—no such alienation of the body takes place, and consequently no sin,

19.] Justification of the assertion next preceding,—and this by an amplification of the principles above laid down.

your body (i. e. the body of each man among you, but put singular, to keep, as in ch. iii. 16, the unity of the idea of God’s temple, or perhaps because *the body* in its attributes is in question here) **is the temple of** (possessed by, as His residence **the Holy Spirit which is in you** (reminiscence of the reality of His indwelling), **which ye have from God** (reminiscence *whose Spirit He is*, and so preparation for the following inference), and **are not your own** (so that ye have no right to alienate your body, not being *yours*).

20.] *Proof, that ye are not your own.* The *possession* of your body as His temple, by the Holy Ghost, is a *presumptive proof* that ye are not; but there is also a proof in *matter of fact*: **For ye were bought** (not, as A.V., *are bought*, which destroys the historic reference) **with a price** (viz. the *blood of Christ*, see 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Matt. xx. 28; Gal. iii. 18. This *buying* is here mentioned mainly with reference to the *right of possession*, which Christ has thereby acquired in us. In other places it is alleged as a freeing from other services: e.g. that of sin [Rom. vi. 17, 18], of the law and its curse [Gal. iii] of Satan [Col. i. 13]):

glorify therefore God (i. e. not *praise* God, but glorify Him by your acts) **in your body** (not, *by means of* your body, but *in your body*, as the temple of God; see John xiii. 32). The words “*and in your spirit, which are God’s,*” added in the A.V., are wanting in almost all our earliest authorities.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 7

CHAP. VII. 1–40.] REPLY TO THEIR ENQUIRIES RESPECTING MARRIAGE; BY WHICH OCCASION IS GIVEN FOR VARIOUS COLLATERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMANDS In order to the right understanding of this chapter, it will be well to remember, that the enquiries in the letter of the Corinthians appear to have been made in *disparagement of marriage*, and to have brought into doubt whether it were not better to avoid it where *uncontracted*, and *break it off where contracted*, or this last at all events *where one of the parties was an unbeliever*. These questions he answers, vv. 1–16: and puts on their true grounds, vv. 17–24. They appear also to have asked respecting *virgins*, what was their duty, and that of their

parents, as to their contracting marriage. This he discusses its various aspects of duty and Christian expediency, vv. 25–38. Then he concludes with an answer and advice, respecting the liberty of a woman to marry after the death of her husband.—The whole is written under the strong impression (see on this,-notes, Acts ii. 20; Rom. xiii. 11, and 2 Cor. v.: and Introd. to 1 Thess. §iv. 5–10) of the near approach of the end of this state of things (vv. 29–31), and as advising them under circumstances in which persecution, and family division for the Gospel's sake, might at any time break up the relations of life. The precepts therefore and recommendations contained in the chapter are to be weighed, as those in ch. viii. al., *with reference to change of circumstances*; and the meaning of God's Spirit in them with respect to the subsequent ages of the Church, to be sought by *careful comparison and inference*, not rashly assumed and misapplicd.—I may also premise, that in hardly any portion of the Epistles has the hand of correctors and interpolators of the text been busier, than here. The absence of all ascetic tendency from the Apostle's advice, on the point where asceticism was busiest and most mischievous was too strong a testimony against it, to be left in its original clearness.

1, 2.] Concession of the expediency (where possible) of celibacy, but assertion of the practical necessity of marriage, as a remedy against fornication.

good] *not morally good*: for in ver. 28 expressly *not sin*, but *inexpediency*, is the reason for not marrying: nor good in the sense of *more excellent*, as Jerome, saying, “if it is good not to touch a woman, it is therefore evil to touch one.” but **expedient**, generally: ‘more for a man's best interests under present circumstances:’ as we say in English, ‘it is the best way,’ in the colloquial sense: so also throughout the chapter: see the word qualified, ver. 26, by the addition of “on account of the present necessity.” This assertion is obviously here made in the widest sense, without *present* regard to the difference between the lawful and unlawful use of the woman. The idea that the assertion applies to abstinence from intercourse in the *already married* (see again below), is altogether a mistake.

2.] The former course is expedient—would avoid much ‘trouble in the flesh: but as a general rule *it may not be*, seeing that for a *more weighty reason* the contrary course is to be recommended.—**But on account of [the] fornications** (the many instances of fornication current), **let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.** The saying is *not concessive, but imperative*; not, “may have,” but “must have.” So the other expressions, “*let them marry*,” ver. 9, “*let her remain*,” ver. 11, &c. With regard to the idea of some, that the Apostle here gives a very low estimate of marriage, as solely a remedy against fornication\the true answer is, that St. Paul does not either here, or in this chapter at all, give any *estimate* of marriage in the abstract. His estimate, *when he does*, is to be found Eph. v. 25–32.

3, 4.] The duty of cohabitation incumbent on the married. This point was in all probability raised in the letter of the Corinthians ‘The Apostle's command is a legitimate following out of the reason, because *of fornications*, above.

3. her due] This is the reading of all our most ancient. MSS.:—the physical duty of a husband.

4.] The ground of this being *another's while they remain their own*, is to be found in the *oneness of body*, in which the marriage state places them.

5.] in order that ye may have undisturbed leisure for prayer. The original (see in my Greek Test.) shews that the prayer meant is not ordinary, but extraordinary,—*seasons of urgent supplication*.—The addition, in the received text, of the words ‘*fasting and*,’ shews how such passages as this have been tampered with by the ascetics. The words are wanting in all our principal oldest authorities.

may be together, not “*come together*,” as it has been amended, because *to be together* in this sense is the *normal state* of the married. The sense is,—the aim of the temporary separation is *not that you may keep apart*, but for a certain end, and then *that you may be united again*.

in order that Satan tempt you not] Purpose of the re-union stated, by that which might happen did it not take place: viz. that a temptation might arise, to fulfil the natural desires in an unlawful manner.

6.] But this I say by way of allowance (for you), not by way of command.

this refers, as the context (ver. 7) shews, to the whole recommendation given in ver. 5. This recommendation all depended on the possibility of their being tempted by incontinence he gives it not then *as a command* in all cases, but *as an allowance* for those to whom he was writing, whom he knew, and assumes, to *be thus tempted*. The meaning ‘*by permission*, A.V., is ambiguous appearing as if it meant by *permission of the Lord (to say it)*.

7. as I myself] viz. in a state of continence: see below on ver. 8. What follows is said in the most general way, as a milder expression of ‘all have not the gift of continence.’

after this manner... after that] both are said *generally*, not one *in the way in which I have it* of continence another *in the way of marrying* (i. e. though he have not *this*, and be therefore *better married*, yet has *some other*).

8, 9.] Advice to the unmarried, that it is best so to remain, but better to marry than be inflamed with lust.

8.] the unmarried, of both sexes: not as usually interpreted, *widowers*, or *unmarried males alone*: this is shewn by the contrasted term, “the married,” which embraces (see vv. 10, 11) both sexes.

and to the widows may be added as singling out widows *especially*;—or more probably, because “*the unmarried*” would naturally be taken as those who *never were married*, and thus widows would not be understood to be included, **It is good for them**, i.e. ‘it is their best way.’ see on ver. 1.

even as I] i.e. unmarried. This brings the Apostle’s own circumstances more clearly before us than ver. 7, which might be misunderstood: and there can be little doubt from this, that he *never was married*. There is a passage of Clement of Alexandria which says that St. Paul in a certain epistle addressed “his yokefellow, whom he did not carry about with him on grounds expedient for his ministry.” But the words “*true yokefellow*,” Phil. iv. 3, certainly have no reference to a wife: see note there.

9.] it is better to marry than to burn, i.e. “than to be wasted by the hidden flame of lust in the conscience.” Augustine.

10, 11.] Prohibition of separation after marriage; or, in case of separation, of another marriage. These married persons, as the *unmarried and widows above*, are all Christians. The case of *mixed marriages* he treats ver. 12 ff. They are **those already married**.

10. not I, but the Lord] *Ordinarily*, the Apostle (I) writes, commands, gives his advice, *under conscious inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God*. See ver. 40. He claims expressly, ch. xiv. 37, that the things “*which I write unto you*” should be recognized as “*the Lord’s commandment*.” But here he is about to give them a command resting, not merely on *inspired apostolic authority*, great and undoubted as that was, but on that of THE LORD HIMSELF. So that all supposed distinction between the Apostle’s own writing of *himself and of the Lord*, is quite irrelevant. He *never wrote of himself*, being a vessel of the Holy Ghost, who ever spoke by him to the church. The distinction between that which is imperative, and that which is optional, that which is more and that which is less weighty in his writings, is to be made by the cautious and believing Christian, from a wise appreciation of the *subject-matter*, and of the *circumstances under which* it was written. ALL is the *outpouring of the Spirit*, but not all for all time, nor all on the primary truths of the faith.—**Not I, but the Lord**, viz. in the reff. especially Matt. See also in Mark, where the *woman’s part* is brought out. That it occupies the *principal place* here, is perhaps because the *Christian women* at Corinth may have been the most ready to make the separation: or perhaps, because the woman, from her place in the matrimonial union, may be more properly said to be separated from the man, than the man to be separated from the woman.

be separated, whether by *formal divorce or otherwise*; the “*let her be reconciled*” below, is like this, an *absolute passive*; undefined whether by her own or her husband’s doing.

11.] The former part of the verse, as far as “*husband*,” is parenthetical. It supposes a case of *actual separation*, contrary of course to Christ’s command: if such have really taken place, the additional sin of a new marriage (Matt. v. 32) must not be committed, but the breach healed as soon as possible.

and that the husband leave not his wife] The Apostle does not add the qualification “except for the cause of fornication,” found in Matt. v. 32 (xix. 9), but not in Mark x. 11 or Luke xvi. 18. But we cannot hence infer that he was not aware of it. The rule, not the exception, here was in his mind: and after what had been before said on the subject of fornication, the latter would be understood as a matter of course.

12–16.] Directions for such Christians as were already married to Heathens. Such a circumstance must not be in itself a ground of separation,—and why: but if the unbelieving party wish to break off the union, let it be so.

12.] to the rest, perhaps in respect of their letter of enquiry—the *only ones not yet dealt with*. At all events, the meaning is plain, being those who are involved in mixed marriages with unbelievers.

I, not the Lord, i.e. I Paul, in my apostolic office, under the authority of the Holy Spirit (see above on ver. 10), **not the Lord**, i.e. not Christ by *any direct command* spoken by Him: it was a question with which HE *did not deal*, in His recorded discourses. The contentment of the wife *also*, presupposes *his own* wish to continue united.

13.] Meyer remarks, that the Apostle uses the general term *leave* here, of *both parties*, the husband and wife, not “*put away*” (as Matt. v. 31, &c.), which would apply only to the husband. In the A.V. this identity of terms is unfortunately neglected.

The same word, **leave**, or **part from**, would well have expressed both cases.—*By the Greek as well as Roman customs, the wife had the power of effecting a divorce.* At Athens,—when the divorce originated with the wife, she was said to *leave* the house of her husband: when with the husband to *be sent away*. At Rome, the only exception to the wife's liberty of effecting a divorce appears to have been in the case of a freedwoman who had married her patronus. Olshausen thinks that St. Paul puts both alternatives, because he regards the *Christian party as the superior one* in the marriage. But, as Meyer remarks, this would be inconsistent with the fundamental law of marriage, Gen 16, and with the Apostle's own view of it, ch. xi. 3, xv. 34; Eph. v. 22; 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

14.] Ground of the above precept.

is sanctified] The meaning will best be apprehended by remembering (1) that *holiness*, under the Gospel, answers to dedication to God under the law; (2) that the sanctified under the Gospel are the *body of Christian men*, dedicated to God, and thus become His in a peculiar manner: (3) that this being so, things belonging to, relatives inseparably connected with, *the people of God*, are said to be *hallowed by their holiness*: not holy in themselves, but sanctified, i.e. included in the holiness of the faithful relative. Chrysostom well shews the distinction between this case and that in ch. vi. 15, that being an *impious connexion*,—in and under the condition of the *very state*, in which the other party is *impure*: whereas this is a connexion according to a pure and holy ordinance, by virtue of which, although the physical unity in both cases is the same, the *purity overbears the impurity*.

in the wife... in the brother] *in*, i.e. his or her *sanctity is situated in*, rests in, *the other*.

else; literally, **since in that case** (i. e. as understood, the *other* alternative,—the *non-hallowing*).

are] *not would be*, nor *were*, as A.V., but *present*: because the supposed case is assumed and the ind. pres. used of what *has place* on its assumption.

holy] as above: **holy to the Lord**. On this *fact*, *Christian children being holy*, the argument is built. This being so,—they being hallowed, because the children of Christians,—it follows that *that union out of which* they sprung, must as such have the same hallowed character; i.e. that the *insanity* of the one parent is in it *overborne* by the *sanctity* of the other. The *fact* of the children of Christians, God's spiritual people, *being holy*, is tacitly assumed as a matter of course, from the precedent of God's ancient covenant people.—With regard to the bearing of *this verse* on the subject of Infant Baptism,—it seems to me to have *none*, further than this: that it establishes the so far, between Christian and Jewish children, as to shew, that if the initiatory rite of the old covenant was administered to the one,—that of the new covenant, in so far as it was regarded as corresponding to circumcision would probably as a matter of course be administered to the other. Those who deny any such inference, forget, as it seems to me, that it is not *personal holiness* which is here predicated of the children, any more than of the unbelieving husband or wife, but *holiness of dedication*, by strict dependence *on one dedicated*. Notwithstanding this *holiness*, the Christian child is individually born in sin and a child of wrath; and individually needs the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, just as much as the Jewish child needed the typical purifying of circumcision and the sacrificial atonements of the law. So that in this *holiness* of the Christian child, there is nothing inconsistent with the idea, nor with the practice, of Infant Baptism.

15.] But if the wish for separation proceed from the side of the UNBELIEVER (emphatic), *let him (or her) be separated.*

is not put under bondage] i.e. the same necessity does not exist when a believer is joined to an *unbeliever* as when *believers* are joined. In this latter case, to abide in the union is imperative; in the other, if the unbeliever wishes to dissolve the union, it may be dissolved.

in peace] Not the same as “*to peace*” (A. V.), but signifying the moral element *in which* we are called to be: see ver. 22 below.—The meaning is, “let the unbeliever depart, rather than by attempting to retain the union, endanger that peace of household and peace of spirit, which is part of the calling of a Christian.”—Observe, (1) that there is no contradiction in this license of breaking off such a marriage, to the command of our Lord in Matt. v. 32,—because the Apostle expressly asserts, ver. 12, that *our Lord's words do not apply* to such marriages as are here contemplated. They were spoken to those *within the covenant*, and as such apply immediately to the wedlock of *Christians* (ver. 10), but *not to mixed marriages*. (2) That the question of re-marrying after such a separation, is here *left open*: on this, see note on Matt. v. 32. (3) That not a word here said can be so strained as to imply any license to *contract* marriages with unbelievers. Only those *already contracted* are dealt with: the *being unequally yoked with unbelievers* is expressly forbidden, 2 Cor. vi. 14, and by implication below, ver. 39.

16.] This verse is generally understood as a ground for remaining united, as ver. 13, in hope that conversion of the unbelieving party may follow. thus ver. 15 is regarded altogether parenthetical. But (1) this interpretation is harsh as regards the context, for ver. 15 is evidently *not parenthetical*,—and (2) (see my Greek Test.) it is hardly grammatically admissible. The fact is, that the verse is not a ground for remaining united, in hope, &c.,—but a ground for consummating a separation, and not marring

the Christian's peace for so uncertain a prospect as that of converting the unbelieving party. The question thus preserves its strict sense, **How knowest thou** (about the question) **whether....?** and the verse coheres with the words immediately preceding, "God hath called us in peace." The meaning then of the verse will be as follows: (Let the unbeliever depart: hazard not for an uncertainty the peace in which you ought to be living as Christians:) **for what assurance hast thou, O wife, whether thou shalt be the means of thy husband's conversion? Or what assurance hast thou, O husband, whether thou shalt be the means of thy wife's conversion?** This interpretation is the only one compatible with the obvious sense of ver. 15, and of the expression how knowest: thou whether thou shalt save; and is also in exact harmony with the general tenor of the Apostle's argument, which is not to urge a union, but to tolerate a separation Stanley; the rest of whose note is deeply interesting as to the historical influence of the verse as commonly misunderstood.

17.] Only takes an exception, by way of caution, to the foregoing motive for not remaining together (ver. 16). The Christian partner might carry that motive *too far*, and be tempted by it to *break the connexion on his own part*; a course already prohibited (verses 12–14). Therefore the Apostle adds, **Only** (only be careful not to make this a ground for *yourselves* causing the separation) **as to each the Lord distributed [his lot], as God has** called each, so (in that state, without change) **let him walk.**

so ordain I...] "he says this to make them readier to obey, by *all* being included under the command." Theophylact.

18–24.] Examples of the precept just given.

18–20.] *First example: CIRCUMCISION.*

18.] Was any one called [being] circumcised, i.e. at the time of his conversion.

become uncircumcised] By a surgical operation; see 1 Macc. i. 15. The practice usually was adopted by those who wished to appear like the Gentiles, and to cast off their ancient faith and habits. Among the Christians a strong anti-Judaistic feeling might lead to it.

19.] See Gal. v. 6, where our **keeping of the commandments of God** is expressed by "*faith working by love*," and Gal. vi. 15, where it is given by "*a new creature*" (or "creation"). See an interesting note in Stanley's "Epistles to the Corinthians," on the relation of these three descriptions. After God supply, as in our text, [**in every thing**]: see a similar construction in ch. iii. 7.

20.] Formal repetition of the general precept, as again ver. 24. **calling** does not mean *calling in life*, but strictly **calling** ('vocation') by **God**. The **calling** of a circumcised person would be a *calling in circumcision*, and by this he was to abide.

21–24.] Second example: SLAVERY. **Wast thou called** (converted) **being a slave? care not for it: nay even if thou canst be made free, use it** (i. e. remain in slavery) rather. 'This rendering, which is that of all the ancient commentators, is absolutely required by the words in the original: see in my Greek Test. It is also required by the *context*: for the *burden* of the whole passage is, 'Let each man remain in the state in which he was called' The other interpretation,—mentioned by Chrysostom and given by Erasmus and Luther, Beza, Calvin, Grotinus, and almost all the moderns, understands it to mean *liberty*:— "*but if thou art able to become free, take advantage of it rather*" The objections to this, besides that it is grammatically inadmissible as a rendering of the original, are:— (1) Its utter inconsistency with the general context. The Apostle would thus be giving two examples of the precept,— "*let each abide in the same calling wherein he was called*," one of which would convey a recommendation of the contrary course. This is well followed out in Chrysostom. (2) Its entire contradiction to ver. 22: see below. (3) It would be quite inconsistent with the teaching of the Apostle,—that in Christ (Gal. iii. 28) *freeman and slave are all one*,—and with his remarks on the urgency and shortness of the time in this chapter (ver. 29 ff.), —to turn out of his way to give a precept merely of worldly wisdom, that a slave should become free if he could. (4) The import of the verb rendered "**use it**," in such a connexion, which suits better the remaining in, enduring, labouring under, giving one's self up to, an already-existing state, than the adopting or taking advantage of a new one.

22.] Ground of the above precept. For the slave who was called in the Lord (not as A.V., '*He who is called in the Lord being a slave.*'

in the Lord: as the *element* which what is about to be stated takes place) **is the Lord's freed man.** The Lord's freed man is not here in the ordinary Roman sense 'the Lord's manumitted slave:' for the *former master was sin or the devil*, see on ch. vi. 20;—but *only, a freed man belonging to Christ*, viz. freed by Christ from the service of another. This the reader would understand as a matter of course: **in like manner he that was called, being free** (not the freeman being called), **is the slave of Christ.** Christ's service is perfect *freedom*, and the Christian's freedom is the *service of Christ*. But here the Apostle takes, in each case, *one member* of this double antithesis from the *outer world*, *one from the spiritual*. The (actual) slave is (spiritually) free: the (actually) free is a (spiritual) slave. So that the two are so mingled, in the Lord, that the slave need not trouble himself about his slavery, nor seek for this world's freedom, seeing he has a more glorious freedom in Christ, and

seeing also that his brethren who seem to be free in this world are in fact Christ's servants, as *he* is a servant. It will be plain that the reason given in this verse is quite inconsistent with the prevalent modern rendering of ver. 21.

23.] Following out of the idea, **the slave of Christ**, by reminding them of the PRICE PAID whereby Christ PURCHASED them for His (eh. vi. 20): and precept thereupon, BECOME NOT SLAVES OF MEN: i.e. 'do not allow your relations to human society, whether of freedom or slavery, to bring you into bondage so as to cause you anxiety to change the one or increase the other.' Chrysostom and others think the precept directed against *eye-service*, and general regard to men's opinion. But it is better to restrict it (however it may legitimately be applied generally) to the case in hand. Others understand it as addressed to the *free*, and meaning that *they* are not to *sell themselves into slavery*: but this is evidently wrong: as may be seen by the change to the *second person plural* as addressing all his readers: besides that a new example would have been marked as in vv. 18, 21. See Stanley's note.

24.] The rule is again repeated, but with the addition **with God**, reminding them of the relations of Christ's freed man and Christ's slave, and of the price paid just mentioned: of that relation to God in which they stood by means of their Christian calling.

25–38.] Advice (with some digressions connected with the subject) concerning the MARRIAGE OF VIRGINS.

25.] **virgins** is not to be understood *unmarried persons of both sexes*, a meaning which, though apparently found in Rev. xiv. 4 (see note there), is perfectly unnecessary here, and appears to have been introduced from a mistaken view of vv. 26–28. The emphasis is on **commandment—command of the Lord have I none**, i.e., *no expressed precept*; so that, as before, there is no marked comparison between "the Lord," and "I."

to be faithful, i.e., as a steward and dispenser of the hidden things of God, and, among them, of such directions as you cannot make for yourselves, but require one so entrusted to impart to you. This sense, which has occurred in the estimate given of himself in this very Epistle, is better than the more general ones of *true or believing*.

26.] The question of the marriage of *virgins* is one involving the expediency of contracting marriage *in general*: this he deals with now, on grounds connected with the then pressing necessity.

then follows on '*I give my judgment*,' and introduces the "*judgment*."

this indicates what is coming, viz. "*so to be*." **good**, see note on 1: **the best way**.

the present (or instant) necessity: viz. that prophesied by the Lord, Matt. xxiv. 8, 21, &c.: which shall precede His coming: see especially verr. 19 there: not, the *cares of marriage*, as Theophylact, and others, nor *persecutions*, as Photius, which are only a *part* of the apprehended troubles. These the Apostle regards as *instant, already* begun: for this is the meaning, not imminent *shortly to come*. See note on 2 Thess. ii, 2, where this distinction is very important.

a man] here purposely general, *every one*, including those treated of, young females.

so to be] how? "*Even as I*," in ver. 8? perhaps better, *as he is*: on account of the following context, ver. 27. This, in the case of the *unmarried*, would amount to the other: and the case of virgins is now that especially under consideration.

27.] The expression, **so to be, re-stated and illustrated**: neither the married nor the unmarried are to *seek for a change*. 'The general recommendation here is referable alike to all cases of marriage, and does not touch on the prohibition of ver. 10, —*only dissuading from a spirit of change in consideration of the instant necessity*. It seems better to take the verse thus, than to regard it as inserted to guard against misunderstanding of the preceding *judgment* of the Apostle.

Art thou loosed? does not imply *previous marriage*, but describes all those who are not bound by the marriage tie, whether previously married or not.

28.] *Not sin, but outward trouble*, will be incurred by contracting marriage, whether in the case of the unmarried man or of the virgin; and it is *to spare them this*, that he gives his advice. The literal rendering is,—**But if also thou shalt have married, thou didst not sin** (viz. when thou marriedst); **and if a virgin shall have married, she sinned not; but such persons, viz. they who have married, shall have tribulation in the flesh: but I** (emphatic, *my motive is*) **am sparing you** (endeavoring to spare you this trouble in the flesh by advising you to keep single).

29–31.] He enforces the foregoing advice by solemnly reminding them of the shortness of the time, and the consequent duty of *sitting loose to all worldly ties and employments*.

29. this I say...] ‘What I just now said, of marrying being no *sin*, might dispose you to look on the whole matter as indifferent: my motive, the sparing you outward affliction, may be underrated in the importance of its bearing: but I will add this solemn consideration? **the time henceforth is shortened, i.e., the time that remains is short: the interval** between now and the coming of the Lord has arrived at an extremely contracted period. These words have been variously misunderstood. (1) **The time** has been by Calvin, Mstius, and others, interpreted ‘the space of man’s life on earth: which, however true it may be, and however legitimate this *application* of the Apostle’s words, certainly was not in his mind, nor is it consistent with *his* usage of the word: see Rom. xiii. 11; Eph. v. 16,—or with that of the great prophecy of our Lord which is the key to this chapter, Luke xxi, 8; Mark xiii. 33. (2) The word which we render **shortened** has been understood as meaning *calamitous*. But it never has this signification. (3) The word **henceforth** has been by some (e. g. in A.V., so also Tertullian, Jerome, the Vulgate, Luther, Calvin, and others) *joined to what follows*: ‘*it remains that both they, &c.* But usage is against this, and the continuity of the passage would be very harshly broken; whereas by the other rendering all proceeds naturally. See more in my Greek Test.

in order that...] *The end for which the time has been (by God) thus gathered up into a short compass: in order that both they, &c.: i.e. in order that Christians, those who wait for and shall inherit the coming kingdom, may keep themselves loose in heart from worldly relationships and employments: that the married may not fetter his interests to his wedlock, nor the mourner to his misfortunes nor the joyous to his prosperity, nor the man of commerce to his gain, nor the user of the world to his use of the world.* We may notice that according to this only right view of the sense, the clauses following are not *precepts of the Apostle*, but the *objects*, as regards *us*, of the *divine counsel in shortening the time*.

31. using it to the full] The word in the original appears here to imply that intense and greedy use which turns the legitimate use into a fault. This meaning is better than ‘*abuse*’ (A. V.), which is allowable, and is adopted by many. The end of the verse gives a reason for the assertion that *the time is short*; the clauses which have intervened being subordinate to those words: see above.

for the fashion (meaning not *mode*, or habit, but present external form. So in Phil. ii. 8, ‘*being found in fashion as a man*’) **of this world is passing away** (is in the act of being changed, as a passing scene in a play.—This shews that the time is short:—the form of this world is already beginning to pass away. Stanley compares a remarkable parallel, 2 Esdr. xvi. 40–44, probably copied from this passage).

32–34.] Application of what has been just said to the question of marriage.

32.] But (i. e. since this is so—since the time is so short, and *that*, in order that we Christians may sit loose to the world) **I wish you to be without worldly cares** (undistracted). Then he explains how this touches on the subject.

34.] The literal rendering is—**Divided also is the (married) woman and the virgin, divided in interest** [i. e. in cares and pursuits] from one another: not merely, *different from one another* as would seem at first sight from the words of the text. On the question arising from different readings, see my Greek ‘Test—The judgment of marriage here pronounced by the Apostle must be taken, as the rest of the chapter, *with its accompanying conditions*. He is speaking of a pressing and quickly shortening period, which he regards as yet remaining before that day and hour of which neither he, nor any man knew. He wishes his Corinthians, during that short time, to be as far as possible *totally* undistracted. He mentions as an objection to marriage, that which is an *undoubted*

fact of human experience:—which is necessarily bound up with that relation; and *without which the duties of the relation could not be fulfilled*. Since he wrote, the unfolding of God’s Providence has taught us more of the interval before the coming of the Lord than it was given even to an inspired Apostle to see. And as it would be perfectly reasonable and proper to urge on an apparently dying man the duty of abstaining from contracting new worldly obligations,—but both unreasonable and improper, should the same person recover his health, to insist on this abstinence any longer; so now, when God has manifested His will that nations should rise up and live and decay, and long centuries elapse before the day of the coming of Christ, it would be manifestly unreasonable to urge,—except in so far as every man’s *time is getting shorter and shorter*, and similar arguments are applicable,—the considerations here enforced. Meanwhile they stand here on the sacred page as a lesson to us how to regard, though in circumstances somewhat changed, our worldly relations: and to teach us, as the coming of the Lord may be as near now, as the Apostle then believed it to be, to act at least in the spirit of his advice, and be, as far as God’s manifest will that we should enter into the relations and affairs of life allows, without distraction. The duty of ver. 35 is incumbent on all Christians, at all periods.

35.] Caution against mistaking what has been said for an imperative order, whereas it was only a suggestion for their best interest.

this] viz. verses 32–34. **for your own (emphatic) profit**, i.e. not for my own purposes—not to exercise my apostolic authority: **not that I may cast a snare** (lit. ‘a noose,’ the metaphor is from throwing the noose in hunting or in war) **over you** (i. e. entangle and encumber you with difficult precepts), **but with a view to seemliness** (compare Rom. xiii. 13), and **waiting**

upon the Lord without distraction. Stanley draws out the parallel to the story in Luke x. 39–42: Mary sitting by the feet of Jesus, while Martha was cumbered with much serving, and careful about many things: the very words used in the original there being almost the same as here.

36–38.] *For seemliness' sake:* and consequently, if there be danger, by a father withholding his consent to his daughter's marriage, of unseemly treatment of her, let an exception be made in that case: but otherwise, if there be no such danger, it is better not to give her in marriage.—**But** (introduces an inconsistency with what is seemly) **if any one** (any father) **thinks that he is behaving unseemly towards his virgin daughter** (viz “in setting before her a temptation to sin with her lover, or at least, bringing on her the imputation of it, by withholding his consent to her marriage), **if she be of full age** (for *before* that the imputation and the danger consequent on preventing the marriage would not be such as to bring in the unseemliness. Or the reference may be to the supposed disgrace of having a grown-up unmarried daughter in his house. See Stanley's note, and compare Eccles xii. 9.—**and thus it must be** (i. e. and there is help for it, they are bent on it beyond the power of dissuasion. **Thus**, viz., that they

what he will (as his determination on this thought of his) **let him do, he sinneth not** (for there is no *sin* in marriage): **let them** (his daughter and her lover) **marry.**

37.] **But he who stands firm in his heart** i.e. his *purpose*,—having no such misgiving that he is behaving unseemly), **not involved in any necessity** (no urgent circumstances as in the other case; no determination to marry on the part of his daughter, nor attachment formed), **but has liberty of action respecting his personal wish** (to keep his daughter unmarried), **and has determined this in his own** (his *own*, as it is a matter of private determination only) **heart** (determined *this*: it is not stated *what*, but is understood by the reader to mean, *the keeping his daughter unmarried*) **to keep** (in her present state) **his own virgin daughter, shall do well.** **39, 40.]** *Concerning second marriages of women.*

39. is bound] viz. *to her husband*, or perhaps absolutely, **is bound**, in her marriage state.

only in the Lord, i.e. within the limits of *Christian* connexion—in the element in which all Christians live and walk;—‘*let her marry a Christian?*

40. she is more blessed] Not merely happier, in our merely social secular sense: but, including this, happier, partly by freedom from the attendant trials of the “*present necessity*,”—but principally for the reason mentioned verse 34. “To higher blessedness in heaven, which became attached to celibacy afterwards in the views of its defenders, there is no allusion here” Meyer.

and I think] This is modestly said, implying more than is expressed by it,—not as if there were any uncertainty in his mind. It gives us the true meaning of the saying that he is *giving his opinion*, as ver. viz. not that he is speaking without inspiration, but that in the consciousness of inspiration he is giving that counsel which should determine the question.

I also] ‘*as well as other teachers.*’ Whether said with a general or particular reference, we cannot tell, from not being sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 8

VIII. 1—XI. 1.] ON THE PARTAKING OF MEATS OFFERED TO IDOLS, AND ASSISTING AT FEASTS HELD IN HONOUR OF IDOLS.

CHAP. VIII. 1–13.] *Though (vv. 1–6) for those who are strong in the faith, an idol having no existence, the question has no importance, this is not so with all (ver. 2); and the infirmities of the weak must in such a matter be regarded in our conduct (vv. 8–13).*

1.] The **things sacrificed to idols** were those portions of the animals offered in sacrifice which were not laid on the altar, and which belonged partly to the priests, partly to those who had offered them. These remnants were sometimes eaten at feasts held in the temples (see ver. 10), or in private houses (ch. x. 27 f.), sometimes sold in the markets, by the priests, or by the poor, or by the niggardly. Theophrastus describes it as characteristic of an illiberal man, that when giving his daughter in marriage he sells those portions of the victim which were over after the sacrifice. ‘They were sometimes also reserved for future use. ‘Theophrastus mentions it as belonging to the shameless man, that when he has offered a sacrifice to the gods, he salts away the remnants, and goes to dine with a neighbour. Christians were thus in continual danger of meeting with such remnants. Partaking of them was an abomination among the Jews: see Numb. xxv. 2; Ps. civ. 28; Rey. ii. 14; Tobit. 10–12; and was forbidden by the Apostles and elders assembled at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 29; xxi. 25. That St. Paul in the whole of this passage makes no allusion to that decree, but deals with the question on its own merits, probably is to be traced to his wish to

establish his position as an independent Apostle, endowed with God's Holy Spirit sufficiently himself to regulate such matters, But it also shews, *how little such decisions were at that time regarded as lastingly binding on the whole church*: and how fully competent it was, even during the lifetime of the Apostles, to Christians to open and question on its own merits, a matter which *they* had, for a special purpose, once already decided.

we all have knowledge] Who are all? Some say, *Paul himself and the enlightened* among the Corinthians: some, *these latter alone*: and some think it said ironically, some concessively, of them. But it is manifest from verses 4–6, which are said in the widest possible reference to the faith of *all Christians*, that all Christians must be intended here also. But then, ver. 7, he says, “*there is not in all men this knowledge*,” obviously pointing at the weak Christian brother: and how are the two to be reconciled? By taking, I believe, the common-sense view of two such statements, which would be, in ordinary preaching or writing, that the first was said of what is *professed* and *confessed*,—the second of what is *actually and practically apprehended by each man*. Thus we may say of our people, in the former sense, ‘*all are Christians: all believe in Christ?* but in the latter, ‘*all are not Christians; all do not believe.*’

knowledge, viz. *concerning them*.—From here to end of ver. 3 is virtually a parenthesis.

Knowledge, abstract; i.e., when *alone*, or improperly predominant: it is the attribute of knowledge, ‘barely,’ to puff up.

love] viz. ‘*towards the brethren*;’ see Rom. xiv. 15, and ch. x. 23.

edifieth] Keep the literal meaning: **helps** to build up (God's spiritual temple), ch. iii. 9.

2, 3.] ‘The general deductions, (1) from *a profession of knowledge*, and (2) from *the presence of love*, in a man:—expressed sententiously and without connecting particles, more, as Meyer observes, after the manner of St. John in his Epistles.—The case supposed is the only one which can occur where love is absent and conceit present; a man can then *only think he knows*, —*no real knowledge* being accessible without humility and love. Such a man **knows not yet, as he ought to know**: has had no real practice in the art of knowing.—**But if a man loves God** (which is the highest and noblest kind of love, the source of brotherly love, 1 John y. 2), **this man** (and not the wise in his own conceit) **is known by Him**. The explanation of this latter somewhat difficult expression is to be found in Gal. iv. 9, “*Now that ye know God, or rather are known of God*.” So that here we may fairly assume that *he* chooses the expression **is known by Him in preference** to that which *would have been*, had any object of knowledge but the Supreme been treated of, the *natural one*, viz. *the same knoweth Him*. We cannot be said to Know God, in any full sense (as here) of the word to *know*. But those who become acquainted with God by love, **are known by Him**: are the especial objects of the divine Knowledge,—their being is pervaded by the Spirit of God, and the wisdom of God is shed abroad in them. So in 2 Tim. ii. 19, “*The Lord knoweth them that are His.*” See also Ps. i. 6, and ch. xiii. 12.

4.] The subject is resumed, and further specified by the insertion of **the eating of**.

we know that there is no idol in the world, i.e. that the idols of the heathen (meaning not strictly the *images, but the persons represented by them*) *have no existence in the world*. That they who worship idols, worship devils, the Apostle himself asserts ch. x. 20; but that is no contradiction to the present sentence, which asserts that the deities imagined by them, Jupiter, Apollo, &c., have *absolutely no existence*. Of that subtle Power which, under the guise of these, deluded the nations, he here says nothing. The rendering of the A.V., and many Commentators, ancient and modern,—‘*an idol is nothing in the world?* ch. x. 19; Jer. x. 3, is certainly wrong here, on account of the exact verbal parallel, **there is no God but one**, which follows. The insertion of “*other*” (wanting in all our most ancient MSS.) has probably been occasioned by the wording of the first commandment, “Thou shalt have none other gods but me.”

5, 6.] *Further explanation and confirmation of ver. 4.*

5.] For even supposing that beings named gods EXIST (*the chief emphasis is on exist, on which the hypothesis turns*), **whether in heaven, whether upon earth, as (we know that) there are** (viz. as being spoken of, Deut. x. 17, “*The Lord thy God is God of gods, und Lord of lords:*” see also Ps. cxxxvi. 2, 3) **gods many, and lords many** (the Apostle brings in an acknowledged fact, on which the possibility of the hypothesis rests—‘*Even if some of the many gods and many lords, whom we know to exist, be actually identical with the heathen idols...*’ He does not concede this, but only puts it),

6.] yet TO US (emphatic: however that _matter may be, we hold) **there is ONE GOD, the Father (the Father answers to Jesus Christ in the parallel clause below, and serves to specify what God—viz. the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ), of Whom** (as their Source of being) **are all things, and we unto** (i. e. **for**) **Him** (His purposes—to serve His will); **and one Lord Jesus Christ** (notice the *one* God opposed to *many gods*, and *one Lord to many lords*), **by Whom** (as Him by whom the Father made the worlds, John i. 3; Heb. i. 2) **are all things, and we** (but here secondly, we as His spiritual people, in the new creation) **by Him.**—The inference from the foregoing is that, *of itself*, the eating of meat offered to idols is a thing indifferent, and therefore allowed. The limitation of this licence now follows.

7.] But not in all is the knowledge (of which we have been speaking: i.e. see above, is not in them in their individual apprehension, though it is by their profession as Christians): **but some through their consciousness to this day, of the** (particular) **idol** (i. e. through their having an apprehension to this day of the *reality* of the idol, and so being conscientiously afraid of the meat offered, as belonging to *him*: not wishing to be connected with him), **eat it as offered to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.** By the expression **even until now**, it is shewn that these weak ones must have belonged to the *Gentile* part of the Corinthian church: to those who had *once*, before their conversion, held these idols to be veritable gods. Had they been *Jewish* converts, it would not have been *consciousness of the idol* which would have troubled them, but apparent violation of the Mosaic law.

8.] Reason why we should accommodate ourselves to the prejudices of the weak in this matter: because it is not one in which any spiritual advantage is to be gained, but one perfectly indifferent.

will not affect our (future) **standing before God**, or, as in text, **s hall not be reckoned to us before God.**

9.] But, that is, “I acknowledge this indifference—this licence to eat or not to eat; *but* it is on that very account, *because* it is a matter indifferent, that ye must take heed,” &c.—The particular stumbling. block in this case would be, the tempting them to *act against their conscience*:—a ‘practice above all others dangerous to a tian: see below, ver. 11.

10.] Explanation how the stumblingblock may arise.

any man, i.e. any weak brother, see below.—The words **thee which hast knowledge** seem to imply that the weak brother *is aware of this*, and *looks up to thee as such*. The word rendered **emboldened** is literally **edified, built up**, not without a certain irony, seeing it is accompanied by a description of the man as *weak*,—for thus the building up would be without solid foundation—a *building up undo ruin*, as Calvin calls it.

11.]...and (thus) the weak perishes (hereafter: see the parallel, Rom, xiv. 15 and note) by (literally, in, as the element in which,—he entering into it as his own, which it is not) **thy knowledge,—the brother, in whose behalf Christ died?**—See again Rom. xiv. 15.

12.] thus, viz. as described in wv. The and which follows fixes, and explains what is meant by sinning against the brethren.

wound] literally, smite. Chrysostom says, “What can be more unfeeling than to smite one who is weak?”

13.] Fervid expression of his own resolution consequent on these considerations by way of an example to them.

meat] in the most general sense: **food**, i.e. *any* article of food, as ver. 8; purposely indefinite here; ‘if such a matter ter as food...’ but presently particularized.

flesh] meaning, in order the more certainly not to eat flesh offered to an idol, I will abstain from every kind of flesh.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 9

IX. 1–27.] *He digressively illustrates. the spirit of self-denial which he professed. in the resolution of ch. vii. 13,—by contratsing his rights as an Apostle with his actual conduct in abstaining from demanding them (verses 1–22). This self-denying conduct he further exemplifies, verses 23–27, for their imitation,*

1.] He sets forth, (1) his independence of men (contrast ver. 19); (2) his apostolic office; (3) his *dignity* as an Apostle, in having been vouchsafed a sight of Christ Jesus our Lord; (4) his efficiency in the office, as having converted them to God.

free] So that the resolution of ch. viii. 13 is not necessitated by any *dependence* on my part *on the opinion of others*. The order of the clauses adopted in the Revised Text is that found in our most ancient authorities.

have I not seen Jesus Carist our Lord?] Not, during the life of our Lord on earth, as some think, nor is such an idea supported by 2 Cor. v. 16; see note there;—but, in the. *appearance* of the Lord to him *by the way to Damascus* (Acts ix. 17; ch. xv. 8); and also, secondarily, in those *other visions and appearances*,—recorded by him, Acts xviii 9 (?) xxii. 17,—and possibly on other occasions since his conversion.

in the Lord is not a mere humble qualification **of my work** (i. e. God’s work, not mine),—but designates, as elsewhere, the *element*, in which the work is done: they were his work as an Apostle, i.e. *as the servant of the Lord enabled by the Lord*, and

SO IN THE LORD. See ch. iv. 15

2.] At least my apostleship cannot be denied by *you* of all men, who are its seal and proof.

the seal] as being the proof of his apostolic calling and energy, by their conversion: better than,—by the signs and wonders which he wrought among them. Their conversion was the great proof.

in the Lord belongs to the whole sentence, see above, on ver. 1.

3.] This belongs to the preceding, not, as in A.V., to the following verses:

This, viz. the fact of your conversion: this word is the *predicate, not the subject*—as in John i. 19; xvii. 3, and stands here in the emphatic place before the verb; referring to what went before. With ver. 4 a new course of questions begins, which furnish no *defence*. **me** is emphatic.

4.] He resumes the questions which had been interrupted by giving the proof of his Apostleship. ‘The plural, we, seems to apply to Paul alone: for though Barnabas is introduced momentarily in ver. 6, there can be no reference to him in ver. 11. It may perhaps be used as pointing out a matter of *right*, which any would have had on the same conditions (see ver. 11), and as thus not belonging’ personally to Paul, as do the things spoken of in verses 1, 2, 15. This however will not apply to ver. 12, where the emphatic *me* is personal.

to eat and to drink, i.e. at the cost of the churches.

5.] **Have we not the power to take about with us** (also to be maintained at the cost of the churches, for this, and not the power to marry, is here the matter in question) **as a wife, a (believing) sister** (or, ‘to bring with us a believing wife;’ these are the only renderings of which the words are legitimately capable. From a misunderstanding of this passage grew up a great abuse, that of missionaries taking about with them women of wealth, who ministered to them of their substance. Such women are mentioned with reprobation by Epiphanius, and were forbidden by the Council of Nicaea), **as well as the other Apostles** (in the wider sense, not only the Twelve; for, ver. 6, Barnabas is mentioned. It does not follow hence that all the other Apostles were married; but that all had the power, and some had used it), **and the brethren of the Lord** (mentioned not because distinct from the Apostles, though they were absolutely distinct from the Twelve, see Acts i, 14,—but as a further specification of the most renowned persons, who travelled as missionaries, and took their wives with them. On the *brethren of the Lord*, see note, Matt. xiii. 55. They were in all probability the actual brethren of our Lord by the same mother, the sons of Joseph and Mary. The most noted of these was James, the Lord’s brother [Gal. i. 19; ii. 9, 12, compare Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18], the resident bishop of the Church at Jerusalem; the others known to us by name were Joses [or Joseph], Simon, and Judas, see note on Matt. ib.), and Cephas (Peter was married, see Matt. viii. 14. A beautiful tradition exists of his encouraging his wife who was led to death, by saying, “O thou, remember the Lord.” Clement of Alexandria relates that he had children. On a mistake which has been made respecting St. Paul’s (supposed) wife, see note on ch. vii. 8)?

6.] **Or** (implying what the consequence would then be, see ch. vi. 2, 9: does not introduce a new ‘liberty,’ but a consequence of the denial of the last two) **have I only and Barnabas** (why Barnabas? Perhaps on account of his former connexion with St. Paul, Acts xi. 30; xii. 25; xiii. 1-xv. 39; but this seems hardly enough reason for his being here introduced. It is not improbable that, having been at first associated with Paul, who appears *from the first* to have abstained from receiving sustenance from those among whom he was preaching, Barnabas, after his separation from our Apostle, may have retained the same self-denying practice, “This is the only time when he is mentioned in conjunction with St. Paul, since the date of the quarrel in Acts xv. 39.” Stanley) **not power to abstain from working** (i. e. power to look for our maintenance from the churches, without manual labour of our own)?

7-12.] Examples from common life, of the reasonableness of the workman being sustained by his work.

7.] From the analogies of human conduct: (1) The soldier.

at his own charges] with pay furnished out of his own resources. (2) The husbandman. (3) The shepherd.

8.] Am I speaking these things merely according to human judgment of what is right? **Or** (see note, ver. 6) **does the law too not say these things?**

9.] (It does say them) **For in the law of Moses it is written, Thou shalt not muzzle an ox while treading out the corn.** It was and still is the custom in the East, to place the newly-reaped grain on a floor in the open air, and then, by means of oxen, or buffaloes, to crush out the grain from the husk, either by the feet of the beasts, or by machines dragged by them.

Is it for the OXEN that God is taking care?—The question imports, In giving this command are the *oxen*, or those *for whom the law was given, its objects?*” And to such a question there can be but one answer. Every duty of *humanity* has for its ultimate ground, not the mere welfare of the animal concerned, *but its welfare in that system of which MAN is the head*: and therefore, *man’s* welfare. The good done to man’s immortal spirit by acts of humanity and justice, infinitely outweighs the mere physical comfort of a brute which perishes.

10.] Or (the other alternative being rejected) **on OUR account** (i. e. on account of us ministers of the Gospel: not, of *men in general*) **altogether** (*altogether*, excluding entirely the other idea) doth he (or perhaps it, the law) **say (this)? yea, for our sakes it** (viz., “*Thou shalt not muzzle the ox*,” &c.) **was written: because the plougher** (not literal but spiritual, see below) **ought to plough in hope, and the thresher** (to thresh) **in hope of partaking** (of the crop).—The words used in this sentence are evidently *spiritual*, and *not literal*. They are inseparably connected with **for our sakes**, which precedes them: and according to the common explanation of them as referring to a mere maxim of agricultural life, would have no force whatever. But spiritually taken, all coheres. “The command (not to muzzle, &c.) was written on account of us (Christian teachers), because we ploughers (in the ‘*husbandry of God*,’ ch. iii. 9) ought to plough in hope,—and we threshers (answering to the ‘*ox that treadeth out the corn*’) ought to work in hope of (as the ox) having a share.”—No minute distinction must be sought between the *plougher* and the *thresher*. The former is perhaps mentioned on account of the process answering to the breaking up the fallow ground of Heathenism:—the latter on account of its occurrence in the precept.

11.] The we (both times *strongly emphatic*:—we need sorely some means of marking in our English Bibles, for ordinary readers, *which words have the emphasis*), although plural, *in fact* applies to Paul alone. The secondary emphasis is on **you** and **your**. It is one of those elaborately antithetical sentences which the great Apostle wields so powerfully in argument.

spiritual and **carnal** (see Rom. xv. 27) need no explanation. The first are so called as belonging to the *spirit* of man (some say, as *coming from the Spirit of God*: but it is better to keep the antithesis exact and perspicuous), the second as serving for the nourishment of the *flesh*.

12.] others does not necessarily point at the *false teachers*; more, besides them, may have exercised this power.

we bear all things] The verb thus rendered was commonly used of vessels *containing, holding without breaking*, that which was put into them; thence of *concealing* or *covering*, as a secret; and also of *enduring or bearing up against*.

all things: viz. labour, privations, hardships. The hindrances to the Gospel would arise from his being charged with covetousness and self-seeking, which his independence of them would entirely prevent.

13, 14.] Analogy of the maintenance of the Jewish priesthood from the sacred offerings, with this right of the Christian teacher, as ordained by Christ—It has been rightly remarked, **that they which minister about the holy things** can only mean the *priests, not including the Levites* and therefore that both clauses apply to the same persons.—On the practice referred to, see Numb. xviii. 8 ff.; Deut. xviii, 1 ff.—No other priesthood but the *Jewish* can have been in the mind of the Apostle. The Jew knew of no *altar* but one: and he certainly would not have proposed heathen sacrificial customs, even *in connexion with* those appointed by God, as a precedent for Christian usage: besides that the idea is inconsistent with the words **Thus also**, which follow: see below.

14.] Thus also (i. e. in analogy with that His other command) **did the Lord** (Christ; the Author, by His Spirit, of the Old Testament as well as the New) **appoint** (viz. Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 8) **to those who are preaching the gospel, to live of** (be maintained by) **the gospel**. Observe, that here the Apostle is establishing an analogy between the rights of the *sacrificing priests* of the law, and of the *preachers of the gospel*. *Had those preachers been likewise sacrificing priests*, is it possible that, all allusion to them in such a character should have been here omitted? But as all such allusion is *omitted*, we may fairly infer that no such character of the Christian minister was then known. As Bengel remarks on ver. 13: “If the mass were a sacrifice, Paul would have expressed this conclusion in the next verse accordingly.”

15.] none of these things is best explained of the different forms of *power* which have been mentioned.

I have not written these things however, that it may be so (viz., after the examples which I have alleged) **done to me** (in my): **for it were good for me rather to die** (or better for me to die), **than that any one should make void my (matter of) boasting**. In saying “to die,” he does not mean, as Chrysostom and others have supposed, *of famine*, by not being supported, but only that he prefers this his boasting even to life itself.

16 ff.] The reason why he made so much of *this matter of boasting*, viz. that *his mission* itself gave him no advantage this way, being an office *entrusted* to him, and for which he was solemnly accountable: but in this thing only had he an *advantage* to be able to boast of it, that he preached the gospel *without charge*. The English reader must beware not to ion “*preach the gospel*,” as if it made a distinction between preaching “the gospel” and preaching *something else*: it simply represents the

word “*evangelize*,” i.e. perform the work of a Christian missionary.

17.] For (illustration and confirmation of the “woe” pronounced above) **if I am doing this** (preaching) **of mine own accord** (as a voluntary undertaking, which in St. Paul’s case was *not so*: not as A. V. “willingly,” for this was so), **I have a reward** (i. e. it *of mine own will* I took up the ministry, it might be conceivable that a **reward**, or **usages**, might be due to me. That this was not the case, and *never could be*, is evident and the clause therefore is only hypothetical): **but if involuntarily** (which was the case, see Acts ix. 15; xxii. 14; xxvi. 16), **with a STEWARDSHIP** (emphatic) **have I been entrusted** (and therefore from the nature of things, *in this respect* I have no *reward, or wages*, for merely doing what is my bounden duty, see Luke xvii, 7–10; but woe if I fail in it).

18.] Ordinarily thus arranged and rendered: ‘What then ts my reward? (It is), in preaching I make the gospel to be without cost, that I use not my power in the gospel.’ But this in the A.V., though perhaps an allowable rendering of the original, *is not true*. His. making the gospel to be without cost, *was not his reward, but his boasting*; and these two are not identical. The *boasting* was *present*: the *reward future*. i am persuaded that the following is the true rendering: **What then is my reward** (in prospect), **that I while preaching, render the gospel without cost** (i. e. what reward have I in prospect *that induces me to preach gratuitously*), in order not to use (as carrying out my design not to use) **to the full** (see ch. vii. 31, and note: not, to abuse, **as A.V.**) **my power in the gospel?**

19 ff.] He now proceeds to *answer* the question, ‘What *prospect of reward could induce me to do this?*’ **Yea** (literally **for**, that is to say, the reward must have been great and glorious in prospect), **being free from the power of all men, I enslaved myself** (when I made this determination; and have continued to do so) **to all, that I might gain** (not, *all*, which he could not exactly say, but) the **largest number** (*of any*: that hereafter Paul’s converts might be found to be the most: see below on ver. 24). This word, that I might GAIN, is THE ANSWER to the question, “*What is my reward?*” *This having gained the greater number* is distinctly referred to by him elsewhere, as his reward in the day of the Lord: see especially 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. And it is for this reason that the expression, “*that I might gain*,” is *three times repeated*; and, as we shall presently see, that the similitude at the end of the chapter is chosen.

20–22.] specializes the foregoing assertion, **I made myself servant to all**, by enumerating various parties to whose weaknesses he had conformed himself in order to gain them.

20.] unto the Jews I became as a Jew] See examples, Acts xvi. 3; xxi. 26. The *Jews* here are not *Jewish converts*, who would be already *won* in the sense of this passage.

to them that are under the law....] These again are not Jewish converts (see above); nor *proselytes*, who would not be thus distinguished from other Jews, but are much the same as the last-mentioned, the *Jews*, only to the number of these the Apostle *did not belong*, not being himself under the law, whereas he was nationally a Jew.

21. to them that are without law] These are the *Heathen*; hardly, as Chrysostom supposes, *such as Cornelius*, fearing God but not under the law. St. Paul became as a Heathen to the Heathen, e.g., when he discoursed at Athens (Acts xvii.) in their own manner, and with arguments drawn from their own poets.

not being (being conscious of not being, remembering well in the midst of my being *as without law*, that I was not) **an outlaw from God, but a subject-of-the-law of Christ** (the words seem inserted rather to put before the reader the true position of a Christian with regard to God’s law revealed by Christ, than merely with an apologetic view, to keep his own character from suffering by the imputation of *lawlessness*), **that I may gain them that are without law**. The weak here can hardly be the *weak Christians* of ch. viii. and Rom. xiv., who were *already won*, but *those who had not strength to believe and receive the Gospel*. This sentence then does not bring out **a new form of condescension 22. to all men...]** This sums up the above, and others not enumerated, in one general rule,—and the various *occasions* of his practising the condescension in one general result.—**To all men I am become all things** (i. e. to each according to his situation and prejudices), **that by all means** (or perhaps *in all ways*: but I prefer the other) **I may save some** (emphatic:—some out of each class in the “*all men*.” It is said, as is the following verse, in extreme humility, and distrust of even an Apostle’s confidence, to shew them the immense importance of the *reward* for which he thus denied and submitted himself).

23.] But (as much as to say, ‘not only this of which I have spoken, but all’) **all things I do on account of the gospel, that I may be a fellow-partaker** (with others) **of it** (of the blessings promised in the gospel to be brought by the Lord at his coming).

24 ff.] ‘This is my aim in all I do: but inasmuch as many run in a race, many reach the goal, but *one* only receives the prize,—I as an Apostle *run my course*, and you must so *run yours*, as each to labour not to be rejected at last, but to gain the glorious and incorruptible prize’ This, as compared with the former context, seems to be the sense and connexion of the passage. He was anxious, as an Apostle, to labour more abundantly, more effectually than they all: and hence his condescension to all men,

and self-denial: accompanied with which was a humble self-distrust as to the great matter itself of his personal salvation, and an eager anxiety to secure it. These he proposes for their example likewise.

24.] The allusion is primarily no doubt to the Isthmian games, celebrated “under the shadow of the huge Corinthian citadel” (Stanley); but this must not be pressed too closely: the foot-race was far too common, an element in athletic contests, for any accurate knowledge of its predominance in some and its insignificance in others of the Grecian games to be here supposed. Still less must it be imagined that those games were to be celebrated in the year of the Epistle being written. The most that can with certainty be said, is that he alludes to a contest which, from the neighbourhood of the Isthmian games, was well known to his readers. See Stanley’s note: who, in following out illustrations of this kind, writes with a vivid graphic power peculiarly his own.

Thus (after this manner—viz. as they who run all, each *endeavouring to be the one who shall receive the prize*: not as *the one who receives it*—for the others strive as earnestly as he) **run** (no contrast is intended between the stadium, where *one only* can receive the prize, and the Christian race, where *all* may. Such a contrast would destroy the sense), **in order that ye may [fully] obtain** (the prize of your calling, see Phil. iii. 14).

25.] There is one point in the comparison yet included in the **so, the conduct of the athletes in regard of temperance**, which he wishes to bring into especial prominence for their imitation:—as concerning the matter in hand, *his own abstinence from receiving this world's self*, in order to save himself and them that heard him.—The emphasis is on **every man**, thus *shewing the so above to refer to all who run*. **contendeth** is more general than “*runneth*” as much as to say, ‘Every one who engages, not only in the *race*, but in *any athletic contest*,’ and thus strengthening the inference. The garlands with which the victors were crowned were variously of olive, parsley, ivy, or (in the Isthmian games) of pine. See Stanley.

but we] supply *are temperate in all things in order to obtain*... He takes for granted the Christian’s temperance in all things, as his normal state.

26.] **I then** (emphatic—he recalls the attention from the incidental exhortation, and reminiscence of the Christian state, to the main subject, his own abstinence from receiving, and its grounds) **so run, as not uncertainly** (i. e. without any sure grounds of contending or any fixed object for which to contend; both these are included); **so fight I, as not striking the air** (and not my adversary). The allusion is not to a “sham fight,” or rehearsal of a fight with an *imaginary* adversary, but to a fight with a *real* adversary (viz. here, *the body*) in which the boxer vainly hits into the air, instead of striking his antagonist:

27.] **but I chastise [bruise] my body** (the word literally signifies to strike heavily in the face, so as to render black and blue. The *body* is the adversary, considered as the seat of the temptations of Satan, and especially of that self-indulgence which led the Corinthians to forget their Christian combat, and sit at meat in the idol’s temple. The abuse of this expression to favour the absurd practice of the flagellants, or to support ascetic views at all, need hardly be pointed out to the rational, much less to the Christian student. It is not even of fasting or prayer that he is here speaking, but as the context, vv. 19–23, shews, of breaking down the pride and obstinacy and self-seeking of the natural man by laying himself entirely out for his great work—the salvation of the greatest number: and that, denying himself “solace” from without: “My hands have been worn away (Acts xx. 34) with the black tent-cloths, my frame has been bowed down with this servile labour.” Stanley), and **enslave it: lest perchance having pro claimed** (the word **proclaimed** is used *absolutely*, and answers to our use of *preached*). The subject of the proclamation might be the *laws of the combat*, or the *names of the victors*, each by one in the capacity of *herald*: probably here the former only, as answering to the preaching of the Apostles. The nature of the case shews that the Christian herald differs from the agonistic herald, in being himself a *combatant as well*, which the other was not: and that this is so, is no objection to thus understanding the word. “This introduces indeed a new complication into the metaphor: but it is rendered less violent by the fact that.... sometimes the victor in the games was also selected as the herald to announce his success.” Stanley) **to others, I myself may prove rejected** (from the *prize*: not, as some Commentators *from the contest altogether*, for he was already *in it*). An examination of the victorious combatants took place after the contest, and if it could be proved that they had contended unlawfully, or unfairly, they were deprived of the prize and driven with disgrace from the games. So the Apostle, if he had proclaimed the laws of the combat to others, and not observed them himself, however successful he might apparently be, would be personally rejected as unqualified in the great day. And this he says with a view to shew them the necessity of more self-denial, and less going to the extreme limit of their Christian liberty; as Chrysostom says, “If to me the having preached, and taught, and brought thousands to the faith, suffices not to salvation, if my personal course have not been lawfully run, much more will this be so with you.”

1 Corinthians: Chapter 10

X. 1–22.] He proceeds, in close connexion with the warnings which have just preceded, to set before them the *great danger of commerce with idolatry*, and enforces this by the *example of the rebellions and rejections of God's ancient people*, who were under a dispensation analogous to and typical of ours (1–11); and by the *close resemblance of our sacrament of the Lord's*

Supper,—their eating of meats sacrificed—and the same act among the heathen, in regard of the UNION in each case of the partakers in one act of participation. So that THEY COULD NOT EAT THE IDOL' S FEAST WITHOUT PARTAKING OF IDOLATRY i. e., VIRTUALLY ABJURING Cunrist (vv. 15–22)

1.] For joins to the preceding. He had been indicating the necessity of *self-subduing* (ch. ix 24–27), and now enforces it in the particular departments of *abstaining from fornication, idolatry, &c.*, by the example of the Jews of old.

our fathers] He uses this expression, not merely speaking for himself and his Jewish converts, but regarding the Christian church as a continuation of the Jewish, and the believer as the true descendant of Abraham. all... all... all, each time with strong emphasis, as opposed to “*the more part of them*,” ver. 5. ALL had these privileges, as *all of you* have their counterparts under the Gospel: but *most* of them failed from rebellion and unbelief.

were under the cloud] The pillar of cloud, the abode of the Divine presence went before them, and was to them a *defence*: hence it is sometimes treated of as covering the camp, e.g. Ps. cv. 39, “*He spreadeth a cloud for a covering*,” and thus they would be *under* it. So also Wisd. x. 17, xix. 7,—“*the cloud covering the camp*,” see Exod. xiii. 21, xiv. 20.

2.] were baptized: literally, **baptized themselves unto Moses;** entered by the act of such immersion into a solemn covenant with God, and became His church under the law as given by Moses, God's servant,—just as we Christians by our baptism are bound in a solemn covenant with God, and enter His church under the Gospel as brought in by Christ, God's eternal Son; see Heb. iii. 5, 6.

in the cloud and in the sea] The cloud and the sea were both *aqueous*; and this point of comparison being obtained, serves the Apostle to indicate the outward symbols of their initiation into the church under the government of Moses as the servant of God, and to complete the analogy with our baptism. The allegory is obviously not to be pressed minutely: for neither did they enter the cloud, nor were they *wetted by the waters of the sea*; but they *passed under* both, as the baptized passes under the water, and it was said of them, Exod. xiv. 31, “*T hen the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.*”

3.] They had what answered to the one Christian sacrament, Baptism:—now the Apostle shews, that they were not without a symbolic correspondence to the: other, the Lord's Supper. ‘The two elements in this Christian sacrament were anticipated in their ease by the manna and the miraculous stream from the rock: these elements, in their case, as well as ours, symbolizing THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST. The whole passage is a standing testimony, incidentally, but most *providentially*, given by the great Apostle to the *importance of the Christian Sacraments as necessary to membership of Christ, and not mere signs or remembrances*; and an inspired protest against those who, whether as individuals or sects, would lower their dignity, or deny their necessity.

spiritual meat] The manna is thus called from its being no mere physical production, but miraculously given by God—the work of His Spirit. ‘Thus Isaac is called, Gal. iv. 29, “*he that was born after the Spirit*,” in opposition to Ishmael, “*him that was born after the flesh*.” Josephus calls the manna “*a divine and marvellous food*,” Antt. iii. 1. 6; and in Ps. lxxviii. 24 it is said, “*he had given them of the corn of heaven*.” We can scarcely avoid recognizing in these words a tacit reference to our Lord's discourse, or at all events to the substance of it,—John vi. 31–58.

4.] It is hardly possible here, without doing violence to the words and construction, to deny that the Apostle has adopted the tradition current among the Jews, that the *rock followed the Israelites* in their journeyings, and gave forth water all the way. Thus Rabbi Solomon, on Num. xx. 2: “*Throughout all the forty years it was to them a well.*” and Schéttgen cites from the Bammidbar Rabba, “How came that well, which is mentioned Num. xxi. 16? Answer. It was like a stone, or a swarm of bees, and it rolled on, and accompanied them in their journeys. When they encamped, and the tabernacle was set up, the rock came and rested in the entrance of the tent. Then came the Princes and stood by it, saying ‘Spring up, O well, &c.,’ and it sprung up.” He also gives other testimonies.—The only ways of escaping this inference are (1) by setting aside the natural sense altogether, as Chrysostom does, understanding the saying, not of water at all, but of the spiritual rock, i.e. Christ, who went with them and wrought wonders; or (2) by taking the rock as equivalent to the *water from the rock*: so Calvin, who says, “How could the rock, which stood fixed in its place, have accompanied the Israelites? As if it were not plain that by the word ‘rock’ is denoted the flow of water, which never deserted the people.” But against both of these we have the plain assertion, representing matter of physical fact, they drank from the **Spiritual (or, miraculous) rock which followed them:** and I cannot consent to depart from what appears to me the only admissible sense of these words. How extensively the traditional reliques of unrecorded Jewish history were adopted by the apostolic men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the apology of Stephen may bear witness.

But (distinction between what *they* saw in the rock and what we see in it: they drank from it and knew not its dignity: *but the rock was Christ.*)—In these words there appear to be three *allusions*: (1) to the ideas of the Jews themselves: so the Targum on Isa. xvi. 1: “They shall bring gifts to the Messiah of the Israelites, who shall be strong, inasmuch as in the desert he was the

Rock, the Church of Zion:" so also in Wisd. x. 15 ff., the wisdom of God (see note on John i. 1) is said to have been present in Moses, to have led them through the wilderness, &c. That the MESSIAH, the ANGEL OF THE COVENANT, was present with the church of the Fathers, and that his upholding power was manifested in miraculous interferences for their welfare, was a truth acknowledged no less by the Jew than by the Christian. (2) *To the frequent use of this appellation*, A ROCK, for the God of Israel. See, among other places, Deut. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31, 37; 1 Sam. ii. 2; 2 Sam. xxii. 2 and passim xxiii. 8, &c.; Psalms passim, and especially lxxviii. 20, compared with v. 35; see also Rom. ix. 33; 1 Pet. ii. 8. Hence it became more natural to apply the term *directly to Christ*, as the ever present God of Israel. (3) *To the sacramental import of the water which flowed from the rock*, which is the point here immediately in the Apostle's mind. As well in sacramental import as in upholding physical agency, *that rock was Christ*. The miraculous (spiritual) food was (sacramentally) the flesh of Christ: the miraculous (spiritual) drink was the blood of Christ: so that the Jews' miraculous supplies of food and drink were *sacramentally significant of the Body and Blood of Christ*, in kind analogous to the two great parts of the Christian Supper of the Lord. In the contents prefixed to the chapters in the A.V., we read as the import of these verses, "*The Sacraments of the Jews are types of ours*," which though perhaps correctly meant, is liable to be erroneously understood; inasmuch as no sacramental ordinance can be *a type of another*, but all alike, though in different degrees of approximation, and by different representations, *types of Him*, who is the fountain of all grace. The difference between their case and ours is *generally*, that they were unconscious of the sacramental import, whereas we are conscious of it: "*they knew not that I healed them*," Hos. xi. 3; and *in this particular case*, that Christ has come to us "not by water only, but by water and blood," 1 John v. 6: HIS DEATH having invested our sacramental ordinance with another and more deeply significant character. To enter more minutely into the import of the words, "*the rock was Christ*", would be waste of time and laboUr. 'The above reasons abundantly justify the assertion, without either pressing the verb **was** beyond its ordinary acceptation, or presuming to fix on the Apostle a definiteness of meaning which his argument does not require.

5.] **Howbeit with the more part of them** (in fact the exceptions were Joshua and Caleb only) **God was not well pleased.**

6.] **But** (the contrast being, between the events themselves, and their application to us) **these things happened as** (our examples: the literal rendering is) **figures** (not 'types,' as we now use the word, meaning by type and antitype, the *material representation*, and the *ultimate spiritual reality*,—but *figures*, as one imperfect ceremonial polity may figure forth a higher spiritual polity, but still this latter may not itself be the ultimate antitype) **of us** (the spiritual Israel as distinguished from the literal),—**in order that we might not be** (God's purpose in the *figures*: of course an *ulterior* purpose, for they had their own *immediate purpose* as regards the literal Israel) lusts (so literally; and the use of the substantive forcibly depicts the *habit*) **after evil things** (*generally*: no special reference yet to the Corinthian feasters, as Grotius supposes), **as they also** (i. e. supposing us to be like them) **usted.**

7.] Now the *special* instances of warning follow. Notice, that all four of these were brought about by the *lusting after evil things*, not distinct from it.—This instance is singularly appropriate. The Israelites are recorded to have sat down and eaten and drunken *at the idol feast of the golden calf* in Horeb: the very temptation to which the Corinthians were too apt to yield. And as the Israelites were *actually* idolaters, doing *this as an act of worship* to the image: so the Corinthians were in *danger of becoming such*, and the Apostle therefore puts the ease in the strongest way, **neither be** (literally, **become**) ye idolaters.

to play] The Hebrew word is properly **to dance to music**. The dance was an accompaniment of the idol feast.

8.] Another prominent point in the sins of the Corinthian church. **three and twenty thousand**] The number. was *twenty-four thousand*, Num. xxv. 9, and is probably set down here from memory. The subtleties of Commentators in order to escape the inference, are discreditable alike to themselves and the cause of sacred Truth. Although the sin of Baal-peor was, strictly speaking, *idolatry*, yet the form which it exhibited was that of *fornication, as incident to idolatrous feasting*, see Num. xxv. 1, 2. 'Thus it becomes even more directly applicable to the case of the Corinthians.'

9.] The word rendered **tempt** means, tempt beyond endurance, 'tempt thoroughly.'

the Lord] On the reading, see in my Greek Testament. The *tempting of the Lord was*,—as on the other occasions alluded to Num. xiv. 22, where it is said that *they tempted God ten times*,—*the daring Him, in trying His patience by rebellious conduct and sin*. Compare the similar use of the verb *to tempt*, Acts v. 9; xv. 10. And he warns the Corinthians, that they should not in like manner provoke God by their sins and their partaking with idols.

by the (well-known) serpents.

10.] **Murmur** has been by some understood of murmuring *against their teachers*, as the Israelites against Moses and Aaron, Num. xiv. 2; xvi. 41. But not to mention that this was, in fact, *murmuring against God*, such a reference would require something more specific than the mere word *murmur*. The warning is substantially the same as the last, but regards more the spirit, and its index, the tongue. As Theophylact says, "they did not bear trials manfully, but murmured, saying, When will the promised good things come, and how long will troubles last?"—The destruction referred to must be that related Num. xvi. 41

ff., when the pestilence (which though it is not so specified *there*, was administered on another occasion by a destroying angel, 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, see also Exod. xii. 23) took off 14, 700 of the people. The punishment of the unbelieving congregation in Num. xiv., to which this is commonly referred, does not seem to answer to the expression “*were destroyed by the destroyer*,” nor to the term “*some of them*,” seeing that all except Joshua and Caleb were involved in it.

11. by way of example] or figure. Meyer cites from the Rabbis, “Whatever happened to the fathers, was a sign to their posterity.”

the ends of the world] An expression corresponding to “*the completion tion of the ages*,” rendered *the end of the world* in Matt. xiii. 39; xxviii. 20: this being literally, **the ends of the ages** of this world’s lifetime. So Chrysostom, “He means nothing else than that the terrible judgment is close at hand.”

are come] literally, have reached. The ages are treated as occupying space, and their extent as just coincident with our own time. See a similar figure in ch. xiv. 36.

12.] he standeth, viz. *in his place as a member of Christ’s church*, to be recognized by him at His coming for one of His. ‘To such an one the example of the Israelites is a warning to take heed that he fall not, as they did from their place in God’s church.

13.] There are two ways of understanding the former part of this verse. Chrysostom and others take it as a *continuation and urging of the warning of the verse preceding*, by the consideration that no temptation had yet befallen them but such as was *within the power of human endurance*: but a *greater temptation is imminent*:—while Calvin and others regard it as a *consolation*, tending to shew them that *taking heed not to fall*, is within the limits of their power, seeing that their temptation to sin was nothing extraordinary or unheard of, but only ‘*according to man*:’ and they might trust to God’s loving care, that no temptation should ever befall them which should surpass their power to resist. This latter seems to me beyond doubt the correct view. For, besides the requirements of the construction, &c., the other view restricts the sense of **temptation** to **persecution**, which it here does not mean, but *solicitation to sin*, in accordance with the whole context.

hath taken you, not ‘took you,’ shews that the temptation was *still soliciting* them.

faithful] He has *entered into a covenant* with you by *calling you*: if He suffered temptation beyond your power to overcome you, He would be violating that covenant. Compare 1 Thess. v. 24, “*Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.*”

will..... make also the way to escape] Then God *makes* the temptation too: arranges it in His Providence, and in His mercy will ever set open a door for escape.

the (way to) escape, i.e. *which belongs to the particular temptation.*

in order that you may be able to bear (it): observe, not, ‘will remove the temptation?’ but, ‘will make an escape simultaneously with the temptation, to encourage you to *bear up against it*’

14.] Conclusion from the above warning examples : IDOLATRY IS BY ALL MEANS TO BE SHUNNED; not tampered with, but fled from.

flee from presses very strongly the entire avoidance. ‘This verse of itself’ would by inference forbid the Corinthians having any share in the idol feasts; but he proceeds to ground such prohibition on further special considerations.

15–22.] By the analogy of the *Christian participation in the Lord’s supper, and the Jewish participation in the feasts after sacrifices*, joined to the fact that the *heathens sacrifice to devils*, he shews that the partaker in the idol feast is a PARTAKER WITH DEVILS; which none can be, and yet be a Christian.

15.] An appeal to their own sense of what is congruous and possible,—as introducing what is to follow.

as to wise men expresses an assumption on the Apostle’s part, that they *are* wise men. ye is emphatic—be YE **the judges of what I am saying.**

16.] The analogy of the *Lord’s Supper*, which, in both its parts, is *a participation* in Christ. The stress throughout to ver. 20 is on **participation** and **partakers**. The **cup of blessing** is explained immediately by **which we bless,—over which we speak a blessing**, and is the Christian form of the Jewish cup in the Passover, over which thanks were offered after the feast,—in blessing of which cup, our Lord instituted this part of the ordinance: see note on the history in Matt. xxvii. The explanation,

the exp which brings a blessing, is wrong, as being against this analogy.

which we bless] i.e. consecrate with a prayer of thanksgiving. Observe, the first person plural is the *same throughout*: the blessing of the cup, and the breaking of the bread, the acts of consecration, were not the acts of the minister, as by any authority peculiar to himself, but only as the representative of the whole Christian congregation. The figment of sacerdotal consecration of the elements by transmitted power, is as alien from the apostolic writings as it is from the spirit of the Gospel.

the participation (i. e. that whereby the act of participation takes place) **of the Blood. of Christ?**—The strong literal sense must here be held fast, as constituting the very kernel of the Apostle's argument. The wine is *the Blood*, the bread is *the Body*, of Christ. (*In what sense* the Blood and the Body, does not belong to the present argument.) We receive unto us, make by assimilation parts of ourselves, that wine, that bread: we *become* therefore, by participation of that Bread, *one Bread*, i. e ONE BODY: hence the close and literal participation in and with Christ. If we are to understand this word **is** to mean, *represents or symbolizes*, the argument is made void. On the other hand it is painful to allude to, though necessary to reprobate the caricature of this real union with Christ, which is found in the gross materialism of transubstantiation. See further on ch. xi. 26, 27.

which we break] probably already the *breaking* of the bread. in the communion was part of the act of consecration, and done after the example of our Lord in its institution. See ch. xi. 24; Acts ii. 42; xx. 7, 11. For the rest, see above.

17.] **Because we, the (assembled) many** (so literally), are one **bread** (by the assimilation of that one bread partaken: not ‘one loaf’) **one Body** (by the participation of the Body of Christ, of which that bread is the vehicle); **for the whole of us partake of that one bread.** By partaking of that bread, we become, not figuratively but literally, *one bread*: it passes into the substance of our bodies, and there is in every one who partakes, a portion of himself which is *that bread*. The *bread* which was *before*, is *now ourselves*. But that loaf, broken and blessed, is the medium of participation of the Body of Christ; we then, being that one bread, are *one Body*; *for* we all partake of that one bread. The argument is a very simple and direct one;—the bread is the Body of Christ;—we partake of the bread: therefore we partake of the Body of Christ. Of these propositions, the *conclusion* is implied in the form of a question in ver. 16: the minor stated in the latter clause of ver. 17; its connexion with the *major* producing the conclusion given in the former clause, “*This is my body.*” The *major* itself, “*because we being many are one bread, one body,*” is suppressed, as being a maxim familiar to Christians.

18.] Another example of **Participation** from the *Jewish feasts after sacrifice*.

Israel after the flesh, the actual **material Israel**, as distinguished from “*Israel after the Spirit*,” see Rom. ii. 29; Gal. iv. 29; and “*the Israel of God*,” Gal. vi. 16.

they which eat the sacrifices, viz. those parts of the sacrifices which were not offered; see on ch. viii. 1—The parts to be offered are specified, Levit. iii. 3; the practice of eating the remainder of the meat sanctioned and regulated, ib. vii. 15–18.

partakers with the altar (in a strict and peculiar sense,—the *altar* having *part* of the animal, the *partaker another part*; and by the fact of the religious *consecration* of the offered part, this connexion becomes a *religious connexion*. The question has been raised, and with reason, why the Apostle did not say partakers with *God*? Meyer answers,—because the Jew was *already in covenant with God*, and the Apostle wished to express a *closer connexion*, brought about by the sacrifice in question:—De Wette,—because he was unwilling to ascribe so much to the mere act of sacrifice, see Heb. x. 1 ff: and to this latter view I incline, because, as De Wette remarks, “*God*” would have *suitèd the analogy better than “altar,”* but St. Paul avoids it, and evidently is reluctant to use it. Still the inference lies open, to which our Saviour's saying points, Matt. xxiii. 20, 21. The altar is GOD'S altar).

19, 20.] The inference from the preceding analogies would naturally be, that St. Paul was then representing the idols as *being in reality what the heathen supposes them to be*—and the eater of meats offered to them, as partaking with the idol. This objection be meets,—but with the introduction of a new fact to their consideration—that the things which the heathen sacrifice, they sacrifice really to *devils*.

19.] What do I say then? i. e. **what am I then assuming? that a thing sacrificed to an idol is any (real) thing so sacrificed** (i. e. *has any real existence as a thing sacrificed?*) **or that an idol is any thing (real?)** e.g. that Jupiter is Jupiter, in the sense of a living power?

—*Not so; but* (I say) **that the things which they** (i. e. the Gentiles) **sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God** (the word does not signify ‘*false gods*,’ nor can it hear the sense in which it is used in the mouth of idolaters themselves, Acts xvii. 18,—but, as always in the Septuagint and New Testament, when used by worshippers of the true God, ‘*DEVILS*,’ ‘*evil spirits*.’ the words are from Deut. [ref.], see also Ps. xciv. 5 [Baruch iv. 7]. Heathendom being under the dominion of Satan [*the ruler of this world*], he and his angels are in fact the powers honoured and worshipped by the heathen, however little they may

be aware of it): **but** (so literally: the inference being suppressed, ‘and ye therefore by partaking in their sacrifices would be partakers with devils: but’) **I would not have you be (become) partakers with devils.**

21.] Reason of the wish,—sententiously expressed without any “*for*.”

Ye cannot applies of course to the *real spiritual participation* of the table of the Lord so as to profit by it: to *moral* possibility. The **cup of devils** is said, as corresponding to the cup of which mention has been already made, not as some fancy, referring to the *libation* at an idol feast.

the table is used in the sense of *the meats laid on the table*. From this passage probably, the “*Table of the Lord*” became an expression current in all ages of the Christian Church.

22.] What? (literally, or) do we provoke (are we provoking: is it our wish to provoke, that He may assert His power) **the Lord** (Christ) **to jealousy** (by dividing our participation between Him and devils)?—see Deut. xxxii. 21, which evidently is before the Apostle’s mind:—**are we stronger than He** (are we then such, that we can afford to defy His power to punish)?

23–XI. 1.] Now that he has fully handled the whole question of partaking in idol feasts, and prepared the way for specific directions as about a matter no longer to be supposed indifferent, *he proceeds to give those directions*, accompanying them with their reasons, as regards mutual offence or edification.

23.] He recurs to the plea of ch. vi. 12:—*reasserts his modification of it*, with a view, after what has passed since, to shew its reasonableness, and to introduce the following directions.

not all things edify] viz. *the Christian body*: tend to build up the whole, or the individual parts, of that spiritual temple, God’s building.

24.] Further following out of the idea suggested by **edify**. This ought to be our object: the bringing on one another to perfection, not the pleasing ourselves, see Rom. xv. 2, 3. **but his neighbour’s good**] i.e. but *every one* his neighbour’s good.

25.] The key to understanding this and the following verse is, to remember that **conscience** is used in each case of the conscience of the *person spoken of*, i.e. in the two first cases, that of the *reader*,—in the third, as explained by the Apostle, that of the *weak brother*: see there.—**Every thing which is being sold** (offered for sale) **in the flesh-market, eat, making no enquiry** (whether it is meat offered to idols or not), **on account of your conscience**: this reason is attached to the whole command, not only to the “*asking no question*:”—as is shewn by the parallel below, ver. 28,—where the *reason*

given is joined also to the command, “*eat not*.’ The meaning being,— ‘*eat without enquiry, that your conscience may not be offended*.’ If you *made enquiry*, and heard in reply, that the meat *had been* offered to idols, *your conscience would*

be offended, and you would eat with offence, risk of stumbling, to *yourselves*.

26.] The principle on which such an eating ought to rest: that *all* is GOD’S, and *for our use*: and where no subjective scruple is cast in, *all to be freely partaken of*: see 1 Tim. iv. 4.

27.] The same maxim applied to their conduct at *a banquet given by a heathen*. A *miscellaneous banquet*, and not a sacrificial feast, is meant. At such, there might be meat which had been offered to idols. Grotius says well on the words, **ye are disposed to go**, he admonishes them tacitly that they would do better by not going: but he does not prohibit their going: see above, ch. v. 10. On the words **for conscience sake**, see above, ver. 25.

28.] Who is the person supposed to say this? not, as Grotius, al., think, the *host*, of whom the expression *any man* would hardly be used, but it would stand “*if he say unto you*.” nor, as some think,—some *heathen guest*, by whom it might be said maliciously, or to put the Christian to the proof,—for *his* conscience would hardly be so much taken into account in the matter; but, *some weak Christian*, wishing to warn his brother.

offered in sacrifice (without any mention of its being to idols: such is the reading of our principal ancient MSS.) is apparently placed advisedly, to represent what would be said at a *heathen’s table*.

for his sake that shewed it] i.e. **on account of the man who informed you, and** (*specifying* the particular point or points to which the more general preceding clause applies) **conscience**: i.e. to spare the informer *being wounded in his conscience*. The quotation, which is in the A.V. repeated here, is omitted in all our ancient authorities.

29.] Explanation of the last words, **for conscience sake**, as meaning *not your own, but that of the informer*.

for why is my freedom judged by a conscience not mine own?—i. e. *Why should I be so treated (hazard by my actions such treatment) that the exercise of my Christian freedom, eating as I do and giving thanks, should become matter of condemnation to another, who conscientiously disapproves of it?*—**If I partake thankfully** (not, as A.V., “by grace”) **why am I to be evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?** These words have been misunderstood. It has been generally supposed that the Apostle is *impressing a duty, not to give occasion* for the condemnation of their liberty by another’s conscience. But the ground on which he is *here* arguing, is the unfitness, absurdity, *injustice to oneself* and the cause of God, ver. 31, of *so acting as to be condemned* for that in which a man not only allows himself, but for which he gives *thanks*

to God. The sentiment is the same as in Rom. xiv. 16, “*Let not your good be evil spoken of.*”

31.—XI. 1.] GENERAL CONCLUSION OF THIS PART OF THE EPISTLE,—*enforced by the example of himself.*

31.] This whether then, &c., passing from the special to the general, is not without reference to the last verse, in which the hypothesis is, that the *Christian and thankful act* of the believer is marred by the condemnatory judgment of his weak brother. All such hindrances to God’s glory they are to avoid; and in all things, *eating or drinking* or any other particular of *conduct (any thing)*, the stress being on,—**whether ye do eat or drink, or do any thing whatsoever;** not as A.V. “*whatever ye do*”), the glory of God is to be the aim, self-regard being set aside: and so,—

32.] all offence is to be avoided (it being understood that this refers to **things indifferent**, for in *other things*, both Jews and Greeks *must be offended*, see ch. i. 23), **whether to Jews or Heathens** (both these out of the Church), *or to the Church of God* (their own brethren).

33.] His own course of conduct:—as I in all things please (this expresses, as Meyer well remarks, not the *result*, but the *practice on Paul’s part*; for to *please all men* would be impossible even for one who had no fixed principle, still less for one like St. Paul).

that they, his great aim and end;—so ch. ix. 22.

may be saved: compare on the sense, Phil. ii. 4, 5.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 11

XI. 2–34.] REPROOFS AND DIRECTIONS REGARDING CERTAIN DISORDERS WHICH HAD ARisen IN THEIR ASSEMBLIES: VIZ. (1) THE NOT VEILING OF THEIR WOMEN IN PUBLIC PRAYER (VV. 2–16): (2) THE ABUSE OF THE LOVE-FEASTS (17–34).

2–16.] The law of subjection of the woman to the man (2–12), *and natural decency itself* (13–16), *teach that women should be veiled in public religious assemblies.*

2.] But implying a distinction from the spirit, of the last passage, which was one of *blame*, and exhortation to imitate him. He praises them for the degree in which they did this already, and expresses it by the slighter word “*ye remember me.*”

all things, see above, on ch. x. 33.

and ye keep (continue to believe and practise) **the traditions** (apostolic maxims of faith and practice, delivered either orally or in writing, 2 Thess. ii. 15), **according as** (according to the words in which) **I delivered (them) to you.** This was their *general practice*: the *exceptions* to it, or departures at all events from the *spirit* of those **traditions, now follow.**

3.] “It appears, that the Christian women at Corinth claimed for their sex an equality with the other, taking occasion by the doctrine of Christian freedom and abolition of sexual distinctions in Christ (Gal. iii. 28). The gospel unquestionably did much for the emancipation of women, who in the East and among the Ionian Greeks (not among the Dorians and the Romans) were kept in unworthy dependence. Still this was effected in a quiet and gradual manner: whereas in Corinth they seem to have taken up the cause of female independence somewhat too eagerly. The women overstepped the bounds of their sex, in coming forward to pray and to prophesy in the assembled church with uncovered heads. Both of these the Apostle disapproved,—as well their coming forward to pray and to prophesy, as their removing the veil: here however he blames the latter practice only, and reserves the former till ch. xiv. 34. In order to confine the women to their true limits, he reminds them of their subjection to the *man*, to whom again he assigns his place in the spiritual order of creation, and traces this precedence up to God Himself.” De Wette.

of every man] ‘of every *Christian man*’ (so Chrysostom and others), certainly,—and for such the Apostle was writing: but not *only* of every Christian man: the Headship of Christ is *over all things* to His Church, Eph. i. 22, and thus He is Head of **every man**.—The word **Head**, in each case, means the head *next above*. This must be borne in mind, for Christ is THE HEAD of the Christian *woman*, as well as of the Christian *man*.—God is the Head of Christ, not *only* according to His human nature: the Son is, *in his Sonship*, necessarily *subordinate to the Father*: see ch. iii. 23, note, and ch. xv. 28.—From **Christ**, the order *descends* first: then, in order to complete the whole, *ascends* up to God.—Observe, that though (Gal. iii. 28) the distinction of the sexes is *abolished* in Christ, *as far as the offer of and standing in grace is concerned*, yet for *practical purposes*, and for *order and seemliness*, it *subsists and must be observed*.

4.] The case of the *man* here treated, was regarded by the ancient Commentators as *an actually occurring one* among the Corinthians:—but by recent ones, as *hypothetically put*, to *bring out* that other abuse which really *had occurred*. Had it been real, more would have been said on it below: but from ver. 5 onwards, attention is confined to the *woman*.

praying] i.e. in public:

prophesying] i.e. discoursing in the Spirit; see on ch. xii. 10.

having his head covered] The Jews when praying in public put over their heads a veil, called the Tallith, to shew their reverence before God and their unworthiness to look on Him. Among the Greeks it was the custom to worship with the head bare; among the Romans, with the head veiled. This passage of St. Paul has ever ruled the custom in the Christian church.

dishonoureth his head] i.e. *Christ*: not, his *own head* literally,—except in so far as the literal and metaphorical senses are both included,—the literal head of the man being regarded as the representative of his spiritual Head (see this brought out in Stanley’s note): for the head of the man, *in this respect of honouring or dishonouring, has been, ver. 3, explained to be CHRIST*. Him he dishonours, by appearing veiled before men, thus recognizing subjection to *them* in an assembly which ought to be conformed to *Christian order*.

5.] The case of the woman is just the converse. She, if she *uncovers* herself (on the manner of covering, see below ver. 15 note) in such an assembly, dishonours her head (*the man*; not literally, *her own head* [except as above]: of this *kind of dishonour* there is no mention at all in our passage, and ver. 3 has *expressly guarded us against making the mistake*) by apparently casting off his headship: and if this is to be so, the Apostle proceeds, why not go further, and cut off her hair, which of itself is a token of this subjection? But if this be acknowledged to be shameful (it was a punishment of adulteresses), let the further decency of the additional covering be conceded likewise.

6.] The argument see above. **let her ALSO**, besides being unveiled, &c.

7-9.] *A second reason for the same,—from the dependence of the man on God only, but of the woman on the man.*

7.] **For** refers back to and gives a reason for the words “*let her be covered*,” the difference between the sexes being assumed,—that one *should be* and the other *should not* be veiled.

the image... of God, Gen. i. 26. This the *man* is, having been created first,—*directly*, and in a special manner: the *woman* indirectly, only *through the man*.

and (the representative of the) **glory of God**: on account of his superiority and *godlike* attributes among other created beings. This is obviously *the point* here brought out, as in Ps. viii. 6; not that he is *set to shew forth God’s glory*, because God *glories in him*. *Man is God’s glory*: He has put in him His Majesty, and he represents God on earth: *woman is man’s glory*: taken (ver. 8) from the *man*, shining not with light direct from God, but with light derived from *man*. This of course is true only as regards her place in creation, and her providential subordination, not in respect of the dependence of every woman’s individual soul directly on God, *and not on man*, for supplies of grace and preparations for glory. The Apostle omits in this case *the image*, because anthropologically the woman is not the *image* of the man, on account of the difference of the sexes: and also perhaps because thus he would seem to deny to the woman the being created in the *divine image*, which she is as well as the man, Gen. i. 26, 27. The former reason appears the more probable.

8.] **For** gives the reason of the former assertion, “*the woman is the glory of the man*,”—viz. that **the man is not** (emphasis on “*IS*,”—‘takes not his being,’ in the fact of his original creation. The *propagation* of the species is not here in view) **out of the woman, but the woman out of the man** (compare Gen. ii. 28, “*She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man*”).

9.] **For neither** (parallel with ver. 8—*another reason*: not *subordinate* to it) **was the man created** (emphasis on “*CREATED*” as before on *is*) **on account of the woman, &c.**—In this verse, besides the *manner* of creation, **out of the man**, the occasion

of creation, **for the sake of the man**, is insisted on; see Gen. ii. 18 ff.

10.] For this cause, *on account of what has just been said*, by which the subordination of the woman has been proved:—refers to vv. 7–9.

the woman ought to have power on her head (i. e. the *sign of power* or *subjection*: shewn by the context to mean *a veil*). So Diodorus Siculus speaks of an image of a queen, having three kingdoms on its head, to signify that she was daughter and wife and mother of a king; where ‘kingdoms’ evidently mean *crowns*, the *tokens of kingdom*. And as there from the context it is plain that they indicated *participation* in the glory of the kingdoms, so here it is as evident from the context that the token of **power** indicates being *under power*: and such token is the covering. In this meaning all the principal Commentators agree, both ancient and modern. See some of the differing views discussed in my Greek Test.

because of the angels] i.e. because in the Christian assemblies the holy angels of God are present, and delighting in the due order and subordination of the ranks of God’s servants,—and by a violation of that order we should be giving offence to them. So Chrysostom,—“Knowest thou not that thou standest with angels? with them thou singest, with them thou praisest: and wilt thou stand laughing?” And in another place he says, “To shew that the whole air is full of angels, only hear what the Apostle says, when he is rebuking the women and ordering them to wear a veil on their heads.” Some, with a modification of this rendering, take **the angels** to mean the *guardian angels*, appointed, one to take charge of each Christian. So Theophylact and Theodoret. But though such angels *certainly do minister* to the heirs of salvation, see Matt. xviii. 10 and note,—there does not appear to be any immediate allusion to them *here*. Others again understand ‘*bad angels*,’ who might *themselves* be lustfully excited (so Tertullian),—or might *tempt men so to be*,—or might *injure the unveiled themselves*. **But the angels, absolute**, never means any thing in the N.T. except *the holy angels of God*. See some other explanations in my Greek Test. But still a question remains, **WHY should the Apostle have here named the angels, and adduced them as furnishing a reason for women being veiled in the Christian assemblies?** I believe the account given above to be the true one, and the *reason* of adducing it to be that the Apostle *has before his mind the order of the universal church*, and prefers when speaking of the assemblies of Christians to adduce those beings who, as not entering into the gradation which he has here described, are conceived as *spectators* of the whole, delighted with the decency and order of the servants of God. Stanley thinks the most natural explanation of the reference to be, that the Apostle was led to it by a train of association familiar to his readers, but lost to us: and compares the intimations of a similar familiarity on their part with the subjects of which he was treating in 2 Thess. ii. 5–7.

11.] Yet is neither sex insulated and independent of the other in the Christian life. In the Lord, i.e., in the Christian state; a well-known phrase. See e.g. Rom. xvi. 2, 8, 11, 12 (twice), &c.

12.] And in this, the Christian life accords with the original ordinance of God. **For** (proof of ver. 11) **as the woman is** (was taken, Gen. ii. 21 f.) **out of the man, so the man** (is born, in the propagation of the human race) **by means of the woman; but all things** (both man and woman and all things else: a general maxim, see 2 Cor. v. 18) **are of** (as their source,—thus uniting in one great head both sexes and all creation) **God**.—They are dependent on one another, but *both on HIM*: the Christian life, therefore, which unites them in Christ, is agreeable to God’s ordinance.

13.] Appeal to their own sense of propriety: cf. ch. x. 15.

in your own selves] Each man within himself, in his own judgment.

14. nature itself] i.e. the mere fact of *one sex* being by nature unveiled, i.e. having short hair,—the other, *veiled*, i.e. having long hair. This plainly declares that *man* was intended to be *uncovered*,—*woman, covered*. When therefore we deal with the proprieties of the *artificial* state, of *clothing the body*, we must be *regulated by nature’s suggestion*: that which she has indicated to be left uncovered, we must so leave: that which she has covered, when we clothe the body, we must cover likewise. This is the argument. The word **nature** does not mean *sense of natural propriety*, but **NATURE**,—*the law of creation*.

have long hair] “To have long or beautiful hair is a sign of effeminacy. Paris in Homer is reproached as having long hair,” Eustathius.—The Apostle (see above) makes no allusion to the *customs of nations* in the matter, nor is even the mention of them relevant; he is speaking of the dictates of nature herself.

15.] See on ver. 14: compare Milton, Par. Lost, iv. 304 ff.

a covering, properly a *wrapper*, or enveloping garment. “In this passage,” says Stanley, “the Apostle would refer to the ‘peplum,’ which the Grecian women used ordinarily as a shawl, but on public occasions as a hood also, especially at funerals and marriages.”

16.] cuts off the subject, already abundantly decided, with a settlement of any possible difference by appeal to universal apostolic and ecclesiastical custom. **But if any man seemeth to be contentious**,—i. e. ‘if any arises who appears to dispute the matter, who seems not satisfied with the *reasons* I have given, but is still disputations.’ Before what follows, we must supply “*let him know, that.*”

we (emphatic)—the Apostles and their immediate company,—including the women who assembled in prayer and supplication with them at their various stations, see Acts xvi. 13.

no such custom] The best modern Commentators agree with Chrysostom in understanding this, “*no such custom as that of being contentious.*” But surely it would be very unlikely, that *after so long a treatment of a particular subject*, the Apostle should wind up all by merely a censure of a fault *common* to their behaviour on *this and all the other* matters of dispute. Such a rendering seems to me almost to *stultify the conclusion*:—“If any will dispute about it still, remember that it is neither our practice, nor that of the Churches, *to dispute.*” It would seem to me, but for the weighty names on the other side, hardly to admit of a question, that the **custom** referred to alludes to *the practice of women praying uncovered.* So Theodore and many others. He thus cuts off all further disputation on the matter, by *appealing to universal Christian usage:* and to make the appeal more solemn, adds the words **of God** to “*the Churches,*”—the assemblies which are held in honour of and for prayer to God, and are *His own Churches.* Observe “*the Churches,*” not “*the Church.*” The *plurality of independent testimonies to the absence of the custom,* is that on which the stress is laid. This appeal, ‘TO THE CHURCHES,’ was much heard again at the Reformation: but has been since too much forgotten.

17-34.] CORRECTION OF ABUSES REGARDING THE LOVE-FEASTS (AGAPÆ) AND THE PARTAKING OF THE SUPPER OF THE LORD.

17.] refers back to what has been said since ver. 2, and forms a transition to what is yet to be said. **But this** (viz. *what has gone before*, respecting the *veiling of women*, not as Chrysostom and others, that which follows: see below) **I command you** (not, ‘*announce to you*,’ nor ‘*declare to you from report*,’ which are senses of the original word unknown to the New Test., where it only means ‘*to command*,’—to deliver ‘*by way of precept*.’ This makes it hardly possible to refer the word **this** to *what follows*: for if so, some definite command should immediately succeed) **not praising** (refers to the praise bestowed on them in v. 2, and *excepts what has been said since* from that category) [**you**]; **because ye come together not for the better** (so that edification results), **but for the worse** (so that propriety is violated, and the result is to the hindering of the faith). These last words are introduced with a manifest view to include *more* than the subject hitherto treated, and to *prepare the way* for other abuses of their assemblies to be noticed.

18.] **in the first place**—where is the second *particular* found, answering to this *first one?* Ordinarily, it is assumed that the *schisms* are the *first* abuse, the disorders in the Agapæ (love-feasts: beginning with ver. 20), the *second*. But I am convinced that this view is wrong. For (1) neither special blame, nor correction of an abuse, is conveyed in vv. 18, 19: nor is it so much as intimated, on the ordinary hypothesis, what the character of these divisions was. And (2) the words of ver. 22, “*shall I praise you in this? I praise you not,*” plainly refer back to ver. 17, and shew that the whole is continuous. The **divisions** before the Apostle’s mind are, *specifically*, those occurring at the Agapæ, but on the mention of them he breaks off to shew that such divisions were to be no matters of surprise, but were ordained to test them,—and in ver. 20 he returns with the very words, “*when ye come together,*”—to the immediate matter in hand, and treats it at length. See more on ver. 21, ff.—But the question still remains, where is the *second* point, answering to this *first one?* Again (with Meyer and Macknight) I answer,—*at ch. xii. 1.* The **ABUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS**, which also created disorder in their assemblies, ch. xiv. 23 al., and concerning which he concludes, xiv. 40, “*let all things be done decently and in order,*” was the *other point* before his mind, when he wrote this first. That he takes no notice in ch. xii. 1, by any word implying that it was a *second* point, of what has gone before, will be no objection to the above view to any one who is acquainted with our Apostle’s style.

in assembly] not *local*, as A.V., ‘*in the Church,*’ but equivalent to “*in one place,*” ver. 20. In ver. 16, where the same word (ecclesia) was used of distinct bodies of Christians, it was not possible to keep the word *assemblies*: but it should be done where the sense admits it, and it suits the matter in hand.

divisions] of what sort, is specified below; viz. that he does not here refer to the party dissensions of ch. i. 10, nor could he say of them “*I partly believe it,*” but strictly to *divisions* which took place at *their meetings together*, viz. that each takes before other his own supper, &c.

and I partly believe it] Said in gentleness: as if it were, “I am unwilling to believe *all* I hear concerning the point, but, *some* I cannot help believing.”

19. **there must**] in the divine appointment, that, which follows expressing *God’s purpose* thereby. Our Lord had said “*It must needs be, that offences come,*” Matt. xviii. 7:—and Justin Martyr quotes among His sayings prophetic of division in the church, “*there shall be divisions (schisms) and heresies.*” From the pointed manner in which **there must also or even be**

heresies.... is said, I should be inclined to think that the Apostle *tacitly referred to the same saying of our Lord: for there must be* (not only dissensions but) **even heresies** (not in the ecclesiastical or doctrinal sense, but indicating a further and more matured separation, where not only is there present: dissension, as in the Agapæ, but a deliberate choice and maintenance of party distinction. It does not appear, in spite of all that has been written in Germany on the supposed parties of ch. i. 10, that such separations had yet taken place among the Corinthians. Nor even in Clement's Epistle, forty years after this, do we find any allusion to such, but only, as here, to a general spirit of dissension and variance) **among you, that the approved [also]** (i.e. as well as the other party, who would become manifest by their very conduct. This word **also** is found in some of our oldest MSS., and not in others) **may be made manifest among you**; viz. through a better and nobler spirit being shewn by them, than by the contentious and separatists.

20.] The same subject—resumed from ver. 18: see notes on “*in the first place.*”—**When then ye come together** (*are assembling*, present tense, and perhaps here, where he deals with particulars, this is to be pressed,—as their *intention* in thus assembling is blamed) **to one place—there is no eating** (or, **it is not to eat**, i.e. *with any idea of eating*) **the Lord's Supper** (emphasis on the **Lord's**, as opposed to “*his own*” below).

the Lord's Supper] ‘*the Supper instituted by the Lord.*’ This was an inseparable adjunct, in the apostolic times, to their agapæ or feasts of love. Chrysostom and Tertullian give an ample description of these feasts, which were of the nature of mutual contributions, where each who was able brought his own portion,—and the rich additional portions for the poor. *During* and *after* this feast, as shewn by the institution, by the custom at the Passover, by the context here, and by the remnants of the ancient custom and its abuse until forbidden by the council of Carthage,—the ancient Christians partook of the Supper of the Lord. It was necessary for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, that all should eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup; and in all probability, that a prayer should be offered, and words of consecration said by the appointed ministers. Hence cessation of the feast itself, and solemn order and silence, would be necessitated even by the outward requirements of the ordinance. These could not be obtained, where each man was greedily devouring that which he had brought with him: where the extremes were seen, of one craving, and another being drunken. This being their practice, there could be no possibility, and at the same time *no intention* of celebrating the *Lord's Supper*,—no provision for it, nor discernment of the solemnity of it.

21.] taketh before another, viz. during the feast, not *at home*, before coming. Obviously the each one must be limited to the *rich*: the poor had no *supper of their own* to take, and were the losers by the selfishness of the rich.

one is craving (the poor), **another is drunken** (the rich. There is no need to soften the meaning of this latter word, as Meyer says, “Paul draws the picture in strong colours, and who can say that the reality was less strong?”).

22.] For (a reason for the blame in the foregoing: this should not be: for) **have you no houses, to eat, &c.**: meaning, ‘*at home* is the place to satiate the appetite, *not the assembly of the brethren.*’

or do ye shew your contempt for (pres.) **the congregation of God** (*of God*, to express the dignity of the congregation. This contempt was expressed by their *not sharing* with the congregation the portion which they brought),—**and put to shame those who have not** (houses to eat and to drink in, and therefore come to the daily agapæ to be fed)? **What must I say to you? shall I praise you in this matter? I praise you not.** (See ver. 17.)

23–25.] To shew them the solemnity of the ordinance which they thus set at nought, *he reminds them of the account which he had before given them, of its INSTITUTION BY THE LORD.* Matt. xxvi. 26–29; Mark xiv. 22–25; Luke xxii. 19, 20.

23.] For I (no emphasis on “**I**”) **received from the Lord** (*by special revelation*, see Gal. i. 12. If the Apostle had referred only to the Evangelic tradition or writings (?) he would not have used the first person singular, but would have said, “we received.” I may remark, that the similarity between this account of the Institution, and that in St. Luke's Gospel, is only what might be expected on the supposition of a special revelation made to St. Paul, of which that Evangelist, being St. Paul's companion, in certain parts of his history availed himself) **that which I also delivered** (in my apostolic testimony) **unto you**, (viz.) **That the Lord Jesus, &c.**

Literally, **He was being betrayed.** “There is an appearance of fixed order, especially in these opening words, which indicates that this had already become a familiar formula.” Stanley. In the original there is no word inserted between **is** and **for**, such as *broken* or *given*. See note on Matt. xxvi. 26.

25.] See Luke xxii. 20.

After the same manner] viz., He took, and having given thanks, He gave to them.

This cup is the new covenant in (ratified by the shedding of, and therefore *standing in*, as its conditioning element) **my blood.**

as oft as ye drink...] Not a general rule for all common meals of Christians; but a precept that as often as *that cup* is drunk, it should be in *remembrance of Him*: on these last words is the emphasis: see below.

26.] For gives an explanatory reason for the words “*in remembrance of Me*,” viz. that the act of eating and drinking is a *proclamation of the Death of the Lord till His coming*. The Apostle is substantiating the application of the Lord’s words by the acknowledged nature of the rite. It is a proclamation of His Death; and thus is a *remembrance of Him*. It is so, by our making mention of in it, and seeing visibly before us and partaking of, *His Body broken, and His Blood shed*.

till he come] The words **ye declare** are addressed *directly to the Corinthians*, not to them and all succeeding Christians; the Apostle regarding the coming of the Lord as near at hand, in *his own time*; see notes on 2 Cor. v. 1–10. After the coming, there will be no longer any need of the symbols of His Body, since the Body itself will be with us; therefore the Apostle says, “*Till He come*.”

27.] A consequence, from the nature of the ordinance being, *to proclaim the Death of the Lord: the guilt of the unworthy participation of either of the elements*. The Death of the Lord was brought about by the breaking of His body and shedding His blood: this Death we proclaim in the ordinance by the bread broken—the wine poured out, of which we partake: whoever therefore shall either eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily (see below, ver. 29) shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord: i.e. shall be subject to the penalty of offence against the Body and Blood of Christ. Such an one proclaims the Death of Christ, and yet in *an unworthy spirit*—with no regard to that Death as *his atonement*, or a proof of Christ’s love: he proclaims that Death as *an indifferent person*: he therefore *partakes of the guilt of it*. Chrysostom strikingly says, “He makes that Death a murder, and not a sacrifice” The Romanists absurdly enough defend by this or (the meaning of which is not to be changed to *and*, as is most unfairly done in our A.V., and the completeness of the argument thereby destroyed) their practice of *communicating only in one kind*. Translated into *common language*, and applied to the ordinary sustenance of the body, their reasoning stands thus: “Whoever eats to excess, or drinks to excess, is guilty of sin: therefore eating, without drinking, will sustain life.”

28.] The **but** implies an opposition to, and wish to escape from, the guilt just suggested.

examine himself] prove himself: ascertain by sufficient tests, what his state of feeling is with regard to the death of Christ, and how far this feeling is evinced in his daily life—which are the best guarantees for a worthy participation.

and so] i.e. ‘*after examination of himself?*’ The case in which the self-examination ends in an *un-favourable verdict*, does not come under consideration, because it is assumed that such a verdict will lead to repentance and amendment.

29.] For he that eateth and drinketh (of the bread and of the cup: certainly not, as Meyer suggests, ‘*the mere eater and drinker*’, he who partakes as a mere act of eating and drinking,) which is harsh to the last degree, and refuted by the parallel, ver. 27. The word “*unworthily*” is spurious, not occurring in our most ancient MSS., and having found its way into the text by repetition from ver. 27), **eateth and drinketh judgment to himself** (i. e. brings on himself judgment by eating and drinking. The *judgment* meant, as is evident by vv. 30–32, is not ‘*damnation*’, as rendered in our A.V., a mis-translation, which has done infinite mischief), **not appreciating** (i. e. if **he discern not**, “if he have no idea of the solemnity of the ordinance, or of the magnitude of the gift bestowed on him.” Chrysostom) **the body** (of the Lord: here standing for the *whole* of that which is symbolized by the Bread and the Cup, *the Body and Blood*. The mystery of these, spiritually present in the elements, he, not being spiritual, *does not appreciate*: and therefore, as in ver. 27, falls under the divine judgment, as trifling with the Death of Christ).

30.] Experimental proof of the assertion that he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, from the present sicknesses and frequent deaths among the Corinthian believers.—We may distinguish *weaklings*, persons whose powers have failed spontaneously, from *invalids*, persons whose powers are enfeebled by sickness. Both words refer to *physical*, not *moral* weaknesses.

31.] But contrasts with this state of sicknesses and deaths—it might be otherwise. This **discerned** (the result of the examination commanded before) is the same word in the original as that rendered *discern* in ver. 29, and should be carefully kept the same in the translation, the idea being the same.

32.] But now that we are judged, it is by the Lord (emph.) **that we are being chastised** (to bring us to repentance), **that we may not be** (eternally) **condemned with the** (unbelieving) **world**.

33.] General conclusion respecting this disorder. So then (wherefore), my brethren (milder persuasive: as has been the assumption of the first person me, vv. 31, 32), **when ye are coming together to eat, wait for one another** (contrast to the unseemly hurry blamed in ver. 21).

34.] The Agapæ were not meals to satiate the bodily appetites, but for a higher and holier purpose: let the hungry take off the edge of his hunger at home: see ver. 22.

the rest] viz. *things omitted* (probably matters of detail) *in the above directions*. Perhaps they had asked him questions respecting the most convenient time or manner of celebration of the Lord's supper: points on which primitive practice widely differed.

when I come, literally, whenever I shall have come: the Apostle being uncertain as to the time.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 12

CHAPP. XII.-XIV.] ON THE ABUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS: especially PROPHESYING, and SPEAKING WITH TONGUES. The *second particular requiring correction in their assemblies*, see ch. xi. 18, note. Chrysostom well says: "This whole passage is very obscure: and the obscurity is caused by our ignorance of the facts, and by the failure of phenomena which then were occurring, but now occur no longer."

XII] ON THE NATURE, INTENT, AND WORTH OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN GENERAL.

1-3.] The foundation of all spiritual utterance is the confession of Jesus as the Lord: and without the Spirit no such confession can be made.

1.] Some have thought that the Corinthians had referred this question to the Apostle's decision: but from the formula, **I would not have you ignorant**, it rather looks as if, like the last, it had been an abuse which he had *heard of*, and of *his own instance corrects*.

spiritual gifts] In the original the adjective only is expressed, the substantive having to be supplied. It is most likely *neuter*, as in ch. xiv. 1; *spiritual gifts*: so Chrysostom and most commentators—not masculine, as in ch. xiv. 37: so Grotius and others, who maintain that the subject of this section is not the *things*, but the *persons*, quoting ch. xiv. 5. But surely the *things* are the main subject, enounced here, vv. 4–11, and treated of through the rest of the chapter; the inspired *persons* being mentioned only incidentally to *them*.

2.] *Reason why they wanted instruction concerning spiritual gifts*—because *they once were heathen*, and could not therefore have any experience in spiritual things. **Ye know (that) when ye were Gentiles, led about** (or, **carried away**): not necessarily, '*led wrong*;' the context seems rather to favour the idea of being '*led at will*,' blindly transported hither and thither) **to idols which were without utterance** ('the God in whom you now believe is a living and speaking God—speaking by his Spirit in every believer: how should you know any thing of such spiritual speech or gifts at all, who have been accustomed to *dumb idols?*')**, just as ye happened to be led** (viz., on each occasion. These last words imply the absence of all *fixed principle* in the oracles of Heathendom, such as he is about to announce as regulating and furnishing the criterion of the spiritual gifts of Christendom. This **even as ye might be led** might take a man to *contradictory* oracles, the whole system being an imposture—their *idols* being void of all power of utterance, and they being therefore imposed on by the fictions of men, or *evil spirits*, who led them).

3.] *The negative and positive criteria of inspiration by the Spirit of God: viz. the rejection, or confession, of Jesus as the Lord.*

Wherefore, 'because ye have been hitherto in ignorance of the matter.'

in the Spirit of God—in the Holy Ghost] The Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost, is the *Power pervading* the speaker, the *Element in which he speaks*.

Jesus is accursed] **Jesus** (not *Christ*, the *Name of office*, itself in some measure the *object of faith*,—but Jesus, the personal Name,—the historical Person whose life was *matter of fact*: the curse, and the confession, are in this way far deeper) **is accursed** (see Rom. ix. 3, note). So, **Jesus is Lord** (all that is implied in **lord** being here also implied: and we must not forget that the Greek word Kyrios, here used, is the solemn accustomed name in the Septuagint version for the Hebrew JEHOVAH). By these last words the influence of the Holy Spirit is widened by the Apostle from the supernatural gifts to which perhaps it had been improperly confined, to the faith and confession of every Christian.—It is remarkable that in 1 John iv. 1, 2, where a test to try the spirits is given, the *human side* of this confession is brought out,—'*that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*',—St. John having to deal with those who denied the reality of the Incarnation.

4–6.] But (as contrasted to this absolute unity, in ground and principle, of all spiritual influence) **there are varieties of gifts** (*gifts*, i.e. eminent endowments of individuals, in and by which the Spirit indwelling in them manifested Himself,—the manifestation of the Spirit in each man:—and these either *directly bestowed* by the Holy Ghost Himself, as in the case of healing, miracles, tongues, and prophesying, or *previously granted* them by God in their unconverted state, and now *inspired*, *hallowed*, and *potentiated* for the work of building up the church,—as in the case of teaching, exhortation, knowledge. Of all these gifts, *faith working by love* was the necessary substratum and condition), **but the same Spirit** (as their Bestower,—see the sense filled up in ver. 11):

5.] And there are varieties of ministries (appointed *services* in the church, in which as their channels of manifestation the *gifts* would work), **and the same Lord** (Christ, the Lord of the church, whose it is to appoint all ministrations in it. These ministrations must not be narrowed to the *ecclesiastical orders*, but kept commensurate in extent with the gifts which are to find scope by their means, see verses 7–10: and) **varieties of operations** (effects of divine working: not to be limited to *miraculous* effects, but understood again commensurately with the gifts of whose working they are the results), **and the same God, Who worketh all of them in all persons** (all the gifts in all who are gifted). Thus we have GOD THE FATHER, the First Source and Operator of all spiritual influence in all: GOD THE SON, the Ordainer in His Church of all ministries by which this influence may be legitimately brought out for edification: GOD THE HOLY GHOST, dwelling and working in the church, and effectuating in each man such measure of His gifts as He sees fit.

7–11.] These operations specified in their variety, but again asserted to be the work of one and the same Spirit.

7.] To each individual, however (the emphasis on each, as shewing the character of what is to follow, viz. *individual distinction* of gifts. **But, or however**, is contrasted with **the same God** of the last verse; through the workings of *One God, One Lord, One Spirit*, they are bestowed *variously* on each man), **is given the manifestation of the Spirit** (the *manifestation by which the Spirit acts*: it is a general term including *gifts, ministrations, and operations*, and) **with a view to profit** (with the profit of the whole body as the aim).

8–10.] On the question, whether or not any studied arrangement of the gifts of the Spirit is here found, see my Greek Test. I have there seen reason to conclude that a *rigorous* distribution (as e.g. into *intellectual* and *practical*, and their subdivisions) cannot be traced; but that at the same time there is a *sort of arrangement*, brought about not so much designedly, as by the falling together of similar terms,—the word of wisdom,—the word of knowledge;—kinds of tongues,—interpretation of tongues. Unquestionably, any arrangement must be at fault, which proceeding on *psychological* grounds, classes together the speaking with tongues and the *interpretation* of tongues: the *working of miracles*, and the *discernment of spirits*.

8.] For appeals to *matter of fact*, as the ground of the assertion in ver. 7, both as to the *giving*, and as to the gift *being for profit*.

the word of wisdom..... the word of knowledge] *What is the distinction?* According to Neander, **wisdom** represents the *skill*, which is able to reduce the whole *practical* Christian life into its due order in accordance with its foundation principles; **knowledge**, the *theoretical insight* into divine things. But Bengel and others take them conversely, **knowledge** for the practical, **wisdom** for the theoretical. Meyer says, “**Wisdom** means the *higher Christian wisdom* (see on ch. ii. 6) in and of itself;—so that discourse which expresses its truths, makes them clear, applies them, &c. is the *word of wisdom*. But this does not necessarily imply the speculative penetration of these truths,—the philosophical treatment of them by deeper and more scientific investigation, in other words, **knowledge**: and discourse which aims at this is the *word of knowledge*.” This last view is most in accordance with the subsequently recognized meaning of *knowledge* (*gnosis*) and the *gnostic*, and with the Apostle’s own use of *wisdom* in the passage referred to, ch. ii. 6.

These are bestowed **according to** (the disposition,—see ver. 11,—of) **the same Spirit**.

9.] faith, as Chrysostom explains it, “He does not here mean faith in doctrines, but that which works miracles, of which our Lord said, ‘If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, &c.’ (Matt. xvii. 20), and respecting which the Apostles offered their petition, ‘add unto us faith’ (Luke xvii. 5): for this faith is the mother of miracles.” This seems to be the meaning here; a faith, enabling a man to place himself beyond the region of mere moral certainty, in the actual realization of things believed, in a high and unusual manner.

in the same Spirit] in, i.e. by and through, as the effective cause and the medium.

gifts of (miraculous) healings] plural, to indicate the different kinds of diseases, requiring different sorts of healing.

10.] operations of miraculous powers (in general).

prophecy] speaking in the Spirit. Meyer gives an excellent definition of it: “discourse flowing from the revelation and

impulse of the Holy Spirit, which, not being attached to any particular office in the church, but improvised,—disclosed the depths of the human heart and of the divine counsel, and thus was exceedingly effectual for the enlightening, exhortation, and consolation of believers, and the winning of unbelievers. The *prophet* differs from the *speaker with tongues*.... in that he speaks *with the understanding*, not ecstatically: from the *teacher*, thus: ‘He that prophesies speaks all that he utters, from the Spirit: whereas he that teaches, sometimes speaks of his own mind.’ Chrysostom.”

discernings of spirits] i.e. the power of distinguishing between the operation of the Spirit of God, and the evil spirit, or the unassisted human spirit: see 1 John iv. 1, and compare “*giving heed to seducing spirits*,” 1 Tim. iv. 1. The exercise of this power is alluded to ch. xiv. 29.

Kinds of tongues] i.e. the power of uttering, in ecstasy, as the mouthpiece of the Spirit, prayer and praise in *languages unknown to the utterer*,—or even in a *spiritual language unknown to man*. See this subject dealt with in the note on Acts ii. 4, and ch. xiv. 2 ff.

interpretation of tongues] the power of *giving a meaning to what was thus ecstatically spoken*. This was not always resident in the speaker himself: see ch. xiv. 13.

11.] The Spirit is the universal worker in men of all these powers, and that according to His own pleasure: see above: on vv. 4–6.

severally] or **respectively**. This unity of the source of all spiritual gifts, in the midst of their variety, he presses as against those who valued some and undervalued others, or who depreciated them all.

12–30.] *As the many members of the body compose an organic whole, and all belong to the body, none being needless, none to be despised; so also those who are variously gifted by the Spirit compose a spiritual organic whole, the mystical body of Christ.* First, however, vv. 12, 13, this likeness of the mystical Christ to a *body* is enounced, and justified by the facts of our Baptism.

12.] The *organic unity* of the various members in one body, is predicated also of CHRIST, i.e. *the church as united in Him*, see ch. vi. 15. The word **for** confirms the preceding “*one and the selfsame Spirit*,” by an analogy. By the repetition,—“*the body*”.... “*of the body*”.... “*one body*,” the unity of the members as an organic whole is more strongly set forth.

13.] This shewn from our being *baptized into one body*, and *receiving one Spirit*.—**For in** (see on ver. 9) **one Spirit also** (the emphasis on “*one Spirit*,” to which words *also* belongs) **we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or freemen; and we all were made to drink of one Spirit** (or, ‘all watered by one Spirit, viz. the water of baptism, here taken as identical with the Spirit whose influence accompanied it’).—So (understanding the whole verse of baptism) Chrysostom and others refer the latter half to the *Lord’s Supper*: and this is mentioned by Chrysostom, Luther, and others. Olshausen, and others, to the abiding influence of the Spirit in strengthening and refreshing. But the past tense “**we were made to drink**,”... referring to a *fact gone by*, is fatal to both these latter interpretations: besides that it would be *harsh* to understand even “*we were made to drink into one Spirit*,” and impossible to understand “*we were made to drink of one Spirit*,” of the cup in the Lord’s Supper.

14.] *Analogy, by which this multiplicity in unity is justified*: it is even so in the *natural body*, which, though *one*, consists of *many members*. The object of the continuation of the simile seems to be, to convince them that their various gifts had been bestowed by God on them as members of the Christian body, and that they must not, because they did not happen to possess the gifts of *another*, consider themselves *excluded* from the *body*,—in which the weaker as well as the stronger, the less comely as well as the more comely members were necessary. The reader will remember the fable of the belly and members, spoken by Menenius Agrippa to the mutinous plebeians of Rome, when they seceded to the Mons Sacer. See other illustrations in my Greek Test.

15. **is it therefore not of the body?**] These words here, and in the next verse, may be taken, “*it is not there-fore not of the body*.” But they are best taken as a question appealing to the sense of the reader: they thus have more of the vigour and abruptness of the Apostle’s style.

of the body, i.e. **belonging to the body** as an aggregate.

17.] *The necessity* of the members to *one another*, and to the *body*.

18.] **But now**, i.e. **but as the case really stands**.

as he pleased answers to “*as he willeth*,” ver. 11.

19.] The same ‘*reductio ad absurdum*,’ which has been made in the *concrete* twice in ver. 17, is now made in the *abstract*: if the whole were one member, where would be the body (which by its very idea “has many members,” see xx. 12, 14)?

20.] brings out the fact *in contrast* to ver. 19, as ver. 18 in contrast to ver. 17.

21–26.] And the spiritual gifts are also necessary to one another. This is spoken of in reproof of the *highly endowed*, who imagined they could do without those less gifted than themselves, as the preceding to those of small endowment, who were discontented with their gifts.

22, 23.] Nay, the relation between the members is so entirely different from this, that the *very disparagement*, conventionally, of any member, is the reason why more care should be taken of it. I understand by “those members of the body which seem to be more feeble,” those members which in each man’s case appear to be inheritors of disease, or to have incurred weakness. By this very fact, their necessity to him is brought out much more than that of the others.

23.] So also in the case of the parts **which we think to be less honourable**—on which *usage has set the stamp of dishonour*. Perhaps he alludes (as distinguished from “**uncomely parts**” below) to those limbs which we conceal from sight in accordance with custom, but in the exposure of which there would be no absolute indecency. So Chrysostom, “He says well *which seem*, and *which we think* (but I should draw a distinction between the two, in accordance with the above explanation of *the weaker parts*, and render the one **which seem to be** [of themselves], and the other, **which we think** [conventionally], on which see Acts xvi. 20, note), shewing that this verdict is given, not by the nature of things, but by public opinion.”

we bestow more abundant honour] viz. *by clothing*: honouring them more than the face, the noblest part, which we do not clothe.

our uncomely parts] Here there is *no* qualification, such as *which seem*, or *which we think*,—and no ambiguity. Chrysostom says, “These parts enjoy more honour: for even the miserably poor, if compelled to go with the rest of their body naked, will not endure to shew these parts unclothed.”

24.] The *comely* parts are in some measure *neglected*, not needing to be covered or adorned: **but God** (at the creation) **tempered the body together** (compounded it of members on a principle of mutual compensation),—**to the deficient part giving more abundant honour**.

25.] that there be no disunion (see ver. 21) **in the body, but that the members may have the same care** (viz. that for mutual well-being) **for one another**.

26.] And [accordingly], in matter of fact: we see that God’s *temperament* of the body has not failed of its purpose, for the members sympathize most intimately with one another.

if one... suffereth, all... suffer with it] “For,” says Chrysostom, “when the heel, as often happens, is pricked by a thorn, the whole body feels it, and is distressed: the back is bent, and the belly and thighs are contracted, and the hands, like attendants and servants, approach and draw out the offending substance, and the head leans over, and the eyes look for it with anxious care.”

or one.... is honoured (literally **glorified**), **all.... rejoice with it]** Chrysostom again with equal beauty instances, “the head is crowned, and the whole man is glorified; the mouth speaks, and the eyes laugh and are joyous.” But perhaps the analogy requires that we should rather understand the *glorification* of those things which physically refresh or benefit the member, e.g. *anointing* or *nourishment*.

27.] Application of all that has been said of the physical body, to the Corinthians, as the mystical body of Christ: and to individuals among them, as *members in particular*, i.e. each according to his allotted part in the body. **Each church** is said to be the *body of Christ*, as each is said to be the *temple of God* (see ch. iii. 16, note): not that there are many bodies or many temples; but that each church is an image of the whole aggregate, a microcosm or little world, having the same characteristics.

28.] The divine disposition of the members in the spiritual body.

some was apparently intended to follow by “others,” but meanwhile another argument, *first, secondly, thirdly*, occurs to the Apostle, and **some** is left uncorrected, standing alone.

in the (universal) church; a sense more frequently found in the Epistle to the Ephesians, than in any other part of St. Paul’s writings.

first apostles] Not merely *the Twelve* are thus designated, but they and others who bore the same name and had equal power, e.g. Paul himself, and Barnabas, and James the Lord's brother: see also note on Rom. xvi. 7.

prophets] See above on ver. 10.

teachers] those who had the gift of expounding and unfolding doctrine and applying it to practice,—the *word of wisdom* and the *word of knowledge*.

miraculous powers] He here passes to the *abstract* nouns from the *concrete*,—perhaps because no definite class of persons was endowed with each of the following, but they were promiscuously granted to all orders in the church: more probably, however, *without any assignable reason*: as in Rom. xii. 6–8, he passes from the abstract to the concrete.

helpings] i.e. assisting the sick, and the like, forming one department of the *ministrations* of ver. 5: as do also **governings**, a higher department, that of the presbyters or bishops—the *direction* of the, various churches.

divers kinds of tongues] “Do you see where he places this gift, and how he uniformly assigns it the last rank?” Chrysostom. There certainly seems to be intention in placing this *last* in rank: but I am persuaded that we must not seek for a *classified* arrangement: here, as above, vv. 7–11, it seems rather *suggestive* than *logical*: the *gifts of healings* naturally suggesting the *helpings*,—and those again, the assistances to carry out the work of the church, as naturally bringing in the *governings*, the rule and guidance of it.

29, 30.] *The application of the questions already asked vv. 17–19.*

29. miracles] The words [*workers of*], supplied in the English text, have no representative in the original. The Apostle has above placed the concrete, *apostles, prophets, teachers*, in apposition with *miraculous powers*, and *gifts of healings*; and now proceeds with the same arrangement till he comes to *gifts of healings*, which being too palpably unpredictable of persons, gives rise to the change of construction, **have all gifts of healings**.

31.] But (he has been shewing that *all gifts have their value*: and that all are *set in the church by God: some* however are *more valuable than others*) **do ye aim at the greater gifts** (*greater* is explained ch. xiv. 5). This exhortation is not inconsistent with ver. 11: but, as we look for the divine blessing on tillage and careful culture, so we may look for the aid of the Spirit on carefully cultivated powers of the understanding and speech: and we may notice that the greater gifts those of *prophecy* and *teaching*, consisted in the *inspired exercise of the conscious faculties*, in which culture and diligence would be useful accessories.

and moreover] besides exhorting you to emulate the greatest gifts.

Literally, **an eminently excellent way**, viz. *of emulating the greatest gifts*:—so Theophylact: “and herewith if ye must at all events be ambitious of gifts, I will shew you an eminent,” i.e. a more exalted “way, one which leads to all gifts that are: he means, the way of love.”

1 Corinthians: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII. 1–13.] THE PANEGYRIC OF LOVE, *as the principle without which all gifts are worthless* (1–8): *its attributes* (4–7): *its eternity* (8–12): *its superior dignity to the other great Christian graces* (13).—This may,” says Meyer, “without impropriety be ‘called a Psalm of Love:’”—the “Song of Love” of the New Test. (see Ps. xlvi. title). “On each side of this chapter the tumult of argument and remonstrance still rages: but within it all is calm: the sentences move in almost rhythmical melody: the imagery unfolds itself in almost dramatic propriety: the language arranges itself with almost rhetorical accuracy. We can imagine how the Apostle’s amanuensis must have paused to look up in his master’s face at the sudden change of his style of dictation, and seen his countenance lighted up as it had been the face of an angel, as the sublime vision of divine perfection passed before him.” Stanley.

1.] Though I speak (or, **should speak**) supposes a case which never P has been exemplified: **even if I can speak.**

with the tongues of men and of angels] “See where he sets ont: first beginning with that which seemed to them so great and wonderful, the gift of tongues.” Chrysostom. It is hardly possible to understand tongues here of any thing but *articulate forms of speech*: i.e. *languages*. See note on Acts ii, 4.—**Of men** (generic) **and of angels** (generic): i.e. of ‘*all* men and *all* angels,’ whatever those tongues may be.

love] LOVE to all, in its most general sense, as throughout the chapter: no distinction being here drawn between love to man and to God, but the general principle dealt with, from which both spring. The ‘caritas’ of the Latin versions has occasioned the rendering ‘charity’ in most modern versions. Of this word Stanley remarks, “The limitation of its meaning on the one hand to mere almsgiving, or on the other to mere toleration, has so much narrowed its sense, that the simpler term ‘Love,’ though too general exactly to meet the case, is now the best equivalent.”

I am become] the case supposed is regarded as present: ‘if I can speak.... I am become.

sounding brass] Brass of any kind, struck and yielding a sound: i.e. something insensible and inanimate. No particular musical instrument seems to be meant.

cymbal] “Cymbals,” says Josephus, “were large broad plates of brass.” The Hebrew name for them is most expressive, “Tzeltzelim.” There appear to have been two sorts, mentioned in Ps. cl. 5, “sweet (well-tuned) cymbals,” and “loud (high-sounding) cymbals.” Winer thinks the former answered to our castagnettes, the latter to our cymbals. The larger kind would be here meant.

2.] all mysteries are all the secrets of the divine counsel,—see Rom. xi. 25 (note); xvi. 25. The knowledge of these would be the perfection of the gift of prophecy.

all faith (literally, **all the faith**) hardly, as Stanley, implies, ‘all the faith in the world,’ but rather, ‘all the faith required to,’ &c.; or perhaps the article conveys the allusion to our Lord’s saying, Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21, ‘all that faith,’ so as, &c.

3.] “The true and most significant sense is ‘though I dole away in mouthfuls all my property or estates.’ Who that has witnessed the almsgiving in a Catholic monastery, or the court of a Spanish or Sicilian bishop’s or archbishop’s palace, where immense revenues are syringed away in farthings to herds of beggars, but must feel the force of the Apostle’s half-satirical expression?” MS. note by Coleridge, quoted by Stanley.

give up my body that I may be burned] So in Dan, iii. 28, “they yielded their bodies,” the Septuagint has, “to the burning,” but the Hebrew and A.V. omit this. See also 2 Macc. vii. 37. He evidently means in self-sacrifice: for country, or friends. Both the deeds mentioned in this verse are such as ordinarily are held to be the fruits of love, but they may be done without it, and if so are worthless. The variation indicated in the margin is the reading of three of our oldest MSS. It differs only by one letter from that in the text: the verb for “be burned” being “kauthesōmai,” that for “boast” being “kauchesōmai.” It is not easy to decide between the two. The objection to “that I may boast” seems to be that it introduces an irrelevant and confusing element, a boastful motive, into a set of hypotheses which put forward merely an act or set of acts on the one side, and the absence of love on the other, and indeed, worse still, that it makes an hypothesis which would reduce the self-sacrifice to nothing, and would imply the absence of love; and so would render the “yet have not love” unnecessary.

4-7.] The blessed attributes of love.

4.] longsuffering is the negative side, **kindness** the positive, of a loving temper: the former the withholding of anger; the latter, the exercise of kindness.

envieth not] the word in the original means more,—‘knows neither envy nor jealousy:’ both are included under it.

vaunteth not itself] The word in the original is an universal one; a good definition of its meaning is given by Basil, as including “all that a man takes upon himself, not from duty or necessity, but for the sake of self-exaltation.” An equivalent English expression would perhaps be, **displays not itself**.

5.] doth not behave itself unseemly appears to be general, without particular reference to the disorders in public speaking with tongues.

its own] Love is so personified, as here to be identified with the man possessing the grace, who does not seek his own: see ch. x. 33.

imputeth not the evil] “not only plots no evil, but does not even suspect any against the beloved person,” Chrysostom: and this is better and more accordant with the sense of the verb used, than the more general rendering, ‘thinketh no evil.’ And we must not overlook the *article*, which seems here to have the force of implying that the evil actually exists; ‘the evil’ which is,—but Love does not impute it. So Theodoret: “It forgives those who have erred, having no suspicion that they have done so with bad motive.”

6.] rejoiceth not at (the) unrighteousness, i.e. at its commission by others, as is the habit of the unloving world.

rejoiceth with the truth] Most Commentators, as the A. V, altogether overlook the force of the verb and the altered construction, and render ‘rejoiceth in the truth:’ but the rendering in the text is the only one which preserves the force of the words: **rejoices with the Truth**, the Truth being personified, and meaning especially *the spread among men* (as opposed to *unrighteousness*) of the Truth of the Gospel, and indeed of the Truth in general,—in opposition to those who (Rom. i. 18) “hold down the truth in unrighteousness,”—who (2 Tim. iii. 8) “withstand the truth.”

7.] all things, i.e. all things which can be borne with a good conscience, and this applies to *all four* things mentioned: all things, viz., which can be borne, believed, hoped, or endured.

beareth] The verb is the same as that in ch. ix. 12, where see note. Some would render it here “covers,” but the variation in sense from ch. ix. is needless.

believeth] viz. without suspicion of another.

hopeth] viz. even against hope—hoping what is good of another, even when others have ceased to do so.

endureth] viz. persecutions and distresses inflicted by others, rather than shew an unloving spirit to them.

8–12.] The eternal abiding of love when other graces have passed away.

By **whether, whether, whether**, the general idea, **gifts**, is split into its *species*—**be there prophesyings—be there speakings in tongues, be there knowledge**.—Chrysostom and others understand the two first futures, **shall be done away, and shall cease**, of the time when, the faith being every where dispersed, these gifts should be *no longer needed*. But unquestionably the time alluded to is that of *the coming of the Lord*: see ver. 12. and this applies to *all these*, not to the last (*knowledge*) only. The two first, **prophesyings** and **tongues**, shall be *absolutely superseded*: **knowledge relatively**: the imperfect, by the perfect.

9, 10.] Reason given;—that our knowledge and our prophesying (utterance of divine things) are but *partial*, embracing *but a part*: but when that which is *perfect* (entire—universal) shall have come, this *partial* shall be abolished—superseded. See Eph. iv. 11–13, where the same idea is otherwise expressed.

11.] Analogical illustration of ver. 10.

The **child** (or *babe*) and the **perfect** are used in contrast, ch. ii. 6; iii. 1; xiv. 20.

I spoke, I thought (*was minded, or felt*), **I reasoned** (*or judged*). There can hardly be an allusion, as some think, to the *three gifts*, of *tongues* (*I spoke*), *prophesy* (*I thought*, which suits but very lamely), and *knowledge* (*I reasoned*).

now that I am become a man, I have brought to an end the ways of a child: not, as A.V., ‘when I became a man I put away....,’ as if it were done *on a set day*;—this rendering is ungrammatical.

12.] Contrast between our present sight and knowledge,—and those in the future perfect state.

For justifies the analogy of the former verse: for it is just so with *us*.

now, in our *present condition*, until the Lord’s coming.

in a glass] literally, **through a mirror**: i.e. *according to the popular illusion*, which regards the object, really seen *behind* the mirror, as seen *through it*. We must think, not of our mirrors of glass, but of the imperfectly-reflecting metallic mirrors of the ancients.

obscurely] literally, **in an enigma**. There is a reference to the Septuagint version of Numb. xii. 8, “I will speak to him mouth to mouth, apparently, and not **by enigmas**.” We are almost obliged in an English version to take the words adverbially,—‘enigmatically’ (so A.V., ‘darkly’): but the strict propriety of the expression is thus disguised. “*In an enigma*” means, ‘*in a dark discourse*,’ viz. *the revealed word*, which is *dark*, by comparison with our future *perfect knowledge*.

then, i.e., “when that which is *perfect* is *come*;” ver. 10, “at the Lord’s coming, and after.”

face to face] literally, **face towards face**, i.e. by immediate intuition: so Gen. xxxii. 30.

I shall thoroughly know even as I was (during this life: he places himself *in that state*, and uses the aor. as of a thing gone by) **thoroughly known**.—In this life we *are known* by God, rather than *know* Him: see Gal. iv. 9; ch. viii. 3, note.—The sense of this important past tense must not be forced, as in A.V., to a *present*.

13.] Superiority of Love to the other great Christian graces.—Some gifts shall pass away,—but *these three great graces shall remain for ever*,—FAITH, HOPE, LOVE. *This is necessarily the meaning*,—and *not that love alone shall abide for ever, and the other two merely during the present state*. For (1) the words **but now** do not mean in this present state, as opposed to what has just been said, ver. 12,—but *as things have been shewn to be*,—at this stage of our argument:—and the inference from them is just the contrary of that implied in the other rendering: viz. that *since tongues, prophesying, knowledge, will all pass away*, we have left *but THESE THREE*. (2) From the position of the verb **abideth**, it has a *strong emphasis*, and carries the weight of the clause, as opposed to the previously-mentioned things which *shall be done away*. (3) From the expression, **these three**, a *preeminence* is obviously pointed out for *faith, hope, and love*, distinct from aught which has gone before.—This being the plain sense of the words, how can *faith* and *hope* be said to endure to eternity, when faith will be lost in sight, and hope in fruition? With *hope*, there is but little difficulty: *but one place* has inscribed over its portals, “*Leave hope behind, all ye that enter here.*” New glories, new treasures of knowledge and of love, will ever raise, and nourish, blessed hopes of yet more and higher,—hopes which no disappointment will blight. But how can *faith* abide,—faith, which is the evidence of things *not seen*,—where all things once believed are seen? In the form of. *holy confidence and trust*, faith will abide even there. The stay of all conscious created being, human or angelic, is *dependence on God*: and where the faith which *comes by hearing* is out of the question, the faith which *consists in trusting* will be the only faith possible. Thus *Hope* will remain, as anticipation certain to be fulfilled: *Faith* will remain, as trust, entire and undoubting:—the anchor of the soul, even where no tempest comes. See this expanded and further vindicated in my Quebec Chapel Sermons, Vol. i. Serm. viii.

The greater (or in English, **greatest**) **of these**,—not ‘*greater than these*.’ “The greater,” as De Wette beautifully remarks, “because it contains in itself the root of the other two: we believe only one whom we love,—we hope only that which we love.’ And thus the forms of Faith and Hope which will there for ever subsist, will be sustained in, and overshadowed by, the all-pervading superior element of eternal Love.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 14

CHAP. XIV. 1–25.] Demonstration of THE SUPERIORITY OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY OVER THAT OF SPEAKING WITH TONGUES.

1.] Transition from the parenthetical matter of the last chapter to the subject about to be resumed. Pursue after Love (let it be your great aim,—important and enduring as that grace has been shewn to be): **meantime however** (during that pursuit; making that the first thing, take up this as a second) **strive for spiritual gifts** (*gifts* is not expressed in the Greek: see note on ch. xii, 1), **but more** (more than spiritual gifts in general: i.e. more for this than for others; **chiefly** **that ye may prophesy**.

2–20.] Prophecy edifies the BRETHREN more than speaking with tongues.

2.] For he that speaketh in a tongue, speaketh not unto men; but unto God: for noone understandeth him (literally, **heareth him**: but obviously it is meant, hears with intelligence: i.e. as a *general rule*, the assembly do not understand him; some, who have the gift of interpretation of tongues, may,—but they are the exception), **but** (opposed to **no one understandeth him**) **in the spirit** (in his spirit, as opposed to in his understanding: his spirit is the organ of the Holy Ghost, but his understanding is unfruitful; see vv. 14, 15) **he speaketh mysteries** (things which are hidden from the hearers, and sometimes also from himself).

3.] But (on the other hand) **he who prophesieth speaketh to men edification** (genus), **and** (species) **exhortation, and consolation.** See the definition of *prophecy* given on ch. xii. 10.

4.] that he edifieth himself does not necessarily involve his *understanding* what he speaks: the *exercise of the gift* in accordance with the prompting of the Spirit, may be regarded as an *edification*: the intensity of the feeling of prayer or praise in which he utters the words is edifying to him, though the words themselves are unintelligible. This view is necessary on account of what is said in ver. 5, that if he can *interpret*, he can edify not only himself but the church.

the church (i. e. the assembled Christians): see note on ch. xi. 18.

5.] He shews that it is from no antipathy to or jealousy of the gift of tongues that he thus speaks; but (force of the howbeit) that he wished them all to speak with tongues, but rather that they should prophesy. The distinction between the wishing *them all to speak with tongues*, as the simple direct object of the wish, and his wishing *that they should prophesy*, as its higher and ulterior object, has been lost in the A.V.

greater] superior *in usefulness*, and therefore *in dignity*.

6.] Example of the unprofitableness of speaking with tongues without interpreting,—expressed in the first person as of himself.

But now] i.e. if this be so,—viz. that there is no edification without interpretation: see note on ch. xiii. 13.

if I come] Chrysostom understands the first person to imply ‘not even *I myself* should profit you,’&c. But then some emphatic expression, such as “*I myself*,” would have been used.

in revelation] The ground of “*prophecy*,” is “*revelation*,” and that of “*teaching*,” is “*knowledge*” the former being a *direct speaking in the Spirit*, and the latter a *laying forth by the aid of the Spirit* of knowledge acquired. Thus **in**, as referred to *revelation and knowledge*, denotes the *internal element*:—as referred to *prophecy* and *teaching*, the *external element*, of the spiritual activity.

7–11.] Instances, to shew that unintelligible discourse profits nothing. And first,

7–9.] from musical instruments.

7.] The renderings, ‘even things without life’ (A. V.), or ‘things which, though without life, yet give sound,’ are inadmissible.

Literally, **If they shall not have yielded a distinction** (of musical intervals) **in their tones, how shall be known that which is being played on the flute, or that which is being played on the harp** (i. e. *what tune is played* in either case: repetition being made to shew that two distinct instances are contemplated, not necessarily ‘*one tune, either piped, or harped*’)? The observation of Meyer, that this example is decisive against *foreign languages* being spoken in the exercise of this gift, is shewn to be irrelevant by the next example, from which the contrary might be argued—the *uncertain sound* of the trumpet being exactly analogous to an *unknown language*, not to an *inarticulate sound*. But the fact is that all such inferences, from pressing analogies close, are insecure.

8.] uncertain, in its meaning: for a particular succession of notes of the trumpet then, as now, gave the signals for attack, and retreat, and the various evolutions of an army.

9.] Application of these instances.

by the tongue is most naturally understood *physically*, **by means of your tongue**, as answering to the utterance of the sound by the musical instruments. But the technical rendering, “*by means of the (unknown) tongue*,” is allowable.

speaking into the air implies the *non-reception by hearers* of what is said.

10, 11.] Another example of the unprofitableness of an utterance not understood.

10.] It may be belongs to so many, this latter term representing some *fixed number*, but not assignable by the information which the writer possesses, or not worth assigning. See similar expressions, Acts v. 8,—and 2 Sam. xii. 8.

kinds of voices (i. e. **languages**)] The use of **voices**, and not tongues, is no doubt intentional, to avoid confusion, the word *tongue* being for the most part used in this passage in a peculiar meaning: but no argument can be grounded on it as to the *tongues* being languages or not.

none, i.e. **none of them**, no kind of voice.

is without signification; or, is inarticulate.

11.] If then, seeing that none is without meaning: for if any *were*, the imputations following would not be just. We assume that a tongue which we do not understand *has a meaning*, and that it is the way of expression of some *foreign nation*.

a barbarian,—a foreigner, in the sense of one who is ignorant of the speech and habits of a people.

12.] Application of the analogy, as in ver. 9.—The **even so** is evidently meant as in ver. 9, but is rendered somewhat difficult by the change of the construction into a direct exhortation. It is best therefore to give to it the meaning, *after the lesson conveyed by this example*.

Thus likewise ye (i. e. after the example of people who would not wish to be barbarians to one another,—avoiding the absurdity just mentioned), **emulous as ye are of spiritual gifts** (reff.), **seek them to the edifying of the church, that ye may abound:** not, as in A.V., ‘*seek that ye may excel* (abound in them) *to the edifying of the church.*’

13.] *Hortatory inference from the fore-going examples.*

14.] This verse has been explained above. It *justifies the necessity of thus aiming at the gift of interpretation.*

my spirit, not as in ver. 32, and Chrysostom, “the spiritual gift given to me, and moving my tongue,”—but as in Acts xvii. 16, **my (own) spirit**, taking himself as an example, as above, ver. 6: a use of the word familiar to our Apostle, and here necessary on account of “*my mind*” following, ‘When I pray *in a tongue*, my higher being, my spirit, filled with the Holy Ghost, is inflamed with holy desires, and rapt in prayer: but my *intellectual part*, having no matter before it on which its powers can be exercised, bears no fruit to the edification of others (nor of myself:’ but this is not expressed in the word “*unfruitful:*” see the usage of “*fruit,*” by St. Paul, Rom. i. 13; vi. 21, 22; xv. 28; Gal. v. 22).

15.] **What then is (the case)?** (i. e. as our ‘*What then?*’ See Rom. iii. 9; vi. 15.—‘What is my determination thereupon?’)—**I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray also with my mind** (i. e. will interpret my prayer for the benefit of myself and the church), &c. This resolution, or expression of self-obligation, evidently leads to the inference by and by clearly expressed, ver. 28, that *if he could not* pray with his mind, he would *keep silence.*

I will sing] hence we gather that the two departments in which the gift of tongues was exercised were *prayer and praise.* On the day of Pentecost it was confined to the latter of these.

16.] The discourse changes from the first person to the second, because the hypothesis contains an imputation of folly or error.

Literally. **if thou shalt have blessed in spirit** (“*in*” used of the *manner in which, the element;* not of the *specific instrument*, as in the last verse), **how shall he that fills** (i. e. is in) **the situation of a private man** (the word here used, in speaking of any business or trade, signifies a *lay person*, i.e., one unacquainted with it as his employment. Thus in state matters, it is *one out of office*, in philosophy, *one uneducated and rude.* So here it is, *one who has not the gift of speaking and interpreting.*—The word **situation or place** is not to be taken literally, as if these “*private men*” had any *separate seats* in the congregation: the expression is figurative) **say the AMEN** (the Amen which is always said: see Deut. xxvii. 15–26; Neh. viii. 6. From the synagogue it passed into the Christian church; so Justin Martyr says, “When the president has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving, the whole people present give assent, saying, Amen”) **to** (at the end of) **thy thanksgiving, since what thou sayest he knows not?**—This is, as Doddridge has remarked, decisive against the practice of praying and praising in an unknown tongue, as ridiculously practised in the church of Rome.

17.] **well** is not ironical, but concessive; it is not the act of *thanksgiving in a tongue* that the Apostle blames, for that is *of itself good*, being dictated by the spirit: but the doing it *not to the edification of others.*

the other] the *private man* spoken of before.

18, 19.] *Declaration of his own feeling on the matter, highly endowed as he was with the gift. —I thank God I speak with a tongue* (have the gift of speaking with tongues) **more than you all.**

19.] **in (the) assembly**, ‘in the congregation.’ This is the best rendering here, and wherever there is a chance of the word *church* being mistaken as meaning a *building.*

20.] With this exhortation he concludes this part of his argument, in which he reproves the folly of displaying and being anxious for a gift in which there was no edification. Bengel remarks that the address, **Brethren**, carries with it kindness and meekness.

in your understanding] as this preference would shew you to be.

21–25.] By a citation from the Old Test. he takes occasion to shew that tongues are a sign to the *unbelieving only:* and that even for them they are profitless in comparison with prophecy.

21.] **In the law** is here in the wider sense, as in John x. 84; xii. 34; xv. 25,—where the *Psalms* are thus quoted. The context of the passage quoted is thus: The scoffers in Jerusalem (see ver. 14) are introduced as scorning the simplicity of the divine commands, which were line upon line, precept upon precept, as if to children (vv. 9, 10). Jehovah threatens them that, since they would not hear these simple commands, He would speak to them by men of other tongues, viz. the Assyrians, their

captors.—Here, as in many other cases, the historical sense is not so much considered, as the aptness of the expressions used for illustrating the matter in hand; viz. that belief would not be produced in the unbelieving by speaking to them in strange tongues.

With (literally, in: in the person of) **men of other tongues**: A.V., and Hebrew, have it *with another tongue*; and it is placed *second*. The Apostle personifies it, and gives it the prominence.

in (as speaking in, using as the organ of speech) **lips of others** (strangers, see ref.). Hebrew, ‘*in (by) stammerers of lip:*’ A.V. ‘*with stammering lips.*’

unto this people] in Isa., *the Israelites*: here taken generally for the unbelieving world. v

for all that they will not hear me] This is the point of the passage for St. Paul’s argument: see ver. 23:—“for them, and not for us: but even for them, protitless in the main:”—*not even under such circumstances will they listen to me: even this sign will be for them ineffectual.*

22.] So then, viz. according to the words of the foregoing prophetic passage.

the tongues, in the *then* acceptation of the term. He is not interpreting the prophecy, nor alluding to the tongues *there* spoken of, but returns back to the subject in hand—*the tongues* about which his argument was concerned:

are for a sign: but there is no emphasis on the words,—the meaning being much the same as if “*for a sign*” were omitted, and it stood “*so then the tongues are not for,*” &c. Not seeing this, Commentators have differed widely about the meaning of the word **sign**. But all dwelling on this word would introduce an element foreign to the argument, which is, *that tongues are (sign) for the unbelieving, not for the believing.*

not to them that believe, but to unbelievers, i.e. ‘men who do not believe,’ not, as Neander, and others, ‘men who *will* not believe;’ the word “*unbelievers*” must be kept to the same sense through this whole passage, and plainly by ver. 23, it is *not one who will not believe, but an unbeliever, open to conviction.* The mistake has been occasioned by regarding *those to whom the prophecy was directed*, and interpreting Paul by Isaiah, instead of by himself.

Prophecy, i. e. *inspired and intelligent exposition of the word and doctrine*, was eminently *for* believers, but, as below, would be also profitable *to* unbelievers, furnishing a token that God was truly among his assembled servants.

23–25.] Instances given of the opera-tion of both on the ungifted or the un-believer.

23.] therefore following up the axiom just laid down, by supposing a case = **if then....**—The first case put answers to the former half of ver. 22: the second, to the latter.—The supposition is this: that all the (Corinthian) church is assembled, and all its members speak with tongues (not in a *tumultuary* manner—that is not part of the present hypothesis, for if it were, it must apply equally to ver. 24, which it clearly cannot: but that all have the gift, and are *in turn* exercising it):—then **private persons**, ‘*plain* believers,’ persons unacquainted with the gift and its exercise, come in. It is obvious that the hypothesis of *all* being assembled, and *all* having the gift, must not be pressed. to infer that no such *private person* could be found: no one hypothesizes thus rigidly. If any will have it so, then, as Meyer, we may suppose the *private persons* to come *from another congregation*: but the whole difficulty seems to me mere trifling. The *private person* plainly cannot be an *unbeliever*, for *his* case is separately mentioned. Such **plain men**, or perhaps a company of unbelievers, have come in:—they have no understanding of what is going on: the ‘*tongues*’ sound to them an unmeaning jargon; and they come to the conclusion, ‘These men are mad;’ just as men *did infer*, on the day of Pentecost, that the speakers were *drunken*.

24.] But if all (see above) **prophesy** (i. e. intelligibly lay forth, in the power of the Spirit, the Christian word and doctrine), **and there enter any** (singular now, setting forth that this would be the effect *in any case*: plural *before*, to shew that however many there might be, *not one could appreciate the gift*) **unbeliever or plain man** (the *unbeliever* is mentioned *first now*, because the great stress is on the power of prophecy

in its greatest achievement, the *conversion of the unbeliever*; but the *private persons* were first *before*, because the stress there was on the unprofitableness of tongues, *not only to the unbeliever, but to the “plain men” also*), **he is convicted by all** (the inspired discourse penetrating, as below, into the depths of his heart,—by *all*, i.e. by each in turn): **he is searched into by all** (each inspired speaker opening to him his character): **the hidden things of his heart become manifest** (those things which he had never before seen are revealed,—his whole hitherto unrecognized personal character laid out. Instances of such revelations of a man to himself by powerful preaching have often occurred, even since the cessation of the prophetic gift): **and thus** (thus convicted, searched, revealed to himself:—in such a state of mind) **having fallen on his face he will worship God, announcing** (by that his act, which is a public submission to the divine Power manifest among you: or, but not. so well,

aloud, by declaration of it in words) **that of a truth** (implying that previously he had regarded the presence of God among them as an idle tale; or, if a plain Christian, had not sufficiently realized it) **God is among you** (or in each of you: by His Spirit).—In this last description the “*private person*” is thrown into the background, and (see above) the greater achievement of prophecy, the conviction and conversion of the unbeliever, is chiefly in view. “For a similar effect of the disclosure of a man’s secret self to himself, compare the fascination described as exercised by Socrates over his hearers by the ‘conviction’ and ‘judgment’ of his questions in the Athenian market-place. Grote’s Hist. of Greece, 609–611.” Stanley.

26–35.] Regulations respecting the exercise of spiritual gifts in the assemblies.

26.] The rule for *all*, proceeding on the fact of each having his gift to contribute when they come together: viz. that all things must be done with a view to edification.

Literally, **whenever ye happen to be assembling together**: the *present* vividly describes each coming with his gift, eager to exercise it.

a psalm] most probably a **hymn of praise** to sing in the power of the spirit, as did Miriam, Deborah, Symeon, &c. See ver. 15.

a doctrine] **an exposition of doctrine** or moral teaching: belonging to the gift of *prophecy*, as indeed do also *psalm* and *revelation*, the latter being something revealed to him, to be prophetically uttered.

a tongue, i.e. an act of speaking in tongues: see vv. 18, 22.

an interpretation] See below, and ver. 5.

Let all things be done unto edification] THE GENERAL RULE, afterwards applied to the several gifts: and

27, 28.] to the speaking with tongues.

27.] by two (at each time, i.e. in one assembly: not more than two or three might speak with tongues *at each meeting*), **or at the most three, and by turn** (one after another, not together); **and let one** (some one who has the gift,—and *not more than one*) **interpret** (what is said in the tongue).

28.] But if there be not an interpreter, let him (the speaker in a tongue) **be silent in the church; but** (so in original, i.e. let him not quench his gift, *but* exercise it in private) **let him speak for himself and for God** (i. e. in private, with only himself and God to witness it. Theophylact thinks it means, “*softly and quietly, to himself:*” which does not seem to agree with the conditions; the *speaking* being essential to the exercise of the gift).

29–33.] Similar regulations for PROPHECY.

29.] two or three, viz. *at one assembling*;—not *together*; this is plainly prohibited, ver. 30. There is no “*at the most*,” as in the other case, because he does not wish to seem as if he were limiting this most edifying of the gifts.

the others, i.e. prophets,—or perhaps, any person possessing the gift of discerning of spirits mentioned ch. xii. 10 in immediate connexion with prophecy. Such would exercise that gift, to determine *whether the spirit was of God*: see ch. xii. 3; 1 John iv. 1–3.

30.] But if a revelation shall have been made to another (prophet) **while sitting by, let the first** (who was prophesying) **hold his peace** (give place to the other: but clearly, not as ejected by the second in any disorderly manner: probably, by being made aware of it and ceasing his discourse),

31, 32.] He shews that the keeping silent of the first is *no impossibility*, but *in their power to put into effect*.—**For ye have the power** (the primary emphasis of the sentence is on **ye can**, which is not merely permissive, as A.V., ‘*ye may*,’ but asserts the *possession of the power*) **one by one all to prophesy** (i. e. you have power to bring about this result—you can be silent if you please), **in order that all may learn, and all may be comforted** (or, *exhortated*).

32.] And (not, for: but a parallel assertion to the last, ‘*ye have power, &c. and*’) **spirits of prophets** (i. e. *their own spirits*, filled with the Holy Spirit: not the Spirit of God within each: and so in ver. 12: the inspired spirit being regarded as a **spirit in a peculiar sense**—from God, or otherwise. See the distinction plainly made 1 John iv. 2: “In this ye know the **Spirit of God**: every **spirit**,” &c.) **are subject to prophets** (i. e. to the men whose spirits they are. But very many Commentators take the word to signify *other prophets*. “The gift that is in thee, and the working of the spirit which is in thee, is subjected to the gift of the other, who is moved to prophesy,” Theophylact. But the command “*let the first keep silence*,” would be superfluous, if

his gift was in subjection to *another*).

33.] Reason of the above regulations. The premiss, *that the church is God's church*, is suppressed. He is the God of peace, not confusion: therefore those assemblies which are His, must be peacefully and orderly conducted. And this character of God is not one dependent for its truth on preconceived views of Him:—we have a proof of it wherever a church of the saints has been gathered together. ‘*In all the churches of the saints*, God is a God of peace: let Him not *among you* be supposed to be a God of confusion’ I am compelled to depart from the majority of modern critics of note, who join these words, “*As in all the churches of the saints*,” with what follows,—and to adhere to the common arrangement of this latter clause. My reason is, that taken as beginning the next paragraph, the clause would be harsh beyond example, and superfluous, as anticipating the reason about to be given, “*for it is not permitted*,” &c. Besides which, it is more in accordance with St. Paul’s style, to place the main subject of a new sentence first, see 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11, 12; and we have an example of reference to general usage coming in last, in aid of other considerations, ch. xi. 16: but it seems unnatural that it should be placed first in the very forefront of a matter on which he has so much to say.

34, 35.) Regulation prohibiting women to speak publicly in the church, and its grounds.

34. but [supply, *it is ordered them*] **to be in subjection**] The same construction, where a second verb must be supplied from the context, occurs 1 Tim. iv. 3. See there.

the law] See reference. Their speaking in public would be of itself an act of *in* dependence; of teaching the assembly, and among others their own husbands.

35.] This prohibits another kindred irregularity—their *asking questions* publicly. They might say in answer to the former command to keep silence, ‘But if we do not understand any thing, are we not to ask?’ The stress is on **learn**.

their own, confining them to their *own husbands*, to the exclusion of other men.

a shame] See ch. xi. 6: **indecent**, bringing deserved reproach.

36–40.] GENERAL CONCLUSION: *the unseemliness and absurdity of their pretending to originate customs unknown to other churches, as if the word of God first went forth from them: and the enforcement of his apostolic authority.* Then, *a summary in a few words of the purport of what he has said on the spiritual gifts, and a repetition, in another form, of the fundamental precept*, ver. 26.

36.] This question seems to refer to *all the points of church custom* which he has been noticing, and to be inseparably connected with what follows,—the recognition of *his apostolic orders*, as *those of God*.

37.] spiritual, i.e. one spiritually endowed: not quite as in ch. ii. 15. **the things which I am writing**, viz. ‘*these regulations* which I am now making.’

the Lord's, emphatic: **the Lord's [commandment]**: carrying His authority. No more direct assertion of inspiration can be uttered than this. “Paul stamps here: *the seal of apostolic authority*: and on that seal is necessarily Christ.” Meyer.

38. let him be ignorant] implying both the hopelessness of reclaiming such an one, and the little concern which his opposition

gave the Apostle. Some of our principal MSS. have this verb in the passive, **he is unknown**, i.e. as we now say, **he is ignored**, seal. by God: compare ch. viii. 2, 35 xiii. 12; Gal. iv. 9.

39.] The words **earnestly desire** and **forbid not** express the different estimations in which he held the two gifts.

40.] But, i.e. **only provided, that...**

in order] i.e. in right time and in due proportion.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 15

CHAP. XV.] OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD; WHICH SOME IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH DENIED.

For the enquiry, WHO they were that denied the Resurrection, see note on ver. 12.

1-11.] The Apostle lays the foundation of his intended polemical argument in the historical fact of the RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. But he does not altogether assume this fact. He deals with its *evidence*, in relating minutely the various appearances of the Lord after His Resurrection, to *others*, and to *himself*. Then, in ver. 12, the *proclamation* of Christ's Resurrection as the great fact attending the preaching of the gospel, is set against the denial of the Resurrection by some of them, and it is subsequently shewn that the two hang together, so that they who denied the one must be prepared to deny the other; and the consequences of this latter denial are pointed out. But it by no means follows, as some have assumed, that the impugners were *not prepared* to deny the Resurrection of Christ.—The Apostle writes not only for *them*, but for the rest of the Corinthian believers, shewing them the historical certainty, and vital importance of Christ's Resurrection, and its inseparable connexion with the doctrine which they were now tempted to deny.

1, 2.] I make known: not, as most Commentators, '*I remind you*,' nor, '*I direct your attention to*' (both which meanings are inadmissible, from the usage of the word); but as text, **I make known**, i.e. '*make known anew*.' not without some intimation of surprise, and reproach to them:—**the (whole) gospel;** not merely the Death and Resurrection of Christ, which were primary parts of it; the reproach still continues; as if he had said, 'I am constrained to begin again, and declare to you the whole gospel which I preached to you.'

which also ye received] The thrice repeated also indicates a climax:—**which ye also received, in which moreover ye stand, by means of which ye are even being saved** (in the course of salvation).

Literally, **if ye hold fast, with what discourse I preached to you.** He is speaking of the *import*, not of the *grounds* of his preaching: for *of this* he reminds them below, not of *the arguments*.

unless ye believed] The only chance if you hold fast what I have taught you, of your missing salvation, is the hardly supposable one, that your *faith is vain*, and the gospel a fable; see ver. 14, of which this is an anticipation:—**unless** (perchance) **ye believed** (not as A.V. '*have believed*', which confuses the idea: it is, '*became believers*') **in vain**. So Chrysostom, who remarks: "At first he says this softly and cautiously, but he kindles as he goes on, and presently bares his head and shouts out, 'If Christ is not risen, &c.'" This explanation of the words appears to me the only tenable one. Some understand them of a *vain and dead faith*, which the Apostle will not suppose them to have. But surely if the previously expressed condition, not holding fast what they had heard, were fulfilled, their faith *could not be vain or dead*; and again the accurate rendering of the verb is against this interpretation: **unless ye became believers in vain**, not, "*unless, faith has been a vain one*." A still further reason is, the parallelism of "*believed in vain*" here and "*so ye believed*," ver. 11: leading to the inference that the term "*in vain*" here relates not to the subjective insufficiency of their faith, but to the (hypothetical) objective nullity of that on which their faith was founded.

3-11.] A detail of the great facts preached to them, centering in THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

3. first of all] In relation, not to order of time, but to *importance*; this being, as Theophylact observes, as it were the foundation of the whole faith.

that which I also received] viz. (see ch. xi. 23 and note) *from the Lord himself*, by special revelation. Before his conversion he may have known the bare fact of the *Death* of Jesus, but the nature and reason of that Death he had to learn from revelation:—the Resurrection he regarded as a fable,—but revelation informed him of its reality, and its accordance with prophecy. On the following clauses, "the earliest known specimen of what may be termed the creed of the early Church," it is well worth the English reader's while to consult Stanley's notes, and his dissertation at the end of the section.

for our sins] i. e., ON BEHALF OF OUR SINS: viz. to atone for them.

according to the scriptures] This applies to Christ's *Death, Burial, and Resurrection on the third day*: see references.

4. he hath risen] The perfect tense marks the continuation of the state thus begun, or of its consequences.

5.] That the following appearances are related in chronological order, is evident from the use of the definite marks of sequence, **then, after that,... last of all.**

he appeared to Cephas] See Luke xxiv. 34.

the twelve] used here popularly, as *decemviri*, and other like expressions, although the number was not full. The occasion referred to seems to be that in John xx. 19 ff.; Luke xxiv. 36 ff. Clearly we must not with Chrysostom suppose *Matthias* to be included as possibly having seen Him *after His ascension*: for the appearance is evidently *one and the same*.

6.] He drops the construction with “*that*,” dependent on “*I delivered to you*,” and proceeds in a direct narration. But evidently the *sense* of the former construction continues: he is relating what he had received and preached to them.

to above five hundred brethen] From Matt. xxviii. 17, it appears (see note there) that others besides the eleven witnessed the appearance on the mountain in Galilee. But we cannot say that it is the appearance here referred to:—nor indeed is it likely that so many as 500 believers in Jesus would have been gathered, together in Galilee: both from its position in the list, and from the number who witnessed it, this appearance would seem rather to have taken place at *Jerusalem*, and before the dispersion of the multitudes who had assembled at the Passover: for we find that the church at Jerusalem itself (Acts i. 15) subsequently contained only 120 persons.

remain] i.e., **survive**. The circumstance of most of them remaining alive is mentioned apparently by way of strengthening the evidence; “and can attest it, if required:”—hardly for the reason suggested by Stanley, that the dead among them would have been worse off even than others, if there were no resurrection, having been “tantalized by the glimpse of another world in the vision of their risen Lord.”

7. to James] Probably, from no distinguishing epithet being added, *the celebrated James, the brother of the Lord*: see Gal. i. 19. So Chrysostom, See notes on ch. ix. 5, Matt. xiii. 55, and the Introduction to the Epistle of James.—This appearance cannot however be identical with that additional one quoted by Jerome from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*: “James had vowed that he would not eat bread, from the hour when he had drunk the cup of the Lord, until he should see him rising from the dead.” This would imply that the appearance was very soon after the Resurrection, and before any of those to large collections of believers, in which James would naturally be present.

to all the apostles] This is decisive for the much wider use of the term *apostle* than as applying to the Twelve only: and a strong presumption that James, just mentioned, and evidently here and Gal. i. 19 included among the *apostles*, was *not one of the Twelve*. Chrysostom extends the term to the Seventy of Luke x., and others.

8.] But last of all, as to the abortively born, he appeared to me also, viz. on the road to Damascus. This, and this only, can here be meant; as he is speaking, not of a succession of visions, but of some one definite apparition.

9, 10.] Digressive, explanatory of the expression which he has just applied to himself.

9. I] The stress is on the personal pronoun: ‘*I, and no other.*’

to be called] ‘to bear the honourable name of an Apostle.’

10. But by the grace of God] “With the humiliating conviction of his own unworthiness is united the consciousness of that higher Power which worked on and in him,—and this introduces his chastened self-consciousness of the extent and success of his apostolic labours.” De Wette. The position of these words, and the repetition of “**his grace**” afterwards, shew the emphatic prominence which he assigns to the divine Grace.

what I am] viz. in my office and its results, The church has admirably connected this passage, as Epistle for the 11th Sund. after Trin., with that other speech of a Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11,—“*God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are;*” see note there.

laboured] Spoken of his apostolic work, in all its branches; see Phil. ii. 16.

than they all] This may mean than *all taken separately*, or than *all together*. This latter, though preferred by some Commentators, seems hardly necessary, and introduces an element of apparent exaggeration.

yet not I] explanatory, to avoid misapprehension.

not I, however, but the grace of God with me (i. e. *laboured* with me).—That is,—the Grace of God worked with him in so overwhelming a measure, compared to his own working, that it was no longer the work of himself but of divine Grace. On the co-agency of the human will with divine Grace, but in subordination, see Matt. x. 20; 2 Cor. v. 20; vi. 1, and ch. iii. 9, note.

11.] He resumes the subject after the digression respecting himself:—**it matters not whether it were I or they** (the other Apostles)—**SUCH is the purport of our preaching**—**SUCH was your belief:**—so, after this manner, viz., *that Christ died, was buried, and rose again*, as verses 3, 4.

12–19.] *On the fact of Christ's Resurrection, announced in his preaching, and confessed in their belief, he grounds (negatively) the truth of the general Resurrection:—If the latter be not to happen, neither has the former happened:—and he*

urges the results of such a disproof of Christ's Resurrection.

12.] introduces the argument for the resurrection, by referring to its denial among a portion of the Corinthian church.

But belongs to the whole question, and is opposed to “*if we preach*” and “*so ye believed*” of the foregoing verse.—The word Christ has the leading emphasis, as an example of that which is denied by some among you: **But if CHRIST is (not subjunctive, **be preached**):** he is arguing from a matter of fact, not from a mere hypothesis) **preached that He is risen from the dead** (if an instance of such resurrection is a fact announced in our preaching), **how say some among you** (how comes it to pass that some say) **that a resurrection of the dead does not exist** (stress on *is*, in reading the English text)? If the *species* be conceded, how is it that some among you *deny the genus*?

some among you] It is an interesting question, WHO *these some were*: and one which can only be answered by the indications which the argument in this chapter furnishes. (1) *Were they Sadducees?* If so, the Apostle would hardly have begun his argument with the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus. And yet we must remember that he is arguing not *with the deniers*, but with those who being as yet sound, were liable to be misled by them. But the opposition between Sadduceism and Christianity was so complete, that we have little reason to think that any leaven of the Sadducees ever found its way into the church. (2) *Were they Epicureans?* Probably not, for two reasons: (*a*) the Epicurean maxim, “Let us eat and drink,” &c., is represented as a legitimate *consequence* of adopting their denial of the resurrection, not as an accompaniment of, much less as the ground of it: and (*b*) had the Epicurean element entered to any extent into the Corinthian church, we certainly should have had more notice of its exceedingly antichristian tenets. It is possible that the deniers may have been, or been in danger of being, *corrupted by mixture* with Epicureans *without*, from the warning of ver. 33. (3) *Were they Jews?* If not Sadducees, hardly Jews at all, or Judaizers: a strong tenet of Pharisaism was *this very one* of the Resurrection, see Acts xxiii. 6: and we know of no tendency of Essenism which should produce such a denial. (4) They must then have been *Gentile believers*, inheriting the unwillingness of the Greek mind to receive that of which a full account could not be given, see vv. 35, 36: and probably of a philosophical and cavilling turn. Meyer argues, from the antimaterialistic turn of the Apostle’s counter-arguments, vv. 35 ff.,—that the objections were antimaterialistic also: De Wette infers the very opposite, which certainly seems to me more probable.—No trace whatever is found in the argument of an *allegorizing* character in the opponents, as was that of Hymenius and Philetus, who maintained that the resurrection was past already, 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, as some suppose.—Whether the Apostle regarded the resurrection of the body as inseparably bound up with a future existence of the soul does not very clearly appear in this chapter. From the use of the word “*perished*,” ver. 18, which must refer, not to annihilation, but to *perdition*, it would seem that he admitted an independent existence of the soul; as also from Phil. i. 23. But from ver. 32, it would seem that the Apostle regarded the denial of the resurrection as involving that of the future state and judgment.—On the question to which of the (supposed) Corinthian parties the opponents belonged, I have nothing to say, not recognizing the divisions into the Pauline, Apollonian, Petrine, and Christine parties as having any historical foundation; see note on ch. i. 12.

13.] **But** is the argumentative particle frequent in mathematical demonstrations.

then neither is Christ risen] This inference depends on the maxim, “that if the *genus* disappear, the *species* goes with it;” the Resurrection of Christ being an *instance* of the *rule*, that dead *men* rise; inasmuch as *He is man*, this is enlarged on, vv. 20–22.

14. **but]** again introducing a new inference.

vain, idle, ‘empty,’ ‘without result:’ in both clauses the adjective is placed first for emphasis.

also, i.e. if “Christ’s Resurrection be gone, then also our faith is gone.”

15.] **false witnesses of** (i. e. *with regard to*) **God**, not ‘*of God, as belonging to God*,’ as some: and false witnesses, as *bearing false testimony* (see below), not, as *pretending to be witnesses, and not being*.

16.] Repetition of the inference in ver. 13, for precision’s sake.

17, 18.] Repetition of the consequence already mentioned in ver. 14, but fuller, and with more reference to its present and future calamitous results.

17. **to no purpose]** The word is a different one from that used above, ver. 14, and more directly points at the *frustration* of all on which faith relies as accomplished,—e. g. the removal of the guilt and power of sin;—and of all to which hope looks forward, e.g. bliss after death for those who die in Christ. This is so, because Christ’s Resurrection *accomplished our justification* (Rom. iv. 25), and, through justification, our *future bliss*, even in the *disembodied state* (for that seems *here* to be treated of).

18.] **they which fell asleep in Christ perished** (i. e. passed into misery in Hades). He uses the *past tenses*, not *perfects*,

speaking of the act. of death, not of the continuing state: the act of falling asleep in Christ was to them perdition.

[in Christ] in communion with, membership of Christ.

On the word **fell asleep**, Meyer quotes a beautiful sentence from Photius: "When speaking of Christ, he calls it death, that he may confirm His suffering; but when speaking of us, he calls it **sleep**, that he may console our pangs. Again, where the resurrection is past, he is bold, and speaks of death: but where it is yet in hope, he speaks of **sleep**."

19.] Assuming this *perdition* of the dead in Christ, the state of Christians is indeed miserable. It has perhaps not been enough seen that there are here *two emphases*, and that **only** belongs to the aggregate of both. According to the ordinary interpretation, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ...', it would be implied that in reality we shall have hope in Christ in another state also, which would not agree with the perfect tense, **we have had hope**. The right arrangement gives the key to the sentence: 'If only [in this life we have had hope in

Christ],' i.e., 'if all we have done is merely *having hoped in Christ in this life*,' 'if it is there to end, and that hope have no result...'—The perfect tense, **we have had hope**, implies the endurance of the hope through our lives.

Literally, **we are more to be pitied** (more miserable) **than all men**, viz. because they, all other men, live at ease,—we on the contrary are ever exposed to danger and death: because our hope is more intense than that of all others, and leads us to forego more: and to be disappointed in it, would be the height of misery.

20–28.] Reassertion of the truth that Christ IS RISEN from the dead,—and prophetic exposition of the consequences of that great event.

20.] now, 'as matters now stand:' see note on ch. xiii. 13.

as (the) **firstfruits of them that sleep**] The sense is, 'Christ, in rising from the dead, is but the firstling or earnest of the resurrection of the whole number of those that sleep.' There does not appear to be any intended reference to the legal ordinance of the firstfruits (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11): but however general the application of the analogy may be, it can hardly fail to have been suggested to the mind of a Jew by the Levitical ordinances, especially as our Lord rose on the very morrow after the Paschal Sabbath, when (l. c.) the firstfruits were offered.

of them that sleep] from the logical connexion, should mean, not the dead *in Christ*, but *all the dead*; see next verse: but it is the *Christian dead* who are before the Apostle's mind.

21.] MAN the bringer-in both of death and life: explanation (not proof) *of Christ being the "firstfruits of them that sleep:"* and (1) *in that He is MAN*: it being necessary that the firstfruit should be *as* the lump. The verity lying at the root of this verse is, that by **MAN ONLY** can **general effects pervading the whole human race** be introduced.

22.] (2) In that He is (and here the fact of His being the Lord of Life and Righteousness, and the second and spiritual Head of our nature, are assumed) *to us the bringer-in of LIFE, as Adam was the bringer-in of DEATH.*

in Adam... in Christ] in community with, as partakers in a common nature with **Adam** and **Christ**: who are respectively the sources, *to the whole of that nature (all men), of death, and life*, i.e. (*here*) *physical death, and rescue from physical death*. The practice of St. Paul to *insulate the objects of his present attention* from all ulterior considerations, must be carefully here borne in mind. The antithesis is *merely* between the bringing in of death by Adam, and of life (its opposite) by Christ. No *consequence*, whether on the side of death or of life, is brought into consideration. That death physical involved death eternal—that life eternal (in its only worthy sense) involves bliss eternal, is not so much as thought of, while the two great opposites, Death and Life, are under consideration. This has been missed by many Interpreters, and the reasoning thereby marred. But the ancients, and the best of the moderns, keep to the *universal* reference. Theophylact's note is clear and striking: "He adds the argument by which what has been said is confirmed. It was needful, he says, for the same nature which was defeated, itself to triumph, and for him who was stricken, himself to be victorious. For in Adam, i.e. because of Adam's transgression, all men fell under death; and therefore in like manner in Christ all shall rise again: i.e. because Christ was found sinless, and not subject to death, because He died voluntarily, and rose again, because it was not possible that He should be holden of death, being the Prince of Life." See on the great antithesis, Rom. v. 12 ff., and notes.

23.] But in this universal Resurrection ALL SHALL NOT HOLD THE SAME RANK. The word used does not mean *order of priority*, but rank, or '*troop in an army*.' The three ranks are *mentioned in order of priority*, but this does not constitute their distinctive character: Christ is the *firstfruits*—this is His *own rank*, see Col. i. 18:—*they that are Christ's* follow at His coming, who are the *lump* (as understood by the context, and implied by the term *firstfruits*), in the proper and worthiest sense, made like unto Him and partaking of His glory; then (after how long or how short a time is not declared, and seems to

have formed no part of the revelations to St. Paul, but was afterwards revealed,—see Rey. xx. 4–6: compare also 1 Thess. iv. 15–17) shall come THE END, viz. the resurrection of the rest of the dead, here veiled over by the general term, **the end**,—that resurrection not being in this argument specially treated, but only that of Christians. The key to the understanding of this passage is to be found in the prophecy of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. xxv., but especially in the latter chapter. The resurrection and judgment of *them that are*

Christ's forming the subject of vv. 1–30 there, and **the end**,—the great final gathering of *all the nations*, of vv. 31–46.

the firstfruits, therefore necessarily *the first rank*: and hence the word stands first.

they that are Christ's] The same as “*the dead in Christ*,” 1 Thess. iv. 16, No mention occurs here of any *judgment* of these *his own servants*, as in Matt. xxv., for it does not belong to the present subject.

at his coming] Literally, “*in his coming*,” as *forming part of, involved in*, His appearing,—which, as the great event of the time, includes their resurrection in it. It ought to be needless to remind the student of the distinction between this “coming of Christ” and the final judgment: it is here peculiarly important to bear it in mind.

24. Then] next in succession, introducing the third rank,—see above.

the end] *the end of all*: not the end of *the resurrection*, as some:—nor, *of this present world*, as Chrysostom and others,—which properly happens at the coming of Christ: nor exactly of the *Kingdom of Christ*, as Grotius and Billroth: but generally THE END, when all shall be accomplished, the bringing in and fulness of the kingdom by the subjugation of the last enemy, the whole course of the mediatorial work of Christ, the salvation of the elect; the time indicated by Matt. xxv. ult.:

when he (Christ) delivereth up (the present tense is used for that which is certainly attached to the event as its accompaniment. When is literally whenever, indicating the uncertainty of the time when) **the kingdom to God and the Father**, i.e., to him who is God and His Father.—Then the rest of the section as far as ver. 28, is in explanation of the giving up the kingdom. And it rests on this weighty verity: THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST *over this world*, in its beginning, its furtherance, and its completion, has one great end,—THE GLORIFICATION OF THE FATHER BY THE SON. *Therefore*, when it shall be fully established, every enemy overcome, every thing subjected to Him, He will,—not, reign over it and abide its King, BUT DELIVER IT UP TO THE FATHER. Hence, as in ver. 25, His reign will endure, not like that of earthly kings, WHEN HE shall have put all enemies under His feet, but only TILL He shall have, &c.,—and then will be absorbed in the all-pervading majesty of Him for whose glory it was from first to last carried onward. It may be observed (1) that the whole of this respects the mediatorial work and kingdom: the work of redemption, and that Lordship over dead and living, for which Christ both died and rose. Consequently nothing is here said which can affect either (1) His co-equality and co-eternity with the Father in the Godhead, which is prior to and independent of this mediatorial work, and is not limited to the mediatorial kingdom: or (2) the eternity of His Humanity: for that Humanity ever was and is subordinate to the Father; and it by no means follows that when the mediatorial kingdom shall be given up to the Father, the Humanity in which that kingdom was won, shall be put off: nay, the very fact of Christ in the body being the firstfruits of the resurrection, proves that His body, as ours, will endure for ever: as the truth that our humanity, even in glory, can only subsist before God by *virtue of HIS Humanity*, makes it plain that He will be VERY MAN to all eternity,

the kingdom] That kingdom, which in its fullest sense is then *first* His. At this very time of *the end*, Matt. xxv. 34, He first calls Himself by the title of THE KING. The name will no sooner be won, than laid at the feet of the Father, thus completing by the last great act of Redemption the obedience which he manifested in his Incarnation, and in His death.

all rule, &c., not only *hostile* power and government, but as the *context necessitates*, ALL power. Christ being manifested as universal King, *every* power co-ordinate with His must come under the category of *hostile*: all *kings* shall submit to Him: the *kingdoms* of the world shall become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ:—and see the similar expressions Eph. i. 21, where speaking by anticipation, the Apostle clearly indicates that *legitimate* authorities, all the powers that he, are included. Compare by all means Rev. xi. 15.

25.] See on the last verse:—this is the divine appointment with regard to the mediatorial kingdom, that it should last *till*, and only till, all enemies shall have been subdued to it.

till he... viz. Christ, not *the Father*: it is parallel with the former sentence, “*when He shall have done away, &c.*,” and included in the mediatorial acts of Christ, who in His world's course goes forth “*conquering and to conquer*,” Rev. vi. 2. It is otherwise in ver. 27: see there.

26.] Death is *the last enemy*, as being the *consequence of sin*: when he is overcome and done away with, the whole end of Redemption is shewn to have been accomplished. Death is personified, as in Rev. xx. 14.

27.] Scriptural proof of the above declaration.

He, viz., from the Psalm, GOD, the *Father*.—See on the Psalm itself, Heb. ii. 7 ff. notes.

when he shall declare...] The meaning then is: ‘when God, who in Ps. viii. 6 has announced the subjection, shall hereafter have declared that this subjection is *come to pass*.’—This form of expression was suggested to the Apostle by his having already expressed himself in the words of a *saying of God*.

28.] On the sense, see above. “The interpretations, that *subjection* is only an hyperbolical expression for the *entire harmony of Christ with the Father* (Chrysostom and others): the limitation of it to His human nature (Theodoret, Augustine, and others), with the *declarative explanation* that it will then *become plain to all, that Christ even in regard of His kingship is, on the side of His Humanity, dependent on the Father*,—and the addition, *that Christ will then in his divine nature reign with the Father* (so Calvin): the interpretation (of the words **the Son Himself!**), as referring to Christ’s *mystical Body*, i.e. *the Church* (Theodoret),—are idle subterfuges.” De Wette. The refutation of these and all other attempts to explain away the doctrine here plainly asserted, of the *ultimate subordination of the Son*, is contained in the three precise and unambiguous words, **the Son Himself**.

that God (alone) may be all [things] in all,—i. e. recognized as sole Lord and King: “all things will be subordinated to the Son,—the Son to the Father.” Bengel.

29–34.] ARGUMENTS FOR THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION, *from the practice (1) of those who were baptized for the dead, (2) of the Apostles, &c., who submitted to daily peril of death*.

29.] Else resumes the main argument, which has been interrupted by the explanation since ver. 23 of “*each in his own order*.” After it is an ellipsis of ‘if it be as the adversaries suppose.’

what shall they do] There is in these words a tacit reprehension of the practice about to be mentioned, which it is hardly possible altogether to miss. Both by the third person and by the words they which are, he indirectly separates himself and those to whom he is writing from participation in or approval of the practice:—the meaning being, **what will become of**—‘what account can they give of their practice?’

The participle is *present*, **those who are [in the habit of being] baptized**—not past, “*those who have been baptized*.” The distinction is important as affecting the interpretation. See below.

on behalf of the dead] viz. *the same dead* who are spoken of in the next clause and throughout the chapter as the subjects of *the resurrection*—not *dead* in any figurative sense.

the dead, the article marking the particular dead persons on behalf of whom the act took place. Before we pass to the explanation, it will be well to go through the next question: **If dead men are not raised at all, why do they trouble themselves to be baptized for them** (so, and not as in A.V., is the sentence to be arranged)? Thus much being said as to the plain meaning of the words used, there can be no doubt as to their interpretation. The only *legitimate reference* is, to a practice, not otherwise known to us, not mentioned here with any approval by the Apostle, not generally prevalent, but in use by some, of *survivors allowing themselves to be baptized on behalf of (believing?) friends who had died without baptism*. With the subsequent similar practices of the Cerinthians and Marcionites this may or may not have been connected. All we clearly see from the text, is that it unquestionably *did exist*. The other principal interpretations are discussed in my Greek Test. Bengel well says that “even to catalogue all of them would require a dissertation.” I may briefly say here that all labour under one of the following fatal faults, either: (1) they make the word **dead** figurative in meaning; (2) they give an unnatural sense to **for**, or **in behalf of**; or (3) they make the appeal to refer to some feature common to the baptism of all Christians. The only justifiable rendering, as given above, is adopted by Ambrose, and by Anselm, Erasmus, Grotius, &c., and recently by some of the principal modern expositors. The ordinary objection to it is, that thus the Apostle would be giving his sanction to a superstitious usage, or at all events mentioning it without reprobation. But this is easily answered, by remembering that if the above view is correct, he does *not* mention it without a slur on it;—and more completely still, by observing that he thus uses a custom which otherwise would displease him, to shew the untenability of the error which he is combating: reserving, perhaps, the reprehension of the practice for its proper season. Stanley’s concluding remarks are worth quoting: “On the whole, therefore, this explanation of the passage (*that given above*) may be safely accepted, (1) as exhibiting a curious relic of primitive superstition, which, after having, as the words imply (?), prevailed generally in the apostolic church, gradually dwindled away till it was only to be found in some obscure sects, where it lost its original significance: (2) as containing an example of the Apostle’s mode of dealing with a practice, with which he could have no real sympathy; not condemning or ridiculing it, but appealing to it as an expression, however distorted, of their better feelings.”

30.] Not only the practice of those just spoken of, but his own, and that of those like him, who lived a life of perpetual exposure to death, were absurd, if there be no resurrection. Observe that the argument here applies coy to the future existence of the soul.

31.] To die day by day is a strong expression for to be daily in sight of death and expecting it. See 2 Cor. iv. 11.—This he strengthens by an asseveration, grounded on his boast of them as his work in Christ: not that this is immediately or proximately at stake in the matter, but much as we should say, “As I love you, it is true.” He would not think of deceiving those of whom he boasted before God in connexion with Christ.

32.] The stress of the first clause is on the words after the manner of men, and its meaning, merely as man, i.e. ‘according to this world’s views,’ ‘as one who has no hope beyond the grave;’ see ref. If thus only he fought, &c., where was his profit (seeing he despised all those things which, with such a view, might compensate for such a fight,—fame, praise, &c.)?

I fought with beasts (not as A.V. “I have fought;” he refers to one special occasion). How? and when? Most ancient and modern Commentators take the expression figuratively: of which use I have cited examples i in my Greek Test. And this explanation must be right: for his Roman citizenship would have precluded his ever being literally thrown to beasts: and even supposing him to have waived it, and been miraculously rescued, as many suppose, is it conceivable that such an event should have been altogether unrecorded in the Acts?—Adopting the figurative rendering,—we cannot fix on any recorded conflict which will suit the words. His danger from Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen (Acts xix.) had not. yet happened (see Introduction, §vi. 2): but we cannot tell what opposition, justifying this expression, the “many adversaries” of ch. xvi. 9, may ere this have made to his preaching.

If dead men rise not, i.e. ‘if none of the dead rise.’ These words are best joined with the following, as Chrysostom and most of the Commentators: Theophyl., Beza, Bengel, Griesb., Meyer, De Wette, al.,—not with the preceding, as A.V. and others. For the expression “after the manner of men” already expresses their meaning in the preceding sentence: and the form of ver. 29 seems to justify this arrangement, besides that otherwise “Let us eat and drink, &c.” would stand awkwardly insulated.

Let us eat and drink...] In Isa. the words represent the recklessness of those who utterly disregard the call of God to weeping and mourning, and feast while their time lasts.

33.] The tendency of the denial of the resurrection, represented by the Epicurean maxim just quoted, leads him to hint that this denial was not altogether unconnected with a practice of too much intimacy with the profligate society around them.

Be not deceived, as in ch. vi. 9, introduces a warning against oral self-deception.

Evil communications corrupt good manners..] These words form an Iambic verse, and occur in this form in a fragment of the Greek comic poet, Menander.

34.] Awake out of

(your moral) **intoxication**, already possessing you by the influence of these men.

righteously] i.e., so as to recover your righteousness, which you are in danger of losing.

ignorance] The stress is on this word: **for some** (the “some among you” of ver. 12, most probably, are hinted at, and the source of their error pointed out) **have** (are affected with) **ignorance** (an absence of all true knowledge) **of God. I speak** (or, **I am speaking**: it refers to the spirit of the whole passage) **this to your shame.** “Some” shews that these *among them* were not the heathen without:—the existence of such in the Corinthian church was a disgrace to the whole.

35–50.] The argument passes from the fact of the resurrection, already substantiated, to the MANNER of it: which is indicated, and confirmed, principally by analogies from nature.

35.] The new difficulty is introduced in the form of a question from an objector. This is put first generally, **How..., In what manner**,—and next specifically, **With what kind of body are they to come** (forth at that time)?

36–41.] Analogies illustrative of the question just asked: and first, that of seed sown in the earth (36–38).

36.] This similitude was used by our Lord of His own Resurrection, John xii. 24.

is not quickened] Its life is latent in it; but is not developed into quick and lively action without the death of the deposited seed,—i. e. its perishing, disappearing from nature.

37.] Before, the *death* of the seed was insisted on: now, the *non-identity of the seed with the future plant*. **He** names the *plant the body which shall be*, having already in his eye the application to the Resurrection.

38.] **according as He pleased**, viz. at the creation: the past tense setting forth the *one act* of the divine Will giving to the particular seed the particular development at first, which the species retains: whereas “*pleaseth*” would imply a fresh act of the divine Will giving to every individual **seed** his own body. But the *whole gift to the species* being God’s, to continue or withhold, the present tense, **giveth**, still holds good.

a body of its own] Such then being the case with all seeds, why should it be thought necessary that the *same body* should rise *as was sown*, or that God cannot give to each a resurrection-body, as in nature?

39–41.] And the more,—because we have examples from analogy of *various kinds of bodies*; viz. (1) in the *flesh* of animals (ver. 39): (2) in *celestial and terrestrial bodies* (ver. 40): (3) in the *various characters of light* given by the sun, moon, and stars.

flesh] i.e., *animal organism*.

40. **celestial bodies**] not, according to our modern expression, *heavenly bodies*,—for they are introduced first ver. 41, and if we apply these words to them, we must suppose the Apostle to have imagined the stars to be endowed with bodies in the literal sense: for he is here comparing not figurative expressions, but physical realities:—nor (as Chrysostom and others) *the bodies of the righteous*, as opposed to those of the wicked; for in these there is no organic difference whatever: but, as Meyer and De Wette, ‘*the bodies of angels*,’—the only heavenly organisms of which we are aware (except indeed the Resurrection-body of our Lord, and that of those few who have been taken into glory, which, as belonging to the matter *in question*, are not alleged) which will bear comparison with *bodies* on earth.

glory belongs to the *celestial* more strictly than to the *terrestrial*. In Luke ix. 26, we have, “*in His own glory, and that of His Father, and that of the holy angels*.”

41.] This third analogy is suggested by **glory** just before. There is no allusion whatever here, as some have imagined, to *different degrees of glorification* of the bodies of the blessed; the introduction of such an idea confuses the whole analogical reasoning: which is, that even various fountains of *light*, so similar in its aspect and properties, differ; the sun from the moon and the stars: the stars (and much more vividly would this be felt under the pure sky of the East than here) from one another: why not then a *body* here from a resurrection-body, both *bodies*, but *different*?

42–44 a.] APPLICATION OF THESE ANALOGIES TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION.

42.] **So**, viz. in the entire diversity of that which is raised. again from the former body.

It is sown] “He might have said ‘*is buried*,’ bat he prefers **is sown**, that he may the better insist on the similitude of corn just brought forward.” Grotius.

43.] **in dishonour** (“for what is more loathsome than a decomposing corpse?” Chrysostom),—**in glory**: regarding, as throughout this argument (see on ver. 24), on! *resurrection of the just*: see Phil. iii. 21.

in weakness,—the characteristic of the lifeless body, which is relaxed and powerless. Chrysostom understands **weakness** of its *inability to resist corruption*: De Wette would refer it to the previous state of pain and disease: but it seems better to understand it of the *powerlessness* of the corpse, contrasted with **in power**,—or, **in vigour**, viz. the fresh and eternal energy of the new body free from disease and pain.

44, **a natural body**] **an animal body**, of which the “*psyché*,” the animal soul, was the acting and informing power. This soul having departed out of it, does not do away with the correctness of the predicate: its whole organism which still remains *when it is sown*, is arranged to suit this predominance of the animal soul.

a spiritual body] Theophylact, having explained **a natural body** as above, proceeds, “A spiritual body is one rich with the working of the Holy Spirit, and administered in all things by Him. For though now the Spirit worketh in us, yet not as it shall then, nor continuously. For when we commit sin, He departeth from us. And even when the Spirit is present, the *soul* administereth the body: but then the Spirit shall for ever abide in the body of the just.” But: this is not quite enough:—for thus the body might remain as it is, sin only being removed: whereas it shall be no longer a body in which the *soul* predominates to the subordination of the higher part, the *spirit*, but one in which the *spirit*, and that informed fully by the Spirit of God, shall predominate,—its organism being conformed not to an animal, but to a spiritual life: see on ch. vi. 13.—Some have understood

spiritual to mean, *aethereal, airy*, but the other is certainly right.

44 b—49.] REASSERTION AND CONFIRMATION OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

44 b.] If there exists an animal body, there exists also a spiritual; i.e. it is no more wonderful a thing, that there should be a body fitted to the capacities and wants of man's highest part, his spirit, than (which we see to be the case) that there should be one fitted to the capacities and wants of his subordinate animal soul. The emphasis is both times on **is, or exists.**

45.] Confirmation of this from Scripture.

So, viz. in accordance with what has been just said.—The citation extends only to the words “*man became a living soul;*” “*first*” and “*Adam*” are supplied, as are also the concluding words, in which lies the real confirmation. The words quoted serve therefore rather for the illustration of man being a **soul**, than for a proof of the existence of the spiritual body.

was made] by his creation,—by means of God breathing into him the breath of life.

a living soul] “*psyché:*” becoming thereby a natural or animal (*psychical*) body.

the last Adam] This expression was well known among the Jews as indicating the Messiah. A Rabbinical work says, “*The last Adam is the Messiah:*” and other instances are given.

last, as being the *last HEAD* of humanity,—to be manifested in the *last times*; or merely in contrast to the *first*.

became a life-giving spirit] *When?* This has been variously answered. The principal periods selected are His *Incarnation*, His *Resurrection*, and His *Ascension*. But it seems to me that the question is not one to be pressed: in the union of the two natures, the second Adam *was constituted a life-bestowing Spirit*, and is such now in heaven, yet having the resurrection-body. The whole complex of His suffering and triumphant state seems to be embraced in these words. That his resurrection-state *alone* is not intended, is evident from the words “*from heaven,*” ver. 47. He was a “*life-giving spirit,*” even while in the “*natural (animal) body;*” and is still such in the “*spiritual body.*” The *life* implied in the word **life-giving**, is the *resurrection-life*: see John v. 21, 28; Rom. viii, 11.

46.] But in the natural order, that which is *animal* precedes that which is *spiritual.*

47.] So exactly in Gen. ii. 7. God made man of the *dust of the ground.* Meyer has some excellent remarks here, with which I entirely agree:—“Since the body of Adam is thus characterized as a psychical (animal) body, as ver. 45, and animal organism involves *mortality* (ver. 44), it is clear that Paul treats of Adam *not as created exempt from death*: in strict accordance with Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19. Nor does this militate against his teaching that *death came into the world through sin*, Rom. v. 12. For had our first parents not sinned, they would have remained in Paradise, and would, by the use of the *Tree of Life*, which God *had not forbidden them* (Gen. ii. 16, 17), have become immortal (Gen. iii. 22). But they were driven out of Paradise, *ere yet they had tasted of this tree* (Gen. iii. 22), and so, according to the record in Genesis also, Death came into the world by sin.”

from heaven] either, in this *glorified Body*, at his coming: or, in his *whole Personality* as the God-man: this latter seems more probable from John iii. 18, where “*the Son of man*” is designated as “*he that came down from heaven.*”

48.] the earthly Adam: they that are earthly, his posterity on earth: the heavenly, Christ: they that are heavenly, His risen people. See, as admirably illustrating this verse, Phil. iii. 20, 21.

49.] The difference between the two readings (see margin) is occasioned, as in Rom. v. 1 (where see note), by the confusion of the long and short *o* in Greek. An exhortation would certainly here be entirely out of place; and the confusion of the two letters is so common, that it may be doubted whether we have a right to call this a various reading at all. The indefinite past tense **bore** (this form, rather than “*bare,*” which would be ambiguous in sound), not “*have borne,*” as A.V., is used, because the time imagined is when this life is *past*, and the resurrection *instant...*

50—54.] THE NECESSITY OF THE CHANGE OF THE ANIMAL BODY INTO THE SPIRITUAL, IN ORDER TO INHERIT GOD'S KINGDOM. THE MANNER OF THAT CHANGE PROPHETICALLY DESCRIBED: AND THE ABOLITION OF DEATH IN VICTORY CONSEQUENT ON IT.

50. But this I say] He thus calls attention to something to be observed, and liable to be overlooked. Not only is the change of body *possible*, and according to natural and spiritual analogies,—but it is **NECESSARY.**

flesh and blood] equivalent to “*the natural body,*” the present organism of the body, calculated for the wants of the animal

soul.

corruption... incorruption] the abstracts, representing the impossibility of the *corrupt* inheriting the *incorrupt*, as one grounded in these qualities.

doth... inherit] The present tense sets forth the *absolute impossibility in the nature of things*.

51.] He proceeds to reveal to them something of the process of the change at the resurrection-day. This he does under the name of a mystery, a *hidden doctrine* (see references).

We shall not all sleep] There is the most extraordinary variation of reading here. Several of our most ancient MSS., including the Sinaitic, read, “*We shall all sleep, but we shall not all be changed*.” But the Vatican MS. and the ancient Syriac version read as in our text. The variation probably arose from the difficulty presented by the fact that St. Paul and his readers *had all died*. Hence the “*not*” was transferred to the other clause, to the detriment of the sense. The emphasis is both times on **all**—“*[All of us] shall not sleep, but [all of us] shall be changed*.” i.e. “the sleep of death cannot be predicated of [all of us], but the resurrection-change *can*.”

52. in a moment] literally, *in an atom (of time)*: i.e. **in a point of time absolutely indivisible**.

at (literally, in, as part of the events of) the last trumpet-blowing] The word **last** must obviously not be refined upon as some have done, identifying it with the *seventh trumpet* of the Apocalypse;—nor pressed too closely as if there were necessarily no trump after it,—but is *the trump at the time of the end, the last trump*, in a wide and popular sense. See 1 Thess. iv. 16.

we] So also the Apostle speaks in 1 Thess. iv. 15,—“*We that are alive, and remain to the coming of the Lord*,” in which number he firmly believed that he himself should be: see 2 Cor. vi. ff., and notes.

53.] Confirmation of the last words, by a re-statement of the necessity of putting on incorruptibility and immortality.

this corruptible... this mortal] **this** indicating *his own* body. Compare on the figure of *putting on*, 2 Cor. v. 3 and notes.

54.] But when, &c. is repetition, in a triumphant spirit, of the description of the glorious change.

55.] TRIUMPHANT EXCLAMATION of the Apostle, *realizing in his mind that glorious time*; expressed nearly in the terms of the prophetic announcement of Hosea, xiii. 14, which the Septuagint renders, “‘Where is thy cause, O Death? where is thy sting, O Hadés?’” The figure of death as a *venomous beast* is natural, from the *serpent*, Gen. iii. Num. xxii.—The souls in Hadés being freed by the resurrection, Death’s victory is gone: sin being abolished by the change of the animal body (the source of sin) to the spiritual, his sting is powerless.

56.] See above: and compare Rom. v. 12, and vii.

57.] For this blessed consummation of victory over death, he breaks out in thanks to God, who gives it to us (*present*, as being certain) through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Name in full, as befits the solemnity and majesty of the thanksgiving).

58.] Conclusion of the whole by an earnest exhortation.

Wherefore—seeing that the victory is sure.

stedfast, unmoveable] a climax:—in reference, viz. to the doubt which is attempted to be raised among you on this matter.

in the work of the Lord] The *work of the Lord is the Christian life*, with its active and passive duties and graces, the bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit.

knowing (as you do—being convinced by what has been said) **that your labour** (bestowed on the work of the Lord) **is not vain** (which it would be were there no resurrection) **in the Lord**.

1 Corinthians: Chapter 16

CHAP. XVI.] VARIOUS DIRECTIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS (1–18). SALUTATIONS (19, 20). AUTOGRAPH CONCLUSION AND BENEDICTION (21–24).

1-4.] Directions respecting the collection and trans-mission of alms for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

1. for the saints] i.e., the poor among the saints who were in Jerusalem, Rom. xv. 26. See also 2 Cor. viii. 1 ff.; ix. 1 ff; and on the poverty of the church at Jerusalem, note on Acts ii. 44. That poverty was no doubt increased by the continual troubles with which Jerusalem was harassed in this, the distressful close of the Jewish national history. See other causes in Stanley. That the mother church of Christendom should be thus, in its need, sustained by the daughter churches, was natural; and it is at the same time an affecting circumstance, to find *him* the most anxious to collect and bear to them this contribution whose former persecuting zeal had doubtless (see Acts xxvi. 10) made not a few of those saints *widows and orphans*.

as I gave order] We do not find any such order in the Epistle to the Galatians: ch. ii. 10 there being merely incidental. It had probably been given during his journey among them, Acts xviii. 23,—or perhaps by message (?) from Ephesus. Not as A.V., ‘*as I have given order*,’ but **as I gave order**.

He refers to the occasion, whatever it was, when that order was given.—Bengel remarks: “He proposes. the example of the Galatians to the Corinthians, that of the Corinthians and Macedonians to the Romans.” 2 Cor. ix. 2. Rom. xv. 26.

2.] On the observance of the first day of the week, see notes, Acts xx. 7, and Rom. xiv. 5. Here there is no mention of their *assembling*, which we have in Acts xx. 7, but a plain indication that the day was already considered as a special one, and one more than others fitting for the performance of a religious duty.

Literally, **let each of you lay up at home whatsoever he may by prosperity have acquired** (‘*whatsoever he may be prospered in:*’ i.e. the pecuniary result of any prosperous adventure, or dispensation of Providence), **that there may not, when I come, THEN be collections to be made.** His time would be better employed in imparting to them a spiritual benefit than in urging them to and superintending this duty.

3.] “See,” says Bengel, “how so great a man is unwilling to open any chink to suspicion.”

by (or with) letters cannot belong to **ye shall approve**, as in A.V.; (for what need of letters *from them* when he was with them, or before his coming, if the person recommended were *not to be sent off before his arrival?*) but is mentioned as the safe and—proper way of giving credentials to those sent;—**them will I send**,—the alternative which follows, of himself accompanying them, being already in the mind of the Apostle.

letters, plural,—meaning, either that each should have his letter of credentials,—or more probably, that Paul would give them letters to several persons in

Jerusalem.—Meyer well remarks: “Hence we see how common in Paul’s practice was the writing of Epistles. Who knows how many private letters of his, not addressed to churches, have been lost? The only letter of the kind which remains to us (except the Pastoral Epistles), viz. that to Philemon. owes its preservation perhaps to the mere circumstance that it is at the same time addressed to *the church in the house of Philemon*. See ver. 2.”

4.] But if it (the occasion,—dependent on the magnitude of your collection) **be worthy of my also taking the journey** (i. e. if your collection be large enough to warrant an apostolic mission, in order to carry it—not said for *security*, nor to procure himself a fair reception at Jerusalem,—but with the sense of the dignity of an apostolic mission), **they shall go in my company.** This did apparently take place, see Acts xx. 4 ff.

5-9.] Taking up “*when I am come,*” *he announces his plan of visiting them.*

5.] This plan was a *change from his former intention*, which had been (see 2 Cor. i. 15, 16, and note) *to pass through them to Macedonia, and again return to them from Macedonia*, and thence to Judæa. This he had apparently announced to them in the lost Epistle alluded to ch. v. 9 (or in some other), and he now tacitly drops this scheme, and announces another. For this he was charged (2 Cor. i. 17 ff.) with *levity of purpose*:—but his real motive was, *lenity towards them*, that he might not come to them in sorrow and severity (2 Cor. i. 23; ii. 1). The second plan *he adhered to*: we find him already in Macedonia when 2 Cor. was written (2 Cor. ii. 13; viii. 1; ix. 2, 4), and on his way to Corinth (2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii. 1);—and in Acts xx. 1, 2, the journey is briefly narrated.

for Macedonia I pass through is not parenthetical, but **pass through** is opposed (by **but**) to **to abide**.—The present tense implies his *now matured plan*,—not as in the erroneous subscription of the Epistle, that he was *on his way* through Macedonia, when he wrote the word.

6. I shall abide] This, of which he speaks uncertainly, was accomplished; he spent (Acts xx. 3) three months, and those (ib. ver. 6) the three winter months in Greece, at Corinth.

ye, Meyer justly remarks is emphatic, and conveys an affectionate preference, in his present plan, for them.—Whither he should go from Corinth, was as yet uncertain, see ver. 4,

7. For I am not willing this time to see you in passing] There is a slight, but a very slight, reference to his change of purpose (see above): the word **now**, or **this time**, refers to the *occasion*, the news from ‘them of Chloe,’ which had made it advisable that he should not *now* pay them a mere passing visit.

for] ground of his not wishing to see them—but not the ultimate one, see above.

permit] literally, **shall have permitted me**, i.e. ‘if it shall so turn out, in the Lord’s direction of my work, that I shall then find my way open to do so.’

8, 9.] His present plan regarding his stay in Ephesus (where he was writing).

Pentecost] viz., that *next coming*. This probably happened so, or nearly so, notwithstanding the tumult of Acts xix.: for he already (see there, vv. 21, 22) *was meditating his departure*, and had sent on two of his company when the tumult occurred. **door**, see *reff.*: *an opportunity of action*,

great refers to the *extent* of the action thus opened before him: **effectual** to its requirements: neither of them (though “*great*” may be referred to a *door*) properly agreeing with the figure, but both with the reality.

many adversaries] See Acts xix. 9, 23 ff.

10, 11.] Recommendation of Timothy to their good reception and offices.—He had preceded Paul (Acts xix. 22) in the journey to Macedonia. From the expression **if Timothy come**, it would appear to have been *probable*, but not quite certain, that he would visit them. In ch. iv. 17 he is described as sent on *for that purpose*: so that the **if** may merely refer to the necessary uncertainties of the journey.

10. without fear] There must have been some special reason for this caution respecting Timothy besides that assigned by Meyer, &c., that he would naturally be depreciated as only a subordinate of Paul, whom so many of them opposed. His youth occurs to us, mentioned 1 Tim. iv. 12: but even that is not enough, and would hardly be intended here without some reference to it. De Wette’s conjecture may not be without foundation, that he was perhaps of a *timid disposition*. Meyer objects that we have no historical trace of this: but I think some are to be found in 1 Tim.:—e. g. iii. 15 (see note); v. 22, 23.

the work of the Lord] See ch. xv. 58, note.

11, in peace] without strife and contention.

for I look for him] “He says this,” observes Chrysostom, “as a caution to them, in order that, knowing that whatever treatment Timothy should receive at their hands would be reported to the Apostle, they might be more courteous to him:” “and at the same time,” adds Theophylact, “making Timothy more the object of their respect, when they heard how important he was to the Apostle, so that he expected him.” By **with the brethren** it would appear, comparing ver. 12, that more brethren besides Erastus (Acts xix. 22) accompanied Timotheus to Macedonia.

12.] Of Apollos: that he was not willing at present to go to them. He excuses Apollos from coming that the Corinthians might not imagine that the hindrance had arisen from *him*, the Apostle. Meyer remarks, perhaps the Corinthians had expressly desired that Apollos should be sent to them.

with the brethren] perhaps, those who went with Timotheus (see above): perhaps those who were to bear this letter, ver. 17.

and] not ‘but.’ it merely couples the exhortation with its result.

convenient time] The present time not seeming to him a suitable one: apparently on account of the divisions hinted at in the beginning of the Epistle.

13.] “To shew them that not on their teachers but on themselves depended their hopes of salvation, he says, watch, for that they were sleeping: stand, for that they were wavering: quit you like men, be strong, for they were shewing themselves cowards: let all you do be done in love, for that they were in strife.” Chrysostom.

15–18.] Recommendation of the family of Stephanas to their honourable regard: and by occasion, expression of his own joy at

the presence of Stephanas and his companions.

15.] the firstfruits; see Rom. xvi. 5: *the first Achæan converts.* This family were among the few *baptized by Paul*, see ch. i. 16.

to minister unto the saints] or, **to service for the saints:** in what way, does not appear: but perhaps, from the fact of Stephanas being at that time in Ephesus,—for journeys and missions.

16.] ye also, you in your turn,—in return for their self-devotion.

submit yourselves] viz. in honouring their advice and being ready to be directed by them: there is an allusion to “*have set themselves*” above.

unto such] *to such persons*, meaning the individuals of Stephanas’s family, whom they knew.

17.] Perhaps Fortunatus and Achaicus were members of the family of Stephanas. The Fortunatus mentioned by Clement at the end of his Ep. i. to the Corinthians may be the same.

the coming] viz. to Ephesus.

that which was lacking on your part] or, **the want of you;** i.e. of your society.—Grotius interprets it, “What all ought to have done, they have done, viz. have given me information about your defects.” and holds them to have been “*those of (the house of) Chloe,*” mentioned in chap. i. 11. But it is very improbable that he should mention thus a family so distinguished as this: he names them just after, ch. i. 16, as the household of Stephanas:—and still more improbable that one of so fine feeling should add of the bearers of such tidings, **they refreshed my spirit and your’s**, which would on that hypothesis be almost ironical.

18. and your’s] This is a beautiful expression of true affection used in consciousness of the effect of this epistle on them: as if he had said, ‘it is to their presence here that you owe much of that in this my letter which I know will refresh and cheer your spirits.’

acknowledge therefore] i.e. recognize, hold in honour.

19, 20.] Salutations.

19. in the Lord] See note, Rom. xvi. 2. On **Aquila and Priscilla**, see Rom. xvi. 3, 4; Acts xviii. 2. They had removed from Corinth (Acts xviii. 1) to Ephesus (ib. 26), and had there, as subsequently at Rome (xvi. 3, 5), an assembly of the faithful meeting in their dwelling.

20.] All the brethren—the whole Ephesian church.

with an holy kiss] See Rom. xvi. 16, note.

21–24.] Autograph conclusion. The salutation is the *final greeting*, which, according to 2 Thess. iii. 17, was *always in his own hand*, the rest having been written (see Rom. xvi. 22) by an amanuensis.

22.] He adds, as in Col. iv. 18; Eph. vi. 24, some exhortation, or solemn sentence, *in his own hand*, as having especial weight. On the distinction between the two words used for “*to love*,” see notes on John xxi. 15. The negation here of the feeling of personal affection, “has no love in his heart for,” is worthy of note, as connected with the curse which follows.

let him be Anathema] On **Anathema**, see note, Rom. ix. 3:—**let him be accursed.**

Maran-atha (see A.V.) is an Aramaic expression for **the Lord cometh**, and is probably unconnected with **Anathema**, added perhaps as recalling some remembrance of the time when Paul was among them: at all events, as a weighty watchword tending to recall to them the nearness of His coming, and the duty of being found ready for it.

24. My love be with you] Because the Epistle had contained so much that was of a severe character, he concludes it with an expression of affection; so Chrysostom, “After so much fault-finding he does not turn away from them, but loves and embraces them, far off as they were.” i.e. “**my love** has nothing in it of human or carnal, but is spiritual, and in Christ.” Theophylact.

2 CORINTHIANS

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THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

2 Corinthians: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1. by the will of God] See 1 Cor. i. 1, note.

Timothy our brother] So of Sosthenes, 1 Cor. i. 1; perhaps in this case with peculiar emphasis: see 1 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 2, 18; 2 Tim. ii. 1. On his being with Paul at this time, see Introd. to this Epistle, §ii. 4.

with all the saints] This, and the Epistle to the Galatians, were circular letters to all the believers in the respective countries: the variation of expression in the two cases ("to the churches of Galatia," Gal. i. 2) being accounted for by the circumstance that the matter of this Epistle concerned *directly the church at Corinth*, and *indirectly* all the saints in the province,—whereas that to the Galatians, being to correct deep-rooted Judaizing error, directly concerned all the *churches* of Galatia.—*Achaia* comprehended Hellas (Greece proper) and Peloponnesus (Morea); the province was so named by the Romans because they became possessed of them by subduing the *Achaeans* league. On the history of the province, see Acts xviii. 12 and note.

2.] See 1 Cor. i. 3.

3–11.] THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM GREAT DANGER OF HIS LIFE:—HIS ABILITY TO COMFORT OTHERS IN AFFLICITION. Commentators have endeavoured to assign a definite purpose to this opening of the Epistle.—De Wette thinks that Paul had *no* definite purpose, except to pour out the thankfulness of his heart, and to begin by placing himself with his readers in a position of religious feeling and principle far above all discord and dissension. But I cannot agree with this. His purpose shews so plainly through the whole latter part of the chapter, that it is only consistent with verses 12–24 to find it beginning to be introduced here also. I believe that Chrysostom has given the right account: "The not coming annoyed and discomposed them, especially as he had promised he would come, but had spent all the time in Macedonia, and seemed to have preferred others to them. For this cause, knowing the feeling against him on this matter, he tells them the cause of his not coming. But he does not set it down plainly, nor does he say, 'I know that I promised to

come, but as I was hindered by troubles, forgive me, and do not charge me with contumaciousness of purpose:' but manages the matter in another way, in a more dignified and trustworthy manner, exalting it by speaking of consolation in his troubles, that they might not even ask for the cause wherefore he disappointed them." *The postponed journey to Corinth*, through the latter part of the chapter, is coming more and more visibly into prominence, till it becomes the direct subject in ver. 23,

3.] Blessed (above all others) is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ] Here, as in Rom. xv. 6, De Wette would render, "*God, and the Father.....*" which grammatically is allowable; but I prefer the other rendering, on account of its greater likelihood and simplicity.

the Father of mercies] i.e. who has shewn us so great mercies. 4.] The Apostle in this Epistle uses mostly the *first person plural*, perhaps including Timothy, perhaps, inasmuch as he writes *apostolically* (compare "*us the apostles*," said of himself and Apollos, 1 Cor. iv. 9), as speaking of the Apostles in common. This however will not explain all places where it occurs elsewhere: e.g. 1 Thess. ii. 18, "*We would have come to you, even I Paul, once and again*,"—where see note. So that after all perhaps it is best to regard it merely as an idiomatic way of speaking, when often only the singular is intended.

that we may be able] "The Apostle lived not for himself, but for the Church: so that whatever grace God conferred on him, he thought given not for himself alone, but to enable him the better to help others." Calvin.

5.] 'As He is, so are we in this world:' 1 John iv. 17.

as the sufferings of Christ (*endured by Christ*, whether in his own person, or in his mystical body, the Church, see Matt. xxv. 40, 45) abound towards us (i. e. *in our case*, see reff.), even so through Christ our consolation also aboundeth.—The form of expression is altered in the latter clause: instead of "*the comfort of Christ aboundeth*," we have **through Christ aboundeth also our comfort**. And not without reason:—we suffer, because we are His members: we are consoled, because He is our

Head.

6.] And all this for your benefit.—**But whether we are afflicted,** (it is) **on behalf of your comfort and salvation** (the great end of the *comfort*), **which** (*comfort and salvation*) **is working in the endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer:**—**and our hope is stedfast on your behalf** (that you *will* endure hardness, and be consoled and saved);—**or whether we are comforted,** (it is) **for your comfort and salvation.** This arrangement agrees best with the sense, besides being in accordance with the best MSS. On the place of the words, “*and our hope is stedfast for you,*” see in my Greek Test.

7.] Knowing refers back to “*we be comforted:*”—**we are comforted with the assurance that, &c.**

so are ye of the comfort also] not, “*so shall ye be,*” as A.V.: he is speaking generally, of the community of consolation subsisting mutually between himself and the Corinthians; and it was this thought which helped to console him.

8.] It is generally supposed that the tribulation here spoken of was the danger into which St. Paul was brought by the tumult at Ephesus, related in Acts xix. This opinion has been recently defended by Neander, Wieseler, and Dr. Davidson, but impugned by De Wette, on the grounds, (1) that “*in Asia*” can hardly refer to Ephesus, which St. Paul generally *names*, 1 Cor. xv. 82; xvi. 8; (2) that he was not in danger of his life in this tumult. The first ground is hardly tenable: there would be an appropriateness in the expression “*in Asia*” here, as he has in his mind an apologetic account of the reasons which hindered him from leaving those parts and coming to them. I own, however, that the strong expressions here used do not seem to me to find their justification in any thing which we know of that tumult or its consequences. I am unable to assign *any other event* as in the Apostle’s mind: but the expressions seem rather to regard a *deadly sickness*, than a persecution: see below, verses 9, 10.

so that we utterly despaired even of life] Such an expression surely would not be used of a tumult, where life would have been *the first thing* in danger, if Paul had been at all mixed up in it,—but to some wearing and tedious suffering, inducing despondency in minor matters, which *even reached* the hope of life itself.

9.] carries on and intensifies the description of his hopeless state.

we had in ourselves the response (or, sentence) of death, i.e. our answer within ourselves to the question, ‘Life or Death?’ was, ‘Death.’

that we should not...] The expression of purpose is very similar in ch. iv. 7.

which raiseth the dead] Our thoughts were weaned from all hope of surviving in this life, and fixed on that better deliverance which God shall work when He raises us from the dead.—To see in this expression merely a figure (as De Wette), and understand ‘Who *raiseth the dead*’ as equivalent to ‘Who *delivers men from peril of their lives?*’ because such peril is below and elsewhere (ch. xi. 23) called “*death*,” is surely very forced. Understanding it literally as above, I cannot see how it can be spoken with reference to the Ephesian tumult. If it alludes to *any external danger*, I should be disposed to refer it to the same obscure part of St. Paul’s history to which he alludes 1 Cor. xv. 32, where he also speaks of the *hope of the resurrection* as his great support. But there would be this objection, that these two passages can hardly refer to the *same event*; *this* evidently had taken place *since* the sending of the first Epistle. **10.] who delivered us from so great a death, and will deliver us,—on whom we hope that He will also continue to deliver us.** The first “*will deliver*” regards the *immediate future*,—the “*will continue to deliver*” the *continuance* of God’s help in time distant and uncertain.—The whole verse (as De Wette confesses, who although he repudiates the Ephesian tumult, yet interprets the passage as alluding to external danger) seems to favour the idea of *bodily sickness* being in the Apostle’s mind.

11.] On the various possible renderings of the latter part of this verse, see in my Greek Test.

12–24.] EXPRESSION OF HIS CONFIDENCE IN HIS INTEGRITY OF PURPOSE TOWARDS THEM (12–14), AND DEFENCE OF HIMSELF AGAINST THE CHARGE OF FICKLENESSENCE OF PURPOSE IN NOT HAVING COME TO THEM (15–24).

12.] For, reason why they should help him with their united prayers.

in holiness and sincerity of God] i.e. either ‘belonging to God, where “*His righteousness*” is spoken of, Matt. vi. 38, or ‘*which is the gift of God,*’ as Rom. iii. 21, 22,—or better than either, as the A.V. paraphrases it, ‘*godly*,’ i.e. maintained as in the service of and with respect to God. Calvin interprets it, “*in the sight of God*.”

not in fleshly wisdom] which fleshly wisdom is any thing but holy and pure, having many windings and insincerities in order to captivate men.

but in the grace of God] i.e. in that *grace* which he had received (Rom. i. 5), “*for obedience of the faith among all the nations,*”—the grace of his apostleship. To this he often refers, see Rom. xii, 3, xv. 15; Eph, iii. 2, al.

more abundantly] “Not that his conversation among others had been less sincere: but because he had to shew more proofs of his sincere conversation among the Corinthians: having preached the Gospel gratis, and without charge to them, sparing their weakness.” But perhaps it may relate only to the longer time, and greater opportunities which he had had at Corinth for shewing his purity of purpose.

13, 14.] Confirmation of the foregoing assertion. **For we do not write to you any other things, except those which ye read or even acknowledge, and I hope shall continue to acknowledge to the end:**—i. e. ‘my character in my writings is one and the same, not fickle and changing, but such as past facts have substantiated it to be, and as I hope future facts to the end of my life will continue to do.’

as also ye did partly (that part of you, viz. which have fairly tried me: *partly*, because they were divided in their estimate of him, and those who were prejudiced against him had shut their minds to this knowledge) **acknowledge us, that we are your boast, even as ye also are our's, in the day of the Lord Jesus.**

are, present, as of that which is a settled recognized fact. The experimental mutual knowledge of one another as a ground of boasting was not confined to what should take place in the day of the Lord, but regarded a present fact, which should receive its full completion at the day of the Lord.

15–24.] His defence of himself against the charge of fickleness of purpose for not having come to them.

15.] this confidence, viz., of my character being known to you as that of an earnest and sincere man. **before**, viz., *before* he visited Macedonia, where he now was.

ye might have a second benefit] Literally, **grace**: i.e. an effusion of the divine grace by presence.

second, because there wld thus have been opportunity for *two* visits, one in going towards Macedonia, the other in returning. This is, I believe, the only interpretation which the words will bear. See my Greek Test. I do not believe this passage to be relevant to the question respecting the number of visits which St. Paul *had made* to Corinth *previously* to writing these Epistles. See on that question, Introd. to 1 Cor. §v.

16.] If this is the same journey which is announced in 1 Cor. xvi. 5, the idea of visiting them *in the way to Macedonia* as well as after having passed through it, must have occurred to him subsequently to the sending of that Epistle; or may even then have been a *wish*, but not expressed, from uncertainty as to its possibility,—the main and longer visit being there principally dwelt on. But perhaps the following is the more likely account of the matter. He had announced to them in the lost Epistle (see 1 Cor. v. 9) his intention, as here, of visiting them *on his way to Macedonia*: but the intelligence from “them of the household of Chloe” had altered his intention, so that, in 1 Cor. xvi., he speaks of visiting them *after he should have passed through Macedonia*. For this he was accused of levity of purpose. Certainly, some intention of coming to them seems to have been mentioned in that lost Epistle; see 1 Cor. iv. 18. But the “*being brought on his way to Judea*” can hardly but be coincident with the almsbearing scheme of 1 Cor. xvi. 4: in which case the two plans certainly are modifications of one and the same.

17.] Literally, Did I at all use levity (of purpose)? Or those things which I plan, do I plan according to the flesh (i. e. according to the changeable, self-contradictory, and insincere purposes of the mere worldly and ungodly man), **that there should be with me** (not, ‘so that there is with me:’ he is speaking not merely of the result, but of the design: ‘*do I plan like the worldly, that I may shift and waver as suits me?*’) the yea yea, and the nay nay (i. e. both affirmation and negation concerning the same thing)? Chrysostom and many others take it thus, which is an allowable translation: ‘*Or those things which I plan, do I plan after the flesh* (as fleshly men do), *so that my yea must (at all events) be yea, and my nay nay?*’ i.e. as worldly men who perform their promise at all hazards, and whatever the consequences, whereas I am under the guidance of the Spirit, and can only journey whither He permits. But this explanation is directly against the next verse, where yea and nay is clearly parallel to yea yea, and nay nay, here, the words being repeated, as in Matt. v. 37, without altering the sense: and inconsistent with ver. 23 and ch. ii. 1, where he says that his alteration of plan arose *from a desire to spare them*.

18.] Such fickleness, you know, was not my habit in preaching to you.

God is faithful, that] i.e. as A.V. paraphrases, “*as God is true, or faithful:*” a form of asseveration.

our word (which we preached, 1 Cor. i. 18) **to you is not** (*present*, inasmuch as the character of the doctrine was present and abiding. The present has been altered to the easier ‘*was*’) **yea and nay** (i. e. inconsistent with itself).

19.] Confirmation of the last verse, by affirming the same of the great Subject of that doctrine, as set before them by Paul and his colleagues.

the Son of God is prefixed for “solemnity, and to shew how unlikely fickleness or change is in Christ, *being such as He is*, Compare 1 Sam xv. 29, ‘*The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent*.’

Christ, personal—not meaning, *the doctrine concerning Christ*—HE HIMSELF is the centre and substance of all Christian preaching: see 1 Cor. i. 23, and note at ii.

2. Silvanus] so 1 Pet. v. 12; the same as Silas, see Acts xviii. 5 and al. He names his companions, as shewing that neither was he inconsistent with himself, nor were they inconsistent with one another. The Christ was the same, whether preached by different persons, or by one person at different times.

but is made yea in him] Christ as preached, i.e. our preaching concerning Christ, is made yea, finds its reality, in Christ Himself. ‘Christ preached as the Son of God by us, **has become yea in Him**,’ i.e. has been affirmed and substantiated as verity by the agency of the Lord Himself.

20. For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea (the affirmation and fulfilment of them all); **wherefore also through Him is the Amen, for glory to God by our** (the Apostles’) **means**. On the reading I must refer to my Greek Test.

21, 22.] construction as in ch. v. 5, which in form is remarkably similar.

21.] confirmeth us (in believing) **in Christ. which anointed us**, after the words **us with you**, and **the and**, cannot refer to any anointing of *the Apostles only*, but must be taken of *all*, Apostles and Corinthians. “Making us prophets, priests, and kings: for these three sorts of persons were anciently anointed.” Chrysostom.

22.] This *sealing us* again cannot refer to the Apostles alone, nor is John vi. 27 any ground for such a reference,—but as in the other references, to all, sealed by the Holy Spirit to the day of redemption.

and gave...] ‘And assured us of the fact of that sealing; Rom. viii. 16.

the earnest, i.e. **the pledge or token of the Spirit**: genitive of apposition: the Spirit *is* the token. The word in the original means the first deposit of purchase-money by which a bargain was ratified.

23.] His reason for not coming to them.

upon [i. e. against] **my soul**,—with that testimony against me if I fail in the truth.

to spare you, i.e. out of a feeling of compassion for you.

I forebore coming] literally, “*I no longer came*,” viz. after the first time: see Introd. to 1 Cor. §v. 6. The following verse seems to be added to remove any false inference which might have been drawn from the word “spare” as seeming to assert an unreasonable degree of power over them. But why **over your faith**? He *had power* over them, but it was in matters of *discipline, not of faith*: over matters of faith not even an Apostle has power, seeing it is in *each man’s faith* that he *stands before God*. And he puts this strongly, that in matters of faith he is only a fellow-helper of their joy (the “*joy in believing*,” Rom. xv. 18), in order to shew them the *real department* of his apostolic power, and that, however exercised, it would not attempt to rule their faith, but only to secure to them, by purifying them, joy in believing. He proceeds to say, that it was the probable disturbance of this joy, which induced him to forego his visit.

2 Corinthians: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1-4.] FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE REASON OF THE POSTPONEMENT OF HIS VISIT.

1.] this refers to what follows: see reff.

not come again to you in sorrow] This is the only fair rendering of the words; implying, that *some former visit had been in grief*. Clearly the first visit, Acts xviii. 1 ff., could not be thus described: we must therefore infer, that an *intermediate unrecorded visit* had been paid by him. On this subject, compare ch. xii. 14; xiii. 1 and notes: and see Introd. to 1 Cor. §v.

in sorrow is explained in vv. 2, 3 to mean **in mutual grief**. ‘I grieving you (ver. 2), and you grieving me’ (ver. 3): not St. Paul’s grief alone, nor grief alone inflicted on them by St. Paul.

2. For] Reason why I would not come to you in grief: because I should have to grieve those who formed my proper material for thankfulness and joy.

I has a peculiar emphasis: ‘If *I* cause you grief’... implying, ‘there are who cause you sufficient.’

3.] I put in writing this same thing, viz. the **thing** which I “*determined*,” ver. 1: the announcement of my change of purpose in 1 Cor. xvi. 7, which had occasioned the charge of fickleness against him. See other supposed meanings discussed in my Greek Test.

having confidence in (reposing trust on) **you all, that my joy is that of all of you:** i.e. trusting that you too would feel that there was sufficient reason for the postponement, if it interfered with our mutual joy.—Meyer well observes, that the expression **you all**, in spite of the existence of an anti-pauline faction in the Corinthian church, is a true example of the love which “*believeth all things, hopeth all things,*” 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

4.] Explanation (for) that he did not write in levity of purpose, but under great trouble of mind,—not to grieve them, but to testify his love: he wrote, **out of** (this was the *inducement*) **much tribulation** (inward, of spirit, not outward) **and anguish of heart with** (under the accompaniment and as it were investiture of) **many tears.**

more abundantly] Does St. Paul mean, ‘than to other churches (?)’—so Chrysostom (referring to 1 Cor. iv. 15; ix. 2, &c.): Estius thinks, the comparative is not to be pressed, but understood as ‘overmuch’ (in the A.V.) in ver. 7,—‘exceedingly.’

5–11.] DIGRESSIVE REFERENCE TO THE CASE OF THE INCESTUOUS PERSON, WHOM THE APOSTLE ORDERS NOW TO BE FORGIVEN, AND REINSTATED. From the “*sorrow*” of the former verses, to him who was one of the principal occasions of that grief, the transition is easy.

5.] But if any one hath caused sorrow (a delicate way of pointing out *the one* who had occasioned it), he hath grieved, not me (not,—‘*not only me*,’ which destroys the meaning,—‘*I am not the aggrieved person, but you*’), but in part (i. e. more or less; ‘*partially*’), **that I be not too heavy on him** (this gives the reason why he used the expression “*more or less*,” which qualifies the blame cast on the offender), **all of you.** See the other renderings discussed in my Greek Test.

6. to such a man] Meyer remarks on the expression as being used in mildness, not to designate any particular person: but the same designation is employed in 1 Cor. v. 5. **this punishment:** *what it was*, we are unable with certainty to say; but 1 Cor. v. seems to point to *excommunication* as forming at least a *part of it*. But it was not a formal and public, only a *voluntary individual abstinence from communion* with him, as is shewn by its being inflicted by “*the more part of them*” only: the anti-pauline party probably refusing compliance with the Apostle’s command.

sufficient] not in *duration*, though that would be *the case*, but in *magnitude*: sufficient, as having: produced its desired effect, penitence. **7.] So that on the contrary you (should) rather** (than continue the punishment) **forgive and comfort him, &c.** Not, as A.V., ‘by overmuch sorrow.’ but by the increase of sorrow which will come on the continuance of his punishment.

The expression **be swallowed up** does not set any definite result of the excessive sorrow before them, such as apostasy, or suicide,

but leaves them to imagine such possible.

8.] to confirm, hardly (as usually understood) *to ratify by a public decree of the church*: if (see above) his exclusion was not by such a decree, but only by the abstinence of individuals from his society, the ratifying their love to him would consist in the majority making it evident to him that he was again recognized as a brother.

9.] Reason why they should now be ready to shew love to him again,—the end of St. Paul’s writing to them having been accomplished by their obeying his order. **For to this end also did I write:** the **also** signifying that my former epistle, as well as my present exhortation, tended to this, viz. the *testing your obedience.*

that I might know the proof of you, whether in all things ye are obedient] This was that one among the various objects of his first Epistle, which belonged to the matter at present in hand, and which he therefore puts forward: not by any means implying that he had *no other* view in writing it. **10.] Another assurance to encourage them in forgiving and reinstating the penitent;** that they need not be afraid of lack of Apostolic authority or confirmation of their act from above—he would ratify their forgiveness by his sanction.

To whom, &c.] ‘Your forgiveness is mine:’ not said generally, but definitely, pointing at the one person here spoken of, and no other.

Then he substantiates this assurance, by further assuring them, that his forgiveness of any fault in this case, if it takes place, takes place *on their account*.

in the person of Christ] i.e. *acting as, Christ*, in the same way as he had commanded the punishment, “*in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*” 1 Cor. v. 4.

11.] follows out and explains “*for your sakes:*”—to **prevent Satan getting any advantage over us** (the Church generally: or better, *us Apostles*), in robbing us of some of our people,—viz., in causing the penitent offender to despair and full away from the faith. Chrysostom remarks, “The word ‘*advantage*’ is used appropriately, in a case where Satan would be conquering us by our own weapons. For him to make a man his prey by means of *sin*, is his proper attribute: but not through *penitence*: the weapon is ours, not his.” The word has yet another propriety: the offender was to be delivered over to *Satan for the destruction of the flesh*—care must be taken lest we be overreached by Satan, and his *soul perish likewise*.

his devices] such devices, *as coming from him*, are special matters of observation and caution to every Christian minister; much more to him who had the care of all the churches. See 1 Pet. v. 8.—The personality and agency of the Adversary can hardly be recognized in plainer terms than in both these passages.

12–17.] HE PROCEEDS (after the digression) TO SHEW THEM WITH WHAT ANXIETY HE AWAITED THE INTELLIGENCE FROM CORINTH, AND HOW THANKFUL HE WAS FOR THE SEAL OF HIS APOSTOLIC MINISTRY FURNISHED BY IT.—The only legitimate connexion is that with vv. 1–4.

12.] To *Troas*, viz., on his journey from Ephesus, Acts xx. 1, 2; 1 Cor. xvi. 5–9.

for (the purpose of preaching) **the gospel of Christ]** He had been before at Troas, but the vision of a Macedonian asking for help prevented his remaining there. He now revisited it, purposely to stay and preach. On his return to Asia he remained there seven days, Acts xx. 6–12.

and a door,&c.] and an opportunity of apostolic action being afforded me.

in the Lord defines the *sort* of action implied, and that to which the door was opened. It is remarkable that in speaking of this joy, though not of the same place, St. Paul uses this expression, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. Compare the interesting passage at Troas on his return from Europe the next spring, Acts xx. 6–13.

13.] I had no rest for my spirit (not as in A.V. ‘*in my spirit*:’ compare “*the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot*,” Gen. viii. 9). He could not with any tranquillity prosecute the spiritual duties opened to him at Troas. Paul had sent Titus to Corinth, ch. xii. 18, partly to finish the collection for the saints, but principally to bring intelligence respecting the effect of the first Epistle. Probably it had been fixed that they should meet at Troas.

Titus my brother implies a relation closer than merely that of Christian brotherhood—my *colleague* in the Apostleship.

them] the disciples there, understood from the context.

14–17.] Omitting, as presupposed, the fact of his having met with Titus in Macedonia, and the nature of the intelligence which he brought, he grounds on these a thanksgiving for that intelligence, and a magnification of his apostolic office. It is evidently beside the purpose to refer this thanksgiving to the diffusion of the gospel in Macedonia, or in Troas, or to general considerations:—both the context, and the language itself (see below), shew that its reference is to the effects of the apostolic reproof on the Corinthians.

14. leadeth us in triumph] Two kinds of persons were led in triumph: the *participants of the victory*, and the *victims of the defeat*. In Col. ii. 15, where only the same word is used in the original, the *latter* are plainly meant; here, according to many Commentators, the *former*: which however is never elsewhere the reference of the word, but it always implies *triumphing over*. The proud Cleopatra refused the terms offered her by Augustus, using this word, and saying, “*I will not be triumphed over*.” Meyer in consequence understands it in this sense here: **who ever triumphs over us**, i.e. “who ceases not to exhibit us, His former foes, as overcome by Him:”—and adds, “God began His triumph over them at their conversion:—over Paul at Damascus, where he made him a servant, from being an enemy. This triumph he ever continues, not ceasing to exhibit before the world these his former foes, by the results of their present service, as overcome by Him. This, in the case before us, was effected by Paul, in that (as Titus brought him word to Macedonia) his Epistle had produced such good results in Corinth.” De

Wette objects to this as a strange way of expressing thankfulness for deliverance from our anxiety. But *is it* so to those who look beneath the surface? In our spiritual course, *our only true triumphs* are *God's* triumphs over us. His defeats of *us*, are *our only* real victories. I own that this yet appears to me to be the *only admissible rendering*. We must not violate the known usage of a word, and invent another for which there is no precedent, merely for the sake of imagined perspicuity. Such is that of ‘*causeth us to triumph*,’ A.V., and some Commentators. See also the following context.

in Christ, as usually, **in our connexion with**, ‘as members of’ Christ: not ‘*by* Christ.’

the savour, i.e. smell. The similitude is not that of a sacrifice, but still the same as before: during a triumph, sweet spices were thrown about or burnt in the streets. As the fact of the triumph, or approach of the triumphal procession, was made known by these odours far and wide, so God diffuses by our means, who are the materials of His triumph, the sweet odour of the knowledge of Christ (who is the Triumpher, Col. ii. 15).

of the knowledge] genitive of apposition; the *odour*, which, in the interpretation of the figure, *is* the knowledge.

of him] i.e. Christ: see next verse.

15.] Here the propriety of the figure is lost, and the source of the odour identified with the Apostles themselves. **For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ** (i. e. of that which was diffused by the odour, viz. *the knowledge of Christ*). Estius says, “As of some fragrant unguent of flowers or herbs, we diffuse among all, as a wholesome and sweet odour, the report of His name”), **among them that are being saved, and among them that are perishing**, “Whether men be saved, or whether they perish, the gospel continues to possess its own virtue, and we continue being that which we are; and as the light, though it blind the weak-eyed, is light, for all this darkening: and honey, though it be bitter to the sick, is sweet by nature: so the gospel is of sweet savour, even though some be perishing through disbelief of it.” Chrysostom and Theophylact.

16 a.] to the one (the latter) **an odour arising from death and tending to death: to the other** (the former) **an odour arising from life and tending to life.** The odour was, CHRIST,—who to the unbelieving is *Death*, a mere announcement of a man crucified, and working death by unbelief: but to the believing, *Life*, an announcement of His resurrection and Life,—and working in them life eternal, by faith in Him. The *double working of the gospel* is set forth in Matt. xxi. 44; Luke ii. 34; John ix. 39.

16 b.] In order to understand the connexion, we must remember that the purpose of vindicating his apostolic commission is in the mind of St. Paul, and about to be introduced by a description of the office, its requirements, and its holders. This purpose already begins to press into its service the introductory and apologetic matter, and to take every opportunity of manifesting itself. In order then to exalt the dignity and shew the divine authorization of his office, he asks this question: **And** (see remarks at ver. 2) **for** (to accomplish) **these things** (this so manifold working in the believers and unbelievers,—this emission of the sweet savour of Christ every where) **who is sufficient?** He does not express the answer, but it is too evident to escape any reader, indeed it is supplied in terms by ch. iii. 5. **For these things** is put first, in the place of emphasis, to detain the attention on its weighty import, and then **who is** purposely put off till the end of the question, to introduce the interrogation unexpectedly.

17.] the many here points definitely at those false teachers, of whom he by and by, ch. x.—xii., speaks more plainly.

Literally, **we are not in the habit of adulterating** (the word from which the verb is derived originally signifies any kind of huckster or vender, but especially of wine,—and thence, from the frequency of adulteration of wine, the cognate verb implied to *adulterate*. The same is expressed ch. iv. 2, by “*handling the word of God deceitfully*”) **the word of God, but as of sincerity** (the subjective regard of the speakers), **but as from God** (the objective regard—a dependence on the divine suggestion), **we speak before God** (with a *consciousness* of His presence) in Christ (not ‘*in the name of Christ*, nor ‘*concerning Christ*,’ nor “*according to Christ*:” but as usual, **in Christ**; as united to Him, and members of His body, and employed in His work).

2 Corinthians: Chapter 3

CH. III. 1—VI. 10.] BEGINNING WITH A DISOWNING OF SELF-RECOMMENDATION, THE APOSTLE PROCEEDS TO SPEAK CONCERNING HIS APOSTOLIC OFFICE AND HIMSELF AS THE HOLDER OF IT, HIS FEELINGS, SUFFERINGS, AND HOPES, PARTLY WITH REGARD TO HIS CONNEXION WITH THE CORINTHIANS, BUT FOR THE MOST PART IN GENERAL TERMS.

1–3.] *He disclaims a spirit of self-recommendation.*

1.] Are we beginning again? alluding to a charge probably made against him of having done this in his former epistle; perhaps in its opening section, and in some passages of chs. v. ix., and in ch. xiv. 18; xv. 10 al.—See 2 Cor. x. 18.

or need we (literally, “*or, perhaps we need;*” which gives an ironical turn to the question), **as some** (so 1 Cor. iv. 18; xv. 12; Gal. i. 7, he speaks of the teachers who opposed him, as “*some.*”) Probably these persons had come recommended to them, by *whom* does not appear, whether by churches or Apostles, but most likely by the former, and on their departure requested similar recommendations from the Corinthian church to others), **epistles of recommendation to you, or from you?**

2.] Ye are our epistle (of commendation) **written on our hearts** (not borne in our hands to be shewn, but engraven, in the consciousness of our work among you, on our hearts. There hardly can be any allusion, as Olshausen thinks, to the twelve jewels engraven with the names of the tribes and borne on the breastplate of the High Priest, Exod. xxviii. 21. The plural seems to be used, as so often in this Epistle,—see e.g. ch. vii. 3, 5,—of Paul himself only), **known and read by all men** (because all men are aware, what issue my work among you has had, and receive me the more favourably on account of it. But ‘*all men*’ includes the Corinthians themselves; his success among them was his letter of recommendation *to them* as well as to others from them):

3.] literally, **manifested to be** (that ye are) **a n epistle of Christ** (i. e. *written by Christ*,—not, a3 Chrys., al., *concerning Christ*:—He is the Recommender of us, the Head of the church and sender of us His ministers) **which was ministered by us** (i. e. *carried about, served in the way of ministration* by us as its bearers,—not, as some explain it, *written by us as amanuense s: see below*), **having been inscribed, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God** (so the tables of the law were “*written with the finger of God*,” Exod. xxxi. 18); **not on stone tables** (as the old law, ib.), **but on (your) hearts**, (which are) **tables of flesh.** The apparent change in the figure in this verse requires explanation. The Corinthians are his Epistle of recommendation, both to themselves and others; *an Epistle, written by Christ, ministered by St. Paul; the Epistle itself* being now the subject, viz. the Corinthians, *themselves the writing of Christ*, inscribed, not on tables of stone, but on hearts, tables of flesh. The Epistle itself, written and worn on St. Paul’s heart, and there known and read by all men, consisted of the *Corinthian converts*, on whose hearts Christ had written it by His Spirit. *I bear on my heart, as a testimony to all men, that which Christ has by His Spirit written in your hearts.* On the tables of stone and of flesh, see Exodus, as above, Prov. iii. 3; vii. 3; Jer. xxxi. 31–34, and on the contrast, also here hinted at in the background, between the heart of stone and the heart of flesh, Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26.

4-11.] His honour of his apostolic office was no personal vanity, for all the ability of the Apostles came from God, who had made them able ministers of the new covenant (4-6), a ministration infinitely more glorious than that of the old dispensation (7-11).

4.] The connexion with the foregoing is immediate: he had just spoken of his consciousness of apostolic success among them (which assertion would be true also of other churches which he had founded) being his worldwide recommendation. It is *this confidence* of which he here speaks. **Such confidence, however, we possess through Christ toward God:** i.e. ‘it is no vain boast, but. rests_on power imparted to us through Christ in regard to God, in reference to God’s work and our own account to be given to Him.’

5.] Not that (i. e. ‘I mean not, that’....) **we are able to think any thing** (to carry on *any* of the processes of reasoning or judgment, or faith belonging to our apostolic calling: there is no ellipsis, ‘any thing great,’ or ‘good,’ or the like) **of ourselves, as if from ourselves** (*of ourselves* and **from ourselves**, are parallel the latter more definitely pointing *to ourselves* as the origin),—**but our ability** (to carry on any such Process) **is from** (as its source) **God;**

6.] who also hath enabled us as ministers of the new covenant (i. e. the *gospel*, Eph. iii. 7; Col. i. 23, as distinguished from the *law*: see 1 Cor. xi. 25; Gal. iv. 24:—the *stone tables* and *fleshy tables* are still borne in mind, and lead on to a fuller comparison of the two covenants),—**not [ministers] of (the) letter** (in which, viz. in formal and literal precept, the Mosaic law consisted), **but of (the) spirit** (in which, viz. in the inward guiding of the Spirit of God, the gospel consists. Bengel remarks: ‘Paul, even when he was *writing*, was carrying on the ministration not of the letter, but of the *spirit*: Moses, even when he wrote not, was a minister of the *letter*’): **for the letter** (mere formal and literal precept of the law) **killeth** (as in Rom. vii.,—**brings** the knowledge of sin, its guilt and its punishment. The reference is not to *natural death*, which is the result of sin where there is *no law*: nor to the law *executing punishment*), **but the spirit** (of the gospel, i.e. God’s Holy Spirit, acting in and through Christ, Who “*became a life-giving Spirit*,” 1 Cor. xv. 45. See also below, ver. 17) **giveth life** (not merely life eternal, but the *whole new life* of the man of God, see Rom. vi. 4, 11; viii. 2, 10).

7-11.] And this ministration is infinitely ae glorious than was that of Moses under the old Covenant. He argues from the less to the greater: *from the transitory glory of the killing letter, to the abiding glory of the life-giving Spirit.*

7.] But (passing to another consideration,—the comparison of the two ministrations) **if the ministration of death, in letters** (of that death which the law, the code of literal and formal precept, brought in), **engraven on stones** (it seems strange that the

ministration should be described as engraven on stones; but the *ministration* is the *whole putting forth* of the dispensation, the purport of which was summed up in the decalogue, written on stones. The decalogue thus written was, as in ver. 3, *ministered* by Moses), **was [constituted] in glory** (as its state or accompanying condition:—the abstract as yet, to be compared with the glory of the other:—the concrete, the brightness on the face of Moses, is not yet before us), so that the sons of Israel could not fix their eyes on (they were afraid to come nigh him, Exod. xxxiv. 30—so that **could not** is not said of physical inability, but of inability from fear) **the face of Moses on account of the glory of his face, which was transitory** (supernaturally conferred for a season, and passing away when the occasion was over): **how shall not rather the ministration of the Spirit** (by these words is meant *the ministration of life in the Spirit*, as formally opposed to the other:—but it is not so expressed, because the Spirit is the *principle of life*, whereas the Law only *led to death*) **be** (future, because the glory will not be accomplished till the manifestation of the kingdom) **in glory?**

9.] For (an additional reason in arguing from the less to the greater) **if the ministration of condemnation was (or, is) glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness abound in glory.**—The ministration of *condemnation*, because (Rom. vii. 9 ff.) the Law detects and condemns sin:—the ministration of *righteousness*, because (Rom. i. 17) therein the righteousness of God is revealed and imparted by faith. **10.] For** (substantiation of the foregoing “*much more*”) **indeed** (or, even) **t hat which hath been glorified** (viz. the *ministration of condemnation*, which was *glorious* by the brightness on the face of Moses) **hath not been glorified** (has lost all its glory) **in this respect** (i. e. when compared with the gospel), on account of (i. e. when we take into consideration) **the surpassing glory** (viz. of the other ministration).

11.] For (a fresh ground of superiority in glory of the Christian over the Mosaic ministry) **if that which is being done away** (not here, as above, the brilliancy of the visage of Moses, for that *was* the glory, but *the ministry itself*, the whole purpose which that ministry served, which was parenthetical and to come to an end) **was with glory, much more is that which abideth** (the everlasting gospel) **in glory.**

12, 13.] F rom a consciousness of this superior glory of his ministration, the Apostle uses great plainness of speech, and does not, as Moses, use a veil.

12.] viz. that expressed by **such an hope**, ver. 8: the hope of the ultimate manifestation of exceeding glory as belonging to his ministration.

great openness of speech “Tell me, towards whom? God, or the disciples? Clearly, towards you, under instruction as disciples. That is, we every where speak freely, concealing nothing, reserving nothing, suspecting nothing, but speaking out plainly: and we have no fear of dazzling your eyes, as Moses did those of the Jews.” Chrysostom.

13.] and (do) not (place a veil on our face) **as Moses placed a veil on his face, in order that** (see below) **the sons of Israel might not look stedfastly on the termination of that which was being done away** (viz. his *ministration*, see ver. 11, but spoken of as *glorified*: ‘the glory of his ministration’).—A mistake has been made with regard to the history in Exod. xxxiv. 35, which has considerably obscured the understanding of this verse. It is commonly assumed, that, Moses *spoke* to the Israelites, *having the veil on his face*, and this is implied in our version—‘till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.’ But the Hebrew and Septuagint gave a different account: “and when he ceased speaking to them, he put a veil over his face.” He spoke to them *without* the veil, with his face shining and glorified:—when he had done speaking, he placed the veil on his face: and that, not because they were afraid to look on him, but as here, *that they might not look on the end, or the fading, of that transitory glory*; that they might only see it as long as it was the credential of his ministry, and then it might be withdrawn from their eyes. Thus the declaration of God’s will to them was not in openness of speech, but was interrupted and broken by intervals of concealment, which ours is not. The opposition is twofold: (1) between the *veiled* and the *unveiled* ministry, as regards the mere fact of concealment in the one case, and openness in the other: (2) between the ministry which was suspended by the veiling, that its end might not be seen, and that which proceeds from glory to glory, *having no termination*. On the common interpretation, Commentators have found an almost insuperable difficulty in the purpose here stated, “*that the children of Israel might not*,” &c. The usual escape from it has been to render it (see A.V.), ‘*so that the Israelites could not*’, as in vér. 7. But this is an ungrammatical rendering of the Greek. I may remark also, that the narrative in Exodus, the Septuagint version of which the Apostle here closely follows (see below on ver. 16), implies that the brightness of Moses’ face had *place not on that one occasion only, but throughout his whole ministry* between the and the people. *When he ceased speaking to them, he put on the veil: but whosoever he went in before the Lord to speak to Him, the veil was removed till he came out, and had spoken to the Israelites all that the Lord had commanded him*, during which speaking they saw that his face shone,—and after which speaking he *again put on the veil*. So that the veil was the symbol of concealment and transitoriness: the part revealed they might see: beyond that, they could not: the ministry was a broken, interrupted one; its end was wrapped in obscurity.—In the words, “*the end of that which was being done away*,” we must not think, as some Commentators have done, of *Christ* (Rom. x. 4), any further than it may be hinted in the background that when the law came to an end, He appeared.

14–18.] The contrast is now made between the CHILDREN OF IsRAEL, on whose heart this veil still is in the reading of the

O.T., and US ALL (Christians), who with uncovered face behold the glory of the Lord. This section is parenthetical. Before and after it, the *ministry* is the subject: in it, *they to whom the ministry is directed*. But it serves to shew the *whole spirit* and *condition* of the two classes, and thus further to substantiate the character of openness and. dom asserted of the Christian **14.** **But (also) their understandings were hardened**] These words evidently refer, as well as what follows, not, to the *end*, which they *did not see*, but to that which they *did see*: to that which answers to the present reading of the Old Covenant, viz. *the word of GOD imparted by the ministration of Moses*. And by these words the transition is made from the form of similitude just used, to that new one which is about to be used; ‘*not only was there a veil on Moses’ face, to prevent more being known, but also their understandings were darkened: there was, besides, a veil on their hearts*’—To refer this hardening of their understandings to the present hard-heartedness of the Jews under the freedom of speech of the Gospel, as some do, is, in my view, to miss the whole sense of the passage. No reference whatever is made to the state of the Jews *under the preaching of the gospel*, but only as the objects of the O.T. ministration,—*then*, under the oral teaching of Moses,—now, in the reading of the O.T.—In order to understand what follows, the change of similitude must be carefully borne in mind.

the same vaill] ‘the veil once on Moses’ face,’ is now regarded as laid on *their hearts*. It denoted the ceasing, the covering up, of his oral teaching; for it was put on *when he had done* speaking to the people. Now, his oral teaching has altogether ceased, and the *ministry* is carried on by *a book*. But as when we *listen*, the speaker is the *agent*, and the hearers are *passive*,—so on the other hand, when we *read*, we are the *agents*, and the book is *passive*. The book is the same to all: the difference between those who understand and those who do not understand is now a *subjective* difference—the veil is no longer on the face of the speaker, but on the *heart of the reader*. So that of necessity the form of the similitude is changed.

For (answering to an understood clause, ‘and remain hardened’) **to the present day the same veil** (which was once on the face of Moses) **remains at the reading of the Old Covenant** (i. e. ‘*Testament*: as we now popularly use the words, *the book comprising the ancient Covenant*), **the discovery not being made** (by the removal of the veil: literally, it **not being unvailed**), **that it (the Old Test.) is done away** (or, being done away: but the other is better here) **in Christ** (that the Old Covenant has passed away, being superseded by Christ). This I believe to be the only admissible sense of the words, *consistently with the symbolism of the passage*. The renderings, ‘*remains not taken away—for it (i. e the veil) is done away in Christ*,’ and (as A.V.) ‘*remaineth.... untaken away... which veil is done away in Christ*,’—are inadmissible: (1) because they make the verb **is done away**, which throughout the passage belongs to the *glory of the ministry*, to apply to the *veil*: and (2) because ‘they give no satisfactory sense. It is not *because* the veil can only be done away in Christ, that it now remains untaken away on their hearts, but *because their hearts are hardened*. The word in the original, **unvailed**, has been probably chosen, as is often the practice of the Apostle, on account of its relation to *vail*,—**it not being unvailed to them that...**

15.] But (reassertion of the fact that it is not unvailed, with a view to the next clause) **to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart** (understanding).

16.] Here, the object of comparison is, *the having on a veil, and taking it off on going into the presence of the Lord*. This *Moses did*: and the choice of the *same words* as those of the Septuagint, shews the closeness of the comparison: “*But whosoever Moses went in before the Lord to speak to Him, the veil was taken away*.” This shall likewise be done in the case of the Israelites: **when it** (i. e. *their heart*,—not *Israel*, as some think,—nor *Moses*, as others) **turneth to the Lord** (here again the word is carefully chosen, being the very expression of the Septuagint, when the Israelites, having been afraid of the glory of the face of Moses, returned to him after being summoned by him:—“*they were afraid to come nigh him; and Moses called them, and they turned to him....*”—a **nd the Lord** appears to be used for the same reason), **the veil is taken away** (not, as A.V., ‘*shall be*,’ because “*their heart*” is the subject, and thus the *taking away* becomes an individual matter, happening whenever and wherever conversion takes place). Let me restate this,—as it is all-important towards the understanding of verses 17, 18. ‘When their heart goes in to speak with God,—ceases to contemplate the dead letter, and begins to commune with the Spirit of the old covenant (the Spirit of GOD), then the veil is removed, as it was from the face of Moses.’

17.] Now the Lord is the Spirit: i.e. the **Lord** of ver. 16 is the *Spirit*, whose word the O.T. is: the *spirit*,—as opposed to the *letter*;—which *giveth life*, ver. 6: meaning, ‘*the Lord*,’ as here spoken of, “*Christ*,” ‘*is the Spirit*,’ is identical with the Holy Spirit: not personally nor essentially, but, as is shewn by the words “*the Spirit of the Lord*” following, *in this department of His divine working*:—*Christ*, here, *is the Spirit of Christ*. **and where the Spirit of the Lord** (see above) **is, is liberty**. They are fettered in spirit as long as they are slaves to the letter, as long as they have the *veil on their hearts*; but when they turn to the Lord the *Spirit*, which is not *a Spirit of bondage, but of adoption*, Rom. viii. 15,—and by virtue of whom “*thou art no longer a slave, but a son*,” Gal. iv. 7,—then they are at liberty.

18.] But (the sight of the Jews is thus intercepted; in contrast to whom) **WE all** (‘*all Christians*: not ‘we Apostles and teachers:’ the contrast is to the children of Israel above), **with unvailed face** (the *veil* having been removed at our conversion: the stress is on these words) **beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord** (i. e. Christ: from ver. 16, 17. The gospel is this mirror, the ‘*Gospel of the glory of God*,’ ch. iv. 4, and we, looking on it with unveiled face, are the contrast to the Jews, with veiled hearts reading their law), **are being transfigured into the same image** (which we see in the mirror: the image of the glory of Christ, see Gal. iv. 19; and 1 John iii. 3. But the change here spoken of is a *spiritual* one, not the bodily change at the

Resurrection: it is going on here in the process of sanctification) **from glory to glory** (this is explained, either [1] ‘*from one degree of glory to another:*’ so most Commentators and De Wette, or [2] ‘*from [by] the glory which we see, into glory,*’ as Chrysostom: “from the glory of the Spirit, into our own glory which shall be wrought in us.” I prefer the former, as the other would introduce a tautology, the sentiment being expressed in the words following), as **by the Lord the Spirit.** The transformation is effected *by the Spirit*, the Author and Upholder of spiritual life, who “takes of the things of Christ, and shews them to us,” John xvi. 14, see also Rom. viii. 10, 11,—who sanctifies us till we are holy as Christ is holy; the process of renewal after Christ’s image is *such a transformation as may be expected by the agency of the Lord, the Spirit*,—Christ Himself *being the image*, see ch. iv. 4. The other renderings are out of the question, viz.: (1) “*the Lord of the Spirit*,” i.e. Christ, whose Spirit He is; which seems to me to convey very little meaning, besides being an expression wholly unprecedented: (2) that of A.V. and of the Vulgate, and others, ‘*the Spirit of the Lord*,’ and (3) that of Chrysostom and others, ‘*the Spirit who is the Lord*.’

2 Corinthians: Chapter 4

IV. 1–6.] Taking up again the subject of his freedom of speech (ch. iii. 12), he declares his renunciation of all deceit, and manifestation of the truth to every man (ver. 2), even though to some the Gospel be hidden (vv. 3, 4). And this because he preaches, without any selfish admixture, only the pure light of the Gospel of Christ (vv. 5, 6).

1.] For this cause refers to the previous description of the freeness and unvailedness of the ministry of the Gospel, and of the state of Christians in general (ch. iii. 18).

seeing we have this ministry further expands and explains the opening words.

even as we received mercy (from God at the time of our being appointed; compare the same expression, 1 Tim. i. 16) belongs to what went before, not to what follows, and is a qualification, in humility, of **seeing we have**—‘possessing it, not as our own, but in as far as we were shewn mercy.’

we shrink not back; i.e. **we do not behave ourselves in a cowardly manner**, do not shrink from plainness of speech and action. The conduct repudiated is the opposite of manly plain-speaking. **But** (cowardice alone prompting concealment in such a case, where it does not belong to the character of the ministry itself) **we have renounced the hidden things of shame** (the having any views, ends, or practices which such as have them hide through shame: not, as De Wette, *the hidden things of infamy or dishonesty*. **Shame** is subjective, meaning fear arising from expectation of exposure. It is plain from the context that it refers, not to crimes and unholy practices, but *to crooked arts*, of which men *are ashamed*, and which perhaps were made use of by the false teachers), **not walking** (having our daily conyersation) **in craftiness, nor handling deceitfully** (see ch. ii. 17, note) **the word of God; but by the manifestation of the truth** (as *our only means*, see 1 Thess. ii. 3, 4;—the words come first, as emphatic) **recommending ourselves** (a recurrence to the charge and apology of ch. iii. 1 ff.) **to** (with reference to,—to the verdict of) **every conscience of men** (so literally: every possible variety of the human conscience; implying there is no conscience but will inwardly acknowledge this, however loath some among you may be outwardly to confess it) **in the sight of God** (as ch. ii. 17: not merely to satisfy men’s consciences, but with regard to God’s all-seeing eye, which discerns the heart).

3.] And even if (‘which I concede;’—see note 1 Cor. iv. 7) **our gospel** (the gospel preached by us) **is vailed, it is among** (in the estimation of) **the perishing that it is vailed.** The allegory of ch. iii. is continued,—the hiding of the gospel by the veil placed before the understanding.

4.] in whose case (it is true that) **the god of this world** (the Devil, the ruling principle in the men of this world) **[hath] blinded** (the original is **blinded**, and is said of a purely historical event: but in an English version we are obliged to convey the idea by the perfect, **hath blinded**) **the understandings of the unbelieving** (i. e. who, the perishing, are victims of that blinding of the understandings of the unbelieving, which the Devil is habitually carrying on), **that the illumination of** (i. e. *shining from*) **the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God** (recurrence to the allegory of ch. iii. 18; Christ is the image of God, “*the shining forth of His glory*,” Heb. i. 3, into which same image, we, looking on it in the mirror of the gospel, are changed by the Spirit; but which glorious image is not visible to those who are blinded by Satan), **might not shine forth** (“unto them” is omitted in all our most ancient MSS.; the object of the god of this world was not merely to prevent them from being illuminated, but to stop the shining forth altogether).

5, 6.] We have no reason to use trickery or craft, having no selfish ends to serve: nor concealment, being ourselves enlightened by God, and set for the spreading of light.

5.] For we preach not (the subject of our preaching is not) **ourselves** (Meyer understands ‘as lords;’ but as De Wette observes, this would anticipate the development of thought which follows, the contrast between Christ Jesus as *lord*, and

ourselves as your servants, not being yet raised), **but Christ Jesus as Lord; and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake** (on account of Him and His work).

6.] Because (explains and substantiates the last clause,—that we are your servants for Jesus' sake) (*it is*) **God, Who said Out of darkness light shall shine** (allusion to Gen. i. 3: the change to the words in the A.V. appears to have been made because the words cited are not the exact ones spoken by the Creator), **that shined in our hearts** (the physical creation bearing an analogy to the spiritual), **in order to** (so literally) **the shining forth** (to others) **of the knowledge (in us) of the glory of God in the face of Christ** ('the glory of God manifested in Christ'). The figure is still derived from the history in ch. iii, and refers to the brightness on the face of Moses: the only true effulgence of the divine glory is from the face of Christ.

7-18.] This glorious ministry is fulfilled by weak, afflicted, persecuted, and decaying vessels, which are moreover worn out in the work (7-12). *Yet the spirit of faith, the hope of the resurrection, and of being presented with them, for whom he has laboured, bears him up against the decay of the outer man, and all present tribulation* (13-18). We are not justified in assuming that a definite reproach of personal meanness had induced the Apostle to speak thus. For he does not deal with any such reproach here, but with matters common to all human ministers of the word.—All this is a following out in detail of the assertion, "we shrink not back," ver. 1, already enlarged on in *one of its departments*, that of *not shrinking from openness of speech*,—and now to be put forth in *another*, viz. *bearing up against outward and inward difficulties*.—If any polemical purpose is to be sought, it is the setting forth of the abundance of sufferings, the glorying in weakness (ch. xi. 23, 30), which substantiated his apostolic mission: but even such purpose is only in the background; he is pouring out, in the fulness of his heart, the manifold discouragements and the far more exceeding encouragements of his office.

7.] this treasure, viz. '*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God*', ver. 6. "Being that he had spoken many and great things concerning this ineffable glory: that no one might say, 'But how is it that being partakers of so great glory we remain in the mortal body?' he goes on to say that this very thing is the chief marvel, and the grandest proof of God's power, that an earthen vessel can carry so much brightness, and he the deposit of such a treasure." Chrysostom. Some think the treasure to be the whole ministry: but it seems simpler to refer it to that which has immediately preceded, in a style like that of Paul, in which each successive idea so commonly evolves itself out of the last. The **vessel** is the **body**, not the whole personality; the "*outer man*" of ver. 16; see ver. 10. And in the troubles of the body the personality shares, as long as it is bound up with it here. Herodotus tells a story of Darius Hystaspes, that he stored up his tribute by melting the gold into earthen pots, and when he wanted it, breaking the vessels.

the exceeding greatness of the power, viz. of the power consisting in the effects of the apostolic ministry (1 Cor. ii. 4), as well as in the upholding under trials and difficulties.

may be God's] may belong to (i. e. be seen to belong to) **God**.

8-10.] He illustrates the expression, **earthen vessels**, in detail, by his own experience and that of the other ministers of Christ.

8.] (literally) **in every way (or, on every side) pressed, but not (inextricably) crushed; in perplexity, but not in despair** (a literal statement of what the last clause stated *figuratively*: as Stanley, "bewildered, but not benighted"); **persecuted, but not deserted** (the word is used of desertion both by God and by man. Some (among whom is Stanley) would render this clause '*pursued, but not left behind*'; but the sense thus would be quite beside the purpose, as the Apostle is speaking not of rivalry from those who as runners had the same end in view, but of troubles and persecutions); **struck down** (as with a dart during pursuit. It is ordinarily interpreted of a *fall in wrestling*; but *figures* from the games would be out of place (see above) in the present passage, and the attempt to find them has bewildered most of the modern Commentators), **but not destroyed**;

10.] always bearing about in our body (i. e. ever in our apostolic work, having our body exposed to and an example of: or perhaps even, as Stanley, "bearing with us, wherever we go, the burden of the dead body.") But see below) **the killing** (so literally: the word occurs in the New Test. only once besides,—in Rom. iv. 19, where it signifies figuratively, utter lack of strength and vital power. But here the literal sense, '*the being put to death*,' must evidently be kept, and the expression understood as in 1 Cor. xv. 31, where the Apostle states that he *dies daily*) **of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body**: i.e. 'that in our bodies, holding up against such troubles and preserved in such dangers, may be shewn forth that mighty power of God which is a testimony that Jesus lives and is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour:'—not, 'that our repeated deliverances might resemble His Resurrection, as our sufferings His Death, as Meyer, who argues that the literal meaning must be retained, as in the other member of the comparison, owing to the same expression, "in our body," occurring. But, as De Wette justly observes, the bodily deliverance is manifestly a subordinate consideration, and the **life** of far higher significance, testified indeed by the body's preservation, but extending far beyond it.

11.] Explanation and confirmation of ver. 10.—**For we which live** (which live, asserting that to which *death* is alien and strange, an antithesis to being "*delivered unto death*," as in the other clause "*life*" is to "*in our mortal flesh*") **are alway being delivered unto death** (in dangers and persecutions, so ch. xi. 23, "*in deaths oft*") **on account of Jesus** (so in Rev. i. 9, John

was in Patmos “*on account of the word of God, and on account of the testimony of Jesus Christ*”), **that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh** (the antithesis is more strongly put by *mortal flesh* than it would be by *mortal body* in Rom. viii. 11, the *flesh* being the very food of decay and corruption). By this antithesis, the wonderful greatness of the divine power is strikingly brought out: God exhibits DEATH in the *living*, that He may exhibit LIFE in the *dying*.

12.] By it is also brought out that which is here the immediate subject,—the vast and unexampled trials of the apostolic office, all summed up in these words: **So then death worketh in us, but life in you;** i.e. ‘*the trials by which the dying of Jesus is exhibited in us, are exclusively and peculiarly OUR OWN*,—whereas (and this is decisive for the spiritual sense of the word *life*) *the life, whereof we are to be witnesses, extends beyond ourselves, nay, finds its field of action and energizing IN YOU.*’ Chrysostom, Calvin, and others, take the verse ironically, “*so we have all the danger, and you all the profit:*” but such a sentiment seems alien from the spirit of the passage. Meyer, as unfortunately, limits the meaning to *natural life*, whereas (as above) the context plainly evinces *spiritual life* to be meant, not merely natural.—In Rom. viii. 10, 11, the vivifying influence of His Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is spoken of as extending to the body also; *here*, the upholding influence of Him who delivers and preserves the body, is spoken of as vivifying the whole man: LIFE, in both places, *being the higher and spiritual life, including the lower and natural.* ‘And, in our relative positions,—of this *life*, YE are the examples,—a church of believers, alive to God through Christ in your various vocations, and not called on to be exhibited in an arena (1 Cor. iv. 9: Heb. x. 33), as WE are, who are (not indeed excluded from that *life*,—nay, it flows from us to you,—but are) more especially examples of conformity to the *death* of our common Lord:—in whom DEATH WORKETH.’

13–18.] ENCOURAGEMENTS: and first, FAITH, which enables us to go on preaching to you. But (contrast to the foregoing state of trial and working of death in us) **having the same spirit of faith** (not *distinctly* the *Holy Spirit*,—but still not merely a *human disposition*: the indwelling Holy Spirit penetrates and characterizes the whole renewed man) **with that described in the Scriptures, I believed, therefore I spoke** (the connexion of the words in the Psalm is not clear); **we too believe, and therefore we also speak** (continue our preaching of the gospel, notwithstanding such vast hindrances within and without);

14.] knowing (fixes, and expands in detail the indefinite term “*we believe*,” and thus gives the *ground* of their *speaking*,—not, as commonly understood, the *matter* of which we speak) **that He which raised up** (from the dead) **the Lord Jesus will raise up us also** (*from the dead hereafter*, see 1 Cor. vi. 13, 14:—not in a figurative resurrection from danger, as Meyer and some others) **with Jesus** (not necessarily in 4 figurative sense; even in the passages where a figurative sense is the prevailing one, it is only as built upon the fact of a *literal* ‘raising with Christ,’ to be accomplished at the great day: see Eph. ii. 6; Col. iii. 1, 3; 1 Thess. v. 10), **and present us with you** (i. e. as in Jude 24, *at the day of His coming*). The idea that the Apostle could not thus speak of the resurrection, because he expected (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; i. 8; ch. i. 13, 14) to be *alive* at the day of Christ, is best refuted by this very passage, ch. v. 1 ff., where *his admission of at least the possibility of his death* is distinctly set forth. The fact is that the anticipation of being raised here, having respect rather to the contrast of the future glory with the present suffering, does not necessarily imply one or other side of the alternative of being quick or dead at the Lord’s coming, but embraces all, quick and dead, in one blessed resurrection-state.—This confidence, of being presented at that day “*together with you*” is only analogous to his expressions elsewhere; see ch. i. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20;

15.] Explanation of **together with you** as a ground of his trust: with reference also to what was said of *life working in you*, ver. 12; viz. that all, both the sufferings and victory of the ministers, are *for the church*: see the parallel expression, ch. i. 6, 7.

For all things (of which we have been speaking: or perhaps hyperbolically, ALL THINGS, the whole working and arrangements of God, as in 1 Cor. iii. 22) **are on your behalf, that Grace, having abounded by means of the greater number** (who have received it), **may multiply the thanksgiving** (which shall accrue) **to the glory of God.** Besides this rendering (1), *three others* are possible: (2) ‘*that Grace, having abounded, may, on account of the thanksgiving of the greater number, be multiplied to the glory of God:*’ (3) ‘*that Grace, having abounded, may, by means of the greater number, multiply the thanksgiving to the glory of God:*’ (4) ‘*that Grace, having multiplied by means of the greater number the thanksgiving, may abound to the glory of God.*’ See these discussed, and my reason for preferring (1), in my Greek Test. As to the *sense* see the very similar sentiment, ch. i. 11), *thanksgiving* is the highest and noblest offering of the Church to God’s glory (compare Ps. 1. 23): *that this may be rendered*, in the best sense, as the result of the working of grace which has become abundant by means of the many recipients, is the great end of the Christian ministry.

16–18.] Second ground of encouragement—HOPE.

16.] Wherefore (on account of the hope implied in the faith spoken of ver. 14, which he is about to expand) **we shrink not back** (as in ver. 1: but *now*, owing to *despair*); **but** (on the contrary) **though even our outward man is being wasted away** (i. e. our *body*, see Rom. vii. 22, *is*, by this continued “*killing*” and “*working of death*,” *being worn out*):—he is not as yet speaking of dissolution by death, but only of gradual approximation to it), **yet our inner (man) is being renewed day by day**: i.e. ‘our spiritual life, the life which testifies the life of Jesus, even in our mortal bodies (ver. 11), is continually fed with fresh accessions of grace: see next verse. So Chrysostom,—“How renewed? by faith, by hope, by zeal, by determination to brave down danger. The more the sufferings of the body, the more does the soul learn to value her hopes, and becomes

brighter, as gold more and more purified in the fire."

17, 18.] Method of this renewal.

For the present light (burden) of our affliction worketh out for us (‘effects,’ ‘is the means of bringing about’) **in a surpassing and still more surpassing manner** (i. e. so as to exceed beyond all measure the tribulation) **an eternal weight of glory** (*eternal weight* opposed to *present lightness*).

18.] Subjective condition under which this working out takes place. **while we look not at** (‘propose not as our aim,’ ‘spend not our care about’) **the things which are seen** (“*earthly things*,” Phil. iii. 19. Chrysostom strikingly says, “All things that are seen, whether they be torment, or ease: so as to be neither relaxed by the one, nor borne down by the other”), **but at the things which are not seen** (not, things *invisible*: for as Bengel well remarks, “many things which are not seen, shall become visible when the pilgrimage of faith is over”): for the things **which are seen are temporary** (not, as A.V., ‘*temporal*,’ ‘belonging to time,’ but ‘*fleeting*,’ ‘only for a time,’—i. e. till the day of Christ); **but the things which are not seen are eternal.** Chrysostom again: “Whether they be reigning in glory, or suffering in torment: that he may deter them by the one, and encourage them by the other.”

2 Corinthians: Chapter 5

CHAP. V. 1–10.] Further specification of the hope before spoken of, as consisting in anticipation of an eternity of glory after this life, in the resurrection-body: which leads him evermore to strive to be found well-pleasing to the Lord at His coming: seeing that all shall then receive the things done in the body. **1.] For** (gives the reason of ch. iv. 17,—principally of the emphatic words of that verse, “*more and more exceedingly*,”—showing how it is that so wonderful a process takes place) **we know** (as in ch. iv. 14,—are convinced, as a sure matter of hope) **that if** (‘*supposing*;’ indefinite and doubtful: if this delivering to death continually should end in veritable death. The case is hypothetical, because many will be glorified without the *dissolution* taking place: see 1 Cor. xv. 51, 53) **our earthly tabernacle-dwelling** (the similitude is not derived from the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, nor from the tabernacle, but is a common one with Greek writers. “The whole passage is expressed through the double figure of a house or tent, and a garment. The explanation of this abrupt transition from one to the other may be found in the image which, both from his occupation and his birthplace, would naturally occur to the Apostle,—the tent of Cilician hair-cloth, which might almost equally suggest the idea of a habitation and of a vesture,” Stanley. Chrysostom observes: “Having said a *tabernacle-dwelling*, and having thus implied easy taking down and transitoriness, he opposes to this the house which is *eternal*”) **were dissolved** (‘a gentle word,’ Bengel: i.e. ‘*taken down*,’ ‘done away with’), **we have** (as Meyer rightly remarks, the *present tense* is used of the time at which the dissolution shall have taken place. But even then the dead have it not in *actual possession*, but only prepared by God for them against the appearing of the Lord: and therefore they are said to have it *in the heavens*. The A.V., according to the present punctuation, yields no sense: ‘*not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*’) **a building** (no longer a tabernacle) **from God** (‘in an especial manner prepared by God,’ ‘*pure from God's hands*: not as contrasted with our earthly body, which, see 1 Cor. xii. 18, 24, is also *from God*), **a dwelling not made with hands** (here again, not as contrasted with the *fleshy body*, for *that too* is “*not made with hands*,” but with *other dwellings*, which are “*made with hands*.”) Remember again the Apostle’s occupation of a tent-maker), **eternal, in the heavens** (see above).—A difficulty has been raised by some Commentators respecting the *intermediate disembodied state*,—how the Apostle here regards it, or whether he regards it at all. But none need be raised. The dwelling which in this verse is said, *at the time of dissolution*, to be **in the heavens**, is, *when we put it on*, in the next verse, **our own dwelling-place**, which is

from heaven. Thus the intermediate state, though lightly passed over, as not belonging to the subject, is evidently in the mind of St. Paul.—Some Commentators understand *these words themselves* (“*a dwelling not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens*”) of the *intermediate state of absence from the body*: others, of an *immediate glorified body in heaven*, to be united with the body of the resurrection. Calvin hesitates: “It is uncertain whether he intends the state of blessed immortality which awaits the faithful after death, or the incorruptible and glorious body which shall be after the resurrection. In either of these senses there is nothing objectionable: but I prefer taking it, that the beginning of this building shall be the blessed state of the soul after death, and its consummation the glory of the final resurrection.” But if this be so, (1) the parallel will not hold, between the *dwelling* in one case, and the dwelling in the other,—and (2) the language of ver. 2 is against it, see below.

2.] For also (our knowledge, that we possess such a building of God, even in the case of our body being dissolved, is testified by the *earnest desire* which we have, to put on that new body *without such dissolution taking place*. See the similar argument in Rom. viii. 18, 19) **in this** (tabernacle) **we groan** (see Rom. viii. 23), **longing** (i. e. because we desire, the reason of our groaning) **to put on over this** (viz. *by being alive at the day of Christ*, and *not dissolved* as in ver. 1:—see on ver. 4 below).—The similitude is slightly changed: the *house* is now to be *put on*, as an outer garment, *over the fleshy body*) **our dwelling-place** (the word is slightly different from that rendered *dwelling* in ver. 1: that one being more general, this more appropriated to an inhabitant) **from heaven** (treated now as if *brought with* the Lord at His coming, and put upon us who are alive, and

remain then.— “Therefore,” says Bengel, “this dwelling-place *is not heaven itself*):

3.] seeing that we shall verily be found (shall prove to be) **clothed** (‘*having put on clothing*,’ viz. *a body*), **not naked** (*without a body*: see this rendering justified in my Greek Test., where I have also discussed the other translations. The verse asserts strongly, with a view to substantiate and explain ver. 2, the *truth of the resurrection or glorified body*; and I see in it a reference to the deniers of the resurrection, whom the Apostle combated in 1 Cor. xv.: its sense being this: “*For I do assert again, that we shall in that day prove to be clothed with a body, and not disembodied spirits.*” **4.] Confirmation and explanation of ver. 2.**

For also (a reason, why we long to clothe ourselves with our house which is from heaven, as in ver. 2) **we who are in this tabernacle** (literally, the tabernacle, i.e., before spoken of) **do groan, being burdened** (not by *troubles and sufferings*, nor by the *body itself*, which would be directly opposite to the sense: but, for the reason which follows): **because we are not willing** (literally, as follows) **to divest ourselves (of it), but to put on (that other) over it, that our mortal part may** (not, die, but) **be swallowed up by life** (absorbed in and transmuted by that glorious principle of life which our new clothing shall superinduce upon us).—The feeling expressed in these verses was one most natural to those who, as the Apostles, regarded the coming of the Lord as *near*, and conceived the possibility of their living to behold it. It was no terror of death as to its consequences—but a natural reluctance to undergo the *mere act of death as such*, when it was within possibility that this mortal body might be superseded by the immortal one, *without it*.

5.] This great end, the *having the mortal part swallowed up by life*, is justified as the object of the Apostle’s fervent wish, seeing that it is for this very end, that this may ultimately be accomplished, that God has wrought us (see below) and given us the pledge of the Spirit;—**But** (and this my wish has reason: for) **He which wrought us** (prepared us, by redemption, justification, sanctification, which are the qualifications for glory) **unto this very purpose** (viz. that last mentioned—*having the mortal part swallowed up by life*—not the investing ourselves with the body from heaven, a mere accident of that glorious absorption: see below) **is God, who gave unto us** (a sign that our preparation is of Him) **the earnest** (see ch. i. 22, and note) of (gen. of apposition) **the Holy Spirit**.—The Apostle, in this verse, is no longer treating exclusively of his own wish for the more summary swallowing up of the mortal by the glorified, but is shewing that *the end itself*, which he individually, or in common with others then living, wishes accomplished, in this particular form of *investiture, is, under whatever form brought about*, that for which all the preparation, by grace, of Christians, is carried on, and to which the earnest of the Spirit points forward.

6–8.] *He returns to the confidence expressed in ver. 1; that however this may be, whether this wish is to be fulfilled or not, he is prepared to accept the alternative of being denuded of the body, seeing that it will bring with it a translation to the presence of the Lord.*—**Being confident then** (because it is God’s express purpose to bring us to glory, as in last verse) **always** (either under all trials: or, always whether this hope of investiture over the mortal body, or the fear of the other alternative, be before us,—which latter I prefer), **and knowing** (not as the ground of our confidence, but correlative with it, and the ground of the contentment expressed below), **that whilst in our home in the body, we are absent from our home in the Lord** (the similitude of the body as our *dwelling* being still kept up: see similar sentiments respecting our being wanderers and strangers from our heavenly home while dwelling in the body, Phil. iii. 20; Heb. xi. 13; xiii. 14), for (proof of our *absence from our home in the Lord*) **we walk** (the usual figurative sense, ‘go on our Christian course,’—not literal, as of pilgrims) **by means of faith, not by means of appearance** (not “sight,” as rendered in A.V. and by many Commentators (the substantive cannot possibly have this meaning)—i. e. ‘faith, not the actual appearance of heavenly things themselves, is the means whereby we hold on our way,’ a sure sign that we are *absent from* those heavenly things), still (the last clause seeming to have somewhat dashed that confidence) **we are confident, and are well content rather to go from (out of) our home in the body, and come to our home with the Lord**: i.e. ‘if (as in ver. 1) a dissolution of the body be imminent, even that, though not according to our wish, does not destroy our confidence: for so sensible are we that dwelling in the body is a state of banishment from the Lord, that we prefer to it even the alternative of dissolution, bringing us, as it will, into His presence.’

9, 10.] Wherefore (this being so,—our confidence, in event whether of death, or of life till the coming of the Lord, being such) **it is also** (besides our confidence) **our aim** (literally, *our ambition*), **that whether present** (dwelling in the body) **or absent** (from the body at the time of His appearing), **we may be well-pleasing unto Him** (i. e. ‘whether *He find us in the body or out of the body, we may meet with His approval in that day*.’) That this is the sense, the next verse seems to me to shew beyond question. For there he renders a reason for the expressions, and fixes the participles as belonging to the time of His coming. But this meaning has not, that I am aware, been seen by the Commentators, and in consequence, the verse has seemed to be beset with difficulties. See them discussed in my Greek Test.).

10.] For (explanation and fixing of the words “*we may be well-pleasing unto Him*,” as to *when* and *how* testified) **we all** (and myself among the number) **must be made manifest** (not merely ‘*appear*,’ which is a most unfortunate rendering of the A.V., giving to the reader merely the idea of “*appearing before*,” as when summoned to a magistrate) **before the judgment seat** (the *bema*, or “*lofty seat*, raised on an elevated platform, usually at the end of the basilica, or hall of justice, so that the figure of the judge must: have been seen towering above the crowd which thronged the long nave of the building.” Stanley) **of**

Christ; that each one may receive (the technical word for *receiving wages*) **the things (done) in the body** (literally, **through the body**, as a medium or organ of action), **according to the things which he did** (in the body), **whether** (it were) **good or bad** (singular, as abstract). I may observe that no more definite inference must be drawn from this verse as to the place which the saints of God shall hold in the general judgment, than it warrants; viz. that they as well as others, shall be manifested and judged by Him (Matt. xxv. 19): *when, or in company with whom*, is not here so much as hinted.

11–13.] Having this ambition,—being a genuine fearer of God (see below)—*he endeavours to make his plain dealing EVIDENT TO MEN, as it IS EVIDENT TO GOD. He will give the Corinthians whereof to boast concerning him in reply to his boastful adversaries: this his conduct being, whatever construction may be put on it, on behalf of God and them.* **11.] Knowing then, i.e. being then conscious of** (*'no strangers to'*) **the fear of the Lord** (not as A.V., *'the terror of the Lord'*;)—but meaning, this wholesome fear of Christ as our Judge. The expression is particularly appropriate for one who had been suspected of double-dealing and insincerity: he was inwardly conscious of the principle of the fear of God guiding and leading him), **we persuade men** (the stress on men, *'it is MEN that we attempt to persuade.'*—*Of what?* Some say, *of the truth of Christ's religion; win them to Christ*, which however suits the rendering *'the terror of the Lord,'* better than the right one: Chrysostom and others say, *'of our own integrity,'* and from the context it must have reference to *ourselves*; and I therefore agree with this latter interpretation, I may remind the English reader that there are few texts so much perverted as this one, owing to the rendering of the A.V. It is frequently understood, and preached upon, as if it meant, *"knowing how terrible God is, we persuade others to fear Him."* a meaning as far as possible from the Apostle's mind), **but unto God we are already made manifest** (we have no need to persuade HIM of our integrity, for He knows all things); **and I hope** (am confident) **that we have been made manifest in your consciences also.**

12.] We are not recommending ourselves again unto you (see ch. iii. 1), **but are giving you occasion of glorying on our behalf** (of us, as your teachers, and to the upholding of our ministry), **that ye may have it** (viz. occasion of boasting) **against those who glory in face** (fair outward appearance) **and not in heart** (i. e. in those things which they exhibit, and are outwardly, see ch. xi. 18, not in matters which are *in their hearts* implying that their hearts: are indifferent about the matters of which they boast).

13.] For (ye have good reason to boast of me as your teacher; seeing that) **whether we have been mad** (there is no need to soften the meaning to *'inordinately praise ourselves,'* as Chrysostom; or *'act foolishly,'* as others. *"Paul, thou art mad,"* had been once said, Acts xxvi. 24, and doubtless this charge was among the means taken to depreciate his influence at Corinth), **it was for God** (in God's work and to His glory): **or whether we be of sound mind, it is for you** (on your behalf. 'So that you have reason to glory in us either way; if you will ascribe to us madness, it is a holy **madness, for God;** if you maintain and are convinced of our sobriety, it is a soundness *in your service*').

14–19.] And his constraining motive is the love of Christ: who died for all, that all should live to Him; and accordingly the Apostle has no longer any mere knowledge or regards according to the flesh, seeing that all things are become new in Christ, by means of the reconciliation effected by God in Him, of which reconciliation Paul is the minister.

14.] For (reason of his devotion under all reports and circumstances, *to God and to you*, as in last verse) **Christ's love** (not *love to Christ*, as *"the love of Christ"* in English may mean,—but *Christ's love to men*, subjective, as most Commentators; as shewn in *His death*, which is the greatest proof of love, see Rom. v. 6–8. Meyer remarks that the genitive of the person after *'love'* is with St. Paul always subjective,—Rom. v. 5, 8; viii. 35, 39; ch. viii. 24; xiii. 13; Eph. ii. 4; Phil. i. 9 al., whereas with St. John it is not always so, 1 John v. 3.—St. Paul expresses love *of*, i.e. *towards*, by the preposition *'to,'* Col. i. 4. 1 Thess. iii. 12) **constraineth us** (a better word could not be found: the idea is that of *forcible limitation*, either in a good or a bad sense,—of *confining to one object, or within certain bounds*, be that one object a painful or glorious one,—those bounds the narrow limits of distress, or the course of apostolic energy, as here. *'Constraineth us,'* generally:—limits us to one great end, and prohibits our taking into consideration any others. "There is a figure in this verb *constraineth*: it is signified, that it cannot be but that he who truly weighs and considers that marvellous love which Christ testified towards us by His death, being as it were bound to Him and attached by the tightest bond, should devote himself to His service." Calvin), **having judged this** (i. e., **because we formed this judgment**, viz. at our conversion:—learned to regard this as a settled truth), **that One died for all** (not only, for the benefit of all,—but *instead of* all, suffered death in the root and essence of our humanity, as the second Adam. This death on behalf of *all men* is the absolute objective fact: that *all* enter not into the benefit of that Death, is owing to the nonfulfilment of the subjective condition which follows), **therefore all died** (i. e. therefore, in the death of Christ, *all, the all* for whom He died, *died too*: i.e. see below, became planted in the likeness of His death,—died to sin and to self, that they might live to Him. This was true, *objectively*, but *not subjectively* till such death to sin and self is realized in each: see Rom. vi. 8 ff. The rendering of the A.V., *"then were all dead,"* is inadmissible both from the construction of the original, and the context: *'One on behalf of all died, therefore all died:* if One died the death of [belonging to, due from] all, then all died [in and with Him]':)

15.] and he died for all, that they which live (in *this life*, see ch. iv. 11:—not, *'those who live spiritually,'* which would altogether strike out the sense, for it is, *that they may live spiritually, &c.*) **should no longer (now that His death has taken**

place) live unto themselves (with *self* as their great source and end of action, to please and to obey),**but unto Him that died, and rose again for them (for**, i.e. strictly ‘*in the place of:*’ as the Death of Christ is *our death*, so His Resurrection is *our resurrection*).

16.] So that (*accordingly*,—consistently with our judgment expressed ver. 15) **we** (in opposition to our adversaries, the false teachers; not *general* of *all Christians*,—but as yet spoken of the Apostle himself [and his colleagues?]) henceforth (since this great event, the Death of Christ) **know no man according to** (as he is in) **the flesh** (Meyer well remarks: “Since all are [ethically] dead, and each man is bound to live only to Christ, not to himself, our knowledge of others must be altogether independent of that which they are *according to the flesh*,—must not be regulated *according to the flesh*. And the connexion of ver. 16 with ver. 15 shews that we must not take these words as furnishing the *subjective rule of our knowledge*,—so that the explanation would be, ‘according to mere human knowledge,’ ‘apart from the enlightening of the Holy Spirit,’ see ch. i. 17; 1 Cor. i. 26,—but as the *objective rule*, cf. ch. xi. 18; John viii. 15; Phil. iii. 4,—so that ‘*to know any one according to the flesh*’ means ‘*to know any one according to his mere human individuality*,—‘*to know him as men have judged him by what he is in the flesh*, not by what he is *according to the spirit*, as a Christian, as *a new creature*, ver. 17. He who knows no man *according to the flesh* has, e.g. in the case of the Jew, entirely lost sight of his Jewish origin,—in that of the rich man, of his riches,—in that of the learned, of his learning,—in that of the slave, of his servitude, &c., see Gal. iii. 28”): **if even we have known Christ according to the flesh, now however we know Him (thus) no longer.**—The fact alluded to in the concessive clause, is, not any personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus while He was on earth, but that view of Him which St. Paul took *before his conversion*, when he knew Him only according to His outward apparent standing in this world, *only as Jesus of Nazareth*.—Observe, the stress is not on the word **Christ**, ‘If we have known even Christ after the flesh,’ &c., as usually understood; but on have known, as belonging to the *past*, contrasted with our *present* knowledge. Observe likewise, that “*according to the flesh*,” as above also, is not to be taken as the subjective qualification of our knowledge, but as belonging to the word **Christ**,—‘*Christ according to the flesh*.’—St. Paul now, since his conversion, knew Him no longer as thus shewn, but as declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness. At that time God was pleased to **reveal His Son** in him, Gal. i. 16. See by all means Stanley’s remarks, om the absence of all local and personal recollections of our Lord’s life, in the apostolic age.

17.] So that (additional inference from what has gone before) **if any man is in Christ** (‘in Christ, i.e. in union with Him: Christ being the element in which by faith we live and move), **he is a new creature** (or ‘*creation*,’—the act implying here the result of the act. See Col. iii. 10, 11; Eph. ii. 10; iv. 23.—‘He has received,’ ‘passed into,’ ‘a new life,’ John iii. 3): **the old things** (of his former life—all the old selfish and impure motives, views, and prejudices) **are passed away** (there does not appear to be any allusion, as Chrysostom thinks, to the passing away of Judaism, but only to the *new birth*, the antiquation of the former unconverted state, with all that belonged to it); **behold** (a reminiscence of Isa. xliii. 18, 19), **they** (the old things) **are become new.**

18.] And all things (in this new creation: he passes to a more general view of the effects of the death of Christ—viz. our *reconciliation to God*) **are of God** (as their source), **who reconciled us** (*all men*, from next verse, where “*the world*” is parallel) **to Himself through Christ** (as an atonement, an expiatory sacrifice, ver. 21, for sin which made us “*God’s enemies*,” see Rom. v. 10), **and gave** (committed) **unto us** (Apostles, not mankind in general; for had it been so,—in the next verse which is parallel, ‘*into their hands*, not ‘*into our hands*,’ must have stood after “*them*” and “*their*” just preceding) **the ministration of the reconciliation** (the duty of ministering in that office, whose peculiar work it is to proclaim this reconciliation: so “*the ministration of righteousness*” ch. iii. 9—Observe, that the reconciliation spoken of in this and the next verse, is that of *God to us*, absolutely and objectively, through His Son: that whereby He can complacently behold and endure a sinful world, and receive all who come to Him by Christ. This, the subjective reconciliation,—*of men to God*,—follows as a matter of exhortation, ver. 20);

19.] to wit (or how), that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ (was cannot, as in the A.V., belong to **in Christ**, ‘*God was in Christ*, reconciling’ &c. This participle is *past*: He has accomplished the reconciliation.—**The world**, i.e., the **whole world**,—*man, and man’s world, entire, with all that therein is*, see Col. i. 20, but considered, see “*them*” and “*their*” below, as *summed up in man*), **not reckoning unto them their trespasses** (the participle is a *present* one: He does not, after this reconciliation, impute to any man his trespasses); **and having put into our hands** (literally, **placed in us**; ‘*laid upon us*, as our office and charge, and, besides, ‘*empowered us for, putin our souls by His Spirit*.’—‘*Us*,’ viz. Apostles and teachers) **the word of the reconciliation** (as ‘*the word of the Cross*,’ 1 Cor. i. 18).

20, 21.] He describes his office as that of an ambassador for Christ, consisting in beseeching them, ON THEIR PART, to be reconciled to God: and that, in consideration of the great Atonement which God has provided by Christ.—On Christ’s behalf then (i. e. in pursuance of the imposition on us of the “*word of the reconciliation*”) **we are ambassadors, as though God were intreating by us: we pray** (‘*you*,’ but not uttered as an integral part of the present text, not a request *now made and urged*, as Rom. xii. 1; he is *describing the embassage*; we are ambassadors, and in our embassage it is our work to beseech—‘*Be ye, &c.*’) **on Christ’s behalf, Be reconciled to God:**—‘*be reconciled*,’ strictly *passive*: «God was the RECONCILER—let this reconciliation *have effect on you*—enter into it by faith.’ Our A.V., by inserting the word ‘*ye*,’ has

given a false impression, making it appear as if there were an emphasis on it, corresponding to God being reconciled to *us*,—whereas it is the simple *being reconciled* in that reconciliation in which *God was in Christ, the Reconciler*.

21.] states the great fact on which the exhortation to be reconciled is grounded:—viz. the unspeakable gift of God, to bring about the reconciliation.—It is introduced without a ‘*for*’ (which has been supplied), as still forming part of the *word of the reconciliation*.—**Him who knew not sin** (with what reference is this said? Some think, to the Christian’s necessary idea of Christ; others, to God’s judgment of Him. I much prefer to either, regarding it as said with reference to Christ Himself, Who said, John viii. 46, “*Which of you convicteth Me of sin?*” He was thus one ‘*who knew not*,’ i.e. by contact, personal experience, ‘*sin*.’ See, for the sense, 1 Pet. ii. 2; Heb. vii. 26. **He made (to be) sin** (not, ‘*a sin-offering*,’ as Augustine and others, for the word seems never to have the meaning: and if it had, the former sense of the same word in this same sentence would preclude it here: nor “*a sinner*,” as Meyer, and others: but, as De Wette, and others, SIN, abstract, as opposed to RIGHTEOUSNESS which follows: compare “*a curse*,” Gal. iii. 13. He, on the Cross, was the Representative of Sin,—of the sin of the world) **for us** (or, *instead of us*: I prefer here the former, because the purpose of the verse is to set forth how great things God has done *for us*:—the other, though true, does not seem so applicable.—The words for us are emphatic); **that we might become (at once, and by this one act**. The form of the word in the original necessitates this,—joining the whole justification of all God’s people, as one act accomplished, with the Sacrifice of Christ) **the Righteousness of God** (see above: representatives of the Righteousness of God, endued with it and viewed as *in it*, and examples of it) **in Him** (im union with Him, and by virtue of our standing in Him).

2 Corinthians: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. 1–10.] He further describes his apostolic embassage, as one of earnest exhortation not to receive the grace of God in vain (vv. 1, 2), and of approving himself, by many characteristics and under various circumstances, as the minister of God (vv. 3–10).

1.] with Him is not expressed in the original, but these are evidently the right words to supply: with God, Whose representatives they were, and Whose grace they recommended. This is implied not only in what went before, but, in the words, “*the grace of God*,” of our verse itself.—**Moreover, while working with God, we also intreat that ye** (when preaching to *you*,—or others, when preaching to others: he still is *describing his practice* in his ministry, not using a direct exhortation to the Corinthians) **receive not the grace of God** (i. e. the reconciliation above spoken of) **to no purpose** (i. e. un-accompanied by sanctification of life).

2.] *Ground of the exhortation*: viz. the importance of the present time as the day of acceptance, shewn by a Scripture citation.—**For He** (God, with whom we are fellow-workers, and whose grace we re-command) saith, “**In an accepted time** (Heb. ‘*in the season of grace*’) **I heard thee, and in the day of salvation I helped thee:**” **behold** (inserted for solemnity—to mark the importance of what follows), **NOW is the favourably-accepted time** (the word is a strong term,—the *very* time of *most favourable* acceptance, said from the ful-ness of his feeling of the greatness of God’s grace); **behold, NOW is the day of salvation.** “For he who striveth in such a time, when so much of God’s gift is shed “abroad, in which grace is so great, shall easily gain the prize.” Chrysostom. The prophecy is one directly of the Lord Jesus, as the restorer and gatherer of his people; and the time of acceptance is the interval of the offer of the covenant to men, con-ceded to Him by the Father.

3–10.] And this doing, he approves himself as the minister of God by various characteristics, and under manifold circumstances in life.

3.] This word, **giving**, and all the following participles, vv. 9, 10, qualify the verb **we intreat**, in ver. 1, shewing the pains and caution used by him to enforce this exhortation by his example as well as his precept. So Grotius: “He shews how much in earnest is the advice of one who, in order that he may gain his end, shrinks from no manner of sufferings.” But evi-dently, before the list is exhausted, he passes beyond the mere confirmation of his preaching, and is speaking generally of the characteristics of the Christian ministry.

offence; literally, **stum-bl-ling**; see Rom. xiv. 13.

that the ministry be not blamed] or reproached. The **ministry**, the office itself, would be reproached, if cause of offence were found in the character of its bearers.

4. as God’s ministers, recommending ourselves] recommending ourselves, as ministers of God should do: not, *recommending ourselves as ministers of God*: the ambiguity of the A.V. might have been avoided by a different arrangement of words: ‘*in all things, as the ministers of God, approving ourselves*.’ The fol-low-ing nouns, following in each case the preposition **in**, are all in specification of **in every thing**: but not all of the same sort: some signify *instruments by which*, some, *situations in which*, some *both these*. Bengel remarks: “A notable gradation. ‘There follow thrice three particulars of suffering

(i. e. from **tribulation** to **fast-ings**), by which patience is exercised: *troubles, inflictions, labours.*"

5.] On stripes, see Acts xvi. 23, and ch. xi. 23, 24.

imprisonments] At Philippi only *as yet*, as far as we know from the narrative of the Acts;—but there must have been many other occasions, see eh. xi. 23. He *may* have been imprisoned at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts xiii. 50, and at Lystra, xiv. 19, and at Corinth, xviii. 12, 11: and we cannot tell what may have befallen him during his journeys, Acts xv. 41; xvi. 6; xviii. 23.

in tumults] See Acts xiii. 50; xiv. 5, 19; xvi. 22; xvii. 5; xviii. 12, and above all, xix. 23–41.

labours] The word usually, and here, signifies ‘*labour in the Lord*,’ for His sake. So also the verb ‘*to labour*,’ Rom. xvi. 6, 12 (twice), Chrysostom and others interpret it of his manual work, 1 Cor. iv. 12; but see ch. xi. 23, where this can hardly be; it is most probable that the *weariness of his excessive apostolic labour* was in his mind.

watchings] Chrysostom says, “During the nights in which he taught, or perhaps even wrought with his hands also.” But I would rather believe the *watchings* to have been *watchings through anxiety* for the churches.

in fastings] This is generally taken to refer to involuntary hunger and thirst. But the word does not appear to be ever so used; and in ch. xi. 27, Paul himself distinguishes “*in fastings*” from “*in hunger and thirst*.” The strict meaning of fastings must therefore be retained.

6.] The nine preceding substantives (see on ver. 4) have expanded the word **patience**. We now resume the main catalogue, with **in pureness**, which is variously explained: *of bodily chastity*:—*of unselfishness*:—I prefer to understand it to mean *general purity of character*,—unblameableness of life, and singleness of purpose.

in knowledge] of the Gospel, in a high and singular degree; see 1 Cor. ii. 6 ff.

in kindness] a kind and considerate demeanour.

in the Holy Ghost] as the Power by Whom all these motives are wrought.

7. in the word of truth] is taken by some as *subjective*,—‘in speaking, or teaching truth’—‘*in discourse, the contents whereof were truth*.’ the other (objective) sense is better, in the **word of the truth**, viz. the Gospel in which we labour.

in the power of God] viz. the Power spoken of ch. iv. 7,—the power manifested in every part of our apostolic working,—not merely in miracles.

through (**in** is changed for **through**, first apparently *on account of* the weapons: the word *armour*, in our present acceptance of it, means only the defensive casing: of the body, whereas this includes all the weapons, of offence and defence. “They are the weapons **of**, i.e. marking them more distinctly as *instruments*,—and then continued) **the weapons of righteousness** (*belonging to*,—or *furnished by*,—*the righteousness which is of faith*. That panoply, *part of which* only in the more particular specification of Eph. vi. 13–17, viz. the breastplate, is allotted to *righteousness*,—is here *all* assigned to it.—Some of the ancient Commentators understand by the word, ‘*instruments*,’ as in Rom. vi. 13, and interpret these instruments to be, *situations and opportunities of life*, whether prosperous, on the *right-hand*, or adverse, *on the left*: but the other interpretation is in better accordance with the Apostle’s habit of comparison,—see ch. x. 4; Eph. vi. 13 ff.; 1 Thess. v. 8).

which are on the right and left: i.e. encompassing and guarding the whole person. Most recent Commentators explain it, both *right-handed*,—i. e. *of attack*, the sword and spear,—and *left-handed*,—i. e. *of defence*, the shield: but the original seems to require the other interpretation. On the interpretation *prosperity* and *adversity*, see above.

8.] Perhaps the *instrumental* signification of **through** need not be strictly retained. The preposition, once adopted, is kept for the sake of parallelism, though with various shades of meaning. Here it points out the *medium through which*. Thus understood, these two pairs in ver. 8 will form an easy transition from instrumental, through medial, to the passive characteristics which follow.

as deceivers] From speaking of *repute*, he passes to the *character* of the *repute*.—In all these capacities and under all these representations or misrepresentations, we, as ministers of God, recommend ourselves. In these following clauses a new point is perhaps brought out, viz. the difference of our *real state* from our *reputed one*. That this is the case with “*as dying, and, behold, we live*,” and all following, is of course clear. But is it so with the two clauses preceding that one? Do they mean, ‘*as deceivers, and yet true, as unknown, and yet well known*,’ or,—‘*as deceivers, and as true men, as unknown, and as well known*?’ I own I am not clear on this point: but rather prefer the latter alternative (see in my Greek Test.). In the English text, I

have kept literally to the Greek, supplying nothing, but leaving the ambiguity where it was.

9.] and, behold, we live, is much stronger, more triumphant, than “*and living*” would have been.

as chastened] Surely we must now drop altogether the putative meaning of the *as*. ‘The sense has been (see above) some time verging that way, and in the clauses which follow, the *as* expresses just what it does in “*being, as we are*”... viz. “*as God’s ministers*.”—Ps. cxviii. 18, “*The Lord hath chastened me sore: but He hath not given me over unto death*,” seems to have been in the Apostle’s mind.

10.] Here even more clearly than before, the first member of the clause cannot express the opinion of his adversaries, but must point to the matter of fact. **poor** again can hardly have been *reproach*, but sets forth the *fact*—**as poor men, but enriching** (not by distribution of alms, as Chrysostom and others think, but by imparting spiritual riches; see 1 Cor. i. 5) **many**;—**as having nothing** (in the sense in which they who “*have*” are to be as though they “*had not*,” 1 Cor. vii. 29,—in the improper sense of ‘to possess,’ in which we here use the word—*thus*, we have nothing, are destitute), **but possessing** (finally and as our own, our inheritance never to be taken away; in that sense of the word ‘*to possess*’ which this world’s buyers are *not* to use, 1 Cor. vii. 30) **all things**. See a similar ‘possession of all things,’ 1 Cor. iii. 22: though this reaches further than even that,—to the boundless riches of the heavenly inheritance.

11—VII. 1.] EARNEST EXHORTATIONS TO SEPARATIONS FROM UNBELIEF AND IMPURITY.

11–13.] These verses form a conclusion to the preceding outpouring of his heart with regard to his apostolic ministry, and at the same time a transition to the exhortations which are to follow. **11.] Our (my) mouth is open** (the word seems to refer to the free and open spirit shewn in the whole previous passage on the ministry, in which he had so liberally imparted his inner feelings to them) **towards you, Corinthians** (“the addition of their name is significant of much love, and of warmth, and of rhetorical skill: for it is our habit to cast about in our conversation constantly the bare names of those we love.” Chrysostom. See Phil. iv. 15; Gal. iii. 1, which last is written under a very different feeling), **our (my) heart has become enlarged**. These last words are very variously explained. Chrysostom and others understand them of the *expansive effect of love* on the heart: Luther and others, of the *enlargement of joy*, which does not however agree with “*be ye enlarged also*,” below: nor with the general context, either of what precedes or of what follows: for to refer it to ch. vii. 4, is evidently far-fetched, the intermediate matter being of such a different character. I believe the precise sense will only be found by taking into account the “*be ye enlarged also*,” below, and the occurrence of the expression in Ps. cxix. 32, “*I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart*.” Some light is also thrown upon it by the words “*receive (make room for) us*,” ch. vii. 2. The heart is considered as a *space*, wherein its thoughts and feelings are contained. We have seen the same figure in our expressions, ‘large-hearted,’ ‘narrow-minded.’ In order to *take in a new object of love*, or of desire, or of ambition, the heart must be *enlarged*. The Apostle has had his heart *enlarged* towards the Corinthians: *he could and did take them in*, with their infirmities, their interests, their Christian graces, their defects and sins: but *they did not and could not take him in*: he was misunderstood by them, and his relation to them disregarded. This he here asserts, and deprecates. He assures them of *their* place in *his* heart, which is *wide enough for*, and *does contain them*; and refers back to this verse in ch. vii. 3, thus: “*I have said before, that ye are in our hearts*”... He tells them, ver. **12.]** that they are not straitened in *him*, i.e. that any constraint which they may feel towards him, any want of confidence in him and persuasion of his real appreciation of their state and interests, arose not from *his* being *really* unable to appreciate *them*, and love them, and advise them,—but from *their*

own confined view of him, of his love, his knowledge of and feeling for them. **13.] as a recompence in the same kind**, i.e. in the same manner, as a return for my largeness of heart to you.

as unto my children (explains the use of the word **recompence**—it being naturally expected of children, that they should *requite* the love and care of their parents, by corresponding love and regard).

14—VII. 1.] Separate yourselves from unbelief and impurity. On the nature of the connexion, Stanley has some good remarks. He now applies to circumstances which had arisen among the Corinthians the exhortation which in ver. 1 he described himself as giving in pursuance of his ministry of reconciliation. The following exhortations are *general*, and hardly to be pressed as applying only to *partaking of meats offered to idols*, or to *marriage with unbelievers*,—but regard all possible connexion and participation,—all leanings towards a return to heathenism which might be bred by too great familiarity with heathens.

Be not (literally, **become not**, perhaps, as expressing, ‘do not enter into those relations in which you must become’) **incongruous yokefellows** (the word in the original, and the idea, come from Lev. xix. 19) **with unbelievers**.

what fellowship] i.e. ‘*what share in the same thing, what community, righteousness* is the state of the Christian, being justified by faith: he is therefore excluded from **iniquity** (literally, *lawlessness*), the *proper fruit of faith* being *obedience*.

light, of which we are the children, 1 Thess. v. 5, and not of darkness.

15. Belial] The meaning of the Hebrew word is ‘*contemptibleness*,’ ‘*wickedness*:’ it is found 1 Sam. ii. 12, and other places: see reff. It appears to have been subsequently personified, and used as here for a name of the Evil One.

16. for ye are...] explanation of “*the temple of God*,” as applying to them, and justification of it by a ion from the prophetic Scriptures. ‘The words cited are compounded of Levit. xxvi. 12, and Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27. **17.]** The necessity of separation from the heathen enforced by another citation, Isa. lii. 11, freely given from memory; and **I will receive you** being moreover substituted from Ezek. xx. 34, for ‘*the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rereward*.’ **The unclean thing** must be understood of the *pollutions of heathenism generally*, not of any one especial polluted thing, as meat offered to idols. **18.]** The citation continues, setting forth the blessings promised to those who do thus come out from heathendom. Various passages of the O.T. are combined. In 2 Sam. vii. 14, we have “*I will be his father, and he shall be my son*.” The expression “*m y sons and my daughters*” is found Isa. xlivi. 6; and “*thus saith the Lord of Hosts*” begins the section from which the former clauses are taken, 2 Sam. vii. 8.

2 Corinthians: Chapter 7

VII. 1.] *Inference from the foregoing citations:*—seeing that we have such glorious promises, we are to purify ourselves (not merely, ‘keep ourselves pure:’ purification belongs to *sanctification*, and is a *gradual* work, even after conversion). **of flesh**, as the actual instrument and suggester of pollution: **of spirit**, as the recipient through the flesh, and when the ent, the retainer and propagator of umess. The exhortation is *general*: against impure acts and impure thoughts.

perfecting holiness gives the *positive* side of the foregoing *negative* exhortation: every abnegation and banishing of impurity is a positive advance of that sanctification, in the fear of God (as its element), to which we are called.

2-16.] CONCERNING THE EFFECT ON THEM, AND RESULTS IN THEIR CONDUCT, WHICH HIS FORMER EPISTLE HAD PRODUCED.

2-4.] He introduces the subject by a friendly assurance of *his* love and bespeaking of *theirs*, as before in ch. vi. 11, 13.

2.] Receive, make room for, see above on ch. vi. 13.

wronged no man] Reasons why they should make room for him in their hearts: **we** (when he dwelt among them,—the verbs refer to a set time, not to his course hitherto) **wronged no man** (in outward acts, namely,—in the exercise of his apostolic authority, or the like),—**we ruined no man** (this probably also of outward conduct towards others),—**we cheated no man**.—To understand these verbs as applying to the contents of the former Epistle, is very forced. If “*wronged*” had really referred to the severe punishment of the incestuous person, “*ruined*” to the delivering him over to Satan, and “*defrauded*” to the power which Paul gained over them by this act of authority, surely we should have found more express indication of such reference in the text. But no allusion has *as yet* been made to the former Epistle; and therefore it is much better to understand the words generally of the time when he resided among them, “In how many ways of which history says nothing, may such ruining of others be laid to the charge of Paul? How easily might his severe visitation of sin, his zeal for eleemosynary collections, his habit of lodging with members of the churches, and the like, have been thus unfavourably characterized!” Meyer.

3.] I do not say it (ver. 2) **for condemnation** (with a condemnatory view, in a spirit of blame: there is no “*you*,” or “*of you*,” expressed, nor should it be supplied. He means, ‘I do not say ver. 2 in any but a loving spirit’): **for** (and this shews it) **I have said before** (viz. ch. vi. 11 f. see note there), **that ye are in our hearts** (this was implied in ch. vi. 11) **to die together and live together**, i.e. ‘*so that I could die with you or live with you*.’

4.] confidence, which leads to and justifies *boldness*, not here ‘*of speech*,’ as A.V. after Chrysostom and others.

his glorying to others, in speaking of them.

comfort, literally, **the comfort** (which I have received), viz. that furnished by the intelligence from you: though this is anticipating what follows vv. 7, 9, I cannot but believe it to have been already before the Apostle’s mind.

I overflow] literally, **I am made exceedingly to abound**: see Matt. xiii. 12.

with [the] joy; see above.

in all our tribulation refers to *both* preceding clauses. What *tribulation* he means is explained in the next verse. **5-7.]** *The*

intelligence received from them through Titus, and its comforting effect on the Apostle's mind.

5.] **For** gives a reason for the mention of *tribulation* above: **indeed** connects with ch. ii. 12, 13, where he has spoken of the trouble which he had before leaving Troas. **For indeed** (literally, also), **after our coming to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest** (there is a slight, but very slight distinction, from ‘*I had no rest in my spirit,*’ ch. ii. 12. *Titus was now present*, so that that source of inquietude was removed; but the outward ones, of tightings generating inward fears (but see below), yet remained. No further distinction must be drawn—for the words “*within were fears,*” evidently shew that “*flesh*” must be taken in a wide sense); **without, fightings** (the omission of “*were*” renders the description more graphic), **within, fears.** It is best, as St. Paul speaks of *our flesh*, to understand **without** of *the state of things without him* personally, contentions with adversaries, either within or without the church, and **within** of *that within him* personally, fears, for ourselves, for others, or for *you*, how you might have received our letter.

6.] It was the *not finding Titus* which had given him such uneasiness in Troas, ch. ii. 12.

in the coming of Titus, as the conditional element or vehicle of the consolation. So also twice in next verse.

7.] **not only...., but also in the comfort with which he was comforted concerning yon:** i.e. ‘we shared in the comfort which Titus felt in recording to us your desire,’ &c. see ver. 13. *He rejoiced in announcing the news: we in hearing them.*

your longing desire—either longing to see me, or longing to fulfil my wishes. The former is the more simple.

your lamentation] viz. in consequence of my rebuke in my former Epistle. **the more**, viz. than before, at the mere coming of Titus.

8–11.] *He expresses his satisfaction at the effect produced on them, as superseding his former regret that he had grieved them.*

8.] **Because** (reason of the joy just expressed) **though I even grieved you with** (by means of) **my epistle, I do not** (now) **repent** (having written it), **though I even did repent it** (before the coming of Titus). Erasmus and others take the words to mean ‘*even supposing I repented it before, which was not the case:*’ Calvin and others think that the word **repent** is loosely used for **regret**. The reason of these departures from grammatical construction and the meaning of words, is, for fear the Apostle should seem to have *repented of* that which he did under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But there is no difficulty, even on the strictest view of inspiration, in conceiving that the Apostle may have afterwards regretted the severity which he was guided to use; we know that Jonah, being directed by inspiration to pronounce the doom of Nineveh, endeavoured to escape the unwelcome duty: and doubtless St. Paul, as a man, in the weakness of his affection for the Corinthians, was tempted to wish that he had never written that which had given them pain. But the result shewed that God’s Spirit had ordered it well, that he should thus write; and this his repentance was *repented of again*.

9.] Now, emphatic as distinguishing his present joy from his repentance: *now that I know not only of your grief, but of its being grief which worked repentance.*

after a godly manner] literally, ‘*with reference to God,*’ i.e. with a mind regarding God’s estimate of your conduct.

in order that ye might in nothing be damaged by us: not ‘*so that ye did not...;*’ as many Commentators:—the *divine purpose* of their grief is indicated; ‘God so brought it about, in order that your grief occasioned by me might have, not an injurious, but a beneficial effect.’

10.] How ‘grief according to God’ produces such an effect. **For grief according to God** (so literally) **works** (brings about, promotes, see reff.) **repentance unto salvation never to be regretted.** The epithet ‘*never to be regretted*’ belongs not to ‘*repentance*,’ but to ‘*salvation:*’ ‘*salvation which none will ever regret*’ having attained, however difficult it may have been to reach, however dearly it may have been bought.

the sorrow of the world, i.e. ‘the grief felt by the children of this world:’ grief for worldly substance, for character, for bereavement, without regard to God’s hand in it.

worketh death] i.e. death eternal, as contrasted with ‘*salvation:*’ not ‘*deadly sickness,*’ or ‘*suicide,*’ as some explain it. The grief which contemplates nothing but the blow given, and not the God who chastens, can produce nothing but more and more alienation from Him, and result in eternal banishment from His presence. The verbs used in the two clauses differ: the former is rather **works**, ‘*contributes to,*’ and the latter **works out**, ‘*results in,*’

11.] *The blessed effects of godly grief on themselves, as shewn by fact.*

this selfsame thing, of which I have been speaking.

what carefulness, i.e. earnestness, as contrasted with your former *carelessness* in the matter.

yea] nay, not *carefulness*, merely,—that is saying too little;—**but.... what clearing of yourselves**] viz. to Paul by means of Titus, asserting their innocence in the matter; see below.

what indignation] against the offender.

what fear] “lest I should come with a rod,” Bengel: *fear of Paul*: not here of God. The context is brought well out by Chrysostom. He says, on **what longing desire**, “meaning, towards myself. Having mentioned **fear**,—in order that he might not seem to be lording it over them, he immediately sets them right by saying, **what longing desire**: which last points to love, not to power.”

what zeal] on God’s behalf, to punish the offender;—**exacting of punishment** being the *infliction of justice itself*. Bengel remarks, that the six nouns preceded by *yea*, fall into three pairs: the first relating to *their own feelings of shame*,—the second to *Paul*, and the third to the *offender*.

In every thing must be understood only of participation of *guilt*: by their negligence, and even refusal to humble themselves (1 Cor. v. 2), they had in some things made common cause with the offender. Of this, now that they had shewn so different a spirit, the Apostle *does not speak*.

the matter,—perhaps, not only, ‘of which I have been speaking,’—but with allusion to the *kind of sin* which was in question.

12.] He shews them that to bring out this zeal in them was the real motive of his writing to them, and no private considerations.

Wherefore, i.e. ‘in accordance with the result just mentioned.’

he that suffered wrong would be the *father* of the incestuous person who “had his father’s wife,” 1 Cor. v. 1.—**It would be** easy for any of the Apostle’s adversaries to maintain that the reproof had been administered from private and interested motives. *But he wrote, in order to bring out their zeal on his behalf* (i. e. to obey his command), *and make it manifest to themselves in God’s sight*. It was not to exhibit to them *his* zeal for them that he wrote, but to make manifest to them, to bring out among them, *their* zeal to regard and obey him.

13. For this cause (literally, **on this account**: on account of the fulfilment of this purpose) **we are comforted; but in addition to** (or, on the occurrence of) **our comfort we rejoiced very much more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all**. A similar declaration to that in ver. 7, where not only the arrival of Titus, but his comfort wherewith he was comforted by them, is described as the ground of the Apostle’s joy. According to the received reading (*‘your comfort,’* see A.V.), the sense would hardly represent the real state of things.

14.] This increased joy was produced by the verification which my former boasting of you to Titus now received.

if I have boasted at all] see one particular in which he boasted of them, ch. ix. 2.

I was not put to shame, viz., by being shewn, on Titus’ coming to you, to have boasted in vain:— ‘but **truthfulness was shewn** to be my constant rule of speech, to whomsoever I spoke.’—**But as we spake** (*generally*, not merely in our teaching) **all things to you in truth** (truthfully), **so also our boasting** (concerning you) **before Titus was** (was proved to be: *was*, as shewn by proof) **truth**. De Wette suggests that the Apostle had described (by anticipation) to Titus in glowing terms the affection and probable prompt obedience of the Corinthians, as an encouragement to his somewhat unwelcome journey.

15.] enlarges the words ‘was found to be truth.’—And his heart is more abundantly (turned) toward you, remembering as he does the obedience of you all, how (i. e. which was shewn in the fact that) **with fear and trembling ye received him.** ‘Fear and trembling,’ i.e. ‘lest ye should not pay enough regard to my injunctions and honour enough his mission from me.’

16.] I rejoice (more expressive than with a connecting particle) **that in every thing I am (re)-assured by you:** ‘am of good courage, in contrast to my former dejection, owing to your good conduct.’

2 Corinthians: Chapter 8

CHAP. VIII. 1—IX. 15.] SECOND PART OF THE EPISTLE: CONCERNING THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS.

1–6.] *He informs them of the readiness of the Macedonian churches to contribute for the poor saints (at Jerusalem), which led him also to beg of Titus to complete the collection at Corinth.* See some interesting geographical and historical notices in Stanley's introduction to this section, edn. 2, pp. 479 f.

1. the grace of God] For every good gift and frame of mind comes by divine grace, not by human excellency: and this occasion was most opportune for resting the liberality of the Macedonian churches on God's grace, that he might not be extolling *them* at the expense of the Corinthians, but holding out an example of the effusion of that grace, which was common to the Corinthians also, if they sought and used it.—The original expression is, **given among,—shed abroad in**, the churches of Macedonia.

2.] how that in much proof of tribulation (though they were put to the proof by much tribulation) **(was) the abundance of their joy** (i. e. their joy abounded), **and their deep poverty abounded unto** (produced abundant fruit, 'so as to bring about'....) **the riches** (the riches which have actually become manifest by the result of the collection) **of their liberality.**

3–5.] Proof of this. **For according to their power, I testify, and beyond their power, voluntarily, with much exhortation beseeching of us the grace and fellowship of the ministry to the saints** (i. e. to allow them a share in that grace and fellowship): **and not as we expected** (i. e. far beyond our expectation), **but themselves they gave first** (i. e. *above all*: as the inducing motive: not first in point of *time*, but in point of *importance*, see Rom. ii. 9, 10) **to the Lord and to us by the will of God** (the Giver of grace, who made them willing to do this: not the same as "*according to the will of God*," which only expresses [whatever it may imply] *consonance with* the divine will: whereas "*by the will of God*" makes the divine will the agent).

6.] So that we besought Titus, that as he had before (before the Macedonians began to contribute: 'during his visit from which he had now returned') **begun it, so he would also complete among you this grace also** (this act of grace or mercy, also,—as well as other things which he had to do among them. It does not belong to **this**,—'*this* grace also, as well as other graces,'—but to **this grace** altogether). **7–15.] Exhortations and inducements to perform this act of charity.**

7.] But marks the transition to an exhortation: breaking off from arguments, of which enough have been alleged.

in faith, see ch. i. 24.

word, and knowledge] for both these, see 1 Cor. i. 5: for the latter, 1 Cor., viii. 1.

in all diligence, because diligence may be manifold, even in a good sense.

this is emphatic here, although it is not in ver. 6: '*this* grace also,'—other graces having been enumerated. Grotius remarks, "Paul was not ignorant of the rhetorical art of stirring the mind by praise."

8.] Lest his last words should be misunderstood, he explains the spirit in which they were said: not as a command, but by way of inducement, by mention of the earnestness of others, and to try the genuineness of their love.

by means of] not as A.V., "*by occasion of*," which is an ungrammatical rendering of the original: he treats the **zeal of others** as the *instrument by which*, in the way of emulation, the effect was to be produced.

9.] Explanation of 'proving the sincerity of your love, by upholding His example in the matter. Whom we ought to resemble.

the (act of) grace:—the beneficence.

that] consisting in this, **that** (literally).

he being rich became poor:—not merely by His renunciation of human riches during His life on earth, but by *His examination of His glory* (Phil. ii. 6, 7), when, as Athanasius says, "He took up into Himself our impoverished nature." The stress is on **for your sakes**, to raise the motive of gratitude the more effectually in them.

that by His poverty (as the efficient cause) **ye might become rich:** viz. with the same wealth in which he was rich,—the kingdom and glory of Heaven, including all the blessings which He came to bestow on us. Chrysostom adds, "If thou dost not believe that poverty creates wealth, consider thy Master, and thou wilt doubt no longer."

10.] Ver. 9 was parenthetic: he now resumes the proposition of ver. 8, that he did not speak by way of command.... **And I give**

my opinion in this matter, the stress being on **opinion**, as distinguished from *command*. “*I give my judgment,*” as rendered in the version of the Five Clergymen, is objectionable here, as conveying the very idea which the Apostle wishes to negative, that of an authoritative decision.

for this (viz. ‘*my giving my opinion, and not commanding*’) **is expedient for you, seeing that ye** (‘My giving my opinion, rather than commanding, is expedient for you, who have already shewn yourselves so willing.’) A *command* from me would be a *lowering* of you, and depreciation of your zeal) **began before them** (the Macedonian churches, see below), **not only the act, but also the mind to act, from a year ago:** i.e., ‘not only were you before them in the deed itself, but also in the will to do it.’—The sense has been missed by many of the Commentators, from not observing the *comparison* implied, and applying it only to the *Corinthians themselves* beginning. In that case, as the *will* comes before the *deed*, to say, you began *not only to do, but also to will*, would be unmeaning. But there are *three steps* in the collection for the saints,—the wishing it, the setting about it, and the completion of it. And the Corinthians had *began not only the second*, but *even the first* of these, before the Macedonians. Long employed as they had then been in the matter, it was more creditable to them to receive *advice* from the Apostle, than *command*. **11.] But** (contrast of your former zeal with your present need to be reminded of it) **now complete the act itself also** (*now shew not only the completion of a ready will in the act begun, but complete the act also*); **that as (there was)** (with you) **readiness of will, so (there may) also (be) completion according to your means** (not, ‘*out of that which ye have,*’ as A.V., but ‘*after the measure of your property*’).

12.] Explanation of the last mentioned qualification,—that on it, zeal being presupposed, and not on absolute quantity, acceptability depends.

For if there is first the willing mind,—according to what it may happen to possess, it is acceptable, not according to what it posseseth not. The construction of the sentence is simple enough: **the willing mind** being the subject throughout, as if personified: readiness in God’s service is accepted if its exertion be commensurate with its means,—and is not measured by an unreasonable requirement of what it has not.

13–15.] Further explanation that the present collection is not intended to press the *Corinthians* according to what they possessed not.

For (it is) not (the collection is not made) **that there may be to others** (the saints at Jerusalem) **relief, and to you distress (of poverty):**

14.] but that, by the rule of equality, at this present time (of their need: the stress is on these words, as suggesting that this relation may hereafter be altered) **your abundance may subserve their deficiency; that also** (supposing circumstances changed) **their abundance may subserve your want.** The reference is still, as is evident from the next verse, to the supply of *temporal wants*, in respect of which there should be a mutual relieving and sharing among Christians. But the passage has been curiously misunderstood to mean, ‘*that their* (the Jewish Christians) *abundance in spiritual things may be imparted to you to supply your deficiency*’ Thus Chrysostom and others,—the *ancients* regarding this imparting as the *Gospel-benefit received from them by the Gentiles* (which however was *past*, not future, and is urged as a *motive for gratitude*, see Rom. xv. 27), and the modern Romanists introducing the monstrous perversion of the attribution of the merits of the saints to others in the next world. So Estius: ‘This passage of the Apostle shews, against the heretics of our time, that Christians of inferior sanctity may be helped, even in another world, by the merits of the saints. And we may note the virtue of alms, which make a man partaker of the merits of him on whom they are conferred.’

that there may be equality: as it is written (i. e. according to the expression used in the Scripture history, of the gathering of the manna), **He that (gathered) much did not exceed** (the measure prescribed by God); and **he that (gathered) little did not fall short** (of it). The fact of *equality* being the only point brought into comparison as between the Israelites of old and Christians now, it is superfluous to enquire minutely *how* this equality was wrought among the Israelites. The quotation is presumed by the Apostle to be familiar to his readers.

16–24.] Of Titus and two other brethren whom Paul had commissioned to complete the collection.

16.] The sense is taken up from ver. 6.

the same, viz. as I have in my heart.

17.] Proof of this: that Titus *received indeed* Paul’s exhortation to go to them (said, to shew his subordination,—or perhaps to authenticate his authorization by the Apostle), but in reality was *too ready to go, to need any exhortation*:—and therefore *set forth* (the past tense, indicating things which *will have passed* before the letter is received) *of his own accord to them.*

18–21. Commendation of a brother sent with Titus.

18.] the brother cannot surely be, as some Commentators have understood, ‘*the brother of Titus*:’ the delicate nature of the mission would require that there should be at least no family connexion between those sent to fulfil it. This and the other are called in ver. 23 “*our brethren*,” and were unquestionably *Christian brethren* in the usual sense. *Who this was*, we know not. Chrysostom and others suppose *Barnabas* to be meant: but there is no historical ground for this, and we can hardly suppose him put under Titus. Others suppose *Silas*: to whom this last objection would also apply: besides that he was well known to the Corinthians, and therefore would not need this recommendation. Origen, Jerome, and others, *Luke*:—and of these, all before Grotius (who pointed out the mistake; which however I see lately reproduced in Mr. Birks’s *Horæ Apostolicæ*, p. 242 f.) suppose the words, “*whose praise in the Gospel*,” to refer to his *gospel*, which he wrote;—but this is altogether without proof, as is the assumption by others that it was *Mark*. It may have been *Trophimus*, who (Acts xx. 4) accompanied Paul into Asia, and (xxi. 29) to Jerusalem: so De Wette and Wieseler. If the expression **whose praise in (the matter of) the Gospel is throughout all the Churches**, is to be compared with any similar eulogium, that of Gaius in Rom. xvi. 23, seems to correspond most nearly: “*Gaius, mine host and [the host] of the whole church*:” but he was *resident at Corinth*, see 1 Cor. i. 14. A Gaius, a Macedonian, is mentioned Acts xix. 29, as one of the fellow-travellers of Paul, as here, together with Aristarchus, which latter we know accompanied him to Jerusalem (but see below on ch. ix. 4).—It must then rest in uncertainty.

19.] Parenthetical (see on ver. 20) adding to his general commendation a particular qualification for this office.

and not only so (i. e. praised in all the churches), **but who was also appointed** (by vote: elected, ordained) **by the churches** (of Macedonia? see ver. 1) **as our fellow-traveller** (to Jerusalem, from what follows) **in** (the matter of: the best English version is **with**) **this charity which is being ministered by us,—in order to subserve the glory of the Lord, and our readiness** (this clause refers not to “*being ministered by us*,” as usually interpreted, but to the *fact related*, the union of this brother with Paul in the matter of the alms, which was done to avoid suspicions detrimental to Christ’s glory, and to the zeal of the Apostle):

20.] **taking heed of this** (the participle belongs to ver. 19, being parenthetical), **that no one blame us** (ver. 18) **in the matter of this abundance** (of contributions) **which is being ministered by us**.

21.] ‘And such caution is in accordance with our general practice.’ See reff. The words are quoted from the Septuagint version of Prov. iii. 4.

22.] Still less can we determine who this *second* brother is. Every possible person has been guessed. Several would answer to the description, ‘*whom we have many times in many matters proved to be earnest*.’ By our uncertainty in these two cases, we may see *how much* is required, to fill up the apostolic history at all satisfactorily.

through the great confidence which he hath toward you: belongs to his present access of diligence, not to the fact of the Apostle having sent him. The brother had, by what he had heard from Titus, conceived a high opinion of the probable success of their mission. **23.] General recommendation of the three. Whether concerning Titus** (we may supply *I speak or I write*, or as in A.V., ‘*any do enquire?*’ or we need not supply any thing), **he is my partner and (especially) my fellow-worker toward yo whether our brethren** (be in question: viz. the two mentioned—but in the original the word is generalized ‘*whether any brethren of ours*’), **they are Apostles** (in the more general sense of Acts xiv. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 6; Phil. ii. 25) **of the churches** (i. e. ‘are of the churches, what we are of the Lord’—persons sent out with authority), **the glory of Christ** (i. e. men whose work tends to Christ’s glory).

24.] Shew then (continue to shew) **to them the proof of your love** (‘*to us*,’ or perhaps, ‘*to your poor brethren*:’—but the former is more likely), **and of our boasting concerning you, in the sight of the churches.**

2 Corinthians: Chapter 9

IX. 1–5.] *He recurs to the collection itself, and prays them that they would make good before the brethren his boasting of them, and prepare it before his own coming.*

1.] The connexion with the last verse is thus, ‘I beseech you to receive the brethren whom I send, courteously: for concerning the *duty of ministration to the saints*, it is surely superfluous for me to write to you who are so prompt already.’ No new subject begins, as some have supposed; nor is there any break in the sense at all. Some obscurity has been introduced unnecessarily, by taking the **ministration for the saints** for *merely this collection which is now making*: whereas the Apostle chooses such general terms as a mild reproof to the Corinthians, who, well aware as they were of the duty of ministering to the saints, were yet somewhat remiss in this particular example of the duty. There is an emphasis on **write**, inasmuch as those who carried this letter would be present witnesses of their conduct.

2.] for (ground of this non-necessity of his writing) **I am aware of your readiness, of which I am in the habit of boasting concerning you to Macedonians** (Bengel remarks on the present tense, that St. Paul was therefore still in Macedonia), **that Achaia** (he does not say *ye*—he is relating his own words to the Macedonians) **hath been ready** (viz. *to send off the money*: and that consequently nothing remained but for authorized persons to come and collect it. The Apostle, judging by their readiness, had made this boast concerning them, supposing it was really so. That this is the sense is shewn by ver. 4) **from last year: and the zeal which proceeds from you** (‘which has its source in you, and whose influence goes forth from you’) **stirred up very many of them** (but not *only* the example of your zeal: see ch. viii. 1).

3.] Yet (contrast, not to his boasting above: implying fear lest he should have been making a vain boast concerning them) **I sent** (epistolary past, as in ch. viii. 18, 22) **the brethren, in order that our [matter of] boasting concerning you may not in this particular be proved empty** (‘that our boast of you, so ample and various—ch. vii. 4, may not break down in this one department.’ Estins well calls it “a sharp exhortation of the Apostle combined with tacit praise”): **that, as I said** (when? in ver. 2? or, in his boasting to the Macedonians? or, in 1 Cor. xvi. 1?—Most naturally, *in ver. 2*. If he had meant, *to the Macedonians*, it would probably have been “*I am saying.*” as *I boast* above: if *in 1 Cor. xvi.*, it would have been more clearly expressed.—If so, **I said** refers merely to their *being ready*, as he had boasted they were), **ye may be prepared** (see above on ver. 2):

4.] **lest perchance if Macedonians should come with me** (to you: to bring me on my way, or to bear the Macedonian collection. We may infer from this expression, that neither of the two brethren above mentioned, ch. viii. 18, 22, was a Macedonian), **and should find you unprepared** (with your collection, see ver. 2), **we** (who have boasted), **not to say, ye** (who were boasted of), **should be put to shame in [the matter of] this confidence** (respecting you).

5.] **I therefore** (because of ver. 4) **thought it necessary to exhort the brethren** (Titus and the two others), **that they should go before (my coming) unto you, and previously prepare your long announced beneficence** (i. e. long announced by me to the Macedonians, ver. 2).

beneficence, literally, **blessing**; not used only of a blessing in *words*, but of one expressed by a *present*, as Gen. xxxiii. 11; Judg. i. 15. This sense of *blessing*, combined with the primitive sense, affords the Apostle an opportunity for bringing out the true spirit in which Christian gifts should be given), **that this same may be ready in such sort as beneficence, and not as covetousness** (i. e. as the fruit of blessing, poured out from a beneficent mind, not of a sparing covetous spirit which gives no more than it need).

6, 7.] *He enforces the last words by an assurance grounded in Scripture and partly cited from it, that as we sow, so shall we reap.*

this] Some supply ‘*I say,*’ as 1 Cor. vii. 29. But I would rather take it as an imperfect construction, in which **this** is used merely to point at the sentiment which is about to follow:—**But this—(is true), or But (notice) this....**

with blessings] This refers to the *spirit* of the giver, who must be ‘*a cheerful giver*,’ not giving murmuringly, but *with blessings*, with a beneficent charitable spirit: such an one shall reap also with blessings, abundant and unspeakable. The only change of meaning in the second use of the expression is that the *blessings* are *poured on him*, whereas in the first they *proceeded from him*: in both cases they are the element in which he works. So, we *bestow* the seed, but *receive* the harvest. The spirit with which we *sow*, is of ourselves: that with which we *reap*, depends on the *harvest*. So that the change of meaning is not arbitrary, but dependent on the nature of things.

7.] A continuation of the same thought:—“*sparingly*,” and “*with blessings*,” referred to the *spirit* of the giver; so does this verse—**grudgingly** corresponding to “*sparingly*,” **cheerful** to “*with blessings*.”

as he purposeth in his heart; supply, ‘so let him give?’ i.e. let the full consent of the free will go with the gift; let it not be a reluctant offering, given **out of grief** (so literally), out of an annoyed and troubled mind at having the gift extorted, nor out of necessity,—because compelled. Such givers,—that is implied, God does *not* love.

8-11.] *He encourages them to a cheerful contribution by the assurance that God both can (vv. 8, 9) and will (vv. 10, 11) furnish them with the means of performing such deeds of beneficence.*

8. every grace] even in outward good things—to which here the reference is: not excluding, however, the wider meaning of ‘*all grace*.’

that having at all times in every thing all sufficiency (of worldly substance), **ye may abound towards** (‘have an overplus for,’ which is not inconsistent with *sufficiency*, seeing that sufficiency does not *exclude* the having *more*, but only the having

less than is sufficient: the idea of a man's having at all times and in all things a sufficiency, would presuppose that he had somewhat to spare) **every good work:**

9.] as it is written (i. e. fulfilling the character described in Scripture), **H e scattered abroad** (metaphor from seed); **he gave to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.**—In what sense is righteousness used? Clearly in the only one warranted by the context—that of ‘*goodness proved by beneficence*,’—a righteous deed, which shall not be forgotten,—as a sign of righteousness in character and conduct.’ To build any inference from the text inconsistent with the great truths respecting righteousness ever insisted on by St. Paul (as Chrysostom does, when he says, “For also benevolence maketh men righteous, consuming their sins like fire, when it is poured forth with liberality”), is a manifest perversion.

10.] Assurance that God will do this.—**But** (introduces the new assurance) **He that ministers seed to the sower and bread for eating** (in the physical world: from Isa. lv. 10. The A.V. here commits the mistake of joining “*bread for your food*” with the following verb “*supply*” or “*minister*”), **shall supply and multiply your seed** (i. e. the money for you to bestow, answering to the word. “*seed to the sower*”), **and will increase the fruits of your righteousness** (from Hos. reff.—the everlasting reward for your bestowals in Christ’s name, as Matt. x. 42; answering to ‘*bread for eating*,’ which is the *result* of the sower’s labours).

11.] Method in which you will be thus blessed by God.—**In every thing being enriched unto all liberality** (i. e. in order that you may shew all liberality), **which** (of a sort which) **brings about by our means** (as the distributors of it) **thanksgiving** (from those who will receive it) **to God.**

12.] Explanation of the last clause. Because the ministration (not on our part who distribute, though it might at first sight seem so: the next verse decides the word to mean, ‘*your administering by contribution*,’ as in ver. 1) **of this public service** (the proper sense of the word used is, serving the public by furnishing the means of outfit for some necessary purpose) **not only serves the end of supplying by its help the wants of the saints, but of abounding by means of many thanksgivings to God;**

13.] they (the recipients) **glorifying God by means of the proof** (i. e. the experience, tried reality—the substantial help yielded by) **of this** (your) **ministration, for the subjection of your confession as regards the Gospel of Christ** (i. e. ‘that your confession, you who confess Christ, is really and truly subject in holy obedience, as regards the gospel of Christ.’ But as **regards** must not be joined with *subjection*, as in A.V. ‘*subjection unto*,’—which is unexampled: it is **towards**, ‘*in reference to*’), **and liberality of your contribution, unto them, and unto all men** (the same remarks apply to *unto* as above).

14.] The construction is difficult. See it discussed in my Greek Test. The meaning is obvious enough, viz. that **glory also accrues to God by the prayers of the recipients, who are moved with the desire of Christian love to you, on account of the grace of God which abounds eminently towards** (*over*: in our English version in) **you.**

15.] Having entered, in the three last verses, deeply into the thankful spirit which would be produced in these recipients of the bounty of the Corinthians, *he concludes with an ascription*, in the spirit also of a thankful recipient, *of unfeigned thanks to Him, who hath enriched us by the gift of His only Son, which brings with it that of all things else* (Rom. viii. 32), and is, in all its wonders of grace and riches of mercy, truly *ineffable*. It is impossible to apply such a term, so emphatically placed as here, to any gift short of THAT ONE. And the ascription, as coming from Paul’s fervent spirit, is very natural in this connexion.

2 Corinthians: Chapter 10

CHAP. X. 1—XIII. 13.] THIRD PART OF THE EPISTLE. DEFENCE OF HIS APOSTOLIC DIGNITY, AND LABOURS, AND SUFFERINGS, AGAINST HIS ADVERSARIES: WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS INTENDED COURSE TOWARDS THEM ON HIS ENSUING VISIT.

X. 1–6.] *He assures them of the spiritual nature, and power, of his apostolic office: and prays them not to make it necessary for him to use such authority against his traducers at his coming.*

1.] The form in which the chapter begins marks the transition to a new subject,—and the words **I Paul myself** point on to the personal characteristics mentioned below, setting his apostolic dignity in contrast with the depreciation which follows.

by the meekness and gentleness of Christ] as in Rom. xii. 1, using *the meekness and gentleness of Christ* (Matt. xi. 29, 30) *as a motive whereby he conjures them.* And most appropriately: he beseeches them by the gentleness of Christ, not to compel him to use towards them a method of treatment so alien from that gentleness: “Remember how gentle my Master was, and force not me His servant to be otherwise towards you.”

who in personal appearance in-deed (am) mean among you (he appropriates concessively, but at the same time with some irony,—the imputation by which versaries strove to lessen the weight of his letters), but **when absent am bold** (severe, *outspoken* in blame) **towards you:**

2.] but (however this may be, as-suming this character of me to be true or not, as you please;—or, notwithstanding that I may have been hitherto **bold** among you) **I beseech [you]** (not, *God*: there is no word expressed in the original), **that I may not when present** (‘as I intend to be’—‘at my next visit’) **have to be bold** (see above) **with the confidence** (official peremptoriness, and reliance on my authority) **with which I think to be bold towards** (against) **some, (namely) those who think ‘of) us as walking according to the flesh** “that is, ruling our life and actions according to carnal and human affections. For they thought that Paul, when he was among them, either to curry favours or from fear of offence, or from some human feeling of that kind, had been deterred from using his authority, of which he made boast in his letters.” Estius).

8.] The **for** here shews that this verse is not the refutation of the charge of walking according to the flesh, but a reason rendered for the request made above; and the words “*in the flesh*” and “*according to the flesh*” allude only to the charge just mentioned. This indeed is shewn by the use, and enlargement in vv. 4–6, of the idea of *warring*, instead of that of *walking*:—they who accuse us of walking after the flesh, shall find that we do not *war* after the flesh: therefore compel us not to use our weapons.

Although we walk in the flesh, i.e. are found in the body,—yet we do not take our apostolic weapons from the flesh—do not make its rule, our rule of warfare.

4.] *Enlargement of the idea.*—If the warfare were according to the flesh, its *weapons* would be carnal: whereas now, as implied, they are spiritual,—**powerful in the sight of God** (i. e. ‘*in a estimation, ‘after His rule of war-fare’*’) **in order to pulling down of strong holds** (see Prov. xxi. 22. Stanley thinks that recollections of the Mithridatic and piratical wars may have contributed to this imagery. The second of these, not more than sixty years before the Apostle’s birth, and in the very scene of his earlier years, was ended by the reduction of 120 strong-holds, and the capture of more than 10, 000 prisoners).

5.] The participle **casting down** refers to **we**, the implied subject of ver. 4;—this verse carrying on the figure made use of in the term **strong holds**. By **reasonings** he means, as Chrysostom says, “the pride of the Greeks, and the force of sophistries and logical arguments:”—but, not only these:—every towering conceit *according to the flesh* is also included.

and every high thing (i. e. **lofty edifice**, fortress or tower) **which is being raised** (or, raising itself) **against the knowledge of God** (i. e. the true knowledge of Him in the Gospel; not subjective here, but taken objectively, the things compared being *human knowledge*, as lifted up against the *knowledge of God*, i.e. the Gospel itself), **and leading captive every intent of the mind** (not ‘*thought*’, as A.V.: not *intellectual* subjection here, but that of the *will*, is intended) **into subjection to Christ**.

6.] (but perhaps some will not thus be subjected. In that case we are ready to inflict punishment on them: but not till every opportunity has been given them to join the ranks of the obedient) **when your obedience** (stress on **your**) **shall have been fulfilled**. He does not mention any *persons*—not the *disobedient*, but **every** (case of) **disobedience**, and throws out *your obedience* into strong relief, as charitably embracing all, or nearly all, those to whom he was writing.

7.—XII. 18.] A DIGRESSION, IN WHICH HE VINDICATES HIS APOSTOLIC DIGNITY, HIS FRUITFULNESS IN ENERGY AND IN SUFFERINGS, AND THE HONOUR PUT ON HIM BY THE LORD IN REVELATIONS MADE TO HIM.

7–11.] He takes them on their own ground. They had looked on his outward appearance, and designated it as mean. ‘*Well then,*’ he says: ‘*do ye regard outward appearance?* Even on that ground I will shew you that I am an Apostle—I will bear out the severity of my letters: I will demonstrate myself to be as much Christ’s as those who vaunt themselves to be especially His.’—This rendering suits the context best, and keeps the sense of *in presence* in ver. 1. Respecting other renderings, see my Greek Test.

If any one believeth himself to belong to Christ (literally, ‘*trusteth to himself to belong.*’)—From 1 Cor. i. 12, it certainly was one line taken by the adversaries of the Apostle to boast of a nearer connexion with, a more direct obedience to, Christ, in contradistinction to Paul: and to this mind among them he here alludes), **let him reckon this again out of his own mind** (i. e. let him think afresh, and come to a conclusion obvious to any one’s common sense, and not requiring any extraneous help to arrive at it), **that as he is Christ’s, so also are we** (that whatever intimate connexion with or close service of Christ he professes, such, and no less, is mine).

8.] This is shewn to be so. Even more boasting than he had ever yet made of his apostolic power, would not disgrace him, but would be borne out by the fact.

For if (literally) **we were to boast somewhat more abundantly** (than we have ever done: or than in vv. 3–6) **concerning our power which the Lord has given for building you up and not for casting you down** (“how then has he before said, ‘casting down reasonings?’ &c.,” because thus, to cast down the unsound and rotten parts, and to remove obstacles, is the best way of building up.” Chrysostom), **I shall not be put to shame** (“I shall not be shewn to be acting falsely, nor assuming too much.” Chrysostom).

9.] follows on ver. 8, but requires some clause to be supplied, such as ‘And I say this,’ or the like: **I say this, because I wish not to seem, &c.**

by my letters] He had written *two* before this, see 1 Cor. v. 9; but this is not necessarily here implied: for he may reckon this which he is now writing. Still less can we infer hence that a *third* had been written before this.

10. his bodily presence is weak] No countenance is given by these words to the idea that Paul was of weak physical constitution, or short in stature. His own explanation of them is sufficient as given in 1 Cor. ii. 1 ff. It is, that when he was present among them, he brought, not the strength of presence or words of the carnal teachers, but abjured all such influence, and in fear and trembling preached Christ crucified. It was this, and not weakness of voice, which made his *speech* to be *contemptible*. At the same time, the contrast being between his *epistles* and his *word of mouth*, his authority as *unaccompanied or accompanied* by his presence, it must be assumed, that there was *something* (see on ch. xii. 7) which discommended his appearance and delivery.

11.] **such are we**, not “*such will we be*.” Not only the conduct of the Apostle on his next visit, but his *general character*, is in question.

12–18.] The difficulty of this passage is universally acknowledged. Perhaps the Apostle wrote obscurely, not wishing to point out the offenders more plainly. He substantiates what has just been said, by shewing how unlike he is to those vain persons who boast of other men’s labours;—for he boasts of what God had really done among them by him, and hopes that this boast may be yet more increased.

12.] disclaims resemblance to those false teachers who made *themselves* their only standard. For we do not venture (ironical; —“while he says what he does not, he upbraids that which they do.” Bengel) **to number ourselves with, or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves** (the charge made against him, “commending,” see ch. iii. 1; v. 12, he makes as a true one against the false teachers): **but (they) themselves measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not wise.** On the various renderings, see my Greek Test. Calvin well illustrates the *sense*, by the reputation which any

moderately learned man gained among the ignorant monks of his day. 13.] **But we** (opposed to those spoken of in last verse) **will not** (ever: will never allow ourselves to) **boast without measure** (that is, as they do who compare themselves with themselves, and measure themselves by themselves,—for there is no standard for, no limit to, a man’s good opinion of himself), **but according to the measure of the rule** (i... ‘the measure pointed out by the rule’) **which God apportioned to us as a measure to reach even unto you.**

14.] Further explanation of *reaching even unto you*. **For we are not stretching ourselves beyond [our bounds], as** (we should be doing) **if we did not reach to you: for even as far as unto you did we come in the gospel of Christ** (the element in which our advance was made: ‘the gospel,’ i.e. ‘the promulgation of the gospel’).

15.] Carrying out the thought of ver. 14.

not boasting without measure in other men’s labours (the element of the boasting); **but having a hope, as your faith increaseth, to be enlarged among you according to our rule** (i. e. *our apportionment of apostolic work*, for we seek not to stretch ourselves (beyond it) **unto great abundance** (‘so as to abound more than we now do,’ viz. as ver. 16 explains),

16.] so as (with a view) **to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, not** (with a view) **to boast ourselves within another man’s line** (measuring *line*: according to the metaphor so common among us, ‘in his line’—i. e. ‘within the line which ‘Providence has marked out for him’) **with regard to** (or, ‘to the extent of: ‘to extend our boasting to’) **things ready made to our hand.**

17.] *He sets forth to them*, in contrast to this boasting themselves in another’s line, which was the practice of his adversaries, *wherein the only legitimate boasting must consist*: viz. *in the Lord*, the Source of all grace and strength and success in the ministry; see 1 Cor. xv. 10.

18.] The reason of this being, *that not the self-commander, but he whom the Lord commands* by selecting him as His

instrument, as He had the Apostle, and giving him the *epistle of commendation*, to be known and read by all men, of souls converted and churches founded, is **approved**, i.e. really and in the end abiding the test of trial.

2 Corinthians: Chapter 11

XI. HIS BOASTING OF HIMSELF: and 1–4.] *apologetic introduction of it, by stating his motive,—viz. jealousy lest they should fall away from Christ.*

1.] but (why need I request this? for) **indeed you** (see note, ch. v. 8) **do bear with me.** The indicative is much better than the imperative rendering. He says it, to shew them that he does not express the wish as supposing them void of tolerance for his weakness, but as having *experi-enced some* at their hands, and now *requiring more.*

2.] ‘That forbear-ance which you do really extend to me, and for more of which I now pray, is due from you, and I claim to have it exercised by you, because I have undertaken to present you to Christ as a chaste bride to her hus-band, and (ver. 3) I am jealous for fear of your falling away from Him.’

a jealousy of God] see ch. i, 12, **a godly jealousy:** see note there.

I betrothed you (viz. at your conversion) **to one husband, to present** i.e. in order that I may present in you, present you as) **a chaste virgin to Christ** (viz. at His coming): “The present is the time of betrothal: the future, that of the nuptials, when the cry shall be, ‘Behold the bridegroom.’” Theophylact.

3.] But he fears their being seduced from their fidelity to Christ.

the serpent] He takes for granted that the Corinthians recognized the agency of Satan in the (well-known) serpent: see vv. 13–15, where his transformation of himself for the sake of deceit is alluded to.

4, 5.] The thought here seems to be this:—‘If these new teachers had brought. with them a *new Gospel*, superseding that which I preached, they might have some claim to your regard. But, since there is *but one gospel*, that which I preached to you, and which they pretend to preach also, I submit that *in that one* no claim to regard is prior to mine.’ Observe, that. *the whole hypothesis is ironical:* it is fixed and clear that *there can be no such new gospel:* therefore the inference is the stronger.

For (the whole sentence is steeped in irony:—‘the serpent deceived Eve by *subtlety*: I fear for you, but not because the new teachers use such subtlety—if they did, if the temptation were really formidable, there would be some excuse.’ All this lies in the **for**) **if indeed** (the expression introduces a *reality*, and is full here of deep irony) **he that cometh** (viz, the false teachers generically thus designated: but here too perhaps there is irony: “*he that cometh*” was a solemn expression) **is preaching** (the indicative pres. carries on the ironical assumption, so below) **another Jesus, whom we preached not, or ye are receiving a different Spirit** (the former word, other, was distinctive of individuality; this word, of kind), **which ye received not** (from us), **or another gospel, which ye accepted not (received, accepted):** “differing words, each fitted for its purpose. The will of man has no share in receiving the Spirit, as it has in accepting the Gospel.” Bengel), **ye with reason bear with him** (irony again: for they not only bore with, but preferred them to their father in the faith. The sense is: ‘there seems to be some excuse in that case,—but even in that, really there is none,—for your tolerating him.’ ‘Seeing that there is *but one gospel*, and they and I profess to preach *one Jesus* and impart *one Spirit*, they have no such claim: mine is superior’). **For I reckon that in no respect do I fall short of** (literally, *have I fallen short of*) **these overmuch apostles.** This expression has very commonly been taken to mean *bona fide ‘the greatest Apostles*, i.e. Peter, James, and John, or perhaps *the Twelve*: but (1) this hardly seems to suit the expression **overmuch**, in which I cannot help seeing some bitterness: (2) it would be alien from the spirit of the passage, in which he institutes no comparison whatever between himself and *the other Apostles*, but only between himself and the false teachers: (3) had any such comparison been here intended, the point of comparison would not have been, *personal eminence in fruits of apostolic work and sufferings*, still less, seeing that the other Apostles were unlearned also, the distinction which immediately follows, between a “*common man*,” and one pretending to more skill,—but priority of arrival and teaching in Corinth: (4) the expression “*false Apostles*,” ver. 18, seems to me to refer to, and give the plain sense of, this ironical designation of “*overmuch Apostles*:” (5) the same expression ch. xii. 11 appears even more plainly than here to require this explanation. It has been the practice of Protestant Commentators to adduce this verse against the primacy of Peter, and of the Romanists, to evade the inference by supposing the pre-eminence to be only in gifts and preaching, not in power and jurisdiction. All this will fall to the ground with the supposed reference to the other Apostles.

6.] explains that, *though in one particular he may fall short of them, viz. in rhetorical finish and word-wisdom, yet in real knowledge, not so.*

a common man] a laic,—a man not professionally acquainted with that which he undertakes. The ‘Apostle disclaims mere

rhetorical aptitude and power in 1 Cor. ii. 1 ff.

in my knowledge] the depth of his knowledge of the mystery of the gospel, see Eph. iii. 1–4,

but in every matter we made things manifest (i. e. *the things of the gospel*, thereby shewing our *knowledge*) **unto you before all men** (i. e. with a view to your benefit).

7.] Another particular in which he was not behind, but excelled, the overmuch apostles, viz. *the gratuitous exercise of his ministry among them*. On the sense, see 1 Cor. ix. 1 ff. and notes. The supposition is one of sharp irony.

abasing myself] See Acts xviii. 3. The exaltation which *they received by his demeaning himself* was that of *reception into the blessings of the gospel*, which was more effectually wrought thereby: not merely, their being thus more favoured temporarily, or in comparison with other churches.

in that I gratuitously, &c.] It was his wish to preach to them gratuitously, which necessitated his *abasing himself*, i.e. not exercising the apostolic power which he might have exercised, but living on subsidies from others, besides (which he does not here distinctly allude to) his working with his own hands at Corinth.

8.] The ‘*other churches*’ were the Macedonian, see ver. 9. Among them the Philippians were probably conspicuous, retaining, as doubtless they did, their former affection to him; see Phil. iv. 15, 16.

I robbed is hyperbolic, to bring out the contrast, and shame them.

in order to (to support me in) my ministration to you, gen. obj.

9.] In the former sentence, he implied that he *brought with him* from Macedonia supplies towards his maintenance at Corinth: here, he speaks of a new supply during his residence with the Corinthians, *when those resources failed*.

for (reason why he burdened no one) **the brethren** (*who*, he does not say: their names were well known to the Co-rinthians. Possibly, Timotheus and Silas, Acts xviii. 5) **when they came from Mace-donia** (not as A.V., ‘*which came*’) **supplied my wants; and in every thing I kept myself** (‘*during my residence*:’ not, ‘*have kept myself*, as A.V.) **unburdensome to you, and will keep myself**.

10.] **The truth of Christ is in me, that...**; i.e. ‘*I speak according to that truth of which Christ Himself was our example, when I say that...*;’—there is no oath, nor even asseveration, as A.V. and most Commentators introduce. The expression is exactly analogous to Rom. ix. 1.

this boasting shall not be shut (shall not have its mouth stopped) **as regards** (or, **against**) **me in the regions of Achaia** (where the boasting is imagined as *being* and *speaking*).

11.] He *pre-supposes*, and *negatives*, a *reason* likely to be given for this resolution; viz. that he *loves them not*, and *therefore* will be under no obligation to them: for we willingly incur obligations to those whom we love.

knoweth, viz. that I love you.

12.] **The true reason:—But that which I do, I will also continue to do, in order that I may cut off the occasion** (which would be furnished if I did not so) **of those who wish for an occasion** (viz. of depreciating me by misrepresenting my motives if I took money of you); **that, in the matter of which they boast, they may be found even as we.** Such appears generally acknowledged to be the *rendering*: but as to the *meaning*, there is great variety of opinion. (1) Many of the ancient Commentators assume that they *taught gratis*, and were proud of it,—and that St. Paul would also teach gratis, to put both on an equality and take this occasion of boasting from them. This would suit the sense of the *present verse*, but seems (see above) at variance with the fact. (2) Theodoret and others suppose them to have *pretended* to the credit of self-denial, while really making gain, and that St. Paul means, that he will *reduce them from pretended to real self-denial*. But this too is inconsistent with the context. St. Paul’s boast of disinterested teaching was peculiarly *his own*, and there is nothing to shew that the false teachers ever professed or made any boast, of the like. His resolution did not spring out of an actual comparison instituted by them between their own practice and what they might falsely allege to be his, but was adopted even before his coming to Corinth, arguing *à priori* that it was best to cut off any possible occasion of such depreciation of him from his probable adversaries. (3) I cannot adopt any one of the above accounts of the sentence, for the negative reasons already given, and because all of them seem to me to have missed the clue to the meaning which the chapter itself furnishes. This clue I find in vv. 18 ff. See the other interpretations discussed in any Greek Test. I have endeavoured there to shew that the meaning is, ‘*that in the matter (s) of which they boast they may be found even as we:*’ i.e. we may be on a fair and equal footing: ‘*that*

there may be no adventitious comparisons made between us arising out of misrepresentations of my course of procedure among you, but that in every matter of boasting, we may be fairly compared and judged by facts.' And then, before the **for** of ver. 13 will naturally be supplied, 'And this will end in their discomfiture: *for* realities they have none, no weapons but misrepresentation, being *false apostles*, &c.

13.] For (see above: the **for** implying also that the choice of the above line of conduct has been made in a conviction of their falsehood and its efficacy to detect it) **such men are false apostles, dishonest workmen** (in that they pretend to be teachers of the Gospel, and are in the mean time subserving their own ends), **changing themselves into** (in appearance) **apostles of Christ**. By a *fair* comparison between us, this mask will be stript off;—by the abundance of my sufferings, and distinctions vouchsafed by the Lord, my Apostolicity will be fully proved, and their Pseud-apostolism shewn.

14, 15. for even Satan...] If any definite allusion is here intended, it is perhaps to Job i. 6, &c.: but I would rather suppose the *practice* of Satan in tempting and seducing men to be intended.

14. an angel of light] God is light, and inhabits light, and His angelic attendants are surrounded with brightness, see Acts xii. 7; Ps. civ. 4; whereas Satan is the Power of *darkness*, see Luke xxii. 53.

15.] He, as the father of falsehood and wrong (John viii, 44), is directly opposed to "*the righteousness of God*," Matt. vi. 33, that manifestation of God by which He is known to us in the Gospel, Rom. i. 17.

of whom (notwithstanding this disguise) **the end shall be correspondent to their works** (not to their pretensions).

16–21.] Excuses for his intended self-boasting.

16.] again referring to ver. 1, not *repeating* what he had there said, but again *taking up the subject*, and expanding that request. 'The request of ver. 1 in fact implies both requests of this ve: not regarding him as a tool for boasting, or *even if they did, as a fool* (i. e. yielding to me the toleration and hearing which men would not refuse even to one of whose folly they were convinced) *receiving him*.

I too, as well as they.

17.] Proceeding on the terms, as a fool, he disclaims for this self-boasting the character of inspiration—or of being said in pursuance of his mission from the Lord.

after the (mind of the) **Lord**, in pursuance, i.e. *in this case*, of inspiration from above: not as in 1 Cor. vii. 10, 25, 40.

as it were in foolishness, i.e. 'putting myself into the situation, and speaking the words of a foolish man vaunting of himself.'

18.] Since many, viz. the false teachers, but not only they:—'since it is a common habit,' for he is here speaking as "*one of the foolish ones*" (see Job ii. 10) **boast according to the flesh** (i. e. 'in a spirit of regard')—'having regard to their extraction, achievements, &c.' as below vv. 22 ff), **I also will boast** (according to the flesh).

19.] Bitterly ironical. They were wise—as 1 Cor. iv. 8, "*filled full*"—so full of wisdom as to be able to tolerate complacently, looking down from their 'serene height,' the follies of others. This, forsooth, encourages him to hope for their forbearance and patronage, Compare the earnestness of 1 Cor. i. 10. And the irony does not stop here: it is not only matter of presumption that they *would* tolerate fools with complacency, but the matter of fact testified it: *they were doing this: and more.*

20.] For (proof that they could have no objection to so innocent a man as a *fool*, when they tolerated such noxious ones are adduced) **ye endure (them)**, **if** (as is the ease) **one bringeth you into slavery** (the enslaving understood, is *to the man himself*, not to the *law*: see Gal. ii. 4), **if one devoureth you** (by exaction on your property), **if one catcheth you** (as with a snare: not as A.V., 'taketh of you'), **if one uplifteth himself**, **if one smiteth you on the face** (in insult, see 1 Kings xxii. 24; Matt. v. 39; Luke xxii. 64; Acts xxviii. 2. This is put as the climax of forbearance. That such violence might literally be expected from the rulers of the early Christian society, is also implied in the command in 1 Tim. iii. 3, Tit. i. 7, that the 'bishop' is not to be a 'striker.' Even so late as the seventh century the council of Braga, A.D. 675, orders that no bishop at his will and pleasure shall *strike* his clergy, lest he lose the respect which they owe him." Stanley).

21.] By way of disparagement I assume that WE (emphatic) **were weak** (when we were among you). An ironical reminiscence of his own abstinence when among them from all these acts of self-exaltation at their expense; as much as to say (ironically), 'I feel that I am much letting myself down by the confession that *I* was too weak ever to do any of these things among you.' See this rendering defended in my Greek Test.

in foolishness] see ver. 17.

22.] “The three honourable appellations with which the adversaries magnified themselves,—resting on their Jewish extraction, are arranged so as to form a *climax*: so that **Hebrews** refers to the *nationality*,—**Israelites** to the *theocracy* (tom, ix. 4 ff.), and **seed of Abraham** to the *claim to a part in the Messiah* (Rom. ix. 7: xi. 1, al.).” Meyer.

23.] Meyer remarks, that all three points of Judaistic comparison, of so little real consequence in the matter, were dismissed with the short and contemptuous. **so am I.** But that is not enough, now that we are come to the *great* point of comparison; the consciousness of his real standing, and their nullity as ministers of Christ, requires the **I am more**, and the holy earnestness of this consciousness pours itself forth as a stream over the adversaries, so as to overwhelm their conceited aspirations to apostolic dignity.

I speak as beside myself] I say it as a madman. This is far stronger than “*I speak in foolishness*:” it is said from a deep sense of his own unworthiness, and conscious how utterly untrue was “*I am more*,” in any boasting sense. He therefore repudiates it even more strongly than the “*I am bold also*,” before. The assertion, **I am more**, must not be misunderstood. He *concedes* to them their being *ministers of Christ*, and assumes (as it were *in madness*) for himself, something more, if more abundant labours and sufferings are to be any criterion of the matter. That this is the sense, is obvious from the comparison being in the *amount* of labours and sufferings,—and not, that he denies to them the office of *ministers of Christ*, and merely puts it hypothetically: “Well, then, if *they* are to be considered ministers of Christ, *I* must be something more.” If so, the comparison would not be in the *degree* of ministerial self-sacrifice, but in the *credentials of the ministry itself*. Both are now assumed. to be ministers; but if so, Paul is a minister in a much higher degree, more faithful, more self-denying, richer in gifts and divine tokens, than they.

in (the matter of: or, by, by virtue of) labours (occurring) **more abundantly,—in prisons** (imprisonments) **more abundantly** (but *one* such is mentioned in the Acts [xvi. 23 ff.] previous to the writing of this Epistle—Clement, in the celebrated passage of his *Ast Epistle* to the Corinthians on the labours of Paul, describes him as *having seven times borne chains*. This whole catalogue should shew the chronologists of the Apostle’s life and epistles, how exceedingly unsafe it is to build *only* on the history in the Acts for a complete account of his journeys and voyages), **in stripes above measure** (particularized below), **in deaths oft** (see reff. and ch. iv. 10. Such was the danger escaped at Damascus, Acts ix. 23, at Antioch in Pisidia, xiii. 50, at Iconium, xiv. 5, 6, at Lystra, ib. 19, at Philippi, xvi, at Thessalonica, xvii. 5 f., at Berœa, ib. 13, and doubtless many others of which we know nothing. See below).

24, 25.] are parenthetical, explaining some of the foregoing expressions: the construction is resumed ver. 26.—**At the hands of the Jews five times received I forty save one** (in Dent. xxv. 3, it is prescribed that not more than forty stripes should be given, ‘lest thy brother should seem vile unto thee.’ For fear of exceeding this number they kept within it. Meyer remarks that St. Paul might well number it among the *deaths*, for it was no rare occurrence for the criminal to die under its infliction.—None of these scourgings are mentioned in the Acts), **thrice was I beaten with rods** (viz. by the Roman magistrates, see Acts xvi. 22, 23, which is the only occasion mentioned in the Acts), **once was I stoned** (Acts xiv. 19), **thrice I suffered shipwreck** (not one of these shipwrecks is known to us. Thus we see that perhaps three, perhaps two, voyages of Paul, but certainly one, —previous to this time, must be somewhere inserted in the history of the Acts), **a night and day have I spent in the deep** (i. e. the sea: probably on some remnant of a wreck after one of his shipwrecks alone or with others).

26.] The construction is resumed from ver. 23.—**By journeys frequently, by perils of rivers** (the genitives denote the *material* of the perils; rivers and robbers being the things and persons actually attacking. ‘The perils of rivers’ might arise from crossing or fording, or from floods. The crossing of the rocky and irregular torrents in Alpine districts is to this day attended with danger, which must have been much more frequent, when bridges were comparatively rare. And this is the ease with a road, among others, frequently traversed by Paul, that between Jerusalem and Antioch, crossed as it is by the torrents from the sides of Lebanon. Maundrell says that the traveller Spon lost his life in one of these torrents: see Conybeare and Howson’s Life of St. Paul, edn. 2, vol. i.p. 502, note), **by perils of robbers** (see note on Acts xiii. 14), **by perils from my kindred** (or, **countrymen**: *the Jewish nation*: **from**, i.e. *arising from*: they not being always the direct agents,—but, as in many cases in the Acts, setting on others, or plotting secretly), **by perils from the Gentiles, by perils in the city** (in Damascus, Acts ix. 23 f.,—Jerusalem, ib. 29,—Ephesus, xix. 23 ff.; and many other places), **by perils in the wilderness** (literally, in [the] **solitude**: it may mean the actual desert, or merely the solitude of journeys, as contrasted with ‘the city’), **by perils in the sea** (not a repetition from ver. 25: there are many perils in the sea short of shipwrecks), **by perils among false brethren** (*who were these?* probably persons who wished to be thought. *Christian brethren*, but *were not* in heart and conduct, and were opponents of himself personally, rather than designed traitors. to the Christian cause);

27.] **by weariness and painfulness, in watchings** (see on ch. vi. 5) **frequently, in hunger and thirst, in fastings frequently** (voluntary fastings, “to purify his soul and tame the flesh,” as Estius, see also ch. vi. 5, note. De Wette here too [see also Stanley] holds to ‘involuntary fastings,’ but he is clearly wrong, for “*fastings*” are distinguished in the catalogue from “*hunger and thirst*”), **in cold and nakedness** (insufficient clothing:—or, literally, when thrust into prison after his scourgings,—or

after his shipwrecks).

28.] He passes from particulars, omitting others which might have been specified, to the weight of apostolic care and sympathy which was on him.—**Not to mention those** (afflictions) **which are besides (these)**, (not as A.V., ‘*the things that are without*,’—a meaning which the original word never has),—**my care** (the original word may mean either ‘delay,’ ‘hindrance,’ or ‘care,’ ‘attention,’ ‘matter of earnest thought’) **day by day**, (viz.) **my anxiety for all the churches.**

29.] “Care implies sympathy: so that the minister of Christ takes on him the feelings of all, puts on the person of all, that he may accommodate himself to all.” Calvin,

The **weakness** spoken of may be in various ways; in *faith*, as Rom. xiv. 1 al., or in *purpose*, or in *courage*: that of the Apostle, see 1 Cor. ix. 22, was a sympathetic weakness, a leaning to the same infirmity for the weak brother’s sake, but also a veritable trouble in himself on the weak brother’s account.

I myself] In the former “*I*,” there was no emphasis: on this one, there is: because in that case he was *suffering with* the weak: here he stands between the offender and the offended; indignant at the one, sympathizing with the other.

burn not]—with zeal, or with indignation.

30.] partly refers back to what has passed since ver. 23. The *infirmity* not being mentioned in a different connexion in ver. 29, but that of ver. 21, to which all since has applied. But the words are not without a forward reference likewise. He will boast of his weaknesses—of *those things which made him appear mean and contemptible* in the eyes of his adversaries. He is about to adduce an instance of escape from danger, of which this is eminently the case: he might be scoffed at as *one borne in a basket*, or the like—but he is carried on in his fervency of self-renunciation amidst his apparent self-celebration, and he will even cast before his enemies the *contemptible* antecedents of his career, boasting in being despised, if only for what Christ had done in him. The asseveration in ver. 81 *may* be applied to the whole, but. Lhad rather view it as connected with the strange history about to be related:—‘I will glory in my weaknesses—yea, and I will yet more abase myself—God knows that I am telling sober truth—&c.’ If the solemnity of the asseveration seem out of proportion to the incident, the fervid and impassioned character of the whole passage must be taken into account.

32, 33.] On the *fact and historical difficulty*, see note, Acts ix. 23,

governor] the title is literally **Ethnarch**, who appears to have been a **Prefect**, stationed there by the Arabian king. The title appears to have been variously used. See in my Greek Test. The basket here spoken of probably was a “rope-basket,” a net.

2 Corinthians: Chapter 12

CHAP. XII. 1–10.] *He proceeds to speak of visions and revelations vouchsafed to him, and relates one such, of which, however, he will not boast, except in as far as it leads to fresh mention of infirmity, in which he will boast, as being a vehicle for the perfection of Christ’s power.* In order to understand the connexion of the following, it is very requisite to bear in mind the burden of the whole, which runs through it—“*I will boast in mine infirmities.*” There is no break between this and the last chapter. He has just mentioned a passage of his history which might expose him to contempt and ridicule—this was *one of the weaknesses*. He now comes to *another*: but that other inseparably connected with, and forming the sequel of, a glorious revelation vouchsafed him by the Lord. This therefore he relates, at the same time repudiating it as connected with *himself*, and fixing attention only on the *weakness* which followed it.

1.] On the difficult question of the reading in this verse, see my Greek Test.

I must boast, though it is not to my advantage: but I will proceed to visions and revelations of the Lord] as if he said, ‘*and the instances I will select are just of that kind in which, of boasting ever were good, it might be allowed.*’

vision is the form or manner of receiving **revelation**. There can hardly be a *vision* without a *revelation* of some kind.

of the Lord, i.e., **vouchsafed me by the Lord**, not of, i.e. revealing, the Lord, as the subject of the vision; for such is not that which follows.

2–4.] *An example of such a vision and revelation.* The adoption of the third person is remarkable: it being evident from ver. 7 that *he himself* is meant. It is plain that a contrast is intended between the *rapt and glorified person* of vv. 2, 4,—and *himself*, the weak and afflicted and almost despairing subject of the *thorn in the flesh* of verses 7 ff. Such glory *belonged not to him*, but the weakness *did*. Nay, so far was the glory from being *his*, that he knew not whether he was in or out of the body when it

was put upon him; so that the “*I myself*,” compounded of the *mind* and the *flesh* (Rom. vii. 25), clearly was not the subject of it, but as it were another form of his personality, analogous to that which we shall assume when unclothed of the body.—It may be remarked in passing, as has been done by Whitby, that the Apostle here by implication *acknowledges the possibility of consciousness and receptivity in a disembodied state*.—Let it not be forgotten, that in the context, this vision is introduced not so much for the purpose of making it a ground of boasting, which he does only passingly and under protest, but that *he may by it introduce the mention of the thorn in the flesh, which bore so conspicuous a part in his weaknesses, TO BOAST OF WHICH is his present object.*

2.] I know (not, ‘*knew*,’ as A.V.: which is a mistake in grammar, and introduces serious confusion, making it seem as if the fourteen years ago were the date of the *knowledge*, not, as it really is, of the *vision*) **a man in Christ** (i. e., ‘*a Christian*’) ‘*a man whose standing is in Christ; so in Rom. xvi. 7,* **fourteen years ago** (the *date* refers entirely to the event about to be narrated, and probably refers back to the time when he was at Tarsus waiting for God to point out his work, between Acts ix. 30 and xi. 25. See the chronological table in the introduction to the Acts), **whether in the body, I know not; or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth** (if *in the body*, the idea would be that he was taken up *bodily*: if *out of the body*, to which the alternative manifestly inclines,—that his spirit was rapt from the body, and taken up disembodied); **such an one** (so ‘*such an one*’ *resumes* after a parenthesis, 1 Cor. v. 5) **caught up** (snatched or taken up) **as far as the third heaven**.—*What is the third heaven?* The Jews knew no such limit of number, but commonly recognized *seven heavens*: and if their arrangement is to be followed, the third heaven will be very low in the celestial scale, being only the *material clouds*. The safest explanation is, *not to follow any fixed division*, but judging by the evident intention of the expression, to understand *a high degree* of celestial exaltation.

3, 4.] A solemn repetition of the foregoing, with the additional particular of his having had unspeakable revelations made to him.—Some think that this was a *fresh assumption*, as far as the third heaven, and *thence* into Paradise: but this from the form of the sentence is unlikely. See in my Greek Test.

The **paradise** here spoken of cannot be the Jewish Paradise, the blissful division or side of Hades (Schoel), where the spirits of the just awaited the resurrection, see note on Luke xvi. 22,—but the Paradise of which our Lord spoke on the Cross,—the place of happiness into which He at His Death introduced the spirits of the just: see on Luke xxiii. 43.

which it is not lawful for a MAN to utter (see above):—imparted by God, but not to be divulged to others: and therefore, in this case, intended, we may presume, for the Apostle’s own consolation and encouragement. *Of what kind* they were, or *by whom* uttered, we have no hint given, and it were worse than trifling to conjecture. “They must have been,” says Bengel, “of great sublimity: for not all celestial words are ineffable, e.g., Exod. xxxiv. 6, Isa. vi. 3, which nevertheless were highly sublime.”

5.] Of such a man he will boast, but not (see above on ver. 1) of himself, except it be in his infirmities. He strikes here again the key-note of the whole—*boasting in his infirmities*. He will boast of such a person, so favoured, so exalted; but this merely by the way: it is not his subject: it introduced, not indeed *without reference* to the main point, but principally to bring in the infirmity following.

6.] For (supply the sentence for which it renders a reason: ‘*Not but that I might boast concerning myself if I would*’)—**if I shall wish to boast** (concerning myself), **I shall not be a fool** (I shall not act rashly or imprudently, for I shall not boast without solid ground for it); **for I shall say the truth: but I abstain, that no one may reckon of me beyond** (by a standard superior to that furnished by) **what he seeth me** (to be), **or heareth perchance from me.**—Lest he should seem to undervalue so legitimate a subject of boasting, he alleges the reason why he abstains: not that he had not this and more such exaltations, truly to allege: but because he wished to be judged of by what they really had seen and heard of and from himself in person.

7–10.] He now comes to that for which the foregoing was mainly alleged: the *infirmity in his flesh*, which above others hindered his personal efficiency in the apostolic ministry. **7.] And that I might not by the abundant excess of revelations** (made to me) **be uplifted, there was given me** (‘*by God*:’ certainly not, as Meyer, and others, by **Satan**, of whom such an expression as *was given*, would surely hardly be used: compare “*the grace given to me*,” so often said by the Apostle,—Rom. xii. 3, 6; xv. 15 al., and the absolute use of *given* for *bestowed, portioned out by God*, 1 Cor. xi. 15; xii. 7, 8; Gal. iii. 21; James i. 5) **a thorn** (the word may signify a *stake*, or *sharp pointed staff*: Stanley rejects the meaning ‘*thorn*,’ and supposes the figure to refer to the punishment of impalement) **in my flesh** (the expression used Gal. iv. 14 of this same affliction, “*my temptation which is in my flesh*,” seems decisive for rendering thus, and not ‘*for my flesh*’), **the (or, an) angel of Satan** (it is doubtful whether the *form* of the word **Satan** in the original be nominative or genitive. But usage decides for the genitive. If taken as the nom., the expression would mean a *hostile angel*, which would be contrary to the universal usage of Satan, as a proper name: some render it, *the angel Satan*, which is inconsistent with New Test. usage, according to which Satan, though once an angel, is now the Prince of the powers of the air, Eph. ii. 2, and has his own angels, Matt. xxv. 41), **that he** (the angel of Satan) **may buffet me** (not, *might* buffet me: the action of the afflicting thorn continued and was to continue, even when St. Paul was writing to them. This is Chrysostom’s observation), that **I may not be uplifted** (the repetition gives force and

solemnity,—expressing his firm persuasion of the divine intention in thus afflicting him).—As regards the *thorn itself*, very many, and some very absurd conjectures have been hazarded. They may be resolved into three heads, the two former of which are, from the nature of the case, out of the question below): (1) that Paul alludes to *spiritual solicitations of the devil*, who suggested to him blasphemous thoughts, so Luther (how characteristically!),—or remorse for his former life: or according to the Romanist interpreters, who want to find here a precedent for their monkish stories of temptations,—*incitements to lust*. (2) that he alludes to *opposition from his adversaries*, or *some one adversary*: so many ancient Commentators, and some modern. (3) that he points to *some grievous bodily pain*, which has been curiously specified by different Commentators. The ancients mention *headache*: some have supposed *hypochondriac melancholy*, which however hardly answers the conditions of a *thorn*, in which *acute pain* seems to be implied: see Stanley's note, which is important in other respects also, and full of interest.—On the whole, putting together the figure here used, that of a *thorn*, occasioning pain, and the *buffeting or putting to shame*; it seems quite necessary to infer that the Apostle alludes to some *painful and tedious bodily malady*, which at the same time put him to shame before those among whom he exercised his ministry. Of such a kind may have been the disorder in his eyes, more or less indicated in several passages of his history and Epistles: see notes on Acts xiii. 9; xxiii, 1 f.:—and Gal. iv. 14 (15?); vi. 11 (?). But it may also have been something besides this, and to such an inference probability would lead us; disorders in the eyes, however sad in their consequences, not being usually of a very painful or distressing nature in themselves.

8.] In respect of this (*angel of Satan*, not *thorn*, see below) **I thrice** (Meyer well observes, 'At his first and second request, no answer was given to him: on the third occasion, it came; and his faithful resignation to the Lord's will prevented his asking again') **besought the Lord** (Christ, see ver. 9), **that he might depart from me** (the angel of Satan: in Luke iv. 13, the same Greek word is used of the devil departing from our Lord: as also in Acts xxii. 29, "they departed from him which should have examined him").

9.] And He said to me (literally, **hath said**: but this perfect can hardly in English be represented otherwise than by the historical past; in the Greek, it partakes of its own proper sense—'*He said, and that answer is enough:*' '*He hath said*',—but this last would not contain reference enough to the *fact* itself. The poverty of our language in the finer distinctions of the tenses often obliges us to render inaccurately, and fall short of, the wonderful language with which we have to deal.—*How* this was said, whether accompanied by an appearance of Christ to him or not, must remain in obscurity), **My grace** (not, 'My favour generally'—'*My imparted grace*') **is sufficient for thee** (spoken from the divine Omniscience, '*suffices, and shall suffice*': as if it had been said, '*the trial must endure, untaken away: but the grace shall also endure, and never fail thee*'): **for** (the reason lying in My ways being not as man's ways, My Power not being brought to perfection as man's power is conceived to be) **(My) Power is made perfect** (has its full energy and complete manifestation) **in** (as the element in which it acts as observable by man) **weakness**.—See ch. iv. 7, and 1 Cor. ii. 3, 4,—where the influence of this divine response on the Apostle is very manifest.

Most gladly therefore will I rather (than that my affliction should be removed from me, which before that response, I wished) **boast** (emphatic,—I will rather *boast* in mine infirmities) **in my infirmities, that** (by my *infirmities* being, not removed from me, but becoming my glory) **the power of Christ may have its residence in me** ('may carry on in me its work unto completion,' as above).

10.] Wherfore (because of this relation to human weakness and divine power) **I am**

well content (it is the same word as that used Matt. iii. 17, "*in whom I am well pleased*") **in infirmities** (four kinds of which are then specified,—all coming also, as well as *infirmities proper*, under the category of **infirmities**, as *hindrances and bafflings of human strength*), **in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, on behalf of Christ: for whenever I am weak** (applying to all five situations above), **then I am mighty**.

11–18.] He excuses his boasting, and is thereby led to speak of the signs of an Apostle wrought among them, and to reassert his disinterestedness in preaching to them, on occasion of his past and intended visits.

11.] I am BECOME (the emphasis on the verb,—I am verily *become* a fool, viz. by this boasting, which I have now concluded, It is still ironical, spoken from the situation of his adversaries) **a fool: ye compelled me** (ye emphatic): **for I** (I also emphatic, but more with reference to what has passed: '*ye compelled me*, it was no doing of *mine*, for *I, &c.*') **ought to have been recommended by you** (emphatic, by *you*, *not by himself*): **for I was nothing behind** (when I was with you) **these overmuch apostles** (see on ch. xi. 5: but here even more plainly than there, the expression cannot be applied to the other Apostles, seeing that the assertion would in that case be inconsistent with the fact—the Corinthians never having had an opportunity of comparing him with them), **even though I am nothing** (see similar expressions of humility, 1 Cor. xv. 9–11).

12.] Confirmation of the boast just made..... The signs indeed of an apostle were wrought out among you ("the Apostle's own personality as the worker is modestly veiled behind the passive." Meyer) **in all (possible) patience** (endurance of opposition, which did not cause me to leave off working), **in signs, and wonders, end mighty deeds.**

13–15.] His disinterestedness, shewn in his past, and resolved in his future dealings with them.

13.] The question is asked in bitter irony. It is an illustration of *his much endurance*, and of the distinction conferred on them by so long manifestation of the signs of an Apostle among them. ‘*Was this endurance of working which I shewed, marred by the fact that I worked gratuitously among you?*’

ye were inferior to does not imply that all churches suffered loss, and that the loss of the Corinthians was only not greater than that of other churches: but ‘*ye suffered loss in comparison with the other churches.*’

except that one point, in which of all others they had *least* reason to complain. This one is put forward to indicate their deep ingratitude, if they did complain, seeing that the only point of difference in their treatment had been a preference: “It is Love, deeply wounded, which speaks,” says Meyer. The irony here reaches its height.

14.] The words must, *from the context*, mean, **the third time I am ready to come**, i.e. ‘I am ready to *come the third time*;’—not, ‘*I am the third time ready to come*,’ i.e. ‘this is the third time that I have been *ready to come* to you.’ This latter meaning has been “adopted by many Commentators, in order to evade the difficulty of supposing St. Paul to have been before this time at Corinth. But on this see Introd. to 1 Cor. §y. Here, the context has absolutely nothing to do with his *third preparation to come*, which would be a new element, requiring some explanation, as in 1 Thess. ii. 18. The natural, and I am persuaded, only true inference from the words here is, ‘I am coming to you a third time,—and I will not burden you this time, any more than I did at *my two previous visits*.’—Our business in such cases is, not to wrest plain words to fit our preconceived chronology, but to adapt our *confessedly most uncertain and imperfect history of the Apostle’s life*, to the data furnished by the plain honest sense of his Epistles.

for the children ought not...] St. Paul was the *spiritual father* of the Corinthian Church, 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15: he does not therefore want to be *enriched by them*, his children, but rather to *lay up riches for them*, seeking to have *them* as his treasure, and thus to *enrich them*, as a loving father does his children. What it is that is to be laid up, is left indefinite: if pressed strictly, it cannot be *earthly* treasure in the *negative* part of the sentence, *heavenly*, in the positive:—see next verse.

15.] The Apostle promises more than even natural fathers do. They *lay up* treasures: *I will spend them*:—and more than that, *I will spend myself*: even if I must give my flesh for the salvation of your souls, I will not spare it.

16–18.] *He refutes a possible*, perhaps an actual *calumny*,—*that though he had acted disinterestedly towards then himself, he had some side-way of profiting by them, through others.*

16.] But be it so (‘but let us suppose the former matter dismissed’), **let the fact be granted, that I myself did not burden you.** Then the sense breaks off, and the force of the concession goes no further, the following words making a new hypothesis. **Nevertheless, being** (by habit and standing) **crafty** (unprincipled, and versatile in devices), **I caught you with guile** (with some subtle way). *Caught you*, in order to practise upon you for my own ends).

17, 18.] Specification, in refutation, of the ways in which this might be supposed to have taken place. **18.]** This journey of Titus cannot, of course, be the one spoken of ch. viii. 6, 17, 22; but some previous mission to them before this Epistle was written: probably that from which he returned with the report of their penitence to Paul in Macedonia, ch. vii. 6 ff. We certainly have not elsewhere any hint of “*the brother*” having accompanied him on this journey: but this is no reason why it should not have been so.

our brother—perhaps one of the two mentioned ch. viii. 18, 22: some other, well known to the Corinthians, but absolutely unknown to us: but not ‘*a brother*, as in A.V. It is plain from this and from what follows, that this brother was quite subordinate to Titus in the mission.

in the same spirit] The Spirit in which they walked was *the Holy Spirit*.

in the same footsteps, viz. each as the other: they did not in the minutest particular deviate from my path.

19–21.] *He refutes the notion which might arise in the minds of his readers, that he was vindicating himself BEFORE THEM as judges*, see 1 Cor. iv. 3; *and assures them that he does all for their good, fearing in what state he might find them on his arrival.*

19.] Ye have been some time imagining (i. e. during this my self-defence)**that it is to you that I am defending myself.** Then the answer follows: the assumption being made, and elliptically answered, as in ver. 16.

before God is emphatic, and opposed to “*unto you*.”

We speak in Christ, as in eh. it. 17, which see.

20.] ‘Edification, of which you stand in need, for, &c.’ He here completely and finally throws off the apologist and puts on the Apostle, leaving on their minds a very different impression from that which would have been produced had he concluded with the apology.

lest, when I arrive, I should find you not such as I wish (in the words, **not such as I wish**, there is an *indefinite* possibility of aberration from being *such as I wish*, presently particularized “*lest there be*,” &c.), **and I should be found by you such as ye wish not** (not now “*not such as ye wish*,” because there is now no indefiniteness; *his* disposition towards them in such a case could be but of *one* kind, viz. *severity*. Chrysostom brings out another point; he does not say, ‘such as *I* wish not,’ but with more severity, ‘such as *ye* wish not’).

self-seekings: see note on Rom. ii. 8.

whisperings, i.e. **secret ma-lignings,—slanderings**, i.e. **open detrac-tion**.

21. will humble me “There was nothing in which the Apostle more exulted than in the prosperous success of his preaching: nothing on the other hand by which he was made more sad and downcast than when he saw that he had laboured in vain.” Beza. That this *humbling*, and *not* that of *being obliged to punish*, is intended, seems evident: the exercise of judicial au-thority being no humiliation, but the con-trary, and humiliation being the natural result of want of success.

my GOD expresses the conviction that whatever hu-miliation God might have in store for him would be a part of His will respecting him.

I shall bewail] Some explain it that he would have to punish them, and thus be afflicted over them: but *punishment* seems out of place in this verse, which expresses his fear lest he should be humbled for, and have to lament the case of the im-penitent, —and then, as he declares, ch. xiii. 2, be forced to proceed to discipline; but: this point is not yet introduced. “He shews the feeling of a true and genuine shepherd, when he says that he should have to grieve for the sins of others. Every shepherd ought thus to carry the church in his own soul, be affected by its diseases as by his own, grieve at its sorrows, mourn for its loss.” Calvin.

many of those] Why many? why not *all*? I believe he **uses many of those which have sinned** as a mild expression for the *many which have sinned*, and that we must not therefore press too closely the enquiry.

2 Corinthians: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII. 1–10.] *He warns them of the severity which, on his arrival, if such be the case, he will surely exercise, and prove his apostolic authority. To this proof, how-ever, he exhorts them not to put him.*

1.] This third time I am coming to you: i.e. ‘*this is the third visit which I am now about to pay you*.’ Had not chronological theories intervened, no one would ever have thought of any other rendering. The usual one, «This is the third time that I have been intending to come to you,’ introduces here, as also in ch. xii. 14, an element not only foreign to, but detrimental to, the purpose. The Apostle wishes to impress on them the *certainty* of this coming, and to prepare them for it by solemn self-examination; and in order to this, he (*on this interpreta-tion*) uses an expression which would only remind them of the charge of *lightness* which had been brought against him, and *tend to diminish the solemnity of the warning*. On St. Paul’s visits to Corinth, see Introd. to 1 Cor. §v.

In the mouth of, &c.] i.e. ‘I will not now, as be-fore, be with you *in all long-suffering*, as regards the offenders: but will come to a regular process, and establish the truth in a legal manner.’—This explanation, however, has not been the usual one: Chrysostom, Calvin, and others, understanding the two or three witnesses, of St. Paul’s *two or three visits*, as establishing either (1) the truth of the facts, or (2) the reality of his threats. But it is decisive against this interpretation, as Meyer remarks, that thus the sins committed *since the Apostle’s last visit* would remain altogether unnoticed.

and three, not for “*or three*,”—**two** (and in cases where only two can be had), **and three** (where so many can be obtained): ‘*two and three respectively*.’

2.] I have forewarned you, and I now forewarn you, as (I did) when present the second time, so also (I do) now when absent. It seems to me (see my Greek Test.) that this is the only natural way of taking the words.

them which have sinned heretofore] the same persons as are thus designated above, ch. xii. 21.

all the rest of you] who may not have actually sinned, but still require warning, on account of your own personal danger, connexion with those who have, &c.

if I come again] at my next coming. This was what he was last there, and now repeats.

3.] ‘This gives the reason why he will not spare: they required the exertion of discipline; and they challenged him to the proof of his apostolic authority.

a proof of Christ] ‘The genitive is either objective, a proof of **Christ speaking in me**, i.e. ‘that Christ **speaks in me**,’—or subjective, ‘**a proof given by Christ speaking in me**—‘a token of my authority vouchsafed by Christ speaking in me.’ This latter meaning is more suited to what follows, where *Christ* becomes the *subject*. Such proof would be, the immediate execution, by divine power, of some punishment denounced by Paul’s word, as in Acts xiii. 11. The assertion tends to remind them of the danger of provoking Christ, who spoke by Paul.

4.] Confirmation of the foregoing assertion. For indeed he was crucified (as the source,—the conditional element,—by which His crucifixion became possible) **from weakness, yet He liveth by** (source,—source of His life) **the Power of God** (which raised Him from the dead, Rom. vi. 4; viii. 11; Eph. i. 20; Phil. ii. 9). **For we also are weak in Him** (i. e. *in Him*, in our communion with and imitation of Christ, we, as He did, lay aside our power and spare you: we partake of His voluntary abnegation of power which we might have used. The context requires this explanation, and refutes that of Chrysostom and others, that for His sake we suffer persecution and dishonour), **but shall live** (exercise our apostolic authority, in contrast to the *weakness* above) **with Him** (as He now exercises His power in His glorified resurrection life) **from** (source) **the power of God [toward you]** (“*toward you*,” if genuine, may belong either to “*the power of God*,” or to “*we shall live*,”—“*we shall live with respect to you*,” which agrees better with the parallelism, but not so well with the arrangement of the sentence. The sense seems to require the *latter* interpretation, for the “*power of God towards you*” would be rather the *result* than the source of the apostolic energy indicated by **we shall live**.—I have taken **we shall live**, as the context plainly requires, figuratively: but many Commentators take it literally, of *the resurrection*).

5.] “You want to prove *Christ* speaking in me:—if you necessitate this proof, it will be given. But I will tell you *whom rather to prove, Prove YOURSELVES*; there let your attention be concentrated, if you will apply tests.”

whether ye are (not ‘*be*;’ at least not as we now take that word, as subjunctive). ‘Whether you maintain your Christian place and stauding in Christ, which will be shewn by the power of Christ’s spirit present and energizing among you.’

reprobates, literally, ‘*not abiding the proof*,’ **worthless**,—i. e. in this case, ‘mere pretended Christians.’

6.] But (however it may fall out with your proof of *yourselves*) **I hope** (or perhaps better, expect) **that ye shall know that we are not worthless** (unable to abide the proof to which you put us. The verse is said threateningly: if you wish for a proof to be given by my power to punish, it shall not be wanting).

7.] Yet he prays God rather that they may require no such demonstration of his apostolic power, even though he lose in reputation by it.

not that we should appear....] ‘And the purpose of this my prayer is not to gain any repute by your Christian graces, but that you may be highly endowed with them, and (if it so happen) we may be as of no repute in the judgment of men, by your good conduct tending to the non-exercise and so to the depreciation of our Apostolic power.’

8.] For we have no power against the truth (of the Gospel, not *of the facts*, as Chrysostom and others.—‘If you walk in the truth, we shall be at one with you, and so have no opportunity of shewing our power’), **but (only) on behalf of** (in furtherance of the cause and spread of) **the truth**.

9.] For (*confirmation of ver. 8 by the still stronger assertion, WHEREIN his joy consists, and for what he prays*) **our joy is, when we are weak** (have no opportunity for shewing our power in punishment), **but ye are mighty** (in Christian graces, and requiring no exercise of our authority): **this** (viz. that the state of the case may be as just mentioned) **we also pray for, viz. your perfection** (generally,—in all good things).

10.] For this cause (‘*because I wish and pray for your perfection*’).

these things, ‘*this Epistle*.’ “For I wish,” says Chrysostom, “that my sharpness should lie in my writings, and not in my acts.”

according to the power, &c.] gives the reason why he did not wish to act *sharply*,—*because the power would seem to be exercised in a direction contrary to that intended by Him who gave it.*

11–13.] CONCLUSION.

11] GENERAL EXHORTATIONS. “Paul had written severely: he now turns to a more kindly address, yet without forgetting his main subject.” Bengel.

rejoice, viz. *in the Lord*, as Phil. iii. 1; iv. 4. See also 1 Thess. v. 16.

take comfort; a re-currence in the end of the Epistle to the spirit with which it began; see ch. i. 6, 7, and, for the need they had of comfort, ch. vii. 8–13.

and, i.e. ‘and then.’

12, 18.] CONCLUDING GREETINGS, with an holy kiss] See on Rom. xvi. 16.

All the saints] viz. in the place whence the Epistle was written.

14.] CONCLUDING BENEDICTION; remarkable for the distinct recognition of the Three Persons in the Holy Trinity, and thence adopted by the Christian Church in all ages as the final blessing in her Services.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is put first; “for by the grace of Christ men come ‘to the love of the Father.’” Bengel.

communion] fel-lowship, ‘*communication*.’

be with you all] with all of you, without exception. “And this blessing he invokes, not on a few individuals, or any one section of the Corinthian Church, but expressly on every portion and every individual of those with whom, throughout these two Epistles, he had so earnestly and so variously argued and contended. As in the first, so in the second Epistle, but still more emphatically, as being here his very last words, his prayer was, that this happiness might be ‘with them all.’” Stanley. Compare, for the same emphatic “*all*,” Rom. i. 5, 8; iv. 16; [xvi. 24,] &c.

GALATIANS

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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS

Galatians: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1–5.] ADDRESS AND GREETING. In the very opening sentence of the Epistle, we see the fervour of the Apostle's mind and the weightiness of his subject betraying themselves. The vindication of his own apostolic calling,—and the description of the work and purpose of Christ towards us, shew him to be writing to those who had disparaged that apostleship, and were falling from their Saviour.

1.] It is better not to join the word **Apostle** (here of course used in its strict and highest sense) with **from men**, but to let it stand by itself, and take the two prepositions as indicating, **from** the remote originating cause, **by** the nearer instrumental one. In St. Paul's case, neither of these was merely human: the Lord Jesus was both the original Sender, and Himself the Announcer of the mission.

and God the Father] If by Jesus Christ, then also by God the Father, in and by whose appointment all the mediatorial acts of Christ in the Headship of His Church are done. The strongest possible contrast is here drawn between man, in the ordinary sense, on the one side, and **Jesus Christ**, and **God the Father**, on the other. Had not the Apostle regarded Jesus Christ as one with the Father in the Godhead, he never could have written thus. It is important to remember that the mission of Paul to the actual work of the ministry was by the command of the *Holy Spirit*, Acts xiii. 2,—proceeding from, and expressing the will of, the Father and the Son.

who raised Him from the dead] Why specified here? Not, I think, because (Meyer) Paul was called to be an Apostle *by the risen Saviour*,—nor merely to identify the Father as the Originator of the Son's work of Redemption (which is so in Rom. iv. 24,—but here would not immediately concern Paul's calling to be an Apostle),—nor to meet the objection that he had never seen Christ, and turn it into an advantage, in that he alone was commissioned by the already risen and ascended Jesus,—for in this case we should not find "*who raised Him*" stated as a predicate of the Father, but "*which was raised*" as one of the Son,—nor as asserting the Resurrection against the Jews and Judaizing Galatians, which is far-fetched,—nor again as expressing an attribute of the Father, without which He can hardly be thought of by the believer,—for this is too loose a relevancy for a sentence so pointed as the present: but because the Resurrection, including and implying the Ascension, was the Father's bestowal on Christ of gifts for men, by virtue of which (Eph. iv. 11) St. Paul's *Apostleship had been received*. See a similar sentiment in Rom. i. 4, 5.

2.] Who these brethren were, may best be inferred by the Apostle's usage in the addresses of other Epistles, where we have. "*Sosthenes our brother*" (1 Cor. i. 1), "*Timothy our brother*" (2 Cor. i. 1. Col. i. 1. Philem. 1). They were his colleagues in the work of the Gospel, his companions in travel, and the like (not all the members of the church where he was, who would hardly be specified as being **with him**,—besides that such an address would be unprecedented): and their unanimity is here stated, to shew that he was not alone in his doctrines but, joined by all the brethren who were present. At the same time the word *all* would seem to imply that just now he had *many* of these *brethren* with him. But we cannot draw any inference from this as to the date of our Epistle: for we do not know who were his companions on many occasions. At Ephesus, where probably it was written, we hear only of Gaius and Aristarchus (Acts xix. 29), but we cannot say that there were not others: in all likelihood, several more of those mentioned Acts xx. 4, were with him.

unto the churches] The principal cities of Galatia were Pessinus and Ancyra: but this plural seems to imply more than two such churches. See 1 Cor. xvi. 1, and Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23. That we have here barely *the churches*, without any honourable adjunct (as in 1 Cor., 2 Cor., 1 Thess., 2 Thess., &c.), must be explained, with Chrysostom: "Behold his pervading indignation: for he saith not 'To the Beloved,' nor 'to the sanctified, but only 'to the churches,'"

3.] See introductory note on Rom. i. 1–7.

4.] He thus, by the way, reminds the Galatians, who wished to return to the bondage of the law, of the great object of the Atonement, which they had forgotten. Ch. iii. 13 is but a re-statement, in more precise terms, of this. **who gave himself**] viz. as an offering, unto death: an expression only found in the New Test., here and in the Pastoral Epistles. Several such expressions, confined to these writings, will occur: see the inference, in Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, §1. 32, note.

the present evil world (literally, *age*), state of things; and make us citizens and inheritors of a better age or world, that. which is to come.

according to the will] And this, (1) not according to our own plan in proportion to our legal obedience or any quality in us, but according to the Father's sovereign will, the prime standard of all the process of redemption: and (2) not so that we may trifile with such rescuing purpose of Christ by mixing it with other schemes and fancies, seeing that it is according to a procedure prescribed by Him, who doeth all things after the counsel of His own will. And this, not as the Jord merely of His works, but as *our Father*, bound to us in the ties of closest love—for our good, as well as to fulfil His own eternal purpose.

5. to whom be the glory] So on other occasions, when speaking of the wonderful things of God, St. Paul adds a doxology. "In civil life," says Luther, "when we speak of the names of kings or princes, we do it with a submissive gesture, reverence, and genuflexion; much more, when we speak of God, ought we to bend the knee of the heart."

In the glory, or 'the glory which is His,'—the article is probably inserted for solemnity.

for ever and ever] Literally, **unto the ages of the ages;** see note on Eph. iii. 21.

6–10.] ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE, IN HIS AMAZEMENT AT THEIR SPEEDY FALLING AWAY FROM THE GOSPEL. ASSERTION OF THAT GOSPEL'S EXCLUSIVE CLAIM TO THEIR ADHESION, AS PREACHED BY HIM WHO SERVED GOD IN CHRIST, AND NOT POPULARITY AMONG MEN. We have none of the usual expressions of thankfulness for their faith, &c.; but he hurries vehemently into his subject, and, as Chrysostom says, "his style after this becomes more vehement, as if he were inflamed beyond measure by the thought of the blessings which God hath conferred on us." **6.] I marvel** in this sense is a term of mildness, inasmuch as it imports that better things were expected of them,—and of condescension, as letting down the writer to the level of his readers and even challenging explanation from them. Still, like many other such mild words, it carries to the guilty conscience even sharper rebuke than a harsher one would.

so soon] either (1) 'so soon after your conversion,' or (2) 'so quickly,'—'after so little persuasion,' when the false teachers once came among you, or (3) 'so soon after my recent visit among you.' Of these I prefer (1), as more suiting the dignity of the passage, and as the more general and comprehensive reason. But it does not exclude (2) and (3): 'so soon' might be, and might be intended to be, variously supplied. See Introduction, on the time and place of writing this Epistle.

removing, present—not as A.V., 'removed'—is not passive, in the common usage of the word, according to which the Galatians would understand it. Chrysostom says well, "He saith not, 'are removed,' but 'are removing:' i.e. I as yet believe it not: I cannot think that your perversion is yet completed: the very expression is that of one winning them back again." It is interesting to notice, in connexion with *the charge of fickleness*, the character given by Caesar of the Gauls (by whom Galatia, or Gallo-Grecia, was peopled); "that they were eager and prompt to undertake war, but soon discouraged in calamity: fickle in their decisions, and easily induced to change."

him that called you] this, as almost always with the Apostle, is to be understood (see note on Rom. i. 6) of GOD the Father (see ver. 15; and cf. Rom. viii. 30; ix. 24, 25: 1 Cor. i. 9; vii. 15, 17: 1 Thess. ii. 12: 2 Thess. ii. 14: 2 Tim. i. 9. Also 1 Pet. v. 10).

in (as the *element*, and hence the *medium*; not "*into*," as A. V.) **t he grace of Christ.** 'Christ's grace' is the elementary medium of our 'calling of God,' as is set forth in full, Rom. v. 15: see also Acts xv. 11. And 'Christ's grace' is the sum of all that He has suffered and done for us to bring us to God;—*whereby* we come to the Father,—*in* which, as its element, the Father's calling of us has place.

unto a different (*in kind*: not '*original*,' '*another*,' *of the same kind*, which title he denies it, see below. The adjectives in the two clauses are different) **gospel** (so called by its preachers; or said by way of at once instituting a comparison unfavourable to the new teachers, logy of "*gospel*"—*good tidings*).

7.] The preceding expression, '*a different Gospel*,' was a paradoxical one, there being in reality *but one Gospel*. St. Paul appeared by it to admit the existence of *many Gospels*, and he therefore now explains himself more accurately, how he wishes to be understood, **which** "different Gospel," whereto you are falling away, **is not another**, not a second, besides the one Gospel; **except that there are** (i. e., in more familiar English, **only there are**) **some that trouble you, &c.** That is: '**This different Gospel is only in so far another**, that there are certain, who&c.' Notice, that the stress is on **not another**; so that St. Paul, though he had before said "*a different Gospel*," yet guards the *unity* of the Gospel, and explains what he meant by this expression to be *nothing but a corruption and perversion of the one Gospel of Christ*. 'The nature of this 'different Gospel,' as gathered from the data in our Epistle, was (1), though recognizing Jesus as the Christ, it insisted on circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic ordinances as to times, &c.: (2) it professed to rest on the authority of some of the other Apostles.

the gospel of Christ] perhaps here not "*Christ's Gospel*," but the Gospel of (i. e. relating to, preaching) Christ. The context only can determine in such expressions whether the genitive is subjective or objective.

8.] But (no matter who they are *that trouble you, &c.*) **even though we** (i. e. usually, ‘*I, Paul.*’ but perhaps *used* here on account of what was said in ver. 2, “*a ll the brethren which are with me*”), **or an angel from heaven** (introduced here as the highest possible authority, next to a divine Person: even were this possible, were the highest rank of created beings to furnish the preacher, &c. See 1 Cor. xiii. 1. Perhaps also, as Chrysostom says, there is a reference to the new teachers having sheltered themselves under the names of the great Apostles), **preach** (literally, *evangelize*: it is impossible to preserve in English the form of this word, and in it the reference back to vv. 6, 7) **to you any gospel other than** (not merely ‘*against*,’ nor merely ‘*besides*,’ but indicating ‘*beyond*,’ in the sense of overstepping the limit into a new region, i.e. it points out *specific difference*). The preposition is important here, as it has been pressed by Protestants in the sense of ‘*besides*,’ against Roman Catholic tradition, and in consequence maintained by the latter in the sense of ‘*against*.’ It in fact includes both) **what we preached** (evangelized) **to you, let him be accursed** (*of God*: no reference to ecclesiastical excommunication; for an *angel* is here included. See note, Rom. ix. 3, and compare ch. v. 10).

9.] As we have said before (referring, not to ver. 8; for the word more naturally, as in 2 Cor. xiii. 2 [so too 1 Thess. iv. 6], relates to something said on a former occasion,—but to what he had said during his presence with them: see a similar reference, ch. v. 3, 21), **1 also now say again,—If any one is** (no longer now a supposition, but an assumption of the fact) **preaching to you** (evangelizing you), **other** (with another gospel) **than that which ye received** (from us), **let him be accursed** (see above).

10.] For (accounting for, and by so doing, softening, the seeming harshness of the last saying, by the fact which follows) **am I NOW** (now takes up the “*now*” of the last verse, having here the principal emphasis on it,—‘in saying this,—‘in what I have just said,’ ‘is this like an example of men-pleasing?’) **persuading** (seeking to win over to me) **MEN** (see 1 Cor. iv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 12), **or** (am I conciliating) **God? or do I seek to please MEN** (a somewhat wider expression than the other, embracing his whole course of procedure)? (*Nay*) **if I any longer** (implying that such is the course of the world before conversion to Christ; not necessarily referring back to the time before his own conversion, any more than that is contained by implication in the words, but rather perhaps to the accumulated enormity of his being, after all he had gone through, a man-pleaser) **were pleasing men** (either (1) ‘*seeking to please men:*’ so that the fact, of being well-pleasing to men, does not come into question; or (2) ‘*if I were popular with men:*’ the original will bear both), **I were not the servant of Christ.**

11—CHAP. II. 21.] FIRST, or APOLOGETIC PART OF THE EPISTLE; *consisting in an historical defence of his own teaching, as not being from men, but revealed to him by the Lord,—nor influenced even by the chief Apostles, but of independent authority.*

11, 12.] Enunciation of this subject.

after, or according to man, i.e. measured by merely human rules and considerations, as it would be were it of human origin.

12.] Proof of this. For neither did I (myself strongly emphatic, ‘*neither did I, any more than the other Apostles*’) **receive it** (historically) **from man** (i. e. ‘any man; generic: **nor was I taught it** (dogmatically), **but by revelation of**, i.e. **from Jesus Christ.**—WHEN did this revelation take place?—clearly, soon after his conversion, imparting to him as it did the knowledge of the Gospel which he afterwards preached; and therefore in all probability it is to be placed during that sojourn in Arabia referred to in ver. 17. It cannot be identical with the visions spoken of, 2 Cor. xii. 1 ff.,—for 2 Cor. was written in A.D. 57, and fourteen years before that would bring us to A.D. 43, whereas his conversion was in 37 (see chronological table in Introduction), and his subsequent silence, during which we may conceive him to have been under preparation by this apocalyptic imparting of the Gospel, lasted but three years, ver. 18.—Nor can it be the same as that appearance of the Lord to him related Acts xxii. 18,—for that was not the occasion of any revelation, but simply of warning and command.—He appears to refer to this special revelation in 1 Cor. xi, 23; xv. 3; 1 Thess. iv. 15; see notes in those places.

13—II. 21.] “*Historical working out of this proof:* and first (vv. 13, 14) by reminding them of his former life in Judaism, during which he certainly received no instruction in the Gospel from men.

13.] ye heard, viz. when I was among you: from myself: not as A.V., ‘*ye have heard.*’ **For** binds the narrative to the former verses.

the church of God] for solemnity, to set himself in contrast to the Gospel, and shew how alien he then was from it.

was destroying it] More than the *mere attempt* is to be understood: he was verily *destroying* the Church ‘of God, as far as in him lay.

14. more exceedingly] viz. than they.

being (literally) a zealous assertor (or defender) of my ancestral traditions (i. e. those handed down in the sect of the Pharisees, Paul being “*a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees*,” Acts xxiii. 6,—not, the law of Moses).

15–17.] After his conversion also, he did not take counsel with MEN.

15.] It was God’s act, determined at his very birth (see especially Acts xiii. 2), and effected by a special calling: viz., that on the road to Damascus, carried out by the instrumentality of Ananias. To understand this “*call*” of an act in the divine Mind, is contrary to our Apostle’s usage of the word, see ver. 6; Rom. viii. 30 al. This calling first took place, then the revelation, as here.

16.] to reveal his Son (viz. by that subsequent revelation, of which before, ver. 12: not by his *conversion*, which, as above, answers to the “*call*”) **in me** (strictly: ‘*within me*,’ “the revelation shining through his soul,” Chrysostom: the context here requires that his own personal illumination should be the point brought out).

among the Gentiles] the main object of his Apostleship: see ch. ii. 7, 9.

with flesh and blood] i.e. with mankind: these words are used generally with the idea of weakness and frailty.

17.] went away both times refers to his departure from Damascus: “when I left Damascus, I did not go.... but when I left Damascus, I went.”

into Arabia] On the place which this journey holds in the narrative of Acts ix., see notes on verses 19, 22 there. Its object does not seem to have been the preaching of the Gospel,—but preparation for the apostolic work; though of course we cannot say, that he did not preach during the time, as before and after it (Acts ix. 20, 22), in the synagogues at Damascus. Into *what part* of Arabia he went, we have no means of determining. The name was a very vague one, sometimes including Damascus, —sometimes extending even to Lebanon and the borders of Cilicia. It was however more usually restricted to that Peninsula now thus called, between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Here we must apparently take it in the wider sense, and understand that part of the Arabian desert which nearly bordered on Damascus. *How long* he remained there we are equally at a loss to say. Hardly for any considerable portion of the three years: Acts ix. 23 will scarcely admit of this: for those “*many days*” were manifestly passed at Damascus.—The journey is mentioned here, to account, for the time, and to shew that he did not spend it in conferring with *men*, or with the other Apostles.

and returned....] compare Acts ix. 22, 25.

18–24.] But after a very short visit to Peter at Jerusalem, he retired to Syria and Cilicia.

18.] At first sight, it would appear as if the three years were to be reckoned from his *return to Damascus*: but on closer examination we see that **after three years** stands in opposition to ‘“*immediately*” above, and the “*not going away to Jerusalem*” here answers to “*going up to Jerusalem*” there. So that we must reckon them from his *conversion*: the period specified in ver. 15 ruling the whole narrative. See also on ch. ii. 1.—This is the journey of Acts ix. 26,—where see note. There is no real discrepancy between that account and this. The incident which led to his leaving Damascus (Acts ix. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33) has not necessarily any connexion with his purpose in *going to Jerusalem*: a purpose which may have been entertained before, or determined on after, that incident. To this visit must be referred the vision of Acts xxii. 17, 18.

to visit (i. e. to make the acquaintance of) Cephas—not to get information or instruction from him. Peter was at this early period the prominent person among the Apostles: see note on Matt. xvi. 18.

fifteen days] mentioned to shew how little of his institution as an Apostle he could have owed to Peter. *Why no longer*; see in Acts ix. 29; xxii. 17–21.

19.] This verse admits of two interpretations, between which other considerations must decide. (1) That James, the Lord’s brother, was one of the Twelve, and the only one besides Peter whom Paul saw at this visit: (2) that he was **one of the Apostles**, but not necessarily of the Twelve. Of these, (1) apparently cannot be: for after the choosing of the Twelve (John vi. 70), the brethren of our Lord did not believe on Him (John vii. 5): an expression (see note there) which will not admit of *any* of His brethren having then been His disciples. We must then adopt (2): which is besides in consonance with other notices respecting the term *Apostle*, and the person here mentioned. I reserve the subject for full discussion in the Introduction to the Epistle of James. See also notes, Matt. x. 3; xiii. 55; John vii. 5.

20.] This asseveration (compare 2 Cor. xi. 31) applies most naturally to the important fact just asserted—his short visit to Jerusalem, and his having seen only Peter and James, rather than to the whole subject of the chapter. If a report had been

spread in Galatia that after his conversion he spent years at Jerusalem and received regular institution in Christianity at the hands of the Apostles, this last fact would naturally cause amazement, and need a strong confirmatory asseveration.

21.] The beginning only of this journey is related in Acts ix. 30, where see note. Mr. Howson suggests (edn. 2, i.p. 129, f.) that he may have gone at once from Caesarea to Tarsus by sea, and Syria and Cilicia may afterwards have been the field of his activity,—these provinces being very generally mentioned together, from their geographical affinity, Cilicia being separated from Asia Minor by Mount Taurus. In Acts xv. 23, 41, we find churches in Syria and Cilicia, which may have been founded by Paul on this journey. The supposition is confirmed by our ver. 23: see below.

22, 23.] ‘So far was I from being a disciple of the Apostles, or tarrying in their company, that the churches of Judæa, where they principally laboured, did not even know me by sight.’ The word **Judæa** must be understood as excluding Jerusalem, where he *was known*. This seems to be required by Acts ix. 26–29.

23.] They (the members of the churches) **heard reports** (not, ‘*had heard*,’ as A.V.), **That our former persecutor is now preaching the faith which he once was destroying** (see ver. 13). **And they glorified God in me** (‘in my case.’ i.e., my example was the cause of their glorifying God. By thus shewing the spirit with which the churches of Judæa were actuated towards him, he marks more strongly the contrast between them and the Galatian Judaizers).

Galatians: Chapter 2

II. 1–10.] *On his subsequent visit to Jerusalem, he maintained equal independence, was received by the Apostles as of co-ordinate authority with themselves, and was recognized as the Apostle of the uncircumcision.* **1. after fourteen years]** From what time are we to reckon? Certainly at first sight it would appear,—*from the journey last mentioned*. And Meyer maintains that we are bound to accept this first impression without enquiring any further. But why? Is the *prima facie* view of a construction always right? Did we, or did he, judge thus in ch. i. 18? Are we not bound, in all such cases, should any external reason exist for doing so, to reexamine the passage, and ascertain whether our *prima facie* impression may not have arisen from neglecting some indication furnished by the context? That this is the case here, I am persuaded. The ways of speaking, in ch. i. 18, and here, are very similar. **The then** in both cases may be well taken as referring back to the same starting point. What would there be forced or unnatural in a statement of the following kind? “After my conversion (ch. i. 15) my occasions of communicating with the other Apostles were these: (1) after three years I went up, &c. (2) after fourteen years had elapsed, I again went up, &c.”? This {compare Chronol. Table in Introduction} would bring the visit here related to the year 50: see below.

again went up I: but nothing is said, and there was no need to say any thing, of another visit during the interval. It was the object of the Apostle to specify, *not all his visits to Jerusalem, but all his occasions of intercourse with the other Apostles*: and it is mere trifling, when Meyer, in his love of making discrepancies, maintains that in such a narration as this, St. Paul would be putting a weapon into the hands of his opponents by omitting his second journey. That journey was undertaken (Acts xi. 30) in pursuance of a mission from the church at Antioch, to convey alms to the elders of the suffering church at Jerusalem. It was at a period of persecution, when James the son of Zebedee and Peter were under the power of Herod,—and in all probability the other Apostles were scattered. Probably Barnabas and Saul did not see any of them. They merely (Acts xii. 25) fulfilled their errand, and brought back John Mark. If in that visit he had no intercourse with the Apostles, as his business was not with them, the mention of it here would be irrelevant: and to attempt, as Meyer, to prove the Acts inaccurate, because that journey is not mentioned here, is simply absurd.—That the visit here described is in all probability the THIRD related in the Acts (4. D. 50) on occasion of the council of Apostles and elders (Acts xv.), I have shewn in a note to the chronological table in the Introduction. The various separate circumstances of the visit will be noticed as we proceed.

taking Titus also] In Acts xv. 2, we read, “They determined that Paul and Barnabas, *and certain other of them*, should go up to Jerusalem.” Titus is here particularized by name, on account of the notice which follows, ver. 3: and the **also** serves to take him out from among the others. On Titus, see Introduction to Epistle to Titus.

2.] **But** not only carries on the narrative, emphatically repeating the verb, but carries on the refutation also—**but I went up** (not for any purpose of learning from or consulting others, but)&c. Of his undertaking the journey **by** (in consequence of) **revelation**, nothing is said in the Acts: all that is related there being, the appointment by the church of St. Paul and Barnabas and others to go. What divine intimation St. Paul may have received, inducing him to offer himself for the deputation, we cannot say: that some such occurred, he here assures us, and it was important for him to assert it, as shewing his dependence only on divine leading, and independence of any behests from the Jerusalem church. Meyer well remarks, that the history itself of the Acts furnishes an instance of such a double prompting: Peter was induced by a vision, and at the same time by the messengers of Cornelius, to go to Cesarea.

unto them] The Christians at Jerusalem, implied in the word “*Jerusalem*” above. This wide assertion is limited by the next

clause.

but (limits the foregoing: as if to say, “when I say ‘to them,’ I mean”) **privately** (in a private conference: not to be conceived as separate from, but as specifying, the former communication) **to those that were eminent** (more at length ver. 6, “*they which seemed to be somewhat.*” These were James, Cephas, and John, ver. 9,—who appear to have been the only Apostles then at Jerusalem. ‘This is said, not for his own sake, but for that of others: meaning, that all might see the unity of the preaching, and that the truths proclaimed by me were well pleasing to the rest.’ Theodoret), **lest by any means I should** (seem to) **be running, or (to) have run, in vain.** It is quite out of the question, that this last clause should express a *bona fide* fear, lest his ministry should really be, or have been, in vain, without the recognition of the church at Jerusalem: such a sentiment would be unworthy of him, and, besides, at variance with the whole course of his argument here. The reference must be to the *estimation* in which his preaching would be held by those to whom he imparted it. When we consider the very strong prejudices of the Jerusalem church, this feeling of anxiety, leading him to take measures to prevent his work from being tumultuously disowned by them, is surely but natural.

3.] Howbeit (so far were they from regarding my course to have been in vain, that) **not even was Titus, who was with me, a Greek** (i. e. though he was a Gentile, and therefore liable to the demand that he should be circumcised), **compelled to be circumcised** (i. e. we did not allow him to be thus compelled: the facts being, as here implied, that the church at Jerusalem {and the Apostles? apparently not, from Acts xv. 5] demanded his circumcision, but on account of the reason following, the demand was not complied with, but resisted by Paul and Barnabas. So Meyer, and others, and I am persuaded, rightly, from what follows. But usually it is understood, that the circumcision of Titus *was not even demanded*, and that St. Paul alleged this as shewing his agreement with the other Apostles. But had this been so, besides that the following could not have stood as it does, not the strong expression **was compelled**, but the weakest possible one would have been used—‘*the circumcision of Titus was not even mentioned*’):

4.] and that (restricts and qualifies the broader assertion which went before. ‘*Titus was not compelled...: and the reason was, &c.*’) **because of the false brethren who had been foisted in among us** (the Judaizers in the church at Jerusalem, see Acts xv. 1), **men who crept in to spy out** (in a hostile sense) **our freedom** (from the ceremonial law: to see whether, or how far, we kept it) **which we have in Christ Jesus, with intent to enslave us utterly: to whom not even for one hour did we yield with the subjection required of us, that the truth of the gospel** (as contrasted with the perverted view which they would have introduced. Had they been overborne in this point, the verity of the Gospel would have been endangered among them,—i. e. that doctrine of justification, on which the Gospel turns as the truth of God) **might abide with you** (‘*you Galatians: not, ‘you Gentiles in general:*’ the fact was so,—the Galatians specially, not being in his mind at the time: it is only one of those cases where, especially if a rhetorical purpose is to be served, we apply home to the particular what, as matter of fact, it only shares as included in the general).

6.] He returns to his sojourn in Jerusalem, and his intercourse with ‘*those who seemed to be somewhat*’ there.

These who seemed to be somewhat may be either subjective (‘*those who believe themselves to be something*’), or objective (‘*those who have the estimation of being something*’). The latter is obviously the meaning here.

God respecteth no man’s person] i.e. ‘I wish to form all my judgments according to God’s rule—which is that of strict unbiased justice.’ See Eph. vi. 9.

they... imparted nothing unto me] As I, at my first conversion, did not impart it to flesh and blood, so they now imparted nothing to me: we were independent the one of the other. The meaning ‘*added*’ (A. V. ‘*in conference added*’) is not justified by the usage of the word.

7.] Not only did they impart nothing to *me*, but, on the contrary, they gave in their adhesion to the course which I and Barnabas had been (independently) pursuing. ‘In what did this opposition (‘*contrary*’ course) consist? Apparently in this, that instead of strengthening the hands of Paul, they left him to fight his own battle [practically: but they added the weight of their approval]. They said, ‘Take your own course: preach the Gospel of the uncircumcision to Gentiles, and we will preach the Gospel of the circumcision to Jews.’’’ Jowett.

when they saw, viz. by the communication mentioned ver. 2, coupled with the now manifest results of his preaching among the Gentiles. Compare Acts xv. 12. The word intrusted has the emphasis: **they saw that I was** (literally, **am**: the state being one still abiding) **INTRUSTED with the gospel of the uncircumcision, as Peter with that of the circumcision;** therefore they had only to accede to the appointment of God. Peter was not the Apostle of the circumcision *only*, for he had opened the door to the Gentiles (Acts x., to which Peter himself refers in Acts xv. 7), but in the ultimate assignment of the apostolic work, he wrought less among the Gentiles and more among the Jews than Paul: see 1 Pet. i. 1, and note. But his own Epistles are sufficient testimonies that, in his hands at least, the Gospel of the circumcision did not differ in any essential point from that of the uncircumcision.—Compare, as an interesting trait on the other side, Col. iv. 11.

8.] Parenthetic explanation of this word “*intrusted*.” The word **wrought** applies to the *signs following* with which the Lord accompanied His word spoken by them, and to the power with which they spoke that word. The agent in this *working* is GOD,—the Father: see 1 Cor. xii. 6; Phil. ii. 13; Rom. xv. 15, 16.

unto the apostleship] i.e. **towards**, with a view to, the **apostleship**.

9.] resumes the narrative after the parenthesis.

James] placed first, as being at the head of the church at Jerusalem, and presiding (apparently) at the conference in Acts xv. The expression **seemed to be** alludes to vv. 2 and 6; see there.

pillars, i. e., principal supporters of the church, men of distinction and weight; afterwards the word came to be used directly in a personal sense, without metaphor. Clement of Rome says that “the most righteous pillars were persecuted.” The words **should be apostles** are not expressed in the Greek. Some supply “*should go*,” or “*should preach*,” which come to much the same. ‘This division of labour was not, and could not be, strictly observed. Every where in the Acts we find St. Paul preaching ‘to the Jews first,’ and every where the Judaizers followed on his track.

10.] which very thing I was also forward to do,—viz., then and always: it was my habit. He uses the singular, because the plural could not correctly be predicated of the whole time to which the verb refers: for he parted from Barnabas shortly after the council in Acts xv. The proofs of this *forwardness* on his part may be found, Rom. xv. 15–27; 1 Cor. xvi. 1–4; 2 Cor. viii. ix.; Acts xxiv. 17: which, though they probably happened after the date of our Epistle, yet shew the bent of his habitual wishes on this point.

11–17.] *He further proves his independence, by relating how he rebuked Peter for temporizing at Antioch.* This proof goes further than any before: not only was he not taught originally by the Apostles,—not only did they impart nothing to him, rather tolerating his view and recognizing his mission,—but he on one occasion stood aloof from and reprimanded the chief of them for conduct unworthy the Gospel: thus setting his own Apostleship in *opposition* to Peter, for the time.

11.] This visit of Peter to Antioch, not related in the Acts, will fall most naturally (for our narrative follows the order of time) in the period described, Acts xv. 35, seeing that (ver. 18) Barnabas also was there. See below.

Cephas] Eusebius quotes out of Clement a story that this Cephas was not the Apostle, but one of the Seventy, of the same name. This was manifestly invented to save the credit of St. Peter. One of the most curious instances of ecclesiastical ingenuity on record has been afforded in the interpretation of this passage by the Fathers. They try to make it appear that the reproof was only an apparent one—that St. Peter was entirely in the right, and St. Paul withheld him **to the face**, i.e. as they explain it, ‘*in appearance merely*,’ because he had been blamed by others. So Chrysostom: so Theodoret also: and Jerome.—This view of Jerome’s met with strong opposition from Augustine, who writes to him, nobly and worthily, maintaining that if St. Paul wrote thus, he was *lying*, in the very passage in which he says, “The things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.” Afterwards, Jerome abandoned his view for the right one.

because he was condemned] not, ‘*because he was to be blamed*,’ A.V.: no such meaning can be extracted from the original word. He was ‘a condemned man,’ as we say: by whom, does not appear: possibly, *by his own act*: or, *by the Christians in Antioch*: but St. Paul would hardly have waited for the prompting of others to pronounce his condemnation of him. I therefore prefer the former: **he was [self] convicted:** convicted of inconsistency by his conduct.

12.] These certain men from James have been softened by some Commentators into persons who merely *gave themselves out* as from James, or who merely came from Jerusalem where James presided. But the candid reader will I think at once recognize in the words a *mission* from James: and will find no difficulty in believing that that Apostle, even after the decision of the council regarding the Gentile converts, may have retained (characteristically, see his recommendation to St. Paul, in Acts xxi. 18 ff.) his strict view of the duties of Jewish converts,—for that is perhaps all that the present passage requires. And this mission may have been for the very purpose of admonishing the Jewish converts of *their* obligations, from which the Gentiles were free. Thus we have no occasion to assume that James had in the council been over-persuaded by the earnestness and eloquence of Paul, and had afterwards undergone a reaction: for his course will be consistent throughout. And my view seems to me to be confirmed by his own words, Acts xv. 19, where the emphatic expression, “*them which from among the Gentiles are turning unto God*,” tacitly implies, that the Jews would be bound as before.

he ate with the Gentiles] As he had done, Acts x., on the prompting of a heavenly vision; and himself defended it, Acts xi. See below.

he withdrew and separated himself] The original expresses that there were more cases than one where he did this: it was the

course he took.

fearing them which were of the circumcision] The whole incident is remarkably characteristic of Peter—ever the first to recognize, and the first to draw back from, great principles and truths.

13. joined in his hypocrisy] The word is not (as De Wette says) too strong a one to describe their conduct. They were aware of the liberty in Christ which allowed them to eat with Gentiles, and had practised it: and now, being still aware of it, and not convinced to the contrary, from mere fear of man they adopted a contrary course. The case bore but very little likeness to that discussed in 1 Cor. viii.—x.; Rom. xiv. There, it was a mere matter of *licence* which was in question: here, the very foundation itself. It was not now a question of using a liberty, but of asserting a truth, that of justification by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law.

was carried away] “Besides the antagonism in which this passage represents the two great Apostles, it throws an important light on the history of the apostolic church in the following respects:—1] As exhibiting Peter’s relation to James, and his fear of those who were of the circumcision, whose leader we should have naturally supposed him to have been. 2] Also as pourtraying the state of indecision in which all, except St. Paul, even including Barnabas, were in reference to the observance of the Jewish law.” Jowett.

14. before them all] i.e. ‘before the church assembled.’ The words require this, and the reproof would otherwise have fallen short of its desired effect on the Jewish converts.—The speech which follows, and which I believe to extend to the end of the chapter, must be regarded as a compendium of what was said, and a free report of it, as we find in the narratives by St. Paul himself of his conversion. See below.—**If thou, being** (by birth, originally, cf. Acts xvi. 20 and note) **a Jew, livest** (as thy usual habit. As Neander remarks, these words shew that Peter had long been himself convinced of the truth on this matter, and lived according to it: see further on ver. 18) **as a Gentile (how,** is shewn by the fact that he *ate with the Gentiles*, mentioned above), **and not as a Jew, how is it that thou art compelling the Gentiles** (i. e. virtually and ultimately; for the high authority of Peter and Barnabas would make the Gentile converts view their course as necessary to all Christians. There is no need to suppose that the persons who came from James actually compelled the Gentile converts to Judaize, as necessary to salvation, and Peter upheld them: nor is there any difficulty in the expression: the present may mean, as it often does, ‘*art compelling to the best of thy power*,’ ‘*doing thy part to compel*,’—for such certainly would be the *ultimate result*, if Jews and Gentiles might not company together in social life—“his principle logically involved this, or his influence and example would be likely to effect it.” Jowett) **to Judaize** (observe the ceremonial law)?

15.] Some think that the speech ends with ver. 14: others with ver. 15, or ver. 16, or ver. 18: Jowett, that the conversation gradually passes off into the general subject of the Epistle. “Ver. 14,” he says, “is the answer of St.

Paul to St. Peter: what follows, is more like the Apostle musing or arguing with himself, with an indirect reference to the Galatians.” But it seems very unnatural to place any break before the end of the chapter. The Apostle recurs to the Galatians again, in ch. iii. 1: and it is harsh in the extreme to suppose him to pass from his speech to Peter, into an address to them, with so little indication of the transition. I therefore regard the speech (which doubtless is freely reported, and gives rather the bearing of what was said, than the words themselves, as in Acts xxii. and xxvi.) as continuing to the end of the chapter, as do the great majority of Commentators, ancient and modern.

We (thou and I) are Jews by nature (birth), and not sinners from among the Gentiles (he is speaking to Peter from the common ground of their Judaism, and using [ironically?] Judaistic language, in which the Gentiles were called *atheists, lawless, unjust, sinners*, see Rom. ii. 12; vi. 1; ix. 21; Eph. ii. 12; 1 Sam. xv. 18} **knowing nevertheless that a man is not justified by** (as the ground of justification) **the works of the law,—** (supply, nor is any man justified) **save through** (except by, literally) **the faith of Jesus Christ,—we also** (as well as the Gentile sinners, casting aside our legal trust) **believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by** (this time, faith is the *ground*) **the faith of Christ** (so literally), **and not by the works of the law: because** (it is an axiom in our theolog that) **by the works of the law shall all flesh find no justification** (so in the Greek: in English ‘*shall no flesh be justified:*’ our language not admitting of the logical form of the Greek: but by this transposition of the negative, the sense is not accurately rendered).

17.] continues the argument. But if, seeking (put first for emphasis—in the course of our earnest endeavour) **to be justified in Christ** (as the element—the Body, comprehending us the members. This is lost sight of by rendering as A.V., ‘*by Christ*’), **we ourselves also** (you and I, addressed to Peter) **were found [to be] sinners** (as we should be, if we regarded the keeping of the law as necessary; for we should be in the situation of those Gentiles who in the Judaistic view are *sinners*, faith having failed in obtaining righteousness for us, and we having cast aside the law which we were bound to keep), **is not Christ a minister of sin** (i. e. are we to admit the consequence which would in that case be inevitable, that Christ, having failed to obtain for his own the righteousness which is by faith, has left them sinners, and so has done all his work only to minister to a state of sin)? Theodoret expresses well the argument. “If our having left the law and become attached to Christ, expecting by our faith in Him to gain righteousness, is to be accounted transgression, the guilt will lie on our Master Christ Himself: for He it was who

proposed to us the new covenant. But God forbid that we should dare to utter such a blasphemy.”

18.] For (substantiates the **God forbid**, and otherwise deduces the *being found sinners*) **if the things which I pulled down, those very things** (and no others) **I again build up** (which thou art doing, who in Casarea didst so plainly announce freedom from the Jaw, and again here in Antioch didst practise it thyself. The *first person* is chosen for courtesy’s sake; the *second* would have placed Peter, where the first means that he should place *himself*), **I am proving myself a transgressor** (a *transgressor* is the species, bringing me under the genus *sinner*. So that this is the explanation of the *being found sinners*). The *force* of the verse is,—‘You, by now reasserting the obligation of the law, are proving (as far as in *you* lies) that your former step of setting aside the law was in fact a *transgression* of it:’ viz. in that you neglected and set it aside.

19.] For I (I myself: the pronoun of the first person, for the first time expressed in the Greek, is marked and emphatic. The first person of the *last* verse, serves as the transition point to treating, as he now does, of HIS OWN state and course. And this “I,” as that in Rom. vii., is purely and *bona fide* ‘I Paul;’ not ‘I and all believers’) **by means of the law died to the law** (Christ was the end of the law for righteousness: the law itself, properly apprehended by me, was my “guide” to Christ: and in Christ, who fulfilled the law, I died to the law: i.e. satisfied the law’s requirements, and passed out of its pale), **that I should live to God** (the end of Christ’s work, LIFE unto God). Many of the Fathers, and others, take the first **law** here to mean the Gospel (the “*law of the Spirit of life*” of Rom. viii. 2): but it will be manifest to any who follow the argument, that this cannot be so. This “*through the law dying to the law*” is in fact a compendium of his expanded experience in Rom. vii.: and also of his argument in ch. iii. iv. below.

20.] I am (‘*and have been*’) **crucified with Christ** (specification of the foregoing *dying*: the way in which I died to the law was, by being united to, and involved in the death of, that body of Christ which was crucified): **but** (so literally) **it is no longer I that live, but** (it is) **Christ that liveth in me** (the punctuation of the A.V. is altogether wrong, the meaning is ‘but the life is not mine,—but the life is Christ’s within me.’—Christ is the vine, we the branches: He lives, He, the same Christ, through and in every one of His believing people): **but** (so again literally: it is taken up again, parallel with the two clauses beginning with “but” above) **that which** (i. e. ‘the life which’) **I now** (since my conversion, as contrasted with the time before: not the *present* life contrasted with the *future*) **live in the flesh** (in the fleshly body;—which, though it appear to be a mere animal life, is not. So Luther; “I live indeed in the flesh, but I do not count this insignificant particle of life which is going on in me, to be really life. For it is not, but only the mask of life, under which another lives, viz. Christ, who is really my life”) I live in (not ‘*by*,’ as A.V.: **in the faith** corresponds to **in the flesh**: *faith*, and *not the flesh*, is the real element in which I live) **faith, viz. that** (particularizing what sort of faith) **of** (having for its object, see on ver. 16) **the Son of God** (so named for solemnity, and because His eternal Sonship is the source of His life-giving power, compare John v. 25, 26), **who loved me** (the link which binds the eternal Son of God to me), **and** (proved that love, in that He) **gave Himself up** (to death) **for me** (on my behalf).

21] I do not (as thou [Peter] art doing, and the Judaizers) **frustrate** (or, **make void**) **the grace of God: for** (justification of the strong expression, *frustrate*) **if by the law (comes) righteousness** (not justification—but the *result of justification*), **then Christ died without cause** (not as A.V., ‘*in vain*,’ with reference to the *result* of His death, but *gratuitously, causelessly*;—‘*Christ need not have died*.’ ‘For,’ says Chrysostom, ‘if, Christ died, it is clear that it was because the law could not justify us: but if the law *does* justify us, Christ’s death was superfluous’).

Galatians: Chapter 3

CH. III. 1—V. 12.] SECOND, OR POLEMICAL PART OF THE EPISTLE.

1.] The Apostle exclaims indignantly, moved by the fervour and truth of his rebuke of Peter, against the folly of the Galatians, for suffering themselves to be bewitched out of their former vivid apprehension of Christ’s work and Person.

foolish must not, with Jerome, be taken as an allusion to any supposed national stupidity of the Galatians (for they appear to have been ‘very apt to learn, and of ready wit’): it merely springs out of the occasion.

you has the emphasis—‘YOU, **to whom**,’ &c.

was evidently set forth] We must understand this to refer to the time when he preached Christ among them, which he represents as a previous description in writing of Christ, in their hearts and before their eyes.

crucified, as expressing the whole mystery of redemption by grace, and of freedom from legal obligation. “It has an echo of the being *crucified with Christ*, in ch. ii. 20.” Jowett.

2.] This only,—not to mention all the *other* grounds on which I might rest my argument. “I wish to deal with you the shortest

and simplest way."

Did ye from (as its ground, see ch. ii. 16) **the works of the Law receive the Spirit** (evidently here to be taken as including *all His gifts*, spiritual and external: not as some, "outward spiritual gifts" only: for the two are distinguished in ver. 5), **or from the hearing of faith** (meaning either, '*that preaching which proclaimed faith*,' or, '*that hearing, which received (the) faith*.' The first is preferable, because (1) where their first receiving the Gospel is in question, the *preaching* of it would probably be hinted at, as it is indeed taken up by the "*then*" below, ver. 5: (2) where the question is concerning the power of faith as contrasted with the works of the law, faith would most likely be *subjective*)?

3.] Are ye so (to such an extent, emphatic) **foolish** (as viz. the following fact would prove)? **having begun** (understand 'the Christian life') **in the Spirit** (the Spirit, i.e. the Holy Spirit, guiding and ruling the spiritual life, as the 'essence and active principle' of Christianity,—contrasted with the flesh,—the element in which the law worked), **are ye now being completed in** (as above) **the flesh?**

4.] Did ye suffer (not "*have ye suffered*," as A.V.) **so many things in vain?** There is much controversy about the meaning. Chrysostom, Augustine, and the ancients, and others, understand it of the sufferings which the Galatians underwent at the time of their reception of the Gospel. And, I believe, rightly. For (a) the word "*suffer*" occurs seven times in St. Paul, and always in the strict sense of '*suffering*,' by persecution, or hardship (similarly in Heb., 1 Pet., &c.); (b) the past tense here marks the reference to be to some definite time. Now the time referred to by the context is that of their conversion to the Gospel, compare verses 2, 3, above. Therefore the meaning is, **Did ye undergo all those sufferings** (not specially mentioned in this Epistle, but which every convert to Christ must have undergone as a matter of course) **in vain? if it be really in vain** ("if, as it must be, what I have said, 'that ye suffered in vain,' is really the fact").

5.] then takes up again the question of ver. 2, and asks it in another form.

mighty works] not merely "*miracles*," as A.V.; but, the wonders wrought by divine Power in you (not, as A.V. "*among you*"; see 1 Cor. xii. 6; Phil. ii. 13; Eph. ii. 2; also Matt. xiv. 2), viz. at your conversion and since.

doeth He it from (out of, or in consequence of: "as the originating or moving cause") **the works of the law, or from** (as above) **the hearing** (see above, ver. 2) **of faith?**

6-9.] A braham's faith was his entrance into righteousness before God: and Scripture, in recording this, records also God's promise to him, by virtue of which all the Faithful inherit his blessing.

6.] The reply to the foregoing question is understood: it is **by the hearing of faith**. And then enters the thought of God's *working* as following upon Abraham's faith. The fact of justification being now introduced, whereas before the *supplying* the *Spirit* was the matter enquired of, is no real departure from the subject, for both these belong to the "*beginning*" of ver. 3,—are concomitant and inseparable. On the verse, see note, Rom. iv. 3.

7.] The verb is better taken indicatively, than imperatively. It is no objection to the indicative, that such knowledge could not well be predicated of the Galatians: it is not so predicated, but is here set before them as a thing which they ought to be acquainted with—**from this then you know**, as much as to say, "it is evident to all." The imperative seems to me to lose the fine edge of the Apostle's argumentative irony.

they which are of faith, as the origin and the starting-point. of their spiritual life: see Rom. ii. 8; iii. 26, and notes.

these] emphatic; **these**, and these only (see Rom. viii. 14), not *they which are of works*.

8.] Moreover the scripture (as we say, Nature: meaning, the Author of the Scripture), **foreseeing that of faith** (emphatic,—'*and not of works*') **God would justify** (literally, justifieth: this present tense is used, because it was God's *one* way of justification—He never justified in any other way—so that it is the normal present; 'God is a God that justifieth') **the Gentiles** (there is no stress here on the word "*Gentiles*": no question is raised between the carnal and spiritual seed of Abraham,—the question is between those who were *of faith*, and those who wanted to return to the *works of the law*, whether Jews or Gentiles. So that in fact the **Gentiles** [or, **nations**] must be here taken in its widest sense, as in the Abrahamic promise soon to be quoted), **announced the good news beforehand to Abraham: In thee** (not, '*in thy seed*,' which is a point not here raised; but strictly **in thee**, as followers of thy faith, it having first shewn the way to justification before God. That the words will bear that other reference, does not shew that it must be introduced here) **shall all the Gentiles** (or, **nations**, see above: not to be restricted to its narrower sense, but expressing, from Gen. xviii. 18; xxii. 18, in a form suiting better the Apostle's present argument, "*all the families of the earth*," Gen. xii. 3) **be blessed**.

9.] Consequence of his being blessed in Abraham above, substantiated by ver. 10 below. A share in Abraham's *blessing* must

be the accompaniment of faith, not of works of the law.

with, to shew their community with him in the blessing: **faithful** Abraham, to shew wherein the community consists, viz. FAITH.

10.] Substantiation of ver. 9: they *that are of the works of the law* cannot be sharers in the blessing, for they are accursed; it being understood that they do not and cannot continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them: see this expanded in Rom. iii. 9–20.

11, 12.] contain a perfect syllogism, so that “*the just shall live by faith*” is the major proposition, ver. 12 the minor, and “*in the law no man is justified before God*,” the consequence. It is inserted to strengthen the inference of the former verse, by shewing that not even could a man keep the law, would he be justified—the *condition* of justification, as revealed in Scripture, being that it is *by faith*. **But** (moreover) **that in** (not merely the *elemental* in, but the *conditional* as well: ‘in and by:’ not ‘through’) **the law no man is justified** (the *normal* present: is, in God’s order of things) **with (before**, in the judgment of) **God is evident: for** (it is written, that), **The just by faith shall live** (not ‘*The just shall live by faith*,’ as A.V. St. Paul is not seeking to shew *by what* the righteous shall live, but the *ground itself of that righteousness* which shall *issue in life*; and the contrast is between “*t he just by faith*,” and “*the man that doeth them*”): **but** (or, *now*: logical, introducing the minor of the syllogism: see above) **the law is not of** (does not spring from nor belong to) **faith: but** (its nature is such that), **He that hath done them** (viz. “*my statutes and my judgments*,” Lev. xviii. 5) **shall live in** (conditional element) **them** (see Rom. x. 5).

13.] But this curse has been removed by the redemption of Christ. The joyful contrast is introduced abruptly, without any connecting particle: see a similar case in Col. iii. 4. The US is emphatic, and applies solely to the Jews. *They only* were under the curse of ver. 10,—and they being by Christ redeemed from that curse, the blessing of Abraham (justification by faith), which was always destined by God to flow through the Jews to the Gentiles, was set at liberty thus to flow out to the Gentiles. This is the only view which suits the context. To make *us* refer to Jews and Gentiles, and refer *the curse of the law* to the law of conscience, is to break up the context altogether.

redeemed us] bought us off: see, besides reff., 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23; 2 Pet. ii. 1; Rev. v. 9.—The form of the idea is,—the Law (personified) held us (Jews) under its curse; (**out of this**) **Christ bought us, BECOMING** (emphatic) **a curse** (not *accursed*, concrete, but *a curse*, abstract, to express that he became not only a cursed person, but *the curse itself*, coextensive with the disability which affected us) **for us** (the JEWS again. And the meaning is not, ‘*instead of us*,’ but ‘*on our behalf*.’ It was in our stead: but that circumstance is not expressed by the form of this sentence).

for it is written, &c., is a parenthesis, justifying the formal expression “*having become a curse for us*.” The citation omits the words “*of God*” after “*cursed*.” They were not to the point here, being understood as matter of course, the law being *God’s* law. The words are spoken of hanging *after death by stoning*; and are given, in the place cited, as a reason why the body should not: remain on the tree all night, because one hanging on a tree is accursed of God. Such formal curse then extended to Christ, who *died* by hanging on a tree.

14] to the end that (the intent of *Christ’s becoming a curse*) **the blessing of Abraham** (promised to Abraham: i.e. justification by faith; ver. 9) **might be** (come) **upon the Gentiles** (or, nations: but here not *all* nations, but strictly the Gentiles: see above on ver. 13) **in** (in and by, *conditional element*) **Christ Jesus; that we** (not emphatic: no longer the Jews, but all Christians) **might receive** (in full, as fulfilled) **through the** (or, but not so usually, *our*: perhaps best expressed in English simply by “*through faith*”) **faith the promise of the Spirit** (viz. that made Joel ii. 28.—See Acts ii. 17, 33; Luke xxiv. 49,—THE PROMISE of the new covenant). This ‘receiving the promise of the Spirit’ distinctly refers back to ver. 2, where he asked them whether they received the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? “Here is a pause, at which the indignant feeling of the Apostle softens, and he begins the new train of thought which follows with words of wilder character, and proceeds more quietly with his argument.” Windischmann.

15–18.] But what if the law, coming after the Abrahamic promise, *abrogated* that promise? These verses contain the refutation of such an objection: *the promise was not abrogated by the law*.

15.] “What is ‘I speak after the manner of men? From human examples.’” Chrysostom. But (see 1 Cor. xv. 32) the expression refers not only to the character of the example chosen, but to the temporary standing-point of him who speaks: I put myself for the time on a level with ordinary men in the world.

a (mere) man’s covenant (not ‘testament,’ although the word has also that meaning; for there is here no introduction of that idea: the promise spoken to Abraham was strictly a *covenant*, and designated by the word used here (*diathéké*) in the passages which were now in the Apostle’s mind, see Gen. xv. 18; xvii. 7), **when ratified, no one notwithstanding** (that it is merely a human covenant) **sets aside, or supplements** (with new conditions. Nothing is implied as to the nature of the additions, whether consistent or inconsistent with the original covenant: the simple fact that *no additions are made*, is enounced).

16.] What is *now* said, in a parenthetical and subsidiary manner, is this: The covenant was not merely nor principally made with Abraham, but with Abraham *and HIS SEED*, and that seed referred, not to the Jewish people, but to CHRIST. The covenant then was not fulfilled, but awaiting its fulfilment, and He to whom it was made was yet to appear, when the law was given.

the promises] because the promise was many times repeated: e.g. Gen. xii. 7; xv. 5, 18; xvii. 7, 8; xxii. 18.

and to his seed] These words, on which, from what follows, the stress of the whole argument rests, are probably meant to be a formal quotation. If so, the promises quoted must be Gen. xiii. 15; xvii. 8 [Jowett supposes xxi. 12, but qu.?] where the words occur as here.

He saith not] v iz. He who gave the promises—God.

to seeds.... to thy seed] The central point of the Apostle's argument is this: The seed to whom the promises were made, was Christ. To confirm this position,—see Gen. xxii. 17, 18, where the collective *seed* of ver. 17 is summed up in the individual *seed* of ver. 18, he alleges a philological distinction, which was also recognized by the Rabbinical schools. This has created considerable difficulty: and all sorts of attempts have been made to evade the argument, or to escape standing committed to the distinction. Jerome (ad loc.), curiously and characteristically, applies the words "*I speak after the manner of men*" to this distinction especially, and thinks that the Apostle used it as adapted to the calibre of those to whom he was writing: "He had lately called the Galatians foolish, and now he descends to their level and becomes a fool in his argument." The Roman-Catholic Windischmann, one of the ablest and most sensible of modern expositors, says, "Our recent masters of theology have taken up the objection, which is as old as Jerome, and forgetting that Paul knew Hebrew better than themselves, have severely blamed him for urging the singular meaning of *seed* here, and thus justifying the application to Christ, seeing that the word which occurs here in the Hebrew text, has no plural (Windischmann is not accurate here: the plural is found 1 Sam. viii. 15, in the sense of 'grains of wheat'), and so could not be used. Yet they are good enough to assume, that Paul had no fraudulent intent, and only followed the arbitrary exegesis of the Jews of his time. The argument of the Apostle does not depend on the grammatical form, by which Paul here only puts forth his meaning in Greek,—but on this, that the Spirit of God in the promise to Abraham and the passage of Scripture relating that promise, has chosen a word which implies a collective unity, and that the promise was not given to Abraham *and his children*. Against the prejudice of the carnal Jews, who held that the promise applied to the plurality of them, the individual descendants of the Patriarch, as such,—the Apostle maintains the truth, that only the Unity, Christ, with those who are incorporated in Him, has part in the inheritance." On these remarks I would observe, (1) that the Apostle's argument is independent of his philology: (2) that his philological distinction must not be pressed to mean more than he himself intended by it: (3) that the *collective and individual* meanings of *seed* are both undoubted, and must have been evident to the Apostle himself, from what follows, ver. 29. We are now in a position to interpret the words **which is Christ**, Meyer says '**Christ** is the personal Christ. Jesus, not, as has been held since Augustine's time, Christ and His Church.' This remark is true, and untrue. **Christ** certainly does not mean 'Christ and His Church:' but if it imports only the personal Christ Jesus, why is it not so expressed? For the word does not here occur in passing, but is the predicate of a very definite and important proposition. The fact is, that we must place ourselves in St. Paul's position with regard to the idea of Christ, before we can appreciate all he meant by this word here. Christians are, not by a figure, but really, the BODY OF CHRIST: Christ contains His people, and the mention even of the personal Christ would bring with it, in the Apostle's mind, the inclusion of his believing people. This seed is, CHRIST: not merely in the narrower sense, the man Christ Jesus, but Christ the Seed, Christ the Second Adam, Christ the Head of the Body. And that this is so, is plain from vv. 28, 29, which are the key to these words: where he says, "*For ye all are ONE in Christ Jesus*" (notice **Jesus** here carefully inserted, where the Person is indicated); "*and if ye be Christ's, then ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, heirs according to promise.*" So that while it is necessary for the form of the argument here, to express Him to whom the promises were made, and not the aggregate of His people, afterwards to be identified with Him (but not here in view), yet the Apostle has introduced His name in a form not circumscribing His Personality, but leaving room for the inclusion of His mystical Body.

17.] Inference from vv. 15, 16, put in the form of a re-statement of the argument, as applying to the matters in hand. **This however I say** (this is my meaning, the drift of my previous statement), **The covenant which was previously ratified by God** (the words *unto Christ* seem to have been inserted by some to complete the correspondence with ver. 16: the *fact was so*, it was '*to Christ*,' as its second party, that the covenant was ratified by God), **the Law, which took place** (was constituted) **four hundred and thirty years after, does not abrogate, 80 as to do away the promise.** As regards the interval of 430 years, we may remark, that in Exod. xii. 40, it is stated, "The sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." (In Gen. xv. 13, Acts vii. 6, the period of the oppression of Israel in Egypt is roundly stated at 400 years.) But to this, in order to obtain the entire interval between the covenant with Abraham and the law, must be added the sojourning of the Patriarchs in Canaan,—i. e. to the birth of Isaac, 25 years (Gen. xii. 4; xxi. 5),—to that of Jacob, 60 more (Gen. xxv. 26),—to his going down into Egypt, 130 more (Gen. xlvi. 9); in all = 215 years. So that the time really was 645 years, not 430. But in the Septuagint version (and Samaritan Pentateuch) we read, Exod. xii. 40, "The sojourning of the children of Israel which they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, they and their fathers, was four

hundred and thirty years;" and this reckoning St. Paul has followed. We have instances of a similar adoption of the Septuagint text in the apology of Stephen: see Acts vii. 14, and note. After all, however, *the difficulty* lies in the 400 years of Gen. xv. 13 and Acts vii. 6. For we may ascertain thus the period of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt: Joseph was 39 years old when Jacob came into Egypt (Gen. sli. 46, 47; xlvi. 6): therefore he was born when Jacob was 91 ($91 + 39 = 130$: see Gen. xlvi. 9). But he was born 6 years before Jacob left Laban (compare ib. xxx. 25 with xxxi. 41), having been with him 20 years (ib. xxxi. 38, 41), and served him 14 of them for his two daughters (xxxi. 41). Hence, seeing that his marriage with Rachel took place when he was 78; [the marriages with Leah and Rachel being contemporaneous, and the second seven years of service occurring *after*, not before, the marriage with Rachel; Levi, the *third* son of Leah, whose first son was born after Rachel's marriage [xxix. 30–32], must have been born not earlier than Jacob's 81st year,—and consequently was about 49 [130–81] when he went down into Egypt. Now (Exod. vi. 16) Levi *lived in all* 137 years: i.e., about 88 [137–49]

years in Egypt. But (Exod. vi. 16, 18, 20) Amram, father of Moses and Aaron, married his father Kohath's sister, Jochebed, who was therefore, as expressly stated Num. xxvi. 59, 'the daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bare to Levi in Egypt' Therefore Jochebed must have been born within 88 years after the going down into Egypt. And seeing that Moses was 80 years old at the Exodus (Exod. vii. 7)—if we call x his mother's age when he was born, we have $88 + 80 + x$ as a maximum for the sojourn in Egypt, which clearly therefore cannot be 430 years, or even 400; as in the former case x would = 262,—in the latter 232. If we take x = about 47 (to which might be added in the hypothesis any time which 88 and x might have had in common), we shall have the sojourn in Egypt = 215 years, which, added to the previous 215, will make the required 430. Thus it will appear that the Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, and St. Paul, have the right chronology,—and as stated above, the difficulty lies in Gen. xv. 13 and Acts vii. 6,—and in the Hebrew text of Exod. xii. 40.

18.] See Rom. iv. 14. **For if the inheritance** (the general term for all the blessings promised to Abraham, as summed up in his Seed who was to inherit the land,—in other words, for the Kingdom of Christ: see 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10) **is of the law** (i. e. by virtue of the law, having as its ground the covenant of the law), **it is no more** (not of time, but logical—the 'negative' follows on the hypothesis) **of (by virtue of) promise: but** (the 'but' of a demonstration, appealing to a well-known fact) **to Abraham by promise hath God granted [it]** (and therefore it is not of the Law).

19–24.] *The use and nature of the Law. What then [is] the Law? For the sake of the transgressions [of it]* ("when we hear that the law could not confer righteousness, many thoughts arise,—that it must then be useless, or contrary to God's covenant, or something of that kind." Calvin. The office of the law was, *to make sin into TRANSGRESSION*,—so that what was before not a transgression might now become one. The law then was added [to the promise, which had no such power], for the sake of {in order to bring about as *transgressions*] the transgressions [of it] which should be, and thus [ver. 23] to shut us up under sin, viz. the transgression of the law) **it was superadded** ("this *addition* does not contradict the assertion of ver. 15, that no one supplements an already ratified covenant. For the law was not given as a supplement, of the covenant, but came in as another institution, additional to that already existing." Meyer), **until the seed shall have come to whom** (ver. 16) **the promise is (not was) made** (this seed is of course Christ); **being enjoined by means of angels** (angels were, according to the Rabbinical view, the enactors and enjoiners of the law: so Josephus speaks; "We," he says, "have been taught the best desires and the holiest laws by means of angels from God." See also Heb. ii. 2; and note on Col. ii. 15. Of course no explaining away of the term **angels** into men [Moses, Aaron, &c.] can be allowed. Observe, the angels are not the *givers* of the Law, but its *ministers*, and *instrumental enactors*: the Law, with St. Paul, is always *God's* law; see especially Rom. vii. 22), **in the hand of a mediator** (viz. MOSES, who came from God to the people with the tables of the law in his hands. Compare his own words, Deut. v. 5, "I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord." Philo calls Moses by this very name of *Mediator*: and numerous examples are cited from the Rabbinical books, in which the name *Mediator* is given to Moses. *Why* does the Apostle add this last clause? I am inclined to think with Meyer that it is,—not to disparage the Law in comparison with the Gospel or with the promise, but to enhance the solemnity of the giving of the law as a preparation for Christ, in answer to the somewhat disparaging question, "what is the use of the law?" If the being given *by means of angels* had been here disparaging, as in Heb. ii. 2, "*by the Lord*" or the like must have been expressed, as there, on the other side, the intervention of a *mediator* is certainly no disparagement of the old covenant in comparison with the new, for this it has in common with the other. The fact is (see below on ver. 20), that no such comparison is in question here).

20.] The explanations of this verse, so obscure from its brevity, are so numerous (Winer counted 250: Jowett mentions 430) that they require a bibliography of their own. I believe we shall best disentangle the sense as follows. (1) Clearly, the terms **a mediator** and **God** are opposed. (2) As clearly **cannot be of one** and **is one** are opposed. (3) From this contrast arises an apparent opposition between the law and the promises of God, which gives occasion to the question of ver. 21. Taking up therefore again (1),—*a mediator*, by whose hand the law was enacted, stands opposed to *God*, the giver of the promises. And that, in this respect (2);—(a) *a mediator* is not *of one*, but (b) *God is one*. And herein lies the knot of the verse; that is, in (b),—for the meaning of (a) is pretty clear on all hands; viz. that *a mediator* does not belong to *one party* (masculine) but to *two*, as going between one party and another). Then to guide us to the meaning of (b), we must remember, that the numerical contrast is the primary idea: *a mediator* belongs not to *one*, but *God is one*. Shall we then say, that all reference of the term *one* (as applied to *God*) beyond this numerical one is to be repudiated? I cannot think so. The proposition "*God is one*" would carry to the mind of every reader much more than the mere *numerical* unity of God—viz. His Unity as an *essential attribute*,

extending through the whole divine Character. And thus, though the proposition *a mediator is not of one*, would not, by itself, convey any meaning but that a mediator belongs to more than one, it would, when combined with *God is one*, receive a shade of meaning which it did not bear before,—of a state of things involved in the fact of a *mediator* being employed, which was not according to the *oneness* of God, or, so to speak, in the main track of His unchanging purpose. And thus (3), the law, administered by the *mediator*, belonging to a state inconsistent with *oneness*, a state of two at variance, is apparently opposed to the *promises*, belonging entirely to THE ONE, the one (faithful) God. And observe, that the above explanation is deduced entirely from the *form of the sentence itself*, and from the idea which the expression “*God is one*” must necessarily raise in the mind of its reader, accustomed to the proposition as the foundation of the faith;—not from any preconceived view, to suit which the words, or emphatic arrangement, must be forced. Notice by the way, that the objection, that the Gospel too is *in the hand of a mediator*, does not apply here: for (a) there is no question here of the Gospel, but only of the *promises*, as direct from God: (b) the *mediator* of the Gospel is altogether different, and His work different: He has absolutely reconciled the parties at variance, and MADE THEM ONE in Himself. Remember St. Paul’s habit of insulating the matter in hand, and dealing with it irrespective of all such possible objections. I must refer the reader for even the shortest account of other explanations, to my Greek Test. We may profitably lay down one or two canons of interpretation of the verse. (1) Every interpretation is wrong, which understands Christ by **the mediator** in this verse. The context determines it to be abstract, and its reference to be to Moses, the mediator of the Law. (2) Every interpretation is wrong, which makes **one** mean ‘one party’ in the covenant. **God is one** itself confutes any such view, being a wellknown general proposition, not admitting of a concrete interpretation. (3) Every interpretation is wrong, which confines **God is one** to its mere numerical meaning, and does not take into account the ideas which the general proposition would raise. 4) Every interpretation is wrong, which deduces from the verse the *agreement* of the law with the promises: because the Apostle himself, in the next verse, draws the very opposite inference from it, and refutes it on other grounds. (5) Every attempt to set aside the verse as a gloss is utterly futile.

21.] The law being thus set over against the promises,—being given through a mediator between two,—the promises by the one God,—it might seem as if there were an inconsistency between them. The words of **God** are not without emphasis: the promises given rest immediately on God, and were given by no mediator.

for if, &c.] Notwithstanding all the above features of contrast between the law and the prophets, it is not against them, for it does not pretend to perform the same office: *if it did*, then there would be this rivalry, which now does not exist. The term **to give life** takes for granted that we by nature are *dead* in trespasses and sins.

verily has the emphasis: **in very truth**, and not only in the fancy of some, **by the law** (as its ground) **would have been righteousness** (which is the condition of life eternal.—If life, the result, had been given by the law, then righteousness, the condition of life, must have been by it also: reasoning from the whole to its part).

22.] Howbeit, i.e., but on the contrary (this not being the case,—no law having been out of which could come righteousness) **the scripture** (not the Law; but as in ver. 8, the Author of Scripture, speaking by that, His witness) **shut up** (see note Rom. xi. 32, where the same expression occurs. “The term **shut up** is beautifully chosen to set off more clearly the idea of Christian freedom by and by.” Windischmann: see ch. v. 1) **all** (literally, all things: neuter, as indicating the entirety of mankind and man’s world: *all human matters*) **under sin, in order that** (the intention of God, as in Rom. xi. 832: *not the mere result*, here or any where else) **the promise** (i. e. the things promised—the *inheritance*, cf. vv. 16, 18) (which is) **by** (depends upon, is conditioned by) **faith of** (which has for its object and its Giver—is a matter altogether belonging to) **Jesus Christ might be given** (be a *free gift*—**given** has the emphasis) **to them that believe** (the word “*given*” having the emphasis, “*to them that believe*” does no more than take up the words “*by faith*” above, as if it had been said ‘to those who fulfil that condition’).

23.] But (*this carries us on to a further account of the rationale and office of the law*) **before** (this) **faith** (not, *the faith*, in the sense of the *objects of faith*, but the faith just mentioned, viz. *the faith of Jesus Christ*, which did not exist until Christ) **came** (was found, or was possible, in men), **we** (properly, we Jewish believers—but not here to be pressed, because he is speaking of the divine dealings with men generally—the Law was for *all*: the only revelation) **were kept in ward** (not simply ‘*kept*’ as A.V., but as Chrysostom says, *as it were in a fortress*), **shut up under the law, in order to** (*said* of the preparatory design, not merely of the *result*, or the arrival of the time: and it may belong either to **shut up** or to **were kept in ward**) **the faith** (as in ver. 22) **about to be revealed** (‘as long as there was no such thing as faith in Christ, this faith was *not yet revealed*, was as yet an element of life hidden in the counsel of God.’ Meyer).

24.] So that (taking up the condition in which the last verse left us, and *adding to it the fact* that we are the SONS of God, ver. 26) **the Law hath become** (has turned out to be) **our tutor** (pedagogue, or schoolmaster, see below) **unto** (ethically; for) **Christ** (the pedagogue was a faithful slave, entrusted with the care of the boy from his tender years till puberty, to keep him from evil physical and moral, and accompany him to his amusements and studies. The word **schoolmaster** does not express the meaning fully: but it disturbs the sense less than those have done, who have selected one portion only of the pedagogue’s duty, and understood by it, ‘*the slave who leads a child to the house of the schoolmaster*,’ thus making Christ the schoolmaster, which is inconsistent with the imagery. On the contrary, the whole schoolmaster’s work is included in the word

pedagogue, and Christ represents the *freedom* of the grown-up son, in which he is no longer guarded or shut up, but justified by faith, the act of a free man; and to Christ as a *Teacher* there is here no allusion), in order that by faith we can be **justified** (which may only be done now Christ has come). **But** (adversative) **now that** [the] **faith** (see above) **is come**, we are no longer under a **tutor** (pedagogue or schoolmaster).

26.] Reason of the negation in last verse. **For ye all** (Jews and Gentiles alike) **are SONS** (no longer *children*, requiring a *tutor*) **of God through the** (or, but not so well, your) **faith in Christ Jesus.**

27.] For (substantiates and explains the assertion of ver. 26: see below) **as many of you as were baptized into** (see Rom. vi. 3 and notes) **Christ did put on Christ** (at that time, compare the verbs in Acts xix. 2: not “*have been baptized*,” and “*have put on*,” as A.V., which leaves the two actions only concomitant: the past tenses make them identical: as many as were baptized into Christ, did in that very act, put on, clothe yourselves with, Christ. The force of the argument is well given by Chrysostom: “Why did he not say, ‘As many of you as were baptized into Christ, were born of God?’ for this would naturally follow from having shewn that they were sons. Because he lays down a far more startling proposition. For if Christ is the Son of God, and thou hast put Him on, having the Son in thee, and fashioned after His likeness, thou wert brought into one family with Him and one type.” Observe here how boldly and broadly St. Paul asserts the effect of Baptism on ALL THE BAPTIZED. Luther remarks: “This passage is to be carefully noted against those fanatical spirits who deprecate the majesty of Baptism, and speak wickedly and impiously concerning it. Paul, on the other hand, dignifies Baptism with sublime titles, calling it the font of regeneration and of the renewal by the Holy Spirit (Tit. iii. 5), and here says that all the baptized put on Christ: as if he said: ye have not received in baptism a mere ticket of admission into the number of Christians, as many fanatics of our time have fancied, who have made of baptism a mere admission ticket, i.e. a transitory and empty sign: but he declares that in baptism, they put on Christ: i.e. ye were snatched away from the law into a new birth, which was effected in your baptism.” But we may notice too, as Meyer remarks, that the very putting on of Christ, which as matter of standing and profession is done in baptism, forms a subject of exhortation to those already baptized, in its ethical sense, Rom. xiii. 14).

28.] The absolute equality of all in this sonship, to the obliteration of all differences of earthly extraction or position. See Col. iii. 11; Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor xii. 13. Observe, “**neither Jew nor Greek**,”—“**neither bond nor free**,” but “**male and female**:” the two former being accidental distinctions which may be entirely put off in falling back on our humanity,—but the latter a necessary distinction, absorbed however in the higher category: “there is no distinction into male and female.”

for] reason why there is neither, &c.—viz. our unity in Christ. The unavoidable inference from an assertion like this is, that Christianity did alter the condition of women and slaves.

one [man], more forcible and more strict than *one*: for we are one, *in Him*, “*one new man*,” as St. Paul says in Eph. ii. 15, speaking on this very subject.

29.] Christ is ‘*Abraham’s seed*’ (ver. 16): ye are one in and with Christ, have put on Christ; therefore *ye* are Abraham’s seed; consequently heirs by promise; for to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. The stress is on *ye, Abraham’s*, and **according to promise**, especially on the latter,—carrying the conclusion of the argument, as against inheritance *by the law*. See on this verse, the note on ver. 16 above. “The declaration of ver. 7 is now substantiated by 22 verses of the deepest, the most varied, and most comprehensive reasoning that exists in the whole compass of the great Apostle’s writings.” Ellicott.

Galatians: Chapter 4

IV. 1–7.] The Apostle shews the correspondence between our treatment under the law and that of heirs in general: and thus, by God’s dealing with us, in sending forth His Son, whose Spirit of Sonship we have received, confirms (ver. 7) the conclusion that WE ARE HEIRS.

1. the heir] any heir, generic. The question, whether the *father* of the *heir* here is to be thought of as dead, or absent, or living and present, is in fact one of no importance: nor does it belong properly to the consideration of the passage. The fact is, the antitype breaks through the type, and disturbs it: as is the case, wherever the idea of *inheritance* is spiritualized. The supposition in our text is, that a father (from what reason or under what circumstances matters not) has preordained a time for his son and heir to come of age, and till that time, has subjected him to guardians and stewards. In the *type*, the reason might be absence, or decease, or even high office or intense occupation, of the father: in the *antitype*, it is the Father’s sovereign will: but the *circumstances* equally exist.

differeth nothing from a bond-servant] for he may be coerced, and even corporally punished, by those set over him.

though he be lord of all must be understood *essentially*, rather than prospectively. It is said of him in virtue of his rank, rather than of his actual estate: *in posse*, as the lawyers say, rather than *in esse*.

2.] guardians, overseers of the person; stewards, overseers of the property.

3.] we—are Jews only here included, or Jews and Gentiles? Clearly, *both*: for “*that we might receive the adoption of sons*,” ver. 5, is spoken of all believers in Christ. He regards the Jews as, for this purpose, including all mankind (see note on ch. iii. 23), God’s only positive dealings by revelation being with them—and the Gentiles as partakers both in their infant-discipline, and in their emancipation in Christ.

when we were children refers, not to any immaturity of capacity in us, but to the lifetime of the church, as regarded in the time previously appointed by the Father: see below on ver. 4.

the rudiments of the world] There have been various interpretations. The best seems to be, as in Col. ii. 8, 20, **the elementary lessons of outward things**. Of this kind were all the enactments peculiar to the Law; some of which are expressly named, ver. 10.

4.] the fulness of the time (‘that whereby the time was filled up’): answers to the *time appointed by the Father*, ver. 2. The Apostle uses this term with regard not only to the absolute will of God, but to the preparations which were made for the Redeemer on this earth. The manifestation of man’s guilt was complete:—and the way of the Lord was prepared, by various courses of action which He had brought about by men as his instruments.

sent forth cannot,—however little, for the purposes of the present argument, the divine side of our Lord’s mission is to be pressed,—mean any thing less than **sent forth from Himself**.

born of a woman will not bear being pressed, as some have done,—that it was of *a woman alone*, without co-operation of a man: it is Christ’s HUMANITY which is the point insisted on, not His being born of a virgin. On the other hand, the words cannot for an instant be adduced as *inconsistent* with such birth: they state generically, what all Christians are able, from the Gospel record, to fill up specifically.

born under the law] ‘*born of a woman*,’ identified Him with all mankind: **born under the law**, introduces another condition, in virtue of which He became the Redeemer of those who were under a special revelation and covenant. A Gentile could not (humanly speaking, as far as God has conditioned His own proceedings) have saved the world: for the Jews were the representative nation, to which the representative man must belong.

5.] See above. Christ, being born under the law, a Jewish child, subject to its ordinances,—by His perfect fulfilment of it, and by enduring, as the Head and in the root of our nature, its curse on the tree, bought off (from its curse and power, but see on ch. iii. 18) those who were under the law: and if them, then the rest of mankind, whose nature He had upon Him. Thus in buying off *those under the law*, He effected that **we, all men, should receive** (not ‘recover,’ as Augustine and others: there is no allusion to the innocence which we lost in Adam, nor was redemption by Christ in any sense a *recovery* of the state before the fall, but a far more glorious thing, the bestowal of an adoption which Adam never had) **the adoption** (the place, and privileges) **of sons**.

6.] And because ye are sons, God sent forth (not, ‘*hath sent forth*’—see above) **the Spirit of His Son** (you being now fellows with that Son in the communion of the Spirit, won for you as a consequence of His atonement: called, Rom. viii. 15, “*the Spirit of adoption*,” and ib. 9, “*the Spirit of Christ*,” where participation in Him is said to be the necessary condition of belonging to Christ at all) **into our hearts** (as he changed from the third person to the first in the foregoing verse, so now from the second: both times from the fervour of his heart, wavering between logical accuracy and generous largeness of sympathy), **crying** (in Rom. viii. 15, it is “*in whom we cry*.” Here the Spirit being the main subject, is regarded as the agent, and the believer merely as His organ), **Abba, Father. Father** is not a mere Greek explanation of **Abba**, but an address by His name of relation, of Him to whom the term *Abba* was used more as a token of affection than as conveying its real meaning of ‘my father.’ see notes on Mark xiv. 36, Rom. viii. 15.

7.] Statement of the conclusion from the foregoing, and corroboration, from it, of ch. iii. 29. The second person singular individualizes and points home the inference. This individualization has been gradually proceeding from ver. 5—“*that we may receive*”—“*ye are*”—“*thou art*.”

through God] The received reading, “*of God through Christ*,” seems to have been an adaptation to the parallel text in Rom. viii. 17.—On the text, Windischmann remarks, “**Through God** combines, on behalf of our race, the whole before-mentioned agency of the Blessed Trinity: the Father hath sent the Son and the Spirit, the Son has freed us from the law, the Spirit has completed our sonship; and thus the redeemed are heirs through the tri-une God Himself, not through the law, nor through fleshly descent.”

8–11.] Appeal to them, as the result of the conclusion just arrived at, *why, having passed out of slavery into freedom, they were now going back again.*

8] at that time refers back, not to ver. 3, but to the time referred to in ver. 7, when they were as bond-servants.—In the assertion that they *knew not God*, there is no inconsistency with Rom. i. 21: there it is the knowledge which the Gentile world might have had: here, the matter of fact is alleged, that they *had it not. ye served gods which by nature exist not*: see 1 Cor. viii. 4; x. 19, 20 and note. The received reading would mean, “*those which are not by nature gods*,” i.e. only men, made into gods by human fancy: but this is not the Apostle’s way of conceiving of the heathen deities.

9. or rather are known of (by) God] See note on 1 Cor. viii. 3. Here the propriety of the expression is even more strikingly manifest than there: the Galatians did not so much acquire the knowledge of God, as they were taken into knowledge, recognized, by Him. And this made their fall from Him the more matter of indignant appeal, as being a resistance of His will respecting them. No change of the meaning of **known** must be resorted to, as ‘*approved*,’ ‘*loved*:’ compare Matt. xxv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 19: also Phil. ii. 12.

weak] so the *commandment that went before* is called in Heb. vii. 18, *weak and unprofitable*. Want of power to *justify* is that to which the word points here.

beggarly] in contrast with the riches which are in Christ. Or both words may perhaps refer back to the state of childhood hinted at in ver. 6, during which the heir is *weak*, as immature, and a *beggar*, as not yet in possession. But this would not strictly apply to the *rudiments* as the Gentiles were concerned with them: see below.

again] These Galatians had never been *Jews* before: but they had been before under the *rudiments of the world*, under which generic term both Jewish and Gentile worship was comprised: so that they were turning back again to these rudiments.

again from the beginning to be in bondage: i.e. to begin afresh your whole course of servitude.

10.] This verse supplies a verification of the charge just brought against them interrogatively: explaining *one phase at least of their bondage*. Wishing to shew to them in its most contemptible light the unworthiness of their decadence, he puts the *observation of days* in the forefront of his appeal, as one of those things which they already practised. Circumcision he does not mention, because they were not yet drawn into it, but only in danger of being so (ch. v. 2, al.):—nor abstinence from meats, to which we do not hear that they were even tempted.

days, emphatic, as the first mentioned, and also as a more general predication of the habit, under which the rest fall. The days would be sabbaths, new moons, and feast days: see Col. ii. 16, where these are specified.

months] hardly new moons, which were *days*: but perhaps the seventh month, or any others which were distinguished by great feasts.

times] any festal seasons.

years] can hardly apply to the sabbatical or jubilee years, on account of their rare occurrence, unless indeed we are to suppose that they were *then celebrating one*: perhaps those observations may be intended which especially regarded the *year*, as the new year. But this is not likely (see above on “*months*”): and I should much rather suppose, that each of these words is not minutely to be pressed, but all taken together as a rhetorical description of those who observed times and seasons. Notice how utterly such a verse is at variance with any and every theory of a *Christian sabbath*, cutting at the root, as it does, of ALL obligatory *observance of times as such*: see notes on Rom. xiv. 5, 6; Col. ii. 16. “These periodical solemnities of the law shewed, by the fact of their periodical repetition, the imperfection of the dispensation to which they belonged: typifying each feature of Christ’s work, which, as one great and perfect whole, has been performed once for all and for ever,—and were material representations of those spiritual truths which the spiritual Israel bear in union with Christ as a risen Lord. To observe periods then, now in the fulness of time, is to deny the perfection of the Christian dispensation, the complete and finished nature of Christ’s work: to forsake Him as the great spiritual teacher of His brethren, and to return to carnal pedagogues: to throw aside sonship in all its fulness, and the spirit of adoption: and to return to childhood and the rule of tutors and governors.” Bagge: who however elsewhere maintains the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath.

12–16.] Appeal to them to imitate him, on the ground of their former love and veneration for him.

12.] This has been variously understood. But it is best interpreted as referring to the Apostle having in his own practice cast off Jewish habits and become as the Galatians: i.e. a Gentile: see 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21.

Ye did me no wrong] The key to rightly understanding these words is, their apposition with the other verbs, “*ye despised not,*

nor rejected: but ye received me..." below. To that period they refer: viz. to the time when he first preached the Gospel among them, and the first introduction of this period seems to be in the words, **for I am as ye are.** Then, I became as you: and at that time you did me no wrong, but on the contrary shewed me all sympathy and reverence. Then comes in the inference, put in the form of a question, at ver. 16,—I must then have *since* become your enemy by telling you the truth.

13.] because of an infirmity of my flesh: or,—**on account of bodily weakness:** all other renderings (e. g. ‘*in weakness*, as A.V.) are ungrammatical, or irrelevant. The meaning is, that it was *on account of an illness* that he first preached in Galatia: i.e. that he was for that reason detained there, and preached, which otherwise he would not have done. On this, see Introduction,§ii. 3: the fact itself, I cannot help thinking, is plainly asserted here.

at the first] with reference to that second visit hinted at below, ver. 16, and ch. v. 21. See Introduction,§v. 3.

14.] The **temptation** seems to have been the “thorn in the flesh” of 2 Cor. xii. 1 ff., whatever that was: perhaps something connected with his *sight*, or some nervous infirmity: see below, and notes on Acts xiii. 9; xxiii. 1. It was *their* temptation, because it tempted them to disparage and reject his preaching. The expression, which has been altered into “*my temptation*,” is one of those exquisite and delicate touches, which belong so peculiarly to St. Paul’s mind.

as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus] a climax:—besides the freedom of angels from fleshy weakness, there is doubtless an allusion to their office as messengers—and to His saying, who is above the angels, Luke x. 16. No inference can be drawn *from these expressions* being used of the *Galatians’ reception* of him, that they were already Christians when he first visited them: the words are evidently not to be pressed as intended to be accurate in point of chronology; they mean, not, ‘as you *would have received*,’ &c., but, ‘as you would (now) receive.’

15.] Where then (i. e. where in estimation, holding what place) **(is) your congratulation of yourselves** (so literally: **the blessedness ye boasted of**, in having me among you as your Apostle? This is perhaps as good a rendering as the words will bear)? i.e. considering your fickle behaviour since.

for I bear you witness...] a proof, to what lengths this *congratulation of themselves*, and consequently their high value for St. Paul ran, at his first visit. In seeking for a reference for this expression, **y e would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me**, the right course will be, not at once to adopt the conclusion, that they point to ocular weakness on the part of the Apostle,—nor, because they form a trite proverb (signifying any great extent of self-sacrifice for another) in many languages, therefore to set down at once that no such allusion to a personal infirmity can have been intended, but to judge from the words themselves, and our information from other sources, whether such an allusion is likely. And in doing so, I may observe that a proverbial expression so harsh in its nature, and so little prepared by the context, would perhaps hardly have been introduced without some notice, or some particle of climax. Would not the Apostle have more naturally written, “*have plucked out even your own eyes?*” Had the “*even*” been inserted, it would have deprived the words of all reference to a matter of fact, and made them purely proverbial. On the other side, the *order of the words* in the original rather favours the idea that the phrase is a proverbial one. The inference then of any ocular disease from these words themselves seems to me precarious. Certainly Acts xxiii. 1 ff. receives light from such a supposition: but with our very small knowledge on the subject, many conjectures may be hazarded with some show of support from Scripture, while none of them has enough foundation to make it probable on the whole.

16.] Am I then (as things now stand; an inference derived from the contrast between their former love and their present dislike of him) **become your enemy** (hated by you;—in a passive sense: or perhaps it may be active,—one who hates you) **by speaking the truth** (see Eph. iv. 15 note) **to you?** When did he thus incur their enmity by speaking the truth? Not *at his first visit*, from the whole tenor of this passage: nor *in this letter*, as some think, which they had not yet read: but at his *second visit*, see Acts xviii. 23, when he probably found the mischief beginning, and spoke plainly against it.

17.] ‘My telling you the truth may have made me seem your enemy: but I warn you that these men who court you so zealously have no honourable purpose in so doing: it is only in order to get you away from the community as a separate clique, that you may court them.’ Thus the verse seems to fit best into the context. As regards particular words, their *shutting out* or *excluding* must bear the meaning of exclusion from a larger and attraction to a smaller, viz. their own, party. Our very word ‘exclusive’ conveys the same idea.

18.] ‘I do not mean to blame them in the abstract for *zealously courting you*: any teacher who did this *in a good cause*, preaching Christ, would be a cause of joy to me (Phil. i. 15–18): and it is an honourable thing (for you) to be the objects of this zeal, in a good cause, at all times and by every body, not only when I am (or was) present with you:’ as if he said, ‘I have no wish, in thus writing, to set up an exclusive claim to *court you thus*—whoever will really teach you good, at any time, let him do it and welcome.’ Then the next verse follows naturally also, in which he narrows the relation between himself and them, from the wide one of a mere “*courter*” of them, to the closer one of their parent in Christ, much as in 1 Cor. iv. 14 f.

19.] belongs to what follows, not to the preceding. **My little children** (the diminutive occurs only here in St. Paul, but is manifestly purposely, and most suitably chosen for the propriety of the metaphor. It is found [see reff.] often in St. John, while our Apostle has *child*, 1 Tim. i. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 1), **whom** (without the diminutive epithet) **I again** (a second time; the former was “*when I was present with you,*” ver. 18) **travail with** (bear, as a mother, with pain and anxiety, till the time of birth) **until Christ shall have been fully formed within you** (for Christ dwelling in a man is the secret and principle of his new life, see ch. ii. 20),

20.] yea, I could wish to be present with you now, and to change my voice (from what, to what? Some say, from mildness to severity. But surely such a change would be altogether beside the tone of this deeply affectionate address. I should rather hold,—from my former severity, when I became your enemy by *telling the truth*, to the softness and mildness of a mother, still *telling the truth*, but in another tone).

21–30.] Illustration of the relative positions of the law and the promise, by an allegorical interpretation of the history of the two sons of Abraham: “intended to destroy the influence of the false Apostles with their own weapons, and to root it up out of its own proper soil” (Meyer).

21.] do ye not hear (heed) **the law**, listen to that which the law imparts and impresses on its hearers?

22.] For answers to a tacit assumption of a negative answer to the foregoing question—‘nay, ye do not: *for*,’&c.

23.] after the flesh, i.e., **according to nature**, in her usual course: **the other, by [virtue of] the promise**, as the efficient cause of Sarah’s becoming pregnant contrary to nature: see Rom. iv. 19.

24.] Which things are allegorical (i. e. as in text, **have another meaning**): are to be understood otherwise than according to their literal sense. It was the practice of the Rabbinical Jews to allegorize the Old Test. history. “Almost all the things narrated have with them their allegorical and mystical interpretation. Nor can we deprecate their labours in this matter. For St. Paul treats things in the same way, e.g. by speaking of the first and second Adam, of spiritual meat and drink, of Hagar, &c. So also John speaks of the mystical Sodom and Egypt, and predicts by revelation the infliction of the Egyptian plagues on the enemies of the church.” Schöttgen. How various persons take this allegorical comment of the Apostle, depends very much on their views of his authority as a Scripture interpreter. To those who receive the law as a great system of prophetic figures, there can be no difficulty in believing the events by which the giving of the law was prepared to have been prophetic figures also: not losing thereby any of their historic reality, but bearing to those who were able to see it aright, this deeper meaning. And to such persons, the fact of St. Paul and other sacred writers adducing such allegorical interpretations brings no surprise and no difficulty, but only strong confirmation of their belief that there are such deeper meanings lying hid under the O.T. history. That the Rabbis and the Fathers, holding such deeper senses, should have often missed them, and allegorized fancifully and absurdly, is nothing to the purpose: it is surely most illogical to argue that because they were wrong, St. Paul cannot be right. The only thing which really does create any difficulty in my mind, is, that Commentators with spiritual discernment, and appreciation of such a man as our Apostle, should content themselves with quietly casting aside his Scripture interpretation wherever, as here, it passes their comprehension. On their own view of him, it would be at least worth while to consider whether his knowledge of his own Scriptures may not have surpassed ours. But to those who believe that he had the Spirit of God, this passage speaks very solemnly; and I quite agree with Mr. Conybeare in his note on this place, “The lesson to be drawn from this whole passage, as regards the Christian use of the O.T., is of an importance which can scarcely be overrated.” Of course no one, who reads, marks, learns, and inwardly digests the Scriptures, can subscribe to the shallow and indolent dictum of Macknight, ‘This is to be laid down as a fixed rule, that *no ancient history is to be considered as allegorical, but that which inspired persons have interpreted allegorically*: but at the same time, in allegorizing Scripture, he will take care to follow the analogy of the faith, and proceed soberly, and in dependence on that Holy Spirit, who alone can put us in possession of His own mind, in His word.’ Calvin’s remarks here are good: “As then the family of Abraham was the true Church, so it is beyond doubt that the chief and most memorable events which happened in it, are so many types to us. As there was allegory in circumcision, in sacrifices, in the whole Levitical priest-hood: as there is now in our sacraments,—so, I say, was there then in the family of Abraham. But that is no reason why we should give up the literal sense. It amounts to the same as if Paul said that a figure of the two Testaments in the two wives of Abraham, and of the two people in his two sons, is, as if in a picture, set forth to us.” Not the bare literal historical fact is in question here, but the inner character of God’s dealings with men, of which type, and prophecy, and the historical fact itself, are only so many exemplifications. The difference between the children of the bond-and the free, of the law and the promise, has been shewn out to the world before, by, and since the covenant of the law): **for these women** (the mothers are the covenants;—the sons, the children of the covenants) **are** (import in the allegory) **two covenants** (not ‘*revelations*,’ but lite-rally covenants between God and men); **one** (covenant) (**indeed**) **from Mount Sinai** (taking its origin from,—or having Mount Sinai as its centre), **gendering** (bringing forth children: compare the expression, Ye are the children (sons)... of the cove-nant, Acts iii. 25) **unto** (with a view to) **bondage, which one is** (identical in the allegory with) **Hagar**.

25.] For the word Hagar is (imports) **Mount Sinai, in Arabia** (i. e. among the Arabians. This rendering, which is

Chrysostom's—"Mount Sinai is called 'Hagar' in their vernacular tongue,"—is I conceive necessitated by the arrangement of the sentence as well as by the expression here, "*the word Hagar*," not Hagar herself. Testimony has been adduced that the Arabs to this day call Mount Sinai Hadschar: and Chrysostom's evidence is decisive for his own time. Certainly we have *Hagar* as a geographical proper name in Arabia Petreæ: the Chal-dee paraphrast always calls the wilderness of Shur *Hagra*. So that Jowett certainly speaks too strongly when he says, "the old explanations, that Hagar is the Arabic word for a rock or the Arabic noun for Mount Sinai, are destitute of foundation." As to the improbability at which he hints, of St. Paul quoting Arabic words in writing to the Galatians, we may well suppose St. Paul to have become familiarized, during his sojourn there, with this name for the granite peaks of Sinai), **and corresponds** (viz. Hagar, which is the subject, not Mount Sinai, see below) **with the present Jerusalem** (i. e. Jerusalem under the law,—the Jerusalem of the Jews, as contrasted with the Jerusalem of the Messiah's King-dom), **for she (the present Jerusalem, not Hagar) is in slavery with her children.**

26.] But (opposes to the last sentence) **the Jerusalem above** (i. e. the heavenly Jerusalem, *the new Jerusalem*, Heb. xii. 22. Rev. iii. 12; xxi. 2. The expression here will mean, "the *Messianic theocracy*, which before the *coming of Christ*, is the *Church*, and after it Christ's Kingdom of glory." Meyer) **is free, which** (which said city, which heavenly Jerusalem) **is our mother** (the emphasis is not on **our**; nay rather it stands in the least emphatic place, as indicating a relation taken for granted by Christians. See Phil. iii. 20).

27.] Proof of this relation from prophecy. The portion of Isaiah from which this is taken, is directly Messianic: indicating in its foreground the reviviscence of Israel after calamity, but in language far surpassing that event. The citation is from the Septuagint version, verbatim. St. Paul here interprets the barren of Sarah, who bore not according to the flesh (representing the promise), and the fruitful, of Hagar (representing the Law). In the next clause we must not render, as A.V., "*many more&c.*," which is inaccurate: but, **many are the children of the desolate, more than** (rather than; both being numerous, hers are the *more numerous*) **of her, &c.**

28.] Now ye (or, we), brethren, like Isaac, are children of PROMISE (emphatic:—are children, not *according to the flesh*, but *by the promise*, see ver. 23, and below, ver. 29).

29.] he that was born after the flesh, see ver. 23. It has been thought that there is nothing in the Hebrew text to justify so strong a word as **persecuted**. It runs, 'and Sarah saw the son of Hagar mocking'—the Septuagint has, 'sporting with her son Isaac.' The Hebrew word is the same as that used when Lot seemed as one that "*mocked*" to his sons-in-law, Gen. xix. 14. And this would be quite ground enough for the word here, for the spirit of persecution was begun. So that we need not refer to tradition, as many have done, to account for St. Paul's expression.

him [that was born] after the Spirit, i.e. in virtue of the promise, which was given by the Spirit. Or, '*by virtue of the Spirit's agency*.' but the other is better.

30.] Nevertheless: notwithstanding the fact of the persecution, just mentioned. The quotation is adapted from the Septuagint, where *my son Isaac* (as in our English text) stands for "*the son of the freewoman*." We need hardly have recourse to the fact that God confirmed Sarah's words, in order to prove this to be *Scripture*: the Apostle is allegorizing the whole history, and thus every part of it assumes a significance in the allegory.

31.] I am inclined to think, against Meyer, and others, that this verse is, as commonly taken, the conclusion from what has gone before: and that the **wherefore** is bound on to the word *inherit* preceding. For that we are *heirs*, is an acknowledged fact, established before, ch. iii. 29; ver. 7. And if we are, we are not the children of the handmaid, of whom it was said *that they should not inherit*, but of the freewoman, of whose son the same words asserted that he should inherit.

Galatians: Chapter 5

V. 1–12.] This may be called the *peroration* of the whole second part of the Epistle. It consists of *earnest exhortation to them, grounded on the conclusion of the foregoing argument, to abide in their evangelical liberty, and warning against being led away by the false teachers.*

1.] With liberty did Christ make us free (i. e. *free men* is our rightful name and ought to be our estimation of ourselves, seeing that *freedom* is our inheritance by virtue of Christ's redemption of us). **Stand fast, therefore, and be not again** (see note on ch. iv. 9: in fact, the whole world was under the law in the sense of its being God's only revelation to man) **involved in the yoke of bondage.**

2.] Behold (it draws attention to what follows, as a strong statement).

I Paul] Calvin says well, "This way of speaking has great emphasis: he puts himself plainly in opposition, and gives his name,

that the matter may admit of no doubt. And although his authority had been disparaged. among the Galatians, yet he again asserts it as sufficient to refute all his adversaries.”—The *present*, in the original, implies the continuance of a habit, q.d. **if you will go on being circumcised.** He does not say, ‘*if you shall have been circumcised.*’ Chrysostom remarks, “He that allowed himself to be circumcised did it as fearing the law, and he that thus feared, distrusted the power of grace, and he that distrusts gains nothing from that which he distrusts.” Nothing can be more directly opposed than this verse to the saying of the Judaizers, Acts xv. 1. The exception to the rule in St. Paul’s own conduct, Acts xvi. 3, is sufficiently provided for by the *present tense* here: see above.

3.] Yea, or moreover, introduces an addition, and a slight contrast—‘not only will Christ not profit.... but....’

to every man who receives circumcision,— ‘submits to be circumcised.’—The emphasis is on **every man**, substantiating, and carrying further, the last verse.

the whole has the stress. The circumcised man became a ‘proselyte of righteousness,’ and bound to keep the whole law. “This true and serious consequence of circumcision the false Apostles had probably at least dissembled.” Meyer.

4.] explains and establishes still further the assertion of ver. 2.—**Ye were annihilated from Christ** (literally), **ye who are being justified** (‘endeavouring to be justified,’ ‘seeking justification;’ such is the force of the original word) **in** (not ‘by;’ it is the element in which, as in the expression “*in the Lord*”) **the law; ye fell from grace.**

5.] Proof (hence for) of *their having fallen from grace*, by a contrary statement of the condition and hope of *Christians*.

the hope of righteousness] Is this genitive *objective*, the hope of righteousness, i.e. the hope whose object is perfect righteousness,—or *subjective*, the hope of righteousness, i.e. the hope which the righteous entertain—viz. that of eternal life? Certainly I think the *former*:—‘Ye think ye have your righteousness in the law: we, on the contrary, anxiously wait for the hope of righteousness (full and perfect).’

6.] Confirmation of the words **by faith**, ver. 5.

in Christ, as an element in union with Christ, in the state of a Christian:—in Christ, and that Christ, Jesus of Nazareth.—As parallels to our passage, see Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Cor. vii. 19.

7-12.] *He laments their deflexion from their once promising course, and denounces severely their perverters.*

7.] Ye were running well (“that is, all your matters were in a prosperous state,—you were advancing right onward to eternal life, which was promised you by the Word.” Luther); **who** (see ch. iii. 1: the question expresses astonishment) **hindered you that ye should not** (so literally: the not obeying being the result of the hindrance) **obey the truth** (i. e. submit yourselves to the true Gospel of Christ)?

8.] The persuasion (to which you are yielding—active) **cometh not from** (does not spring from, is not originated by) **Him that calleth you** (i. e. God: see ch. i. 6 and note).

9.] leaven may allude either to men, or to doctrine. In the parallel place in 1 Cor. v. 6, it is moral influence; so also where our Lord uses the same figure, Matt. *leaven* means *doctrine*. Nor can there be any objection to taking it as abstract, and “*lump*” concrete: a little false doctrine corrupts the whole mass (of Christians).

10.] “After the warning of vv. 8, 9, Paul assures his readers that he has confidence in them, but that their perverters shall not escape punishment. An instance of the policy which *divides* for the sake of ruling.” Meyer.

I, emphatic, I, for my part; ‘as far as regards me....’

On **in the Lord**, see 2 Thess. iii. 4: it is the element or sphere in which is employed.

that ye will be of no other mind than this, viz. which I enjoin on you,—not in vv. 8, 9 only, but in this Epistle, and in his preaching generally.

he that troubleth you need not be interpreted as referring necessarily to any one *conspicuous* among the Judaizers, but simply as individualizing the warning, and carrying home the denunciation to each one’s heart among the perverters. Compare “*they which unsettle you*” below, and ch. i. 75 iv. 17.

his judgment;—i. e. **the sentence**, understood to be unfavourable, is a burden laid on the judged person, which he bears. The

words **whosoever he be** generalize the declaration to the fullest extent: see ch. i. 8, 9.

11.] The connexion appears to be this: the Apostle had apparently been charged with being a favourer of circumcision in other churches; as shewn e.g. by his having circumcised Timothy. After the preceding sharp denunciation of “*him that troubleth you,*” and “*whosoever he be,*” it is open to the adversaries to say, that Paul himself was one of their *troublers*, by his inconsistency. In the abruptness then of his fervid thoughts he breaks out in this self-defence.

I, emphatic as before, is best understood as referring, not to any change in his preaching as an Apostle (for he appears always to have been of the same mind, and certainly was from the first persecuted by the Jews), but to the change since his conversion, before which he was a strenuous upholder of Judaism. It has been objected to this that the word **preach** could not be used at that period. But this (even if it be necessary to press the *preaching* so far into matter of fact) cannot be said with any certainty:—the course of Saul as a zealot may have often led him even to preach, if not circumcision in its present debated position, yet that strict Judaism of which it formed a part.

why am I still persecuted?] *still* is logical, i.e., **what further excuse is there for my being** (as I am) **persecuted** (by the Jews)?—**For**, if this is so, if I still preach circumcision, **then is brought to nought**, is done away, the **OFFENCE** (this word has the emphasis) **of the cross**—because, if circumcision, and not faith in Christ crucified, be the condition of salvation, then the cross has lost its offensive character to the Jew: ‘For not even the cross did so much scandalize the Jews, as the having to leave off obeying the fathers’ laws. For when they brought up Stephen, they did not allege against him that he worshipped Him who had been crucified, but that he spoke against the law and the holy place.’ Chrysostom.

12.] The verse introduces a climax—**I would that they who are unsettling you would even....** As to the verb which follows, (1) it cannot be passive, as A.V., ‘*were even cut of.*’ (2) It can hardly mean ‘*would cut themselves off from your communion,*’ as the *even* is against so mild a wish, besides that this sense of the word is unexampled. (3) The only admissible sense of the word is one carrying harshness, and more, to our ears; viz. *amputation*. And (4) such a meaning of the word is that in which (agreeably to its primitive classical sense, of hewing off limbs) it is used by the Septuagint translators in Deut. xxiii. 1, and by other authors. It seems to me that this sense *must be adopted*, in spite of the protests raised against it. And so Chrysostom and the great consensus of ancient and modern Commentators: and, as Jowett very properly observes, “the common interpretation of the Fathers, confirmed by the use of language in the Septuagint version, is not to be rejected only because it is displeasing to the delicacy of modern times.”

13—CH. VI. 5.] THE THIRD or HORTATORY PORTION OF THE EPISTLE, not however separated from the former, but united to it by the current of thought:—and

13—15.] Though free, be one another's servants in love.

13.] **For** gives the reason why the Apostle was so fervent in his denunciation of these disturbers; because they were striking at the very root of their Christian calling, which was **unto** (or, **on condition of**) **freedom**. **Only (make not) your liberty into** (or, use it not for) **an occasion** (opportunity) **for the flesh** (for giving way to carnal passions), **but by means of (your) love be in bondage** (so literally: the word is used in opposition to *freedom*) **to one another**. Chrysostom remarks, “Here again he hints, that strife, and faction, and the love of rule, and vanity, has been to them the cause of this error: for the desire of rule is the mother of heresies.”

14.] See Rom. xiii. 8, 9.—“The question, how the Apostle can rightly say of the *whole* law, that it is fulfilled by loving one’s neighbour, must not be answered by understanding **the law** of the *Christian* law, or of the *moral* law only, or of the *second* table of the decalogue, or of every divinely revealed law in general;—**for the whole law** cannot, from the circumstances of the whole Epistle, mean any thing but ‘*the whole law* of Moses;’—but by placing ourselves on the lofty spiritual level from which St. Paul looked down, and saw all other commands of the Jaw so far subordinated to the law of love, that whoever had fulfilled *this* command, must be treated as having fulfilled the *whole*.” Meyer: who also remarks that **thy neighbour** applies to fellow-Christians; compare one another below. **15.] one another** has both times the emphasis. Chrysostom says, “He has chosen his words with descriptive purpose. For he says not only **ye bite**, which is the act, of a man enraged, but also **ye devour**, which belongs to one persisting in his crime. He that bites gives way to a paroxysm of anger: but he that devours, gives example of the fiercest brutality. And he is speaking of bites and devourings which are not corporeal, but far more savage. For he is not so noxious who eats human flesh, as he who fixes his bites on the soul: for by how much the soul is more precious than the body, by so much more savage is the wounding it.” The literal sense must be kept,—**consumed** (by one another),—your spiritual life altogether annihilated: “for dissension and strife is corruptive both of the defenders and of the aggressors, and eats out every thing worse than the moth.” Chrysostom. **16—26.] Exhortation to a spiritual life, and warning against the works of the flesh.**

16.] But I say refers to ver. 13—repeating, and explaining it: ‘What I mean, is this.’

by the Spirit] *The Spirit* is not man's 'spiritual part,' nor do the words mean 'after a spiritual manner;' it is (as in ver. 5) **the Holy Spirit of God**: this will be clear on comparing with our vv. 16–18, the more expanded parallel passage, Rom. vii. 22—viii. 11.

ye shall not fulfil] i.e. the Spirit and the flesh *exclude one another*.

the flesh] the natural man:—that whole state of being in the flesh, out of which spring the practices and thoughts of ver. 19.

17.] Substantiation of the preceding,—that if ye walk by the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. —The second **for** gives a reason for the continual *lusting* of these two against one another: viz., that they are opposites.

that ye may not] not, as A.V., "so that ye cannot." The purpose of this strife is, on the part of the Spirit, to keep you from doing the things of the flesh, and *vice versa*: your own desires being, in each case, set aside by the combatants. See this verse expanded in Rom. vii. viii. as above: in vii. 20 we have nearly the same words, and the same construction. It is true that the will there is alleged only on one side, the better will, striving after good: whereas here it must be taken in both senses, for 'will' in general, to whichever way inclined. So that our verse requires expansion, both in the direction of Rom. vii. 15–20,—and in the other direction, "for the evil that I desire (after the natural man) I do not: but the good that I desire not, that I do,"—to make it logically complete.

18.] By this verse, the last assertion respecting the flesh and the Spirit is interwoven into the general argument, thus (cf. ver. 23): the law is made for the flesh, and the works of the flesh: the Spirit and flesh *are opposites*: **but if ye are led by** (see Rom. ref., "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God") **the Spirit, ye are not under the law.** This he proceeds to substantiate, by specifying the works of the flesh and of the Spirit.

19–23.] substantiate (see above) ver. 18.

19.] manifest (emphatic), **plain to all**, not needing, like the more hidden fruits of the *Spirit*, to be educed and specified: and therefore more clearly amenable to law, which takes cognizance of *things open and manifest*. The word rendered *wantonness* is defined by the Greek writers as meaning 'readiness for any pleasurable indulgence.' It does not necessarily include "*lasciviousness*."

20.] The word rendered **sorcery** may also mean '*poisoning*.' But the former is preferable, as more frequently its sense in the Septuagint and New Test., and because Asia was particularly addicted to sorceries (Acts xix. 19).

jealousy (in bad sense)—reff.

wrath] passionate outbreaks.

self-seeking] not '*strife*,' as A.V. and commonly, in error: see note on Rom. ii. 8,—but unworthy compassings of selfish ends.

divisions seems to lead to **heresies**, or **parties**, composed of those who have *chosen* (such is the derivation of the word) their self-willed line and adhere to it. **21.] I forewarn you** (now), and **did forewarn you** (when I was with you): the **fore**-in both cases pointing on to the great day of retribution.

22.] the fruit not the works, of the Spirit. The works of the flesh are no *fruit*, see Rom. vi. 21. These are the only real *fruit* of men: see John xv. 1–8: compare also John iii. 20, note. They *are*, or are manifested in, *works*: but they are much more: whereas those others are nothing more, as to any abiding result for good.

love—at the head, as chief—1 Cor. xiii. See Rom. xii. 9. We must not seek for a detailed logical opposition in the two lists, which would be quite alien from the fervid style of St. Paul.

faith, in the widest sense: **faith**, towards God and man: of **love** it is said, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, "*it believeth all things.*"

23.] meekness,—again, towards God and man: and temperance,—the holding-in of the lusts and desires. This verse (see above on ver. 18) substantiates "*ye are not under the law*"—for if you are led by the Spirit, these are its fruits in you, and against these the law has nothing to say: see 1 Tim. i. 9, 10.

24.] Further confirmation of this last result, and transition to the exhortations of vv. 25, 26. But (contrast, *the one universal choice* of Christians, in distinction from the two catalogues) **they who are Jesus Christ's, crucified** (when they became Christ's,—at their baptism, see Rom. vi. 2: not so well, '*have crucified*,' as A.V.) **the flesh with its passions and its desires,**—and therefore are entirely severed from and dead to the law, which is for the fleshly, and those passions and desires—on

which last he finds,—

25.] If (no connecting particle—giving more vividness to the inference) **WE LIVE** (emphatic—if, as we saw, having slain the flesh, our life depends on the Spirit) **by the Spirit, by the Spirit** (emphatic) **let us also walk** (in our conduct in life: let our practical walk, which is led by *choice* of our own, be in harmony with that higher life in which we live before God by faith, and in the Spirit).

26.] connected with “*let us walk*” above, by the *first person*,—and with ch. vi. 1, by the *sense*; and so forming a transition to the admonitions which follow.

Let us not become—a mild, and at the same time a solemn method of warning. For while it seems to concede that they were not this as yet, it assumes that the process was going on which would speedily make them so. ‘*Let us not be*,’ of the A.V., misses this.

vainglorious would include all worldly honour, as not an object for the Christian to seek. 1 Cor. i. 31; 2 Cor. x. 17.

“**envying** is the correlative act on the part, of the weak, to the **provoking** on the part of the strong. The strong vauntingly challenged their weaker brethren: they could only reply with *envy*.” Ellicott.—These words are addressed to *all* the Galatians:—the danger was common to both parties, the obedient and disobedient, the orthodox and the Judaizers.

Galatians: Chapter 6

VI. 1–5.] Exhortation to forbearance and humility.—**Brethren** (bespeaks their attention by a friendly address; marking also the opening of a new subject, connected however with the foregoing: see above), **if a man be even surprised** (**surprised** has the emphasis, on account of the **even**). This makes it necessary to assign a meaning to it which shall justify its emphatic position. The only meaning which satisfies the emphasis is that of being caught in the fact, before he can escape) **in any transgression, do ye, the spiritual ones** (said not in irony, but *bonâ fide*: referring not to the clergy only, but to every believer), **restore such a person** (see especially 1 Cor. v. 5, 11) **in the spirit of meekness** (“the word **spirit** here seems *immediately* to refer to the state of the inward spirit as wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, and *ultimately* to the Holy Spirit, as the inworking power. See Rom. i. 4, viii. 15; 2 Cor. iv. 13; Eph. i. 17: in all of which cases the word seems to indicate the Holy Spirit.” Ellicott); **looking to thyself** (thus the individual is selected from a multitude previously addressed), **lest thou also be tempted** (on a similar occasion).

2.] one another’s is in the original prefixed, and emphatic, and has not been enough attended to. You want to become disciples of that Law which imposes heavy burdens on men: if you will bear burdens, **bear ONE ANOTHER’ S burdens, and thus fulfil** (by this act fulfil) the law of Christ,—a far higher and better law, whose only burden is love. As to the **burdens**, the more general the meaning we give to the word, the better it will accord with the sense of the command. The matter mentioned in the last verse led on to this: but this grasps far wider, extending to *all* the burdens which we can, by help and sympathy, bear for one another. There are some which we *cannot*: see below.

fulfil; literally, **thoroughly fulfil.**

3.] The chief hindrance to sympathy with the burdens of others, is self-conceit: that must be got rid of.

4.] The test applied: emphasis on **work**, which is the complex, the whole practical result of his life.

prove] i.e. **put to the trial, and then** (after he has done this) **he will have his matter of boasting, that whereof to boast** (not without a slight irony,—whatever matter of boasting he finds, after such a testing, will be) **in reference to himself alone, and not in reference to the other** (or, his neighbour—the man with whom he was comparing himself: general in its meaning, but particular in each case of comparison).

5.] And this is the more advisable, because in the nature of things, **each man’s own load** (of infirmities and imperfections and sins: not of ‘*responsibility*,’ which is alien from the context) **will** (*in ordinary life*: not ‘*at the last day*,’ which is here irrelevant, and would surely have been otherwise expressed: the **shall bear** must correspond with the command “*bear ye*” above, and be a taking up and carrying, not an ultimate bearing the consequences of) **come upon himself to bear.**

burden here, hardly with any allusion to ‘Æsop’s well-known fable,’ but the load imposed on each by his own fault. The word in the Greek here, is different from that used in ver. 2. That signifies rather a burden imposed by a grievance, which we can lighten for one another: this, as above, the load which each accumulates for himself.

6–10.] Exhortation (in pursuance of the command in ver. 2, see below), *to liberality towards their teachers, and to beneficence in general.*

6.] But is used, as bringing out a contrast to the individuality of the last verse.

the word, in its very usual sense of **the Gospel,—the word of life.**

share with is most probably the meaning, and not “*communicate unto*,” as there does not appear to be an instance of the transitive use in the New Test. But the two senses come nearly to the same: he who shares in the necessities of the saints, can only do so by making that necessity partly his own, i.e. by depriving himself to that extent, and communicating to them.

in all good things: *the things of this life* mainly, as the context shews. Nor does this meaning produce any break between vv. 5 and 6, and 6 and 7. From the mention of bearing one another’s burdens, he naturally passes to one way, and one case, in which those burdens may be borne—viz. by relieving the necessities of their ministers; and then,

7.] Regarding our good deeds done for Christ as a seed sown for eternity, he warns them not to be deceived: in this, as in other seed-times, God’s order of things cannot be set at nought: whatever we sow, that same shall we reap.

God is not mocked:—though men in their own minds mock God, this mocking has no objective existence: there is no such thing as mocking of God in reality.

for: i.e. ‘and in this it will be shewn.’

that (emphatic, that and nothing else) **shall he also** (by the same rule) **reap**, viz. eventually, at the great harvest. The final judgment is necessarily *now* introduced by the similitude (“*the harvest... is the end of the world,*” Matt. xiii. 39), but does not any the more belong to the context in ver. 5.

8.] For—i. e. and this will be an example of the universal rule. **he that** (now) **soweth,—is now sowing.**

unto,—with a view to.

corruption—because the flesh is a prey to corruption, and with it all fleshly desires and practices come to nothing: see 1 Cor. vi. 13; xv. 50:—or perhaps in the *stronger* sense of *corruption* (see 1 Cor. iii. 17; 2 Pet. ii. 12), **destruction.**

of the Spirit] See Rom. viii. 11, 15–17.

9.] But (in our case, let there be no chance of the alternative) **in well doing** (stress on *well*) **let us not be faint-hearted: for in due season** (an expression otherwise confined to the pastoral Epistles, see Introduction to those Epistles, §1. 32, and note) **we shall reap, if we faint not.**

10.] as—not meaning, ‘*while*,’ nor, ‘*according as*,’ nor, ‘*since*,’ causal,—but **in proportion as:** let our beneficence be in proportion to our *season*—let the seed-time have its *own season*, as well as the harvest, ver. 9.

them who belong to the faith: there does not seem in the original word to be any allusion to a household, as in A.V.

11—end.] POSTSCRIPT AND BENEDICTION.

11.] See in how large letters (in what great and apparently unsightly characters: see note on next verse. ‘The original will not bear the rendering *how large a letter*, as A.V.) **I have written** (not referring to the following verses only, but to the whole Epistle, see below) **unto you with my own hand.** I do not see how it is possible to avoid the inference that these words apply to the whole Epistle. If they had reference only to the passage in which they occur, would not “*am writing*” have been used, as in 2 Thess. iii. 17? Again, there is no break in style here, indicating the end of the dictated portion, and the beginning of the written, as in Rom. xvi. 25; 2 Thess. iii. 17 al. I should rather believe, that on account of the peculiar character of this Epistle, St. Paul wrote it *all with his own hand*,—as he did the pastoral Epistles: and I find confirmation of this, in the partial resemblance of its style to those Epistles. (See Introduction, as above on ver. 9.) And he wrote it, whether from weakness of his eyes, or from choice, in large characters.

12.] As my Epistle, so my practice: I have no desire to make a fair show outwardly: my *letters* are not *fair of show*: and I have no sympathy with these people who wish to make a fair show in the flesh. The term imports not merely ‘*in the flesh*,’ but **in outward things**, which belong to man’s natural state: see ch. v. 19.

constrain you] are compelling you:—go about to compel you.

13.] For (proof that they wish only to escape persecution) **not even they who are being circumcised** (who are the adopters and instigators of circumcision) **themselves keep the law** (*the law*, emphatic: the words contain a matter of fact, not known to us otherwise,—that these preachers of legal conformity extended it not to the whole law, but selected from it at their own caprice); **but wish you** (emphatic) **to be circumcised, that in your** (*your* is emphatic) **flesh they may make their boast** (by being able to allege you as their disciples. In this way they escaped the scandal of the Cross at the hands of the Jews, by making in fact their Christian converts into Jewish proselytes).

14.] But (literally) **to me let it not happen** (so literally: see note on Rom. vi. 2) **to boast, except in the Cross** (the atoning death, as my means of reconciliation with God) **of our Lord Jesus Christ** (the full name for solemnity, and **our** prefixed, to involve his readers in the duty of the same abjuration), **by means of whom** (not so well, ‘*of which*’ [*the cross*], as many Commentators; the greater antecedent, “*our Lord Jesus Christ*,” coming after the “*cross*,” has thrown it into the shade. Besides, it could hardly be said of the Cross, “*by means of which*,” or, “*through which*”) **the world** (the whole system of unspiritual and unchristian men and things) **hath been** (and is) crucified (not merely ‘*dead*:’ he chooses, in relation to the *cross* above, this stronger word, which at once brings in his union with the death of Christ, besides his relation to the world) **unto me and I unto the world:** i.e. each holds the other to be dead.

15.] See ch. v. 6. *Confirmation of last verse*: so far are such things from me as a ground of boasting, that they are *nothing*: the new birth by the Spirit is all in all. **a new creature** literally (see note on 2 Cor. v. 17), **creation**: and therefore the result, as regards an individual, is, that he is **a new creature**: so that the word comes to be used in both significations.

16.] And as many (reference to the “*as many*” of ver. 12) **as shall walk by this rule** (of ver. 15. The word means a ‘straight rule,’ to detect crookedness: hence a *rule of life*), **peace be** (not ‘*is*:’ it is the apostolic blessing, so common in the *beginnings* of his Epistles: see also Eph. vi. 23) **upon them** (come on them from God), **and** (and indeed) **upon the Israel of God** (the subject of the whole Epistle seems to have given rise to this expression. Not the Israel after the flesh, among whom these teachers wish to enrol you, are blessed: but the ISRAEL OF GOD, described ch. iii. 28, 29. Jowett compares, though not exactly parallel, yet for a similar apparent though not actual distinction, 1 Cor. x. 32).

17. trouble me] How? by rebellious conduct and denying his apostolic authority, seeing that it was stamped with so powerful a seal as he proceeds to state.

for I] (emphatic) **for it is I** (not the Judaizing teachers) **who carry** (perhaps as in ver. 5, and ch. v. 10,—bear, as a burden: but Chrysostom’s idea seems more adapted to the *triumphant* character of the sentence: “He saith not, ‘*I have*,’ but ‘*I bear, as one who is proud of trophies or royal standards*’”) **in (on) my body the marks of Jesus.** The word used, *stigmata*, implies, the marks branded on slaves to indicate their owners. These marks, in St. Paul’s case, were of course *the scars of his wounds received in the service of his Master*—cf. 2 Cor. xi. 23 ff.

of Jesus is the genitive of possession: Jesus’s marks, shewing that I belong to Him. There is no allusion whatever to any similarity between himself and our Lord, ‘the marks which Jesus bore:’ such an allusion would be quite irrelevant: and with its irrelevancy falls a whole fabric of disgusting Romanist superstition which has been raised on this verse, and which the fair and learned Windischmann, giving as he does the honest interpretation here, yet attempts to defend in a supplemental note.—Neither can we naturally suppose any comparison intended between these his “*stigmata*” as Christ’s servant, and **circumcision**: for he is not now on that subject, but on his *authority as sealed by Christ*: and such a comparison is alien from the majesty of the sentence.

18.] THE APOSTOLIC BLESSING. No special intention need be suspected in the words **with your spirit** (as Chrysostom does, saying, “He thus dissuades them from fleshly reliance”), seeing that the same expression occurs at the end of other Epistles: see Phil. iv. 28; Philem. 25; 2 Tim. iv. 22. I should rather regard it as a deep expression of his Christian love, which is further carried on by **brethren**, the last word,—parting from them, after an Epistle of such rebuke and warning, in the fulness of brotherhood in Christ.

EPHESIANS

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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

Ephesians: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1. through the will of God] See on 1 Cor. i. 1, As these words there have a special reference, and the corresponding ones in Gal. i. 1 also, so it is natural to suppose that here he has in his mind, hardly perhaps the especial subject of vv. 3–11, the will of the Father as the ground of the election of the church, but, which is more likely in a general introduction to the whole Epistle, the great subject of which he is about to treat, and himself as the authorized expositor of it.

to the saints which are in Ephesus] On this, and on Ephesus, see Introduction. If the words “*in Ephesus*” are omitted, the sentence must be read **to the saints, who are also faithful in Christ Jesus**. The word **saints** is used here in its widest sense, as designating the members of Christ’s visible church, presumed to fulfil the conditions of that membership: see especially ch. v. 3. These words follow rather unusually, separated from the saints by the designation of abode: a circumstance which might seem to strengthen the suspicion against the words “*in Ephesus*,” were not such transpositions by no means unexampled in St. Paul. See the regular order in Col. i. 2.

in Christ Jesus belongs only to *the faithful*: see Col. i. 2: **faithful**, i.e. **believers** (persons who are), **in Christ Jesus**. This, in its highest sense, not mere *truth*, or *faithfulness*, is imported. The *saints* and *faithful* denote their spiritual life from its two sides—that of God who calls and sanctifies,—that of themselves who believe. Stier remarks that by the specification, “*faithful in Christ Jesus*,” “*saints*” gets its only full and New Test. meaning. He also notices in these expressions already a trace of the two great divisions of the Epistle—God’s grace towards us, and our faith towards Him,

2.] On the form of greeting, compare Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 2; Gal. i. 3, &c.

3—III. 21.] FIRST PORTION OF THE EPISTLE: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

And herein,
I. 3–23.] GROUND AND ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH, IN THE FATHER’s COUNSEL, AND His ACT IN CHRIST, BY THE SPIRIT. And herein again, (A) *the preliminary IDEA OF THE CHURCH, set forth in the form of an ascription of praise* vv. 3–14:—thus arranged:—vv. 3–6] The FATHER, in His eternal Love, has *chosen us to holiness* (ver. 4),—*ordained us to sonship* (ver. 5),—*bestowed grace on us in the Beloved* (ver. 6):—vv. 7–12] In the SON, we have,—*redemption according to the riches of His grace* (ver. 7), *knowledge of the mystery of His will* (vv. 8, 9),—*inheritance under Him the one Head* (vv. 10–12):—vv. 13, 14] through the SPIRIT we are *sealed*,—by *hearing the word of salvation* (ver. 13),—by *receiving the earnest of our inheritance* (ver. 14),—to the *redemption of the purchased possession* (ib.).

3.] **Blessed** (see note on Rom. ix, 5; and a similar doxology, 2 Cor. i. 3. Almost all St. Paul’s Epistles begin with some ascription of praise. That to Titus is the only exception [not Gal.: see Gal. i. 5]. See also 1 Pet. i. 3) **be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** (see Rom. xv. 6; 2 Cor. i. 3; xi. 31; Col. i. 3—also 1 Cor. xv. 24, Such is the simplest and most forcible sense of the words—Theophylact says, “God and Father of one and the same Christ: God, as of Christ in the flesh; Father, as of God the Word.” See John xx. 17, from which saying of our Lord it is not improbable that the ex-expression took its rise), **who blessed** (not, as A.V., ‘*hath blessed*:’ the historical fact in the counsels of the Father being thought of throughout the sentence. “*Blessed*”—“*who blesse d*”—“*blessin g*”—such was the ground-tone of the new covenant. As in creation God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply,”—so in redemption,—at the introduction of the covenant, “All families of the earth shall be BLESSED,”—at its completion,—“Come ye BLESSED of my Father.”—But God’s blessing is in *facts*—ours in words only) **us** (whom? not the Apostle only: nor St. Paul and his fellow-Apostles:—but, ALL CHRISTIANS—all the members of Christ. The “*ye also*” of ver. 13 perfectly agrees with this: see there: but the “*I also*” of ver. 15 does not agree with the other views) **in** (better than “*with*:” see below: it is instrumental or medial: the element in which, and means by which, the blessing is imparted) **all** (i. e. **all** possible—all, exhaustive, in all richness and fulness of blessing: see ver. 23 note) **spiritual blessing** (i. e. **blessing of the Spirit**: as we sometimes understand *spiritual*, not merely, ‘inward blessing?’ the word in the New Test. always implies the working of the Holy Spirit, never bearing merely our modern inaccurate sense of spiritual as opposed to bodily. See 1 Cor. ix. 11, which has been thus misunderstood) **in the heavenly place s** (so the expression, which occurs five times in this Epistle, and nowhere else, can only mean; see ver. 20. It is not probable that St. Paul should have chosen an unusual ex-expression for the purposes of this Epistle, and then used it in several different senses. But *what is the sense?* Our country, *place of citizenship*, is *in heaven*, Phil. iii. 20: there our High Priest stands, blessing us. There are our treasures, Matt. vi. 20, 21, and our affections to be, Col. iii. 1 ff.: there our hope is laid up, Col. i. 5: our inheritance is reserved for us, 1 Pet. i. 4. And there, in that place, and belonging to that state, is the *blessing*, the gift of the Spirit, Heb. vi. 4, poured out on those

who *mind the things above*. Materially, we are yet in the body: but in the Spirit, we are in heaven—only waiting for the redemption of the body to be entirely and literally there) **in Christ** (“the threefold **in** after ‘*who blessed*,’ has a meaning ever deeper and more precise: and should therefore be kept in translating. The blessing with which God has blessed us, consists and expands itself—in all *blessing of the Spirit*—then brings in *Heaven*, the heavenly state in us, and us in it—then finally, **CHRIST, personally**, He Himself, who is set and exalted into Heaven, comes by the Spirit down into us, so that He is in us and we in Him of a truth, and thereby, and in so far, we are with Him in heaven.” Stier):

4.] even as (this explains and expands the foregoing—shewing wherein the *blessing* consists as regards us, and God’s working towards us. Notice, that whereas ver. 3 has summarily included in the work of blessing the Three Persons, the FATHER bestowing the SPIRIT in CHRIST,—now the threefold cord, so to speak, is un wrapped, and the part of each divine Person separately described: see the argument above) **He chose us** (*se lected*, rather than *e lected*, it is a choosing out of the world, and for Himself. The word is an Old Test. word, and refers to the spiritual Israel, as it did to God’s elect Israel of old. But there is no *contrast* between their election and ours: it has been but one election throughout—an election in Christ, and to holiness on God’s side—and involving accession to God’s people on ours) **in Him** (i. e. in Christ, as the second Adam [2 Cor. xv. 22], the righteous Head of our race. In Him, in one wide sense, were all mankind elected, inasmuch as He took their flesh and blood, and redeemed them, and represents them before the Father: but in the proper and final sense, this can be said only of His faithful ones, His Church, who are incorporated in Him by the Spirit. But in any sense, all God’s election is *in HIM* only) **before the foundation of the world** (this expression occurs only here in St. Paul. Stier remarks on the necessary connexion of the true doc-trines of creation and redemption: how utterly irreconcilable Pantheism is with this, God’s election, before laying the foundation of the world, of His people in His Son), **that we should be** (the Apostle seems to have Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2, before his mind; in both which places the same sentiment, and form of sentence, occurs) **holy and blameless** (the positive and negative sides of the Christian *character*. This holiness and unblameableness must not be understood of that justification by faith by which the sinner stands accepted before God: it is distinctly put forth here [see also ch. v. 27] as an ultimate *result* as regards us, and refers to that sanctification which follows on justification by faith, and which is the will of God respecting us, 1 Thess. iv. 7) **before Him** (i. e. in the deepest verity of our being—thoroughly penetrated by the Spirit of holiness, bearing His searching eye, ch. v. 27: but at the same time implying an especial nearness to His presence and dear ness to Him—and bearing a foretaste of the time when the elect shall be *before the throne of God*, Rev. vii. 15. See Col. i. 22, note) **in love** (against the joining these last words with the following verse, “Having foreordained us in love, &c.,” see my Greek Test. The qualification, as here existing, is in the highest degree solemn and appropriate. **Love**, that which man lost at the Fall, but which God is, and to which God restores man by redemption, is the great element, in which, as in their abode and breathing-place, all Christian graces subsist, and in which, emphatically, all perfection before God must be found. And so, when the Apostle, ch. iv. 16, is describing the glorious building up of the body, the Church, he speaks of its increasing “*to the building up of itself in Love.*” And it is his prac-tice in this and the parallel Epistle, to add “*in love*” as the completion of the idea of Christian holiness—see ch. iii. 18; Col. ii. 2, also ch. iv. 25 v. 2):

5.] having foreordained (predestined) **us** (subordinate to the act of *choosing* mentioned above: see Rom. viii. 29, 30, where, the steps are thus laid down in succession;—“*whom He foreknew, them He also predestined—whom He predestined, those He also called.*” Now the *choosing* must answer in this rank to the *foreknowing*, and pre-cede the *preordaining*. Stier remarks well, “In God, indeed, all is one; but for our human way of speaking and treating, which is necessary to us, there follows on His first decree to adopt and to sanctify, the nearer decision, how and by what this shall be brought about, because it *could* only thus be brought about”) **unto adoption** (so that we should become His sons, in the blessed sense of being reconciled to Him and having a place in His spiritual family,—should have the remission of our sins, the pledge of the Spirit, the assurance of the inheritance) **through Jesus Christ** (THE SON of God, in and by whom, elementally and instrumentally, our adoption consists; com-pare Rom. viii. 29) **unto Him** (the Father: see Col. i. 20. For the Son could not be in this sentence the last term [the whole reference being to the work and purpose of the Father]. The question what is the *meaning* of this “unto Him,” is best answered by observing the general drift of the sentence. It seems evident that it must follow on the word “*adoption*,” and its import must be ‘*to [into] Himself*’—i. e. so that we should be partakers of the divine nature: see 2 Pet. i. 4), **according**

to (in pursuance of) the good pleasure of His will,

6.] to (with a view to, as the purpose of the predestination) **the praise** (by men and angels—all that can praise) **of the glory of His grace** (the end, God’s end, in our predestination to adoption, is, that the glory,—glorious nature, brightness and majesty, and kindliness and beauty,—of His grace might be an object of men and angels’ praise: both as it is in HIM, ineffable and infinite,—and exemplified in *us*, its objects; see below, ver. 12), **which He freely bestowed upon us** (not “*He hat h....*” The reference is to an act of God once past in Christ, not to an abiding state which He has brought about in us. This, as usual, has been almost universally overlooked, and the perfect, sense given), **in** (see above on “*in Christ*,” ver. 3. Christ is our head and including Representative) **the Beloved** (i. e. Christ:—*the Son of His love*, Col. i138. He is God’s *Beloved above all others*,—see Matt. iii. 17; John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9–11).

7.] Now the Apostle passes, with **In whom**, to the consideration of *the ground of the church in the SON* (7–12): see the synopsis above. But the Father still continues the great subject of the whole;—only the reference is now to the Son.

In whom (see on “in Christ,” ver. 3—and compare Rom. iii. 24) **we have** (objective—‘*there is for us*’ But not without a subjective implied import, as spoken of those who truly *have* it—have laid hold of it: “are ever needing and ever having it,” Eadie) **the (or, our) Redemption** (from God’s wrath—or rather from that which brought us under God’s wrath, the guilt and power of sin, Matt. i. 21. The article expresses notoriety—‘of which we all know,’—‘of which the law testified, and the prophets spoke’) **through** (as the instrument:—a further fixing of the *in whom*, shewing in what manner in Him) **His blood** (which was the price paid for that redemption, Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 20: both the ultimate climax of his obedience for us, Phil. ii. 8, and, which is most in view here,—the *propitiation*, in our nature, for the sin of the world, Rom. iii. 25; Col. 1. 20. It is a noteworthy observation of Harless here, that the choice of the word, the BLOOD of Christ, is of itself a testimony to the idea of *expiation* having been in the, writer’s mind. Not the *death* of the victim, but its BLOOD, was the typical instrument of expiation. And I may notice that in Phil. ii. 8, where Christ’s *obedience*, not His atonement, is spoken of, there is no mention of His shedding His Blood, only of the act of His Death), he remission (not ‘*overlooking*,’ see note on Rom. iii. 25) **of (our) transgressions** (explanation of the words, *our Redemption*: not to be limited, but extending to all riddance from the practice and consequences of our trans-gressions), **according to the riches of His grace** (this alone would prevent the word “*remission*” applying to merely the *forgiveness* of sins. We have in this grace not only redemption from misery and wrath, not only forgiveness,—but we find in it the liberty, the glory, the inheritance of the children of God,—the-crown of eternal life: compare 2 Cor. viii. 9);

8.] which He made to abound (the A.V. is wrong, ‘*wherein He hath abounded*’) **forth to us in all (possible) wisdom and prudence** (I would refer these words to God. See the opinion which refers them to

us discussed in my Greek Test. It was in God’s manifold wisdom and prudence, manifested in all ways possible for us, that He poured out His grace upon us: and this wisdom and prudence was especially exemplified in that which follows, the notification to us of His hidden will, &c. In Col. i. 9, the reference is clearly different: see note there);

9.] having made known (‘in that He made known.’ This ‘making known’ is not merely the information of the understanding, but the revelation, in its fulness, to the heart) **to us** (not, the Apostles, but Christians in general, as throughout the passage) **the mystery** (reff. and Rom. xvi. 25. St. Paul ever represents the redemptive counsel of God as a mystery, i.e. *a design hidden in His counsels*, until revealed to mankind in and by Christ. So that his use of the word **mystery** has nothing in common, except, the facts of concealment and revelation, with the mysteries of the heathen world, nor with any secret tradition over and above the gospel as revealed in the Scriptures. All who vitally know that, i.e. all the Christian church, are the initiated: and all who have the word, read or preached, *may vitally* know it. Only the *world* without, the unbelieving, are the uninitiated) **of** (objective genitive, ‘the material of which mystery was, &c.’) **His will** (that which He purposed), **according to His good pleasure** (belongs to “*having made known*,” and specifies it: i.e. so that the revelation took place in a time and manner consonant to God’s eternal pleasure—viz. “*unto the dispensation*,” &c.) **which He purposed in Himself** (some render these last words, **in him**, i.e. in *Christ*, and they are referred to *Christ* by Chrys. and the ff., Anselm, Bengel, Luther, all. But this seems impossible, because the words “*in Christ*” are introduced with the proper name below, which certainly would not occur on the *second* mention after having said **in him**, with the same reference),

10.] unto (i. e. **in order to**, belongs to **he purposed**, not to “*having made known*.”) The A.V. takes this “*unto*” wrongly, as equivalent to “*in*,” by which the whole sense is confused. Hardly less confusing is the rendering of Calvin and others, *until the time* of the dispensation, &c., thereby introducing into the *act of purposing* the complex idea of *decreed and laid up*, instead of the simple one which the con-text requires) **the economy (dispensation) of the fulness of the times** (or, **the fulfilment of the seasons**). The mistake which has misled almost all the Commentators here, and which as far as I know Stier has been the only one to expose, has been that of taking *the fulness of the times* as a fixed date in the fact, and making it mean, the coming of Christ, as Gal. iv. 4,—whereas usage, and the sense, determine it to mean, the whole duration of the Gospel times; compare especially ch. ii. 7; 1 Cor. x. 11; and Luke xxi. 24; Acts i. 7; iii. 19, 21; 1 Tim. ii. 6. Thus *the dispensation of the fulness of the times* will mean, the filling up, completing, fulfilment, of the appointed seasons, carrying on during the Gospel dispensation. Now, belonging to, carried on during, this fulfilling of the periods or seasons, is the *economy* or *dispensation* here spoken of. And having regard to the derivation and usage of the word, it will mean, *the giving forth of the Gospel under God’s providential arrangements*. First and greatest of all, HE is the *Steward or œconomus, of the dispensation*: then, above all others, His divine Son: and as proceeding from the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit—and then in subordinate degrees every one who is *entrusted with carrying out the economy*, i.e. all Christians, even to the lowest, as *stewards of the manifold grace of God*, 1 Pet. iv. 10. The genitive of **times** is one of *belonging* or *appurtenance*), **to gather up** (the infinitive belongs to and specifies what God’s *good pleasure* was. The verb, here as in the only other place in the New Test. where it occurs (Rom. xiii. 9), signifies to *comprehend, gather together, sum up*. As there the whole law is comprehended in one saying, so here all creation is comprehended, summed up, in Christ. See more below: and compare the parallel place, Col. i. 19, 20, and note there) **all things** (neuter, and to be literally so taken: not as a masculine, which, when a neuter is so understood, must be implied in the context, as in Gal. iii, 22:—*the whole creation*, see Col. i. 20) **in [the] Christ, the things in** (literally, *on*; see below) **the heavens** (universal—not to be limited to the *angels*, nor *spirits of the just*), **and the things on the earth** (general, as before. All creation is summed up in Christ: it was all the result of the Love of the Father for the Son [see my Doctrine of

Divine Love, Serm. I.], and in the Son it is all regarded by the Father. The vastly different relation to Christ of the different parts of creation, is no objection to this union in Him: it affects, as Bengel says, on Rom. viii. 19, "each genus according to its own receptivity." The Church, of which the Apostle here mainly treats, is subordinated to Him in the highest degree of conscious and joyful union: those who are not His spiritually, in mere subjugation, yet consciously; the inferior tribes of creation, unconsciously: but objectively, all are summed up in Him); **even in Him** (emphatic repetition, to connect more closely with Him the following relative clause),

11.] in whom we (Christians, *all*, both Jews and Gentiles: who are resolved below into "*me*" and "*you*:" see on ver. 12) **were also** (besides having, by His purpose, the revelation of His will, ver. 9.—Not, A.V. '*in whom also*') **taken for His inheritance** (the prevalent idea of Israel in the Old Test. Is a people whom the Lord chose *for His inheritance*; see Deut. iv, 20; ix. 29; xxii. 9; 3 Kings viii. 51, al. Olshausen calls this 'the realization *in time* of the *election in Christ* spoken of before,' viz. by God taking to Himself a people out of all nations for an inheritance—first in type and germ in the Old Test., then fully and spiritually in the New Test. This interpretation will be further substantiated by the note on ver. 12 below), **having been foreordained** (why mention this again? because here first the Apostle comes to the idea of the universal Church, the whole Israel of God, and therefore here brings forward again that fore-ordination which he had indeed hinted at generally in ver. 5, but which properly belonged to Israel, and is accordingly predicated of the Israel of the Church) **according to** (in pursuance of) **the purpose** (repeated again [see above] from ver. 9: compare also ch. iii. 11) **of Him who worketh** (energizes; but especially in and among material previously given, as here, in His material creation, and in the spirits of all flesh, also His creation) **all things** (not be restricted to the matter here in hand, but universally predicated) **according to the counsel of His will** (the **counsel** here answers to the "*good pleasure*," ver. 5,—the definite shape which the will, assumes when decided to action—implying in this case the union of sovereign will with infinite wisdom):

12.] (in order) that we (here first expressed, as distinguished from *ye*, ver. 13: see below) **should be to the praise of His glory** (see on ver. 6 and ver. 14 below), **namely, we who before have hoped in [the] Christ** (we Jewish Christians, who, before the Christ came, looked forward to His coming, waiting for the consolation of Israel: compare especially Acts xxviii. 20,—and xxvi. 6, 7. The objection, that *so few* thus looked, is fully met by the largeness of St. Paul's own expression in this last passage).

13.] In whom are ye also (ye Gentile believers), **having** (or, **since ye**) **heard (from the time when.... Their hearing** was the beginning of their being in him) **the word of [the] truth** (the word whose character and contents are the truth of God. This word is the instrument of the new birth, James i. 18. See Col. i. 5, and, above all, John xvii. 17), (viz.) **the Gospel of your salvation** (the Gospel whose contents, whose good tidings are your salvation: compare the expressions, "*the Gospel of the grace of God*," Acts xx. 24,—"*of peace*," ch. vi. 15,—"*of the Kingdom*," Matt. ix. 35,—"*of Jesus Christ*," Mark i. 1): **in whom also** (be-longs to "*having believed were sealed*," not to either verb alone) **having believed** (i. e. **on your believing**: the *date from which*, as "*having heard*" above: see Acts xix. 2, 'Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?'—and Rom. xii 11: see also 1 Cor. iii. 5; xv. 2, 11; Heb. iv. 3. The past tense marks the time when the act of belief first took place) **ye were sealed** (the fact followed on baptism, which was administered on belief in Christ. See the key-passage, Acts xix. 1–6.—The *act of belief* is, and is not, contemporaneous with the *sealing*: it is not, inasmuch as in strict accuracy, faith preceded baptism, and baptism preceded the gift of the Spirit: but it is, inasmuch as on looking back over a man's course, the period of the commencement of his faith includes all its accidents and accompaniments. The figure of *sealing* is so simple and obvious, that it is perhaps mere antiquarian pedantry to seek for an explanation of it in Gentile practices of branding with the names of their deities, or even in circumcision itself.—The sealing was *outward*, making manifest to others: see John iii. 33; Rev. vii. 3,—but also *inward*, an approval and substantiation of their faith: see Rom. viii. 1G; 2 Cor. i. 22; 1 John iii. 24) **by the Spirit of the promise** (i. e. who "*was the promise of the Father*," Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4; Gal. iii. 14, 22; and I therefore insert the article), **even the Holy One** (or, **Spirit**. There is an emphatic pathos in this addition which should not be lost in the usual prefix, 'the Holy Spirit' The Spirit with whom He sealed you is even *His*

own Holy Spirit—what grace, and mercy, and love, is here!),

14.] who (or, which) is the earnest (the word signifies the first instalment paid as a pledge that the rest, will follow. And so here—the Spirit is the "*firstfruits*," Rom. viii. 23,—the pledge and assurer to us of "*the things granted to us by God*," 1 Cor. ii. 12, which eye hath not seen, &c.) **of our inheritance** (here the first person comes in again, and not without reason. The inheritance belongs to both Jew and Gentile—to all who are the children of Abraham by faith, Gal. iii. 28, 29) **for** ('in order to,'—not '*until*,' as A.V. The purpose expressed is that of the *sealing*, not of the *earnest*. These two final clauses express the great purpose of all—not any mere intermediate matter—nor can the Holy Spirit be said to be any such intermediate gift) **the [full] redemption** (this word is often used by the Apostle in this sense, e.g. ch. iv. 30; Rom. viii. 23, of the full and exhaustive accomplishment of that which the word imports) **of the purchased possession** (see the sense of the unusual word here occurring in the original discussed in my Greek Test.), **unto the praise of His glory** (as before, ver. 6; but as Stier well remarks, *the glory of His grace* does not appear here, grace having *done its work*. **His** refers to the Father: compare ver. 17, "*the Father of glory*." This, the thorough and final redemption of the' Church which He hath acquired to Himself, is the greatest triumph of His glory).

(B) vv. 15–28.] *The IDEA OF THE CHURCH carried forward, in the form of a prayer for the Ephesians, in which the fulfilment of the Father's counsel, through the Son and by the Spirit, in His people, is set forth, as consisting in the KNOWLEDGE of the hope of His calling, of the riches of His promise, and the power which He exercises on His saints as first wrought by Him in Christ, whom He has made Head over all to the Church.*

15, 16.] INTRODUCTION TO THE PRAYER.—**Wherefore** (i. e., on account of what has gone before since ver. 3: but especially of what has been said since ver. 13, where **ye also** first came in:—because ye are in Christ, and in Him were sealed, &c.) **I also (also)**, either as resuming the first person after the second,—or as corresponding to “*ye also*” above) **having heard of** (on the indication supposed to be furnished by this respecting the readers, see Introd. §ii. 12) **the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you** (this is not the same as “*your faith*,” A.V., but it implies the possibility of some not having this faith, and thus intensifies the prayer which follows), **and [t]he love which ye have] towards all the saints** (the omission of the words in brackets *may* have been occasioned by similar endings, but the three ancient MSS. which leave them out are perfectly independent of one another), **cease not giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my** (ordinary, see Rom. i. 9 note) **prayers;**

17.] *Purport and purpose of the prayer:*—**that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ** (see on ver. 3, The appellation is here solemnly and most appropriately given, as leading on to what is about to be said in vv. 20 ff. of God’s *exaltation of Christ* to be Head over all things to His Church. To His God, Christ also in the days of His flesh prayed, “*Father, glorify thy Son:*” and even more markedly in that last cry, “*My God, my God*”), **the Father of Glory** (not, merely the *author*, or *source*, of glory: but God is the Father,—by being the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—of that glory, the true and all-including glory, and *only glory*, of the Godhead, which shone forth in the Manhood of the only-begotten Son (John i. 14),—the true Shechinah, which His saints beheld in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6, and into which they are changed by the Lord the Spirit, ib. iii. 18. In fact, 2 Cor. iii. 7—iv. 6, is the key to this sublime expression), **would give unto you the Spirit** (certainly it would not be right to take the word here as signifying solely the Holy Spirit, nor solely the spirit of man: rather is it the complex idea, of the spirit of man indwelt by the Spirit of God, so that as such, it is His special gift; see below) **of wisdom** (not, which gives wisdom, but which possesses it as its character; to which appertains wisdom) **and of revelation** (i. e. that revelation which belongs to *all Christians*: see 1 Cor. ii. 10 ff.: not the *spiritual gifts* of the early Church;—nor could the Apostle be alluding to any thing so trivial and fleeting, see 1 Cor. xiii. 14. To those who are taught of God’s Spirit, ever more and more of His glories in Christ are revealed, see John xvi. 14, 15) **in** (belongs to *would give*: as the element and sphere of the working of this gift of the Spirit) **full knowledge** (not knowledge only, but knowledge full and complete: see 1 Cor. xiii. 12) **of Him:** (**of Him** refers to the Father,—not to Christ, as some think; compare “*his*” four times in vv. 18, 19: Christ first becomes thus designated in ver. 20), **having the eyes of your heart enlightened** (the expression **eyes of your heart** is somewhat unusual. The word “*heart*” in Scripture signifies the very core and centre of life, where the intelligence has its post of observation, where the stores of experience are laid up, and the thoughts have their fountain. Thus the **eyes of the heart** would be those pointed at in Matt. vi. 22, 23,—that inner eye of the heart, through which light is poured in on its own purposes and motives, and it looks out on, and perceives, and judges things spiritual: the eye, as in nature, being both receptive and contemplative of the light); **that you may know** (purpose of the *enlightening*) **what is the**

hope (i. e. the nature of the hope itself, involving also of course the nature of the thing hoped for, which gives its whole complexion to the hope) **of** (belonging to, see on ch. iv. 4) **His calling** (i. e. the calling wherewith he called us. All the matters mentioned, *the calling, the inheritance, the power, are His*,—but not all in the same sense: see below. On *calling*, see notes, Rom. viii. 28–30), **what the riches of the glory of His inheritance** (“what a rich, sublime cumulation, setting forth in like terms the weightiness of the matters described!” Meyer. See Col. i. 27) **in** (in the case, as exemplified in; not so weak as ‘*among*,’—nor merely ‘*in*,’ so as to refer to its subjective realization in them) **the saints** (join together “His inheritance in the saints;”—that inheritance of His, the subjects of which, as its inheritors, are the saints),

19.] **and what the surpassing greatness of his power to us-ward who believe** (not His future power in the actual resurrection only is spoken of, but THE WHOLE of His energizing to us-ward from first to last, principally however His *present* spiritual work, as implied by the present tense, “*who [now] believe*,” not, as in 2 Thess. i. 10, “*that believed*”: see also Col. ii. 12, and 1 Pet. i. 3–5. This power is exerted to *us-ward*, which expression of the A.V. I retain, as giving better the prominence to *us* in the fact of its *direction*, than the more usual but tamer ‘*toward us*’), **accord-ing to** (in proportion to,—as might be expected from: but more than this—His power to us-ward is a part of, a continuation of, or rather included as a consequence in, the other) **the working** (putting forth in action, in an object) **of the might of His strength** (His *might*, the actual measure of His *strength*. The latter is the attribute, subjectively considered: the former the weight of that attribute, objectively es-teemed: the operation, in matter of fact, of the might of that strength), **which** (viz. *working*: compare ver. 6, note) **He hath wrought in Christ** (our *firstfruits*: nor only this, but our *Head*, in virtue of God’s *working* in whom, His power to us-ward is made possible and actual), **in that He raised Him from the dead** (the resurrection of Christ was not a mere bodily act, an earnest of our bodily resurrection, but was a spiritual act, the raising of His humanity [which is ours], consisting of body and soul, from infirmity to glory, from the curse to the final triumph. In that He died, HE DIED UNTO SIN once; but in that He liveth, HE LIVETH UNTO GOD. And so we *who believe*, knit to him, have died unto sin and live unto God. It is

necessary to the understanding of the following, thoroughly to appreciate this—or we shall be in danger of regarding, with the shallower expositors, Christ's resurrection as merely a *pledge* of our *bodily* resurrection, or as a mere *figure representing* our *spiritual* resurrection,—not as *involving* the resurrection of the Church in both senses), **and setting Him at His right hand** (see especially Mark xvi. 19) **in the heavenly places** (see on ver. 3: and Matt. vi. 9, note. But the fact of the universal idea, of God's dwelling being in heaven, being only a symbolism common to all men, must not for a moment induce us to let go the verity of Christ's bodily existence, or to explain away the glories of His resurrection into mere spiritualities. As Stephen saw Him, so He veritably is: in human form, locally existent), **up above** (the word seems to imply, not *far above* but simply local elevation) **all rule** (compare Matt. xxviii. 18), **and authority, and power, and lordship** (the most reasonable account of the four words seems to be this: **above all rule** gives the high-est and fullest expression of exaltation: **and authority** is added as filling out **rule** in detail: **authority** being not only government, but every kind of official power, primary and delegated: compare Matt. viii. 9; x. 1; xxi. 23 ff; Luke xx. 20; xxiii. 7. Then in the second pair **power** is mere *might*, the raw material, so to speak, of **authority**: **lordship** is that pre-eminence which **power** establishes for itself. So that in the first pair we descend from the higher and concentrated to the lower and diffused: in the second we ascend from the lower and diffused to the higher and concentrated. The following shews that in this enumeration not only earthly, nor only heavenly authorities are meant to be included, but both together,—so as to make it perfectly general. That the *evil spirits* are included, is therefore manifest: see also ch. vi. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 24–26), **and every name that is named** (further generalization: indicating not merely titles of honour, nor persons, but a transition from the *authorities, &c.* to *all things* below: answering to “*nor any other creature,*” in Rom. viii. 39. And this transition passes into still wider meaning in the following words), **not only in this present state, but also in that which is to come** (compare again Rom. viii. 38—not only *time* present and to come, but the present [earthly] condition of things, and the future [heavenly] one. And forasmuch as that heavenly state which is for us *future*, is now, to those in it, present, *it* is by the easiest transition denoted by “*the age to come.*” compare Luke xx. 35, and especially Heb. ii. 5, “*the world to come.*” So that the meanings seem combined,—‘every name now named in earth and heaven?’ and, ‘every name which we name,—not only now, but hereafter.’ Wesley says, beautifully expanding Bengel: “We know that the king is above all, though we cannot name all the officers of his court. So we know that Christ is above all, though we are not able to name all His subjects”): **22.] and subjected all things under His feet** (from the Messianic Ps. viii.; not without an allusion also above to Ps. cx. 1), **and gave** (‘*presented;*’ keep the literal sense: not ‘*appointed;*’ see below) **HIM** (emphatic, from its position: **HIM**, thus exalted, thus glorified, the Father not only raised to this supereminence, but gave Him to His redeemed as their Head, &c.) **as head over all things to the Church** (the meaning is thus to be gained, from what follows: CHRIST is Head over all things: the Church is the BODY of Christ, and as such is the fulness of Him who fills all with all: the Head of such a Body, is Head over all things; therefore when God gives Christ as *Head* to the church, He gives Him as *Head over all things* to the church, from the necessity of the case. Thus what follows is explanatory of this), **which same (Church) is His BODY** (not in a figure merely: it is veritably His Body: not that which in our glorified humanity He personally bears, but that in which He, as the Christ of God, is manifested and glorified by spiritual organization. He is its Head, from Him comes its life; in Him, it is exalted: in it, He is lived forth and witnessed to; He possesses nothing for Himself,—neither His communion with the Father, nor His fulness of the Spirit, nor His glorified humanity,—but all for His Church, which is in the innermost reality, **HIMSELF**; His flesh and His bones—and therefore) **the fulness** (i. e. ‘*the thing filled,—“the filled up receptacle”*’ [compare ch. ii. 22], as Eadie expresses it; the meaning being, that the church, being the Body of Christ, is dwelt in and filled by God: it is His **fulness** in an especial manner—His fulness abides in it, and is exemplified by it. The nearest approach to any one word in English which may express it, is made by **fulness**, though it requires explaining, as importing not the inherent plenitude of God Himself, but that communicated plenitude of gifts and graces wherein He infuses Himself into His Church) **of Him that filleth** (it is not very easy here to decide whether the word should be thus rendered, or, “*that is being filled with.*” I have discussed the two in my Greek Test. and adopted that in the text: being further inclined to this rendering by ch. iv. 10, where it is said of Christ, “*He that ascended up above all heavens, that He might fill all things,*” and the Apostle proceeds to enumerate the various gifts bestowed by Him on his Church. See further in note there) **all things** (the whole universe: not to be restricted in meaning. The Church is the special receptacle and abiding-place of Him who fills all things) **with all things** (i. e. who is the bestower of all, wherever found:—*with all*, not only gifts, not only blessings, but *things*: who fills all creation with whatever it possesses—who is the Author and Giver of all things. The reference is, I think, to the Father, and not to Christ).

Ephesians: Chapter 2

II. 1–22.] (See on ch. i. 3.) COURSE AND PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH THROUGH THE SON; consisting mainly in the receiving of believers in the new man Christ Jesus—setting forth on one side the death and ruin in which they were;—on the other, the way to life opened to them by the finished work of Christ. This throughout the chapter, which is composed (as ch. i.) of two parts—the first, more doctrinal and assertive (vv. 1–10), the second more hortative and reminiscent (vv. 11–22). In both, the separate cases of Gentiles and Jews, and the present union in Christ, are treated of. And herein

A. 1–10.] THE POWER OF THE FATHER IN QUICKENING US, BOTH GENTILES AND JEWS, IN AND WITH CHRIST (1–6);—HIS PURPOSE IN MANIFESTING THIS POWER (7);—INFERENCE RESPECTING THE METHOD OF OUR SALVATION (8–10).

1, 2.] Actual state of the Gentiles—dead in trespasses and sins, living under the power of the devil.

1.] You also (now, ye are selected and put into prominence, from among the recipients of God's grace implied in vv. 19–23 of the former chapter, See below), **who were** (this clearly marks the state in which they were at the time when God quickened them: this in ver. 5 is brought prominently forward) **dead** (certainly not, as Meyer, ‘*subject to [physical] death:*’ the whole of the subsequent mercy of God in His quickening them is *spiritual*, and therefore of necessity the death also. That it *involves* physical death, is most true; but as I have often had occasion to remark [see e.g. on John xi. 25, 26], this latter is so subordinate to spiritual death, as often hardly to come into account in Scripture) **by reason of** (not exactly as in Col. ii. 13, “*being dead in your trespasses,*” where the *element* is more in view, whereas here it is the cause of death which is expressed.—We might render, were the expression good in serious writing, ‘*dead of your trespasses,*’ as we say ‘he lies dead of cholera’) **[your] trespasses and sins** (where the two words, **trespasses and sins**, occur together, the distinction seems to be, that the former indicate involuntary acts in which the limit of right is overstepped, the latter, conscious habits of doing wrong. As to the way in which this verse is to be brought into the construction of the context, the simplest view seems to be the usual one, that the Apostle began with **you also**, in the accusative, intending to govern it by “*quickened together with Christ*” (ver. 5), but was led away by the relative clauses, “*wherein,*” &c., “*among whom,*” &c., and himself takes up the dropped thread of the construction by “*But God,*” &c., ver. 4. At all events, the clause should be left, in translation, pendent, as it stands, and not filled in conjecturally, as in A.V.);

2.] in which (viz. *sins*, the last substantive, but applying in fact to both) **ye once walked** (we hardly need, as some, go back every time to the figure in the word **walked**—the word has become with the Apostle so common in its figurative sense) **accord-ing to** (after the leading of, conformably to) **the course** (so A.V.: the very best word, as so often. The original word is **the age**, compounded of its temporal and its ethical sense: it is not exactly ‘*lifetime*, ‘*duration*,’ nor again ‘*fashion*,’ ‘*spirit*,’ but some common term which will admit of being both temporally and ethically characterized,—‘*career*’ or ‘*course*’) **of this world** (St. Paul generally uses “*the world*,” but has “*this world*” in 1 Cor. iii. 19; v. 10; vii. 31. It designates the present system of things, as alien from God, and lying in the evil one), **according to the ruler of the power** (so literally: see below) **of the air** (the devil—the *god of this world*, 2 Cor. iv. 4, is clearly meant: but it is difficult exactly to dissect the phrase, and give each word its proper meaning. *The power* appears to be used here to represent the *aggregate* of those in power: as we say, ‘*the government*.’ St. Paul is supposed by many to have spoken in accordance with Rabbinical, or even with Pythagorean notions. But I am disposed to seek my interpretation of the words from a much more obvious source: viz. the persuasion and common parlance of mankind, founded on analogy with well known facts. We are tempted by evil spirits, who have access to us, and suggest thoughts and desires to our minds. We are surrounded by the air, which is the vehicle of speech and of all suggestions to our senses. Tried continually as we are by these temptations, what so natural, as to assign to their ministers a dwelling in, and power over that element which is the vehicle of them to us? And thus our Lord, in the parable of the sower, when He would represent the devil coming and taking away the seed out of the heart, figures him by *the birds of the air* (or, of *heaven*). The Apostle then, in using this expression, would be appealing to the common feeling of his readers, not to any recondite or questionable system of *dæmonology*. That traces are found in such systems, of a belief agreeing with this, is merely a proof that they have embodied the same general feeling, and may be used in illustration, not as the ground, of the Apostle’s saying), **of the spirit** (*the power* being used as designating [see above] the personal aggregate of those evil ones who have this power, **the spirit**, in apposition with it, represents their aggregate character, as an influence on the human mind, a spirit of ungodliness and disobedience,—the “*spirit of the world*” of 1 Cor. ii. 12,—the aggregate of the “*seducing spirits*” of 1 Tim. iv. 1) **which is now** (i. e. ‘*still:*’ contrast to “*once,*”—to *you*, who have escaped from his government above) **working in the sons of** (the expression is a Hebraism, but is strictly reproduced in the fact: that of which they are sons, is the source and spring of their lives, not merely an accidental quality belonging to them) **disobedience**:

3.] among whom (the “*sons of disobedience:*” not merely local, but ‘numbered among whom’) **we also all** (WHO? The usage of **we all** by St. Paul must decide. It occurs Rom. iv. 16, “*who is the father of us all,*” undeniably for Jews and Gentiles included: viii. 32, where the universal reference is as undeniable: 1 Cor. xii. 13, where it is still more marked: 2 Cor. iii. 18, equally undoubted. It can hardly then be that here he should have departed from his universal usage, and placed an unmeaning “*all*” after “*we,*” merely to signify, ‘*we Jews, every one of us.*’ I therefore infer that by **we all**, he means, we all, Jews and Gentiles alike; all, who are now Christians) **lived our life once in** (of the element, in which, see 2 Cor. i. 12; where the same double use of *in*, of the place, and the element, is found) **the lusts of our flesh** (of our unrenewed selves, under the dominion of the body and the carnal soul. See a contrast, Gal. v. 16), **doing the desires** (the instances in which *our will* manifested itself) **of our flesh and of our thoughts** (the plural use is remarkable. There appears to be a reference to Numb. xy. 39, in the Septuagint version, “*Ye shall not turn aside after your thoughts*” (the same word as here). ‘*Thoughts*’ must be understood to mean, those phases of mind which may or may not affect the will, but which then in our natural state we allowed to lead us by the desires they excited); **and we were** (the change of construction has been remarked by the best Commentators as intentional, not of negligence,—“to give emphasis to the weighty clause that follows, and to dis-connect it from any possible relation to present time, ‘*we were children of wrath by nature*,—it was once our state and condition, it is now so no longer.’” Ellicott) **children** (not *sons*, but implying closer relation. The effect of the expression is to set those of whom it is predicated, beneath, in subjection to, as it were, the products of, wrath) **by nature** (the ex-pression amounts to an assertion on the part of the Apostle of the doctrine of original sin. There is from its secondary position no emphasis on “*by nature:*” but its doctrinal

force as referring to a fundamental truth otherwise known, is not thereby lessened) **of wrath** (WHOSE wrath, is evident: the meaning being, we were all concluded under and born in sin, and so actual objects of that wrath of God which is His mind against sin), **as also [are]** (not, *were*) **the rest** (of mankind i.e. *all others, who are not like us, Christians*).

4.] The construction is resumed, having been interrupted (see above on ver. 1) by the two relative sentences, “*wherein*,” and “*among whom*.” **But** (contrast to the preceding verse,—the *mercy* and *love*, to the *wrath* just mentioned) **God, being rich** (this states the general ground for what follows, and the following, “*because of His great love*,” the special or peculiar motive) **in mercy** (*mercy*, properly, as applying to our wretchedness before: compare Ezek. xvi. 6),—**on account of His great love wherewith He loved us** (the clause belongs, not to *what goes before*, but to the verb below. **Us** are *all Christians*; the same as “*we all*” in the last verse),

5.] **even when we were dead in our trespasses** (see on ver. 1), **vivified** (or, **quickened**: not, as A.V., ‘*hath quickened*’—a definite act in time, not an abiding consequence is spoken of) **us together with Christ** (Christ was THE RESURRECTION and the Life, and we follow in and because of Him. The disputes about the meaning of this *vivifying*, or *quickening*, have arisen from not bearing in mind the relation in New Test. language between natural and spiritual death. We have often had occasion to observe that spiritual death in the New Test. includes in it and bears with it natural death as a consequence, to such an extent that this latter is often not thought of as worth mentioning: see especially John xi. 25, 26, which is the key-text for all passages regarding life in Christ. So here—God vivified us together with Christ: in the one act and fact of His Resurrection He raised all His people—to spiritual life, and in that to victory over death, both spiritual, and therefore necessarily physical also. To dispute therefore whether such an expression as this is past [spiritual], or future [physical], is to forget that the whole includes its parts. Our *spiritual life* is the primary subject of the Apostle’s thought: but this includes in itself our share in the Resurrection and exaltation [ver. 6] of Christ. The three past tenses, “*quickened*,” “*raised up*,” “*made to sit*,” are all anticipatory as regards the actual fact in each man, but equally describe a past and accomplished act on God’s part when He raised up Christ)—**by grace ye have been saved** (this insertion in the midst of the mention of such great unmerited mercies to us sinners, is meant emphatically to call the reader’s attention to so cogent a proof of that which the Apostle ever preached as the great foundation truth of the Gospel. Notice the perfect, ‘*have been saved*,’ not, ‘*are being saved*,’ because we *have passed* from death unto life: salvation is to the Christian *not a future but a past thing*, realized in the present by faith)—

6.] **and raised us together with Him** (the Resurrection of Christ being the next. event consequent on His vivification in the tomb), **and seated us together with Him** (the Ascension being the completion of the Resurrection. So that all three verbs refer strictly to the same work wrought on Christ, and in Christ on all His mystical Body, the Church) **in the heavenly places** (see on ch. i. 3, 20) **in Christ Jesus** (as again specifying the element in which, as united and included in which, we have these blessings which have been enumerated. It is an additional qualification, and recalls the mind to the fact of our union in Him as the medium of our resurrection and glorification.—The disputes as to whether these are to be taken as present or future, actual or potential, literal or spiritual, will easily be disposed of by those who have apprehended the truth of the believer’s union in and with Christ. All these we have, in fact and reality [see Phil. iii. 20], in their highest, and therefore in all lower senses, in Him: they were ours, when they were His: but for their fulness in possession we are waiting till He come, when we shall be like and with Him):

7.) **that He might show forth** (see Rom. ix. 23. The original implies, that the exhibition is for His own purpose, for His own glory [see ch. i. 6, 12, 14]—compare note on Col. ii, 15) **in the ages which are hereafter to come** (what are they? the future periods of the Church’s earthly career,—or the ages of the glorified Church hereafter? The answer must be given by comparing this with the very similar expression in Col. i. 26, 27, where it is manifest (1) that the *ages* from which the mystery was hidden are the past ages of this world; (2) that those to whom, as here, God will make known the riches of His glory, are His saints, i.e. His church on earth. Therefore I conceivé we are compelled to interpret analogously: viz. to understand the “*ages to come*” of the coming ages of the church, and the per-sons involved in them to be the future members of the church. Thus the mean-ing will be nearly as in ch. i, 12.—The supposed reference to the future state of glory seems not to agree with the *language here*,—nor with the fact that the second coming and future kingdom of Christ are hardly ever alluded to in this Epistle) **the exceeding riches of His grace in** (of the material of which this display of His grace will consist, the department in which it will find its exercise) **kindness** (see especially Rom. ii. 4) towards us in see ‘*through*’ as A.V.) **Christ Jesus** (again and again he repeats this “*in Christ Jesus*:” HE is the great centre of the Epistle, towards whom all the rays of thought converge, and from whom all blessings flow; and this the Apostle will have his readers never forget).

8.] **For by grace** (the import of the sentence is, to take up and expand the parenthetic clause “*by grace ye have been saved*,” above: but not barely so: that clause itself was inserted on account of the matter in hand being a notable example of the fact, and this **for** takes up also that matter in hand—the “*exceeding riches, &c.*”

ye have been saved, through faith (“*by grace*,” above, expressed the objective instrumental condition of your salvation,—this “*through faith*” the subjective medial condition: it has been effected by grace and apprehended by faith); **and this** (‘your salvation;’ your *having been saved*, as Ellic.) **not of yourselves**: GOD’S (emphatic) **is the gift** (not, as A.V., ‘*it is the gift of God*;’—*the gift*, viz. of your salvation:—so that the expression amounts to this, ‘*but it is a gift, and that gift is God’s*’): **not of**

works (see on Rom. iii. iv., and Gal. ii. 16), **that no man should boast** (see on Rom. iv. 2).

10.] For (substantiates vv. 8, 9. The English reader is likely to imagine a contrast between ‘not of *works*’ and ‘for we are His handi *work*,’ which can hardly have been in the mind of the Apostle) **his handiwork are we** (not, in our natural creation, which idea is clearly refuted by what immediately follows,—but in the spiritual creation, treated of in vv. 8, 9), **created in Christ Jesus** (see ver. 15; Tit. iii. 5, where the beginning of this new life is called *regeneration*. See also 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15) **for good works** (just as a tree may be said to be created for its fruit: see below), **which God before prepared** (‘*before He thus created us.*’ The sentiment is the same as that in John v. 36. To recur to the similitude used above, we might say of the trees,—they were created for fruits which God before prepared that they should bear them: i.e. defined and assigned to each tree its own, in form, and flavour, and time of bearing. So in the course of God’s providence, our good works are marked out for and assigned to each one of us) **that we should walk in them.** Thus the truth of the maxim “good works do not go before him who is to be justified, but follow after one who is justified,” is shewn. The sentiment is strictly one of the Apostle’s,—in the spirit of Rom. xii.; Gal. v. 22, 25, &c.

B. 11–22.] HORTATORY EXPANSION OF THE FOREGOING INTO DETAIL: REMINDING THEM, WHAT THEY ONCE WERE (vv. 11, 12); WHAT THEY WERE NOW IN CHRIST (vv. 13–22). 11.] Wherfore (since so many and great blessings are given by God to His people, among whom ye are) **remember, that once ye, the** (i. e. who belonged to the category of the) **Gentiles in the flesh** (i. e. in their corporeal condition of uncircumcision), **who are called (the) Uncircumcision by that which is called (the) Circumcision in the flesh wrought by hands** (this last addition seems made by the Apostle, not to throw discredit on circumcision, but as a reserve, *circumcision* having a higher and spiritual application: as if he had said,—‘but they have it only in the flesh, and not in the heart.’ As Ellicott well states the case—“The Gentiles were called, and *were* the *uncircumcision*; the Jews were called, but were not truly, the *circumcision*.” See Col. ii. 11);

12.] that ye were (the **that** takes up again the “*that*” in ver. 11, after the relative clause,—and **at that time** takes up the “*once*” there. It is only a repetition; ‘that, I say....’) **at that time** (when ye were,—not *Gentiles in the flesh* which ye are now, —but that which is implied in the word “*once*” above,—heathens, before your conversion to Christ) **separate from Christ** (having no part in the promised Messiah. That this is the sense, is evident from ver. 13: see below), **alienated from** (‘he does not say, *separated from....* but the emphasis is strong, shewing a great severance. For there were also Israelites who were outside the commonwealth, only not as foreigners but as lax Jews, and lost their part in the covenants, not as foreigners, but as unworthy.’ Chrysostom, Gentiles and Jews were once united in the hope of redemption—this was constituted, on the apostasy of the nations, into a definite *polity* for the Jews, from which and its blessings the Gentiles were alienated) **the commonwealth of Israel** (either a synonymous genitive, ‘that commonwealth which is designated by the term *Israel*,’ or possessive, ‘that commonwealth which *Israel* possessed.’ I prefer the former, as more simple), **and strangers from** (i. e. as we say, **to**) **the covenants of the promise** (what are these covenants? That involved in the well-known promise, “To thee and thy seed, &c.,” and those which followed on it. See Wisd. xviii. 22; Ecclus. xliv. 11. See note on Rom. ix. 4), **not having hope** (not ‘covenanted hope,’—but ‘hope’ at all), **and without God** (this is the best tendering, as it leaves the original word in its latitude of meaning. It may be taken either 1) actively, ‘*denying God*’ ‘*atheist*, 2) in a neuter sense—‘*ignorant of God*,’ or 3) passively, ‘*forsaken of God*’ This latter meaning is best here, on account of the passive character of the other descriptive clauses) **in the world** (contrast to the *commonwealth of Israel*. “He subjoins to the godless ‘How,’ the godless ‘Where,’” Meyer):

13.] but now (contrast to “*at that time*” as things are now with you) **in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off were brought** (so literally, in the historic sense: it is the effect of a definite event of which he is speaking. But in an English version, we are obliged, in combination with **now**, to adopt the perfect, **ye have been) near** (it was a common Jewish way of speaking, to designate the Gentiles as ‘*far off*.’ See also Isa. lvii. 19) **in** (as the instrument by which, but more—the symbol of a fact in which—the seal of a covenant *in* which,—your nearness to God consists: not “*by*,” as A.V., though it is so in ch. i. 7. There the blood of Christ is spoken of specifically, as the medium of our redemption—here inclusively, as *representing the redemption*) **the blood of Christ** (see remarks on ch. i. 7).

14.] For He (there is an emphasis on **He**, ‘He and none other’) **is our peace** (in the widest and most literal sense, *our peace*. He did not make our peace and then retire, leaving us to enjoy that peace,—but is Himself its medium and its substance; His making both one was no external reconciliation, but the taking both, their common nature, on and into Himself,—see ver. 15. Bear in mind the multitude of prophetic passages which connect peace with Him, Isa. ix. 5, 6; lii. 7; liii. 5; lvii. 19; Micah v. 5; Hag. ii. 9; Zech. ix. 10; also Luke ii. 14; John xiv. 27; xx. 19, 21, 26. And notice that already the complex idea of the whole verse, that of uniting both Jews and Gentiles in one reconciliation to God, begins to appear: for He is our Peace, not only as reconciling Jew to Gentile, not as bringing the far-off Gentile *near to* the Jew, but as reconciling both, united, to God; as bringing the far-off Gentile, and the near Jew, both into peace with God. For want of observing this the sense has been much obscured: see below), **who made** (specification, *how* He is our Peace. Better ‘*made*,’ than ‘*hath made*:’ the latter is true, but it is the historic fact which is here brought out) **both** (Jews and Gentiles. In the original *both* is neuter, as abstract;—both things, both elements) **one, and** (explana-tory’ namely, in that he’) **threw down the middle wall of the fence** (i. e. the middle wall which belonged to—was a necessary part of the carrying out of—the *fence*, or *partition*. The primary allusion seems to be, to

the rending of the veil at the crucifixion: not that that veil separated Jew and Gentile, but that it, the chief symbol of separation from God, included in its removal the admission to Him of that one body into which Christ made Jew and Gentile. This complex idea is before the Apostle throughout the sentence: and necessarily so; for the reconciliation which Christ effected between Jew and Gentile was in fact only a subordinate step of the great reconciliation of both to God, which He effected by His sacrifice in the flesh,—and in speaking of one he speaks of the other also. The **partition**, from what has been said above, is more general in sense than the **middle wall**; is in fact the whole arrangement, of which that was but an instrument—the separation itself, consequent on a system of separation: it represents therefore the whole legal system, ceremonial and moral, which made the whole separation,—of Jew from Gentile,—and in the background, of both from God), [to wit] **the enmity** (not, of Jew and Gentile: so strong a term is not justified as applying to their separation, nor does such a reference satisfy ver. 16,—see there;—but, the enmity in which both were involved against God, see Rom. viii. 7. **the enmity** is in apposition with **the partition**. This enmity was the real cause of separation from God, and in being so, was the inclusive, mediate cause of the separation between Jew and Gentile. Christ, by abolishing the first, abolished the other also: see below), **in His flesh** (to be joined, not with **abolishing**, as the A.V., which is very harsh, breaking the parallelism,—but with **brake down**). Christ destroyed the *partition*, i.e. the enmity, in, or by, His flesh; see on ver. 16, where the same idea is nearly repeated. It was in His crucified flesh, which was “*in the likeness of the Slesh of sin*,” that He slew this enmity); **having done away the law of decretory commandments** (this law was the *partition*,—the great exponent of the *enmity*. Its specific nature was that it consisted in commandments, decretorily or dogmatically expressed. This law, moral and ceremonial, its decalogue, its ordinances, its rites, was entirely done away in and by the death of Christ. See Col. ii. 13–15, notes. And the end of that *abolition* was); **that He might create the two** (Jew and Gentile) **in Himself into one new man** (observe, not that He might reconcile the two *to each other* only, nor is the Apostle speaking merely of any such reconciliation: but that he might incorporate the two, reconciled in Him to God, into one *new man*,—the old man to which both belonged, the enemy of God, having been slain in His flesh on the Cross. Observe, too, ONE new man: we are all in God’s sight but one in Christ, as we are but one in Adam), [so] **making peace** (not, between Jew and Gentile: He is *the peace* of us all: see below on ver. 17); **and** (parallel with the former purpose) **might reconcile both of them** (or **of us**) **in one body** (not His own human body, as Chrysostom [who however seems to waver between this and His mystical body],—but the Church, compare the same expression Col. iii. 15) **unto God** (if this had not been here expressed, the *whole* reference of the sentence would have been thought to be to the uniting Jews and Gentiles. That it is expressed, now shews that throughout, that union has been thought of only as a subordinate step in a greater reconciliation) **by means of** (through) **the (His) cross** (the cross regarded as the symbol of that which was done on and by it), **having slain the enmity** (this has been taken here to mean the enmity between Jew and Gentile. But see on ver. 15: and let us ask here, was this the enmity which Christ slew at His death? Was *this* the *enmity*, the slaying of which brought in the *reconciliation* as this verse implies? Does such a meaning of the word at all satisfy the solemnity of the sentence, or of the next two verses? I cannot think so: and must maintain the *enmity* here [and if here, then in ver. 15 also] to be that between man and God, which Christ did slay on the cross, and which being brought to an end, the separation between Jew and Gentile, which was the result of it, was done away) **thereby** (or, **in or on it**: viz. the cross: compare Col. ii. 15, notes: not *in His body*: see above): **and having come, He preached** (how? when? Obviously after his death, because by that death the peace was wrought. We seek in vain for any such announcement made by Him in person after his resurrection. But we find a key to the expression in John xiv. 18: see also ver. 28. And this coming was,—by his Spirit poured out on the Church. There is an expression of St. Paul’s, singularly parallel with this, and of itself strongly corroborative of the genuineness of our Epistle; in Acts xxvi. 23: “*That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.*” This coming therefore is by His Spirit [see on ver. 18], and ministers, and ordinances in the Church) **peace to you who were far off, and peace to those** (not ‘*to us*,’ for fear of still upholding the distinction where he wishes to merge it altogether) **that were nigh** (this **peace** is plainly then not mere mutual reconciliation, but that far greater peace which was effected by Christ’s death, peace with God, which necessitated the union of the far off and the near in one body in Him. This is shewn especially by the repetition of the word **peace**. See Isa. lvii. 19.—Then follows the empowering reason, why he should preach *peace* to us both: and it is this ver. 18 especially which cannot be satisfied on the ordinary hypothesis of mere reconciliation between Jew and Gentile being the subject in the former verses. Here clearly the union [not reconciliation, nor is enmity predicated of them] of Jew and Gentile is subordinated to the blessed fact of an access TO GOD having been provided for both through Christ by the Spirit),

18.] For through Him we have our access (representing, both here and in Rom. v. 2, and ch. iii. 12, *present liberty of approach*) **both of us in** (united in, 1 Cor. xii. 13) **one Spirit** (not ‘*one frame of mind*’: the whole structure of the sentence, as compared with any similar one, such as 2 Cor. xiii. 18, will shew what spirit is meant, viz. the Holy Spirit of God, already alluded to in ver. 17: see above. As a parallel, compare 1 Cor. xii. 13) **to the Father**.

19.] So then ye no longer are strangers and sojourners (‘sojourners,’ as dwelling among the Jews, but not numbered with them), **but are fellow-citizens with the saints** (*comrades, co-citizens*, of the saints. **the saints** are not *angels*, not *Jews*, nor *Christians then alive* merely, but the saints of God in the widest sense,—all members of the mystical body of Christ,—the commonwealth of the spiritual Israel), **and of the household** (i. e. ‘members of God’s family,’ in the usual sense of the word) **of God; having been built up** (literally, **built above**: we cannot express this in one word: we have the substantive ‘super-structure,’ but no verb corresponding. There is a transition from one image, a political and social, to another, a material) **upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets** (how is this genitive to be understood? Is it a genitive of apposition, so that the

Apostles and Prophets themselves *are* the foundation? This has been supposed by numerous Commentators, from Chrysostom to De Wette. But, not to mention the very many other objections which have been well and often urged against this view, this one is to my mind decisive,—that it entirely destroys the imagery of the passage. The temple, into which these Gentiles were built, is the mystical body of the Son, in which the Father dwells by the Spirit, ver. 22. The Apostles and Prophets [see below], yea, Jesus Christ Himself, as the great inclusive Head Corner Stone (see again below), are also built into this temple. [That He includes likewise the *foundation*, and IS the foundation, is true, and must be remembered, but is not prominent here.] Clearly then the Apostles and Prophets cannot *be* the foundation, being here spoken of as parts of the upper building, together with these Gentiles, and with Jesus Christ Himself. But again, does the genitive mean, the foundation which the Apostles and Prophets *have laid*? So also very many Commentators. As clearly,—not thus. To introduce them here as *agents*, is as inconsistent as the other. No agents are here spoken of, but merely the fact of the great building in its several parts being built up together. The only remaining interpretation then is, to regard the genitive as simply possessive: ‘*the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*,’—‘*the Apostles’ and Prophets’ foundation*’—that upon which they as well as your-selves are built. This explanation, which I find ascribed to Bucer only, seems to me beyond question the right one. See more below.—But (2) *who are the prophets?* They have commonly been taken, without enquiry, as the *Old Test. prophets*. And certainly, the sense, with some little straining, would admit of this view. They may be said to be built upon Christ, as belonging to that widest acceptation of His mystical body, in which it includes all the saints, Old as well as New Test. But besides the objections arising from the form of the sentence, which the English reader cannot appreciate, there is this weighty one: the usage of the expression **apostles and prophets** in ch. iii. 5. There unquestionably the prophets are New Test. **prophets**; and again in ch. iv. 11. And it is difficult to conceive that the Apostle should have used the two words conjoined here, in a different sense. Even stronger is the consideration arising from the whole sense of the passage. All here is strictly Christian,—post-Judaic,—consequent on Christ’s death, and triumph, and His coming preaching peace by the Spirit to the united family of man. So that we must decide for these prophets being *New Test. prophets*: those who ranked next to the Apostles in the government of the church: see Acts xi. 27, note. They were not in every case distinct from the Apostles: the apostleship probably always including the gift of *prophecy*: so that all the Apostles themselves might likewise have been *prophets*), **Christ Jesus Himself** (the **Himself** exalts the dignity of the temple, in that not only it has among its stones Apostles and prophets, but the Lord **Himself** is built into it) **being the Head corner stone** (see, besides reff., Jer. li. 26; Acts iv. 11. The reference here is clearly to that Headstone of the Corner, which is not only the most conspicuous but the most important in the building: “which, being placed in the corner, joins and rules the two walls of the building.” Builders set up such a stone, or build such a pillar of brick, before getting up their walls, to rule and square them by. I must again repeat, that the fact of Jesus Christ being Himself the *foundation*, however it underlies the whole, is not to be brought in as interfering with this portion of the figure);

21.] in whom (Christ keeps the whole together: and not only so, but He is in reality the inclusive Head of the building: it all *consists*, is upheld, is squared and ruled by its unity to and in Him) **all the building being framed exactly together is growing** (there seems no reason why the proper sense of the present should not be retained. Both participle and verb imply that the fitting together and the growing are still going on: and the only way which we in English have to mark this so as to avoid the chance of mistake, is by the auxiliary verb substantive, and the participle. The bare present, ‘*groweth*,’ is in danger of being mistaken for the abstract quality, and the temporal development is thus lost sight of: whereas the other, in giving prominence to that temporal development, also necessarily implies the ‘normal, perpetual, unconditioned nature of the organic increase’) **unto an holy temple in the Lord** (i. e. according to apostolic usage, and the sense of the whole passage, ‘*in Christ*.’ These “*in whom*,”—“*in the Lord*,” “*in whom*,”—like the frequent repetitions of the name *Christ* in vv. 12, 13, are used by the Apostle to lay all stress on the fact that Christ is the inclusive Head of all the building, the element in which it has its being and its growth. The increase spoken of will issue in its being a holy temple in Christ):

22.) in whom (viz. **in the Lord**)—it is characteristic [see above] of this part of the epistle to string together these relative expressions, all referring to the same) **ye also are being built in together** (with one another, or with those before mentioned) **for an habitation of God** (the only true temple of God, in which He dwells, being the Body of Christ, in all the glorious acceptation of that term) **in the Spirit** (it is even now, in the state of imperfection, by the Spirit, dwelling in the hearts of believers, that God has His habitation in the Church: and then, when the growth and increase of that Church shall be completed, it will he still in and by the Holy Spirit fully penetrating and possessing the whole glorified Church, that the Father will dwell in it for ever.

Thus we have the true temple of the Father, built in the Son, inhabited in the Spirit: the offices of the Three blessed Persons being distinctly pointed out: God, THE FATHER, in all His fulness, dwells in, fills the Church: that Church is constituted an holy Temple to Him in THE SON,—is inhabited by Him in the ever present indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT. The attempt to soften away **in the Spirit** into “*spiritually*” is against the whole sense of the passage, in which not the present spiritual state of believers, but their ultimate glorious completion is spoken of).

Ephesians: Chapter 3

III. 1–21.] AIM AND END OF THE CHURCH IN THE Spirit. And herein, *the revelation to it of the mystery of Christ*,

through those ministers who wrought in the Spirit: primarily, as regarded the Ephesians, through himself. Thus first, OF HIS OFFICE AS APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES (1–13): secondly, under a form of a prayer for them, THE AIM AND END OF THAT OFFICE AS RESPECTED THE CHURCH: its becoming strong in the power of the Spirit (14–19). Then (20, 21) doxology, concluding this first division of the Epistle.

1–13.] (See above.) **On this account** (in order to explain this, something must be said on the construction. In my Greek Test. I have discussed the various ways of connecting this ver. 1, and of terminating the parenthesis in the sense which begins with ver. 2: and have come to the conclusion that we must consider ver. 14 as taking up the sense, with its repetition of **For this cause**, and the weighty prayer which it introduces, and which forms a worthy justification for so long and solemn a parenthesis. **For this cause** then will mean, ‘seeing ye are so built in,’—stand in such a relation to God’s purposes in the Church) **I Paul** (he mentions himself here, as introducing to them the agent in the Spirit’s work who was nearest to themselves, and setting forth that work as the carrying on of his enlightenment on their behalf, and the subject of his earnest prayer for them: see argument to this chapter above), **the prisoner** (but now without any prominence, or the very slightest; the definite article is rather generic, or demonstrative, than emphatic) **of Christ [Jesus] in behalf of you Gentiles** (see ver. 13, where this is repeated. The matter of fact was so:—his preaching to Gentiles aroused the jealousy of the Jews, and led to his imprisonment. But he rather thinks of it as a result of his great office, and himself as a sacrifice for those whom it was his intent to benefit), **if, that is (or if indeed)**: i.e., ‘assuming that.’ The Ephesians *had heard* all this, and St. Paul was now delicately reminding them of it), **ye heard of** (when I was among you, not “*have heard*,” as A.V., making it appear as if it were some intelligence of his proceedings while absent from them: his whole course at Ephesus, his converse [Acts xx. 18–21], and his preaching, were just the imparting to them this knowledge) **the economy (or, dispensation:** see note on ch. i. 10. It is not the Apostolic office,—but the dispensation in which he was a *steward*, of that which follows) **of the grace of God which was given me** (the *grace which was given* was the material with respect to which the dispensation was to be exercised: so that the genitive is objective, as in ch. i. 10) **to you-ward** (to be dispensed in the direction of, to, you):

3.] **that** (explanatory of the fact implied in their hearing of this: as we say, ‘how that’) **by revelation** (see reff.; the stress is on these words, from their position) **was made known to me the mystery** (viz. of the *admission of the Gentiles* [ver. 6] to be fellow-heirs, &c. See ch. i. 9, directly referred to below); **even as I before wrote** (not, ‘*have before written*.’ ‘Before wrote,’ viz. in ch. i. 9 ff.) **briefly, 4.] whereby** (viz. by that which I wrote: not the fact of my having written *briefly*; as some) **ye can, while reading, perceive my un-derstanding in the mystery of Christ** (by comparing Col. i. 27, it will clearly appear that this genitive is one of apposition:—the mystery IS Christ in all His fulness; not of the object, ‘*relating to Christ*’); 5.] **which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men** (this last is not only a way of expressing *mankind*, but gives also the cause why men were ignorant, the natural man not receiving the things of the Spirit. Notice as contrasted, “**his holy Apostles and Prophets,**” below), **as** (“it was indeed made known in a manner,” says Theodoret, “to the prophets of old, but not as now: for they knew not the things themselves, but wrote beforehand the matters concerning those things”) **it hath been now revealed** (more properly,—‘as in this present age it was revealed’) **unto His holy** (see remarks above. Olshausen says, “It is certainly peculiar, that Paul here calls the Apostles, and consequently himself among them, ‘holy Apostles.’ It is going too far when De Wette finds in this a sign of an unapostolic origin of the Epistle: but still the expression remains an unusual one. I account for it to myself thus,—that Paul here conceives of the Apostles and Prophets as a corporation (cf. ch. iv. 11), and as such, in their official character, he gives them the predicate *holy*, as he names believers, conceived as a whole, ‘*holy*’ or ‘*sanctified*’ but never an individual”) **Apostles and Prophets** (as in ch. ii. 20, the New Test. Prophets—see note there) **in** (as the conditional element; in and by) **the Spirit** (Chrysostom remarks, “Notice, as an example, that Peter would never have gone to the Gentiles, had he not heard the truth from the Spirit”); **that** (‘namely, that’—giving the purport of the mystery) **the Gentiles are** (not, as A.V., ‘should be:’ a *mystery* is not a secret design, but a secret fact) **fellow-heirs** (with the Jews) **and fellow-members** (of the same body) **and fellow-partakers of the promise** (in the widest sense; the *promise of salvation*:—the complex, including all other promises, even that chief promise of the Father, the promise of the Spirit itself) **in** (not to be referred to *the promise*, but to the three foregoing appellatives,—**in Christ Jesus**, as the conditional element in which their participation consisted) **Christ Jesus through the Gospel** (He Himself was the *objective ground* of their incorporation; the **Gospel**, the joyful tidings of Him, the *subjective medium* by which they apprehended it): **of which** (Gospel) **I became** (a reference to the event by which he was made so) **a minister** (see the parallel, Col. i. 23), **according to** (in consequence of and in analogy with) **the gift of the grace** (genitive of apposition, as clearly appears from the definition of the grace given in the next verse: the grace *was the gift*) **of God, which was given unto me according to the working [in me] of His power** (be-cause, and in so far as, His Almighty power wrought in me, was this gift of the *grace*, the *apostleship*, the office of preaching among the Gentiles, &c., bestowed upon me).

8.] Instead of going straight onward, he calls to mind his own (not past, but present and inherent, see 1 Tim. i. 15) unworthiness of the high office, and resumes the context with an emphatic declaration of it. **Unto me, who am less than the least** (thus admirably rendered by A.V.: the adjective is a double superlative in the original: literally, the *leastes*) **of all saints** (‘he does not say, “*of the Apostles*,”’ Chrysostom: and herein, this has been regarded as an expression of far greater depth of humility than that in 1 Cor. xv. 8: but each belongs to the subject in hand—each places him far below all others with whom he compared himself), **was given this grace, (viz.) to bring to the Gentiles** (emphatic, and pointing out *his* distinguishing office) **the glad tidings of the unsearchable** “‘in their nature, extent, and applica-tion”) **riches of Christ** (i. e. the fulness of

wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—all centred and summed up in Him);

9.] and to enlighten (not merely externally to teach, referred to *his work*,—but internally to enlighten the hearers, referred to *their apprehension*: as when the Apostles gave witness *with great power* of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Acts iv. 33. On St. Paul's mission to enlighten, see especially Acts xxvi. 18) **all men** (no emphasis on all men) **what is** (i. e. as to what is, &c.) **the economy** (see on ch. i, 10) **of the mystery** (“the dispensation [arrangement, regulation] of the mystery [the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ, ver. 6] was now to be humbly traced and acknowledged in the fact of its having secretly existed in the primal counsels of God, and now having been revealed to the heavenly powers by means of the Church.” Ellicott), **which hath been hidden from** (the beginning of) **the ages** (this expression gives the temporal limit from which the concealment dated: so in Rom. xvi. 25. The decree itself originated “*before the foundation of the world*,” ch. i. 4, “*before the ages*,” 1 Cor. ii. 7: the “*ages*” being the spaces or reaches of time necessary for the successive acts of created beings, either physical or spiritual) **in** (hidden within,—humanly speaking, ‘in the bosom or the mind of’) **God, who created all things** (‘for the general creation is the foundation of all the rest of the economy of God’s dealings.’ The stress is on **all things**: this concealment was nothing to be wondered at,—for God of His own will and power created ALL THINGS, a fact which involves His perfect right to adjust all things as He will. The expression is used in the widest sense, embracing physical and spiritual alike):

10.] to the intent that (general purpose of the whole: more properly to be referred perhaps to *was this grace given*, than to any other one word in the last two verses. For this sublime cause the humble Paul was raised up,—to bring about,—he, the least worthy of the saints,—that to the heavenly powers themselves should be made known, by means of those whom he was empowered to enlighten, &c.) **there might be made known** (emphatic, as opposed to “*hidden*,” above—‘no longer hidden, but.’) **now** (has the secondary emphasis: opposed to “*from the beginning of the ages*”) **to the governments and to the powers** (see ch. i. 21 and note) **in the heavenly places** (see ch. i. 3 note. **The governments** and the **powers** are those of the holy angels in heaven: not, as has been vainly imagined *Jewish rulers*, *Christian rulers*, or *good and bad angels*. These are excluded by the general tenor of the passage, as Ellicott remarks, who adds well: “Evil angels more naturally recognize the *power*, good angels the *wisdom of God*”) **by means of the Church** (“when we learnt it, then they also learnt it by means of us,” Chrysostom. See also Luke xv. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12. “That the holy angels are capable of a specific increase of knowledge, and of a deepening insight into God’s wisdom, seems from this passage clear and incontrovertible.” Ellicott. “See what honour is put upon men, in that God willed that these His secret counsels should be made known to angels by them, chiefly by the Apostles. For this cause the Angels henceforth refuse worship from Apostles, as their superiors in the ministry, Rev. xix. 10, and with reason.” Grotius. But, as Stier well notices, it is not by the Apostles directly, nor by human preaching, that the Angels are instructed in God’s wisdom, but by the Church;—by the fact of the great spiritual body, constituted in Christ, which they con-template, and which is to them the *theatre of the glory of God*) **the manifold wisdom of God** (*how* is the wisdom of God **manifold**? It is all *one* in sublime unity of truth and purpose: but cannot be apprehended by finite minds in this its unity, and therefore is by Him variously portioned out to each finite race and finite capacity of individuals—so that the Church is a mirror of God’s wisdom,—chromatic, so to speak, with the rainbow colours of that light which in itself is one and undivided. Perhaps there was in the Apostle’s mind, when he chose this word, an allusion to the “*wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold*,” the adorn-ment of the ransomed church, in Ps. Ixviii. 13. See Heb. i. 1; 1 Pet. iv. 10),

11.] according to (depends on **may be made known**—this imparting of the knowledge of God’s manifold wisdom was in accordance with, &c.) **the purpose of (the) ages** (so literally: and the genitive in the original is apparently one of time, as when we say, ‘it has been an opinion of years.’ If so, the sense is best given in English by ‘*eternal*,’ as in A.V. and our text), **which (purpose) He made** (constituted, ordained, **purposed**. Some would render, **wrought**: and apply it to the *carrying out, executing, in its historical realization*) **in Jesus our Lord the Christ** (or as in text, ‘*in the Christ*, [even] *Jesus our Lord*.’ The former name is official, the latter personal. It was in his Christ that He made, the purpose: and that Christ is Jesus our Lord. The words bind together God’s eternal purpose and our present state of access to Him by redemption in Christ, and so close the train of thought of the last eleven verses, by bringing us again home to the sense of our own blessedness in Christ):

12.] in whom (for the connexion, see note on last verse: in whom, as their element and condition) **we have our boldness** (not ‘*freedom of speech*’ merely, nor boldness *in prayer*: the word is used in a far wider sense than these: viz. that of the *state of mind* which gives liberty of speech, cheerful boldness) and **[our] access** (see note on ch. ii. 18: here the intransitive sense is even more necessary, from the union with **boldness**. We may confidently say, that so important an objective truth as our *introduction to God by Christ* would never have been thus coupled to a mere subjective quality in ourselves. Both must be subjective if one is: the second less purely so than the first—but both referring to our own feelings and privileges) **in confidence** (“that is, coupled with a good courage,” Chrysostom. Meyer remarks what a noble example St. Paul himself has given of this *confidence* in Rom. viii. 38 f.) **through the faith** (“*in Christ* points to the objective ground of the possession, **through the faith**, the subjective medium by which, and **in confidence** the subjective state in which, it is apprehended.” Ellicott) **of (objective: = I: of which He is the object) Him.**

13.] Wherefore (‘seeing which things,’ viz. the glorious things spoken of vv. 1–12: and especially his own personal part in them;—since I am the appointed minister of so great a matter) **I intreat you not to be dispirited in** (of the element or sphere,

in which the faint-heartedness would be shewn: ‘*in the midst of*.’ The phrase is best re-presented in an English version by **not to faint at) my tribulations for you, seeing that they are your glory** (“how, their glory? because God so loved them as to give His Son, and to afflict His servants, on their behalf. For it was that they might enjoy such blessings, that Paul was bound with chains.” Chrysostom. Bengel compares 1 Cor. iv. 10).

14-19.] His prayer for them, setting forth the aim and end of the ministerial office as respected the Church, viz. its becoming strong in the power of the Spirit.

14.] For this cause (resumes the *same words* in ver. 1 [see note there]:—viz. ‘because ye are so built in, have such a standing in God’s Church’) **I bend my knees** (in prayer: see reff.; and compare 1 Kings xix. 18) **towards** (directing my prayer to Him) **the Father,**

15.] from whom (as the source of the *name*. In Greek, Father is “*pater*,” Family is “*patria*,” derived from *pater*. This must be lost to the English reader. See more below) **every family** (not ‘*the whole family*’ as A.Y., which is an ungrammatical rendering. The sense, see below) **in the heavens and on earth is named** (it is difficult to convey in another language any trace of the deep connexion of *pater* and *patria* here expressed. Had the sentence been ‘*the Creator, after whom every creature* in heaven and earth is named,’ all would be plain to the English reader. But we must not thus render; for it is not in virtue of God’s creative power that the Apostle here prays to Him, but in virtue of His adoptive love in Christ. It is best therefore to keep the simple sense of the words, and leave it to explanation to convey the idea, **Patria** is the *family* (or in a wider sense, as the Romans named it, the *gens*), named so from its all having one **pater**. It is not easy to say, to what the reference is, or why the idea is here introduced. The Apostle seems, regarding God as the Father of us His adopted children in Christ, to go forth into the fact, that He, in this His relation to us, is in reality the great original and prototype of the paternal relation, wherever found. And this he does, by observing that every **patria, compaternity**, body of persons, having a common father, is thus named [in Greek], *from that father*,—and so every earthly [and heavenly] family reflects in its name [and constitution] the being and soneship of the great Father Himself. But then, what are *families in heaven*? Some have treated the idea of paternity *there* as absurd: but is it not necessarily involved in *any* explanation of this passage? He Himself is the Father of spirits, Heb. xii, 9, the Father of lights, James i. 17:—may there not be fathers in the heavenly Israel; as in the earthly? May not the holy Angels be bound up in spiritual *families*, though they marry not nor are given in marriage?),

16.] that (the purpose and purport of the prayer are blended) **He may give you, according to the riches of his glory** (specifies the *gift*, not what follows: give you, in full proportion to the abundance of His own glory—His own infinite perfections), **to be strengthened with might** (“*with might*” has been taken in several ways: 1) adverbially, ‘*mightily*:’ 2) of the *form or shape* in which the *strengthening* was to take place: 3) the instrumental sense seems the best: ‘*with [His] might*, imparted to you) **by His Spirit** (as the instiller and imparter of that might) **towards** (not merely ‘*in*,’ but ‘*to and into*,’ as Ellicott: import-ing “the direction and destination of the prayed for gift of infused strength:” towards the building up of that hidden man of the heart, which is a man’s self transformed into the likeness of Christ: “the inner man which contains Christ,” as a Greek writer admirably says) **the inner man** (the spiritual man [see above]—the noblest portion of our being, kept, in the natural man, under subjection to the flesh, but in the spiritual, renewed by the Spirit of God); **that** (continuation from the being *strengthened*,—and that as its result) **Christ may dwell** (emphatic; abide, take up His lasting abode: “not looked on afar by faith, but received with the embrace of our souls, that He may dwell in you.” Calvin) **by your faith** (apprehending Him, and opening the door to Him,—see John xiv. 23; Rev. iii, 20,—and keeping Him there) **in your hearts** (for there, as Calvin strikingly says, is Christ’s proper place, not bandied about on the tongue, nor flitting through the brain),—**ye having been rooted and grounded** (both images, that of a tree, and that of a building, are supposed to have been before the Apostle’s mind. But the verb **to root** was so constantly used in a figurative sense as hardly perhaps of necessity to suggest its primary image. The participles are what is called a pendent nominative, agreeing with **you** understood) **in love** (love generally. As Ellicott well says, ‘This [love] was to be their basis and foundation, on which alone they were to be fully enabled to realize all the majestic proportions of Christ’s surpassing love to man”),—**that ye may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints** (all the people of God, in whom is fulfilled that which is here prayed for) **what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth** (all kinds of fanciful explanations have been given of these words. See specimens in my Greek Test. It is most probable, that the question, *of what*, after these nouns, is left indefinite—that you may be fully able to comprehend every dimension—i. e., of all that God has revealed or done in and for us [“*the mystery of God*,” Col. ii. 2]—though this is not a genitive *to be supplied*, but lying in the background entirely), and (this **and** introduces not a parallel, but a subordinate clause. The knowledge here spoken of is not *identical with the comprehension* above, but forms one portion of it, and by its surpassing excellence serves to exalt still more that great whole to which it belongs) **to know the knowledge-passing** (to know that which *passeth knowledge* is a paradox: “*knowledge*” being taken in the sense of ‘*mere*,’ ‘*bare*’ *knowledge*, and “*to know*” in the pregnant sense of that knowledge which is rooted and grounded in love, Phil. i. 9) **Love of Christ** (subjective genitive,—*Christ’s love to us*—see Rom. v. 5 note, and viii. 35–39—not ‘*our love to Christ*’), **that ye may be filled even to all the fulness of God** (“*all the fulness of the Godhead*” abides in Christ, Col. ii. 9. Christ then abiding in your hearts, ye, being raised up to the comprehension of the vastness of God’s mercy in Him and of His Love, will be filled, even as God is full—each in your degree, but all to your utmost capacity, with divine wisdom and might and love).

20, 21.] DOXOLOGY, ARISING FROM THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE FAITHFULNESS AND POWER OF GOD WITH REGARD TO HIS CHURCH.

20.] But unto Him (brings out a slight contrast to what has just preceded—viz. *ourselves*, and our need of strength and our growth in knowledge, and fulness) **who is able to do beyond all things, far beyond the things which we ask or think** (“our thoughts reach wider than our *prayers*: there is a climax in the words.” Bengel), **according to the power which is working** (viz. the might of the indwelling Spirit; see Rom. viii. 26) **in us**,

21.] to Him (solemn and emphatic repetition of the personal pronoun) **be the glory** (the whole glory accruing from all His dealings which have been spoken of: His own resulting glory) **in the Church** (as its theatre before men, in which that glory must be recognized and rendered) **and in Christ Jesus** (as its inner verity, and essential element in which it abides, The two clauses are not altogether independent: it is ‘in the Church, and [thus] in Christ Jesus’) **to all the generations of the age of the ages** (so literally. Probably the account of the meaning is, that the *age of ages* [eternity] is conceived as containing ages, just as our ‘age’ contains years: and then those ages are thought of as made up, like ours, of generations. Like the similar expression, *ages of ages*, it is used, by a transfer of what we know in time, to express, imperfectly, and indeed improperly, the idea of Eternity).

Ephesians: Chapter 4

IV. 1–VI. 20.] SECOND (hortatory) PORTION OF THE EPISTLE: and herein [A] (IV. 1–16) *ground of the Christian's duties as a member of the Church, viz. the unity of the mystical Body of Christ* (vv. 1–6) *in the manifoldness of grace given to each* (7–13), *that we may come to perfection in Him* (14–16).

1.] I beseech you therefore (seeing that this is your calling: an inference from all the former part of the Epistle, as in Rom. xii. 1; but here perhaps also a resumption of “*For this cause*” of ch. iii. 1, 14, and we are thus carried back to the contents of ch. i. ii.), **I the prisoner in the Lord** (who am, as regards, and for the sake of the cause of, the Lord, a prisoner; so that my captivity is *in the Lord*, as its element and sphere, and therefore to be regarded as an additional inducement to comply with my exhortation. “For whatever is Christ’s, even though disgraceful in the eyes of the world, ought to be regarded by you with the utmost respect.” Calvin. Theodoret remarks, that he is prouder of his chains in Christ, than a monarch of his diadem), **to walk worthily of the calling** (see ch. i. 18, and note Rom. viii, 28, 30) **wherewith ye were called**,

2.] with all (see on ch. i. 8) **lowliness and meekness** (before God, accepting His dealings in humility, and before men, as God’s instruments, 2 Sam. xvi. 11: resting therefore on *lowliness* as its foundation), **with longsuffering** (*longsuffering* consists in not taking swift vengeance, but leaving to an offender a place for repentance. From this, its proper meaning, it is easily further generalized to forbearance under all circumstances of provocation), **forbearing** (see Rom. ii. 4) **one another in love**;

3.] earnestly striving to maintain the unity of the Spirit (that unity, in which God’s Holy Spirit in the Church *unites men differing in race and habits*, as Chrysostom.—The genitive is *in fact* a possessive—*the Spirit’s unity*, that unity which the Spirit brings about) **in** (united together by: *within*) **the bond of peace** (the bond *is* peace, not *that which brings about peace*, namely, *love*, as Bengel says. Col. iii. 14, which is quoted to support this meaning, is not applicable, because love there is *expressly named*, whereas here it certainly would not occur to any reader, especially after in love has just occurred. The genitive of apposition is the simplest—peace binds together the Church as a condition and symbol of that inner unity which is only wrought by the indwelling Spirit of God).

4.] (There is) (these words are not expressed in the original: but it is better to supply thus, than ‘*ye are*,’ which will not apply to the following parallel clauses. The assertion of the unity of the Church, and of our Lord in all His operations and ordinances, springs immediately out of the last exhortation, as following it up to its great primal ground in the verities of God) **one Body** (“what is this *one body*? the faithful all over the world, past, present, and to come.” Chrysostom), **and one Spirit** (viz. the Holy Spirit, who dwells in, and vivifies, and rules that one body: see ch. ii. 18, 22; 1 Cor. xii. 13 al.), **as also ye were called in** (elemental—the condition and sphere in which they were called to live and move) **one hope of** (belonging to: you were called *in it* as the element, see above: it is then an accident of the *calling*. Or perhaps it may be the genitive of the *efficient cause*, ‘which the calling works’) **your calling**:

5.] one Lord (as the Head of the Church: in this verse he grounds the co-existence of the “*one body*

and one Spirit”) in the three great facts on which it rests—the first objective,—**one Lord**—the second subjective,—**one faith**—the third compounded of the two,—**one baptism**), **one faith** (in that one Lord: the subjective medium by which that one Lord is apprehended and appropriated: not faith *which* we believed, but, faith *by which* we believe: but it is necessarily understood, that this subjective faith has for its object the One Lord just mentioned), **one baptism** (the objective seal of the

subjective faith, by which, as a badge, the members of Christ are outwardly and visibly stamped with His name. The other sacrament, being a matured act of subsequent participation, a function of the incorporate, not a seal of incorporation [a symbol of *union*, not of *unity*: so Ellicott], is not here adduced. In 1 Cor. x. 17, where an act was in question which was a clear breach of union, it forms the rallying-point).

6.] **one God** (the unity is here consummated in its central Object: “this is the chief thing, because from this all the rest flow.” Calvin. But we must not miss the distinct witness to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in these verses:—going upwards, we have 1st, the One Spirit dwelling in the one body:—2nd, the One Lord appropriated by faith and professed in baptism:—3rd, One God and Father supreme, in whom all find their end and object) **and Father of all** (masculine,—*all men*; ‘of all within the Church,’ for so is clearly the *primary* meaning, where he is speaking distinctly of the Church:—of all who have the *adoption*. But it can hardly be doubted, that there is a further reference—to the universal Fathership of all men—which indeed the Church only inherits in its fulness, others having fallen out of it by sin,—but which nevertheless is just as absolutely true), **who is over all** (men, primarily; and from the following,—men only, in this place. He is over all, in his *sovereignty as the FATHER*), **and through all** (men, in the co-extensiveness of Redemption by the Son with the whole nature of man: see on ver. 10 below, and ch. ii. 20, 21), **and in all** (men: by the indwelling of the Spirit, see ch. ii. 22. So that I cannot but recognize, in these three carefully chosen expressions, a distinct allusion again to the Three Persons of the blessed Trinity. All these are the work of the Father:—it is He who in direct sovereignty is over all—He who is glorified in the filling of all things by the Son:—He who is revealed by the witness of the indwelling Spirit).

7.] **But** (the contrast is between **in all** and **to each one**—the general, and the particular. And the connexion is—as a motive to keep the unity of the Spirit—‘none is overlooked:—each has his part in the distribution of the gifts of the One Spirit, which part he is bound to use for the wellbeing of the whole’) **to each one of us was given** (by Christ, at the time of His exaltation—when He bestowed gifts on men) [**the grace** (which was then bestowed: *the unspeakable gift*,—or **grace**, absolutely,—was distributed to each, &c.) **according to the measure of** (subjective genitive: the amount of: compare Rom. xii. 3) **the gift of Christ** (‘*Christ’s gift*;’—the gift bestowed by Christ, 2 Cor. ix. 1 not, ‘the gift which Christ received,’—for He is the subject and centre here—so Calvin, “He makes Christ the Author of the gift, because, as he made a beginning from the Father, so he desires to sum up us and all that is ours in Him”).

8.] **Wherfore** (i. e., since the gift was bestowed by Christ on different men according to measure) **He** (viz. God, whose word the Scriptures are) **saith** (viz. in Ps. Ixviii. 18, see below. With the question as to the occasion and intent of that Psalm, we are not here concerned. It is a song of triumph, as ver. 1 [compare Numb. x. 33] shews, at some bringing up of the ark to the hill of Zion. It is *therefore* a Messianic Psalm. Every part of that ark, every stone of that hill, was full of spiritual meaning. Every note struck on the lyres of the sweet singers of Israel, is but part of a chord, deep and world-wide, sounding from the golden harps of redemption. The partial triumphs of David and Solomon only prefigured as in a prophetic mirror the universal and eternal triumph of the Incarnate Son of God. Those who do not understand this, have yet their first lesson in the Old Test. to learn. With this caution, let us approach the difficulties of the citation in detail), **When he ascended up on high** (viz. Christ, at His Ascension. The ascending, in the Psalm, is that of God, whose presence was symbolized by the ark, to Zion, The Apostle changes the words from the 2nd person to the 3rd; the *address* asserting a *fact*, which fact he cites), **he led captive a captivity** (i. e. ‘those who *suffer* captivity:’ a troop of captives: such is the constant usage of the abstract word *captivity* for the concrete in the Septuagint: and it is never put for ‘those who cause captivity,’ as some would interpret it. In the Psalm, these would be, the captives from the then war, whatever it was: in the interpretation, they were God’s enemies, Satan and his hosts), **he gave gifts unto mankind** (the original meaning of the Hebrew is obscure. The sense (see my Greek Test.) seems to be, ‘*Thou hast taken gifts among men*,’ hast, as a victor, surrounded by thy victorious host, brought gifts home, spoils of—and the result of such reception would be naturally stated as the distribution of them among such hosts, and the people,—as indeed ver. 12 of the Psalm has already stated. And so the Chaldee paraphrast understood the words, interpreting the passage of Moses: ‘thou hast given gifts to the sons of men’).

9.] Further explanation of this text. **But that He ascended, what is it** (does it imply) **except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth** (the argument seems to be this: the Ascension here spoken of was not a first exaltation, but a *return* to heaven of one who dwelt in heaven: compare John iii. 13, which is in fact the key to these verses. The *ascent* implied a previous *descent*. This is the leading thought. But it is doubted *how far* the words the **lower parts of the earth** carry that descent, whether to earth merely, so that “*of the earth*” is the genitive of *apposition*, “*the lower parts, which are the earth,*”—or to *Hades*, so that it is genitive of *possession*, “*the lower parts which belong to the earth.*” It cannot be said that the descent into hell would be irrelevant here,—or that our Lord ascended, not from Hades, but from the earth: for, the *fact of descent* being the primary thought, we have only to ask as above, *how far* that descent is carried in the Apostle’s mind. The greater the descent, the greater the ascent: and if the *captivity* consisted of Satan and his powers, the warfare in which they were taken captive would most naturally be contemplated in all its extent, as reaching to their habitation itself:—‘this ascent, what does it imply but a descent, and that even to the lower parts of the earth from which the spoils of victory were fetched?’ And this meaning seems to be upheld by the words, “*that he might fill all things*,” which follow, as well as by the contrast furnished by up above **all the heavens**.—This interpretation is upheld by most of the ancients, and some of the best of the moderns: that of the Incarnation merely, *descent on earth*, by most of the moderns: that of Christ’s *death* [and burial], by

Chrysostom and some others)?

10.] He that descended, He (and no other: “for it was not one that descended, and another that ascended,” Theodoret). **is also He that ascended** (in English idiom, we must express it as in the text; see again John iii. 18) **up above** (see on ch. i. 21) **all the heavens** (compare Heb. vii. 26, ‘*made higher than the heavens:*’ and iv. 14, ‘*that has passed through the heavens.*’) It is natural that one who, like St. Paul, had been brought up in the Jewish habits of thought, should still use their methods of speaking, according to which the heaven is expressed in the

plural, ‘*the heavens*’ And from such an usage “**all the heavens**” would naturally flow. See, on the idea of a threefold, or sevenfold division of the heavens, the note on 2 Cor. xii. 2. Ellicott quotes from Bishop Pearson,— ‘Whatsoever heaven is higher than all the rest which are called heavens, into that place did he ascend’), **that He might fill** (not ‘*fulfil*’) **all things** (the whole universe: see ch. i. 23, note: with His presence, His sovereignty, His working by the Spirit: not, with His glorified Body, as some have thought. “Christ is perfect God, and perfect and glorified man: as the former He is present every where, as the latter He can be present any where.” Ellicott).

11.] Resumption of the subject—the diversity of gifts, all bestowed by HIM, as a motive to unity.

And HE (emphatic; ‘it is He, that’) **gave** (*the gifts which He gave* to His Church are now enumerated. “The idea is, that the men who filled the office, no less than the office itself, were a divine gift.” Eadie) **some as apostles** (see 1 Cor. xii. 28, and note); **some as prophets** (see on 1 Cor. xii. 10: and ch. ii. 20; iii. 5, notes); **some as evangelists** (not in the narrower sense of the word, writers of gospels, but in the wider sense, of itinerant preachers, usually sent on a special mission. See note on Acts xxi. 8); **some as pastors and teachers** (from these latter not being distinguished from the pastors by the repetition of “*some as,*” it would seem that the two offices were held by the same persons. The figure in pastors, if to be pressed, would imply that they were entrusted with some special flock, which they tended, “*residing in and busied about some one spot,*” as Chrysostom says; and then the “*teaching*” would necessarily form a chief part of their work. If this view be correct, this last class includes all the stationary officers of particular Churches);

12.] in order to (ultimate aim of these offices, see below) **the perfecting of the saints, for** (immediate object, see below) **(the) work of (the) ministry** (of *ministry* in God’s Church. The articles give completeness in English, but do not affect the sense), **for building up of the body of Christ:**

13.] until (marks the duration of the offices of the ministry) **we** (being thus *perfected* by virtue of the *work of the ministry* and the *building up*) **arrive all of us** (Christians, Jews as well as Gentiles: first person, because he himself was among the number) **at the unity of the faith** (“how so? have not all Christians the same faith?.... No doubt they have, as regards its substance, but not as regards clearness and purity; because the object of faith may be diversely *known*, and knowledge has always such a powerful influence on faith. Therefore he adds to this unity of faith, *and of the perfect knowledge, &c.:* true and full unity of faith is then found, when all thoroughly know Christ, the object of faith, alike, and that in His highest dignity as the Son of God.” De Wette) **and of the perfect knowledge** (further result of’ the faith, ch. iii. 17, 19; 2 Pet. i. 5) **of the Son of God** (this objective genitive belongs to both substantives, “*the faith*” and “*the perfect knowledge*”), **at the full-grown man** (an awkwardness is given by the coupling of an abstract [*unto the unity*] to a concrete [*unto a full-grown man*]. The singular not only denotes unity, but refers to the summation of us all in the one perfect Man Christ Jesus. The maturity of the *full-grown man* is contrasted with the *infancy* which follows), **to the measure of the stature** (or, ‘*age?*’ the Greek word may mean either. The similitude in the words “*full-grown man*” seems to be derived from *age*: that in ver. 16, from *stature*. The balance here is inclined in favour of *stature*, by the prevalence of the image of growth and extension, which can hardly be denied as pervading the passage) **of the fulness of Christ** (see note on ch. i. 23; 19. **Of Christ** is a genitive subjective:—the fulness which Christ has: ‘*Christ’s fulness*’ Compare Gal. iv, 19): **that** (apparently *another*, and subordinate, *aim* of the bestowal of gifts on the church is here adduced. For we cannot *go forward* from the finished growth of ver. 13, and say that *its* object is *that we be no longer children*, but must go back again to the growth itself and its purpose; that pur-pose being mainly the terminal one of ver. 13, and subordinately the intermediate one of our ver. 14) **we be no more** (having been so once) **children tossed** (like waves: see James i. 6) **and borne about by every wind of teaching** (the Commentators quote from Plutarch, that “a man is not to let himself be carried obliquely by every argument as by a wind”), **in** (elemental: “the evil atmosphere, as it were, in which the varying currents of doctrine exist: exert their force.” Ellicott) **the sleight** (literally, *dice-playing*. The word was naturally and constantly used to signify ‘entrapping by deceit’) **of men** (as contrasted with “*of Christ*,” ver. 13), in **craftiness furthering** (tending or working towards) **the system** (see ch. vi. 11, note, and Chrysostom’s explanation) **of error** (not, *deceit*, though in fact the sense is so. The genitive of *error* is subjective—the system is that which error adopts);

15.] but (opposition to the *whole* last verse; introducing as it does, not only *the being followers of truth*, but *the growing up* below) **being followers of truth** (the word here used cannot mean merely, as A.V., *to speak the truth*, as the whole matter dealt with is more general; the *particular* follows, ver. 25. The verb has the widest meaning of *being true*—and [as Stier remarks] not without a certain sense of effort, ‘*following after the truth.*’ The Vulgate gives it well, but perhaps with too exclusively practical a bearing, “*doing truth:*” the Five Clergymen, ‘*holding the truth*,’ which is objectionable as resolving the

sense into mere orthodoxy: the old English versions, ‘folowe the truth,’ which by “*the truth*,” still gives too much the objective sense. It is almost impossible to express it satisfactorily in English. I have somewhat modified this last rendering, restoring the general sense of ‘truth.’ The objection to ‘followers of truth’ is that it may be mistaken for ‘searchers after truth’—but I can find no expression which does not lie open to equal objection) **in love** (this is added, as the element in which the Christian *following of truth* must take place: it is not and cannot be a *following of truth* at all hazards: but must be conditioned by love: a true-seeking and true-being with loving caution and kind allowance—not breaking up, but cementing, brotherly love by walking in truth) **may grow up into** (increase towards the measure of the stature of;—to the perfect man in Him. Again an allusion to the incorporation of all the Church in Christ: see below) **Him in all things** (in every department of our growth, ‘in all things wherein we grow’), **which is the Head** (see ch. i, 22), **namely, Christ:**

16.] from whom (see Col. ii. 19, an almost exact parallel, from which it is clear that ‘*from whom*’ belongs to ‘*maketh the growth*,’ below—He being the source of all growth) **all the body** (see on Col.), (**which is**) **being closely framed together** (note the present participle—the framing is not complete, but still proceeding) **and compacted by means of every joint** (to be joined, not with the participles preceding, but [see below] with *maketh the growth, &c.*) **of the supply** (the joints are the points of union where the supply passes to the different members, and by means of which the body derives the supply by which it grows. The genitive, as in “*body of sin*,” “*vessels of the ministry*,” is a kind of *definitive* genitive, by which the predominant use, purpose, or destination of the joint is specified and characterized.” Ellicott),—**according to the working in the measure of each individual part**,—carries on (the original denotes that the *growth* is not carried on *from without*, but by functional energy within the body itself) **the growth of the body (of the body** is repeated, rather than “*of itself*” used, perhaps for solemnity, perhaps [which is more likely] to call back the attention to the subject word, *the body*, after so long a description of its means and measure of growth) **for the building up of itself in love** (Love is the element in which the edification, as well as that in which the growth, takes place).

[B] (See on ver. 1.) IV. 17–VI. 9.] *Exhortations to a course of walking and conversation, derived from the ground just laid down, and herein (iv. 17–v. 21) general duties of Christians as united to Christ their Head.*

17.] This (which follows) **then** (resumptive of ver. 1. This is shewn by the fact that the “*no longer walking*” here is only the negative side of, and therefore subordinate to, the “*walking worthily*” of ver. 1. vv. 4–16 form a digression, arising out of the words, “*the unity of the Spirit*,” in ver. 3. Still this must not be too strictly pressed: the digression is all in the course of the argument, and “*no longer*” here is not without reference to “*no longer*” in ver. 14. The fervid style of St. Paul will never divide sharply into separate logical portions—each runs into and overlaps the other) **I say** (see Rom. xii. 3. That an imperative sense is involved, lies in the context), **and testify in the Lord** (element in which he spoke, not a formula of conjuring them; see 1 Thess. iv. 1, note), **that ye no longer** (‘as once:’ implied too by **also** below) **walk as also** (besides yourselves: though the Ephesians did not walk so now, their returning to such a course is made the logical hypothesis) **the Gentiles** (ye being now distinguished from them by being members of God’s church, though once Gentiles according to the flesh. Perhaps from this not being seen, “*the rest of*” was inserted) **walk, in** (element) **vanity** (see Rom. i. 21: they were made vain in their downward course from God. But we must not restrict the word to idolatry: it betokens the *waste* of the whole rational powers on worthless objects. See also on Rom. viii. 20) **of their mind** (their rational part),

18.] darkened (see again Rom. i. 21, and the contrast brought out 1 Thess. v. 4, 5, and ch. v. 8) **in** (the sphere or element in which) **their understanding** (perceptive faculty: intellectual discernment), **alienated** (objective result of the subjective ‘being darkened’) **from the life of God** (these words do not mean “the kind of life which God appointed,” as the ancients [Thdrt., Thl., and Grot., al.], for the peculiar word here used for *life* never has this meaning [see the two clearly distinguished in Gal. 7. 25], but always *life*, as opposed to death. Thus ‘*the life of God*’ will mean, as Beza1 beautifully says, “that life which God liveth in His own:” for, as Bengel says, “the spiritual life is kindled in believers from God’s own life.” Stier makes an important remark: “The Apostle is here treating, not so much of the life of God in Christ which is regenerated in believers, as of the original state of man, when God was his Life and Light, before the irruption of darkness into human nature”) **on account of the ignorance** (of God: see 1 Pet. i. 14) **that is in them** (not, by nature: compare Rom. i. 21–28: they did not choose to retain God in their knowledge, and this loss of the knowledge of Him alienated them from the divine Life), **on account of** (second clause, subordinate to **alienated, &c.**) **the hardening** (not *blindness*, as A.V., which is a mistaken rendering of the word. The proper meaning is *becoming callous*, as a part of the body does where the skin is hardened by constant friction or pressure. “By ‘hardening’ he means the last degree of insensibility: for the callosities in the body have no feeling, being altogether deadened.” Theodoret) **of their heart**,

19.] who as being past feeling gave up themselves (“*themselves*, with terrific emphasis. It accorded here with the hortatory object of the Apostle to bring into prominence that which happened on the side of their own free will. It is otherwise in Rom. i. 24, ‘*God gave them up*:’ and the two treatments of the fact are not inconsistent, but parallel, each having its vindication and its full truth in the matter of fact of the context.” Meyer) **to wantonness** (sec Gal. v. 19 note), **in order to** (conscious aim, not merely incidental result of the *giving themselves up*—see below) **the working** (this and more is implied: the being *workmen*—the working as at a trade or business—but we have no one word for it: so Chrysostom, “See how he shuts them out from excuse by using these words, *the working of uncleanness*: they sinned not, saith he, by chance fault, but they went and

wrought the dread things themselves, and used that employ as their care in life") **of impurity of every kind** (see Rom. i. 24–27) **in greediness** (such is the meaning, and not 'with greediness,' i.e. greedily, as A.V.

greediness, the desire of having more, is obviously a wider vice than mere covetousness, though this latter is generally its prominent form. It is self-seeking, or *greed*: in whatever direction this central evil tendency finds its employment. So that it may include in itself as an element, as here, lustful sins, though it can never actually mean 'lasciviousness').

20.] But YOU (emphatic) **did not thus** (not on these conditions, nor with such prospects) **learn Christ** (Christ personal—not to be explained away into a *Christian life*, or any thing else: see 1 Cor. i. 23; Phil. i. 15–18; Col. ii. 6. CHRIST Himself is the subject of all Christian preaching and all Christian learning—to know Him [Phil. iii. 10] is the great lesson of the Christian life, which these Ephesians began to learn at their conversion: see next verse); **if, that is** (see ch. iii. 2 note, and 2 Cor. v. 3. He does not *absolutely* assume the fact, but implies that he then believed and still trusts it was so), **it was Him that ye heard** (if ye really heard at your conversion the voice of the Shepherd Himself calling you as his sheep—John x. 27, see also John v. 25), **and in Him that ye were taught** (if it was in vital union with Him, as members of Him, that ye after your conversion received my teaching. Both these clauses are contained in *learning Christ*,—the first hearing of the voice of the Son of God, and growing in the knowledge of Him when awakened from spiritual death), **according as is truth in Jesus** (the rendering and connexion of this clause have been much disputed. I will remark, 1) that it seems by its form to be subordinate to "in Him that ye were taught," and the **according as** to express the quality of the teaching: 2) that in this case we have **truth is in Jesus** answering to "in Him that ye were taught." 3) To take the easier members first, **in Jesus** is a closer personal specification of **in Him**—in Jesus—that one name recalling their union in both in His Person, and, which is important here, in His example also: 4) **as is truth** expands **ye were taught**—if the nature of the teaching which you received was according to that which is truth [in Him]. So that the meaning will amount to this—if ye were taught in Him according to that which is truth in Jesus;—if you received into yourselves, when you listened to the teaching of the Gospel, that which is true [respecting you—and Him] in your union with and life in Jesus, the Son of God manifest in the flesh),

22.] namely, that ye put off as regards your former way of life (explains the reference of the term **put off**: as if he had said, "for you were clothed with it in your former conversation") **the old man** (your former unconverted selves, see note on Rom. vi. 6), **which is** (i. e., seeing that it is) **corrupting** (i. e., waxing corrupt) **according to** (in conformity with; as might be expected under the guidance of) **the lusts of deceit** (*deceit* is personified—the lusts which are the servants, the instruments of deceit: the rendering, 'deceitful lusts, A.V., destroys the whole force and beauty of the contrast below to *holiness of the truth*'),

23.] and be renewed (both in the original are marked,—the gradual process implied in the *present tense*, and the *passive* character of the verb) **by** (not merely the sphere in which, but the agency by which) **the Spirit of your mind** (the expression is unusual, and can only be understood by reference to the New Test. meaning of the word **Spirit**, as applied to men.—First, it is clearly here not exclusively nor properly 'the Holy Spirit of God,' because it is called "*the Spirit of your mind*." It is a **Spirit**, in some sense belonging to, not merely dwelling in, **you**. The fact is, that in the New Test. the "spirit" of man is only then used in its *proper sense*, as worthy of its place and governing functions, when it is one Spirit with the Lord. We read of no "old spirit;" the *spiritual man* is necessarily a man dwelt in by the Spirit of God: the *psychic man* is the 'animal' man led by the psyché (the animal soul), and *not having a spirit*, Jude 19. Thus then the disciples of Christ are *being renewed*, undergoing a process of renewal in the life of God, by the agency of the **spirit** of their minds, the restored and divinely-informed leading principle of their **mind**, just as the children of the world are walking in the *vanity of their minds*);

24.] and put on the new man (as opposed to the *old*, not meaning *Christ*, any further than as He is its great Head and prototype; see below), **which was created** (as historical fact, once for all, in Christ. In each individual case, it is not created again, but put on: cf. Rom. 14) **after God** (i. e., *after God's image*: see Col. iii. 10; also Gen. i. 27: so 1 Pet. i. 15. The doctrine of the restoration to us of the divine image in Christ, as here implied, is not to be overlooked. Not the bare fact of Gen. i. 27, but the great truth which that fact represents, is alluded to. The image of God in Christ is a far more glorious thing than Adam ever had, or could have had: but still the being "*after the image of God*," "*after God*," is true of both) **in** (element, or sphere, of the character of the new man) **righteousness and holiness of the truth** (again, beware of 'true holiness,' A.V.—as destroying the whole antithesis and force of the words. The genitive, too, belongs to both substantives).

the truth, God's essence, John iii. 33; Rom. i. 25; iii. 7; xv. 8, opposed to "deceit." "Righteousness and holiness occur together, but in contrary order, in Luke i. 75, and Wisd. ix. 3. The adjectives and adverbs are connected, 1 Thess. ii. 10: Tit. 1. 8. Righteousness betokens a just relation among the powers of the soul within, and towards men and duties without. But holiness betokens the integrity of the spiritual life, and the piety towards God of which that is the condition. Hence both expressions together complete the idea of moral perfection [Matt. v. 48]. As here the *ethical side* of the divine image is brought out, Col. iii. 10 brings out the *intellectual*. The new birth alone leads to *perfect knowledge*; all knowledge which proceeds not from renewal of heart is but outward appearance: and of this kind was that among the false Colossian teachers." Olshausen).

25.] Wherefore (because of the general character of the *new man* as contrasted with the *old*, which has been given: "before,

he spoke generally of the old man: now he describes it part by part.' Chrysostom) **having put away** (the past tense should be noticed here: it was open to the Apostle to write "putting away," but he prefers the past—because the man must have once for all put off falsehood as a characteristic before he enters the habit of speaking truth) **falsehood** (abstract), **speak truth each one with his neighbour** (a quotation from the prophet Zechariah, see ref.): **for we are members of one another** (Rom. xii. 5. of one another brings out the relation between man and man more strongly than if he had said, *of one body*: at the same time it serves to remind them that all mutual duties of Christians are grounded on their union to and in Christ, and not on mere ethical considerations).

26.] Be ye angry, and sin not (citation: see ref.: and from the Septuagint version, not from the Hebrew, which {see Hupfeld on the Psalms in loc.] means 'tremble ['stand in awe,' A.V.] and sin not.' 'The first imperative, although by way of command, is so in a weaker degree than the other: it is rather assumptive, than permissive.— 'Be angry [if it must be so].' It has been asked (by Tholuck, Serm. on the Mount):— "If Paul speaks of culpable anger, how can he distinguish sinning from being angry? If of allowable anger, how can he expect not to retain it over the night?"—but we may answer that he speaks of anger which is an infirmity, but by being cherished, may become a sin): **let the sun not set upon your irritation** (i. e., set to your wrath with a brother a speedy limit, and indeed that one which nature prescribes—the solemn season when you part from that brother, to meet again perhaps in eternity):

27.] nor again (there is a slight climax: see below) **give scope** (opportunity of action, which you would do by continuing in a state of *irritation*) **to the devil** (not, *to the slanderer*, as some attempt to make it mean: the word "diabolos" as a substantive always has this personal meaning in the New Test.).

28.] Let him that stealeth (not 'that stole,' as A.V. Stier remarks well, that the word lies between "*him that stole*" and "*the thief*:" the former would be too mild, the latter too strong) **steal no longer: but rather** ("for it is not enough to leave off his sin, but he must enter on a course of life opposite to it." Theophylact) **let him labour, working** (see John vi. 27 and note) **with his hands** (contrast to his former idleness for good, and bad use of those hands) **that which is good** (contrast to his former evil gain by theft), **in order that** (as a purpose to be set before every Christian in his honest labour) **he may have to impart to him that hath need.**

29.] Let every corrupt (or, **worthless**; "that has no profitable work to do," Chrysostom: not so much '*filthy*,'—see ch. v. 4) **saying not come forth** (so the original, according to the Greek idiom) **from your mouth, but whatever (saying) is good for building up of the (present) need** (the **need** is the *deficiency*; the part which needs to be *built up*, the defect to be supplied by edification), **that it may give grace** (minister spiritual benefit: be a means of conveying through you the grace of God) **to them that hear.**

30.] And (Theophylact finely gives the connexion: "If thou speak a word corrupt and unbefitting a Christian mouth, thou hast grieved, not man, but the Spirit of God") **grieve not** (the expression is according to *man's* ideas,—but truly and touchingly sets forth the *love* of God, which [Rom. v. 5] is shed abroad in our hearts by His Spirit) **the Holy Spirit of God, in whom** (as the element, condition, of the sealing: not, as A.V., "whereby;" the sealing, both of the Lord and of us His members, is the act of the Father, John vi. 27: the Spirit *being the seal*, ch. i. 13) **ye were sealed unto** (in reservation for) **the day of redemption** (the day when redemption shall be complete in glory—see again ch. i. 18. So far from the doctrine of final perseverance, for which Eadie here more sharply than reasonably contends, being involved here, there could hardly be a plainer denial of it by implication. For in what would issue the *grieving* of the Holy Spirit, if not in quenching His testimony, and causing Him to depart from them? The caution of Theophylact, "*break not the seal*," is a direct inference from the passage).

31.] Let all bitterness (not only of speech, but of disposition), **and wrath, and anger** ("wrath is a temporary, anger a chronic bearing of malice." Ammonius. Both are effects of *bitterness*, considered as a rooted disposition), **and clamour** ("in which angry men break forth," Estius), **and evil speaking** (the more chronic form of *clamour*—the reviling another not by an outbreak of abuse, but by the insidious undermining of evil surmise and slander. Chrysostom traces a progress in the vices mentioned: "See how he pushes forward the description of evil. Bitterness begets wrath, wrath begets anger, anger begets clamour, clamour begets slander"), **be put away from you, with all malice** (the inner root, out of which all these spring. "We know, that those enmities are most savage which are cherished within and make no show to those who are without." Chrysostom):

32.] but be ye (literally, **become ye**: but it is very difficult to mark the distinction between *become* and *be* in a translation. *Become ye* is certainly too far off the time present; *be ye*, too immediately belonging to it. The difficulty is best seen in such a*command as that in John xx. 27, "*Be not (become not) faithless, but believing*") **towards one another, kind** (see note, Gal. v. 22), **tenderhearted, forgiving** (see Luke vii. 42. Bengel notices that the three, **kind, tenderhearted, forgiving**, are opposed respectively to **bitterness, wrath, and anger**) **each other, even as** (argument from His example whom we ought to resemble—also from the mingled of justice and gratitude, as Matt. xviii. 33) **God in Christ** (not 'for Christ's sake,' as A.V., see 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. God IN Christ, manifested in Him, in all He has done, and suffered: Christ is the sphere, the conditional element in which this act took place) **forgave you** (not '*has forgiven*,' as A.V. It is the historical fact of Christ once for all

putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, which is alluded to. So that we are not to attempt to change the meaning into a future, as is often done, especially in prayers: e.g. “even, as thou, Lord, for Christ’s sake, hast promised to forgive us.” Family Prayers by the late Bishop Blomfield, p. 43).

Ephesians: Chapter 5

V. 1, 2.] These verses are best taken as transitional,—the inference from the exhortation which has immediately preceded, and introduction to the dehortatory passage which follows. Certainly Stier seems right in viewing the **walk in love** as resuming ch. iv. 1, and indicating a beginning, rather than a close, of a paragraph.—**Be ye** (or, “become ye,” see on last verse) **therefore** (seeing that God forgave you in Christ, see next verse) **imitators of God** (viz. in walking in love, see below), **as children beloved** (see next verse: and 1 John iv. 19); **and** (shew it by this, that ye) **walk in love, as Christ also** (this comes even nearer: from the love of the Father who gave His Son, to that of the Son, the Personal manifestation of that love in, our humanity) **loved** (not, ‘hath loved,’ as A.V.) **us** (the appeal, with the reading **us**, is a general one, deduced from the universal relation of us all to Christ: with **you**, it is more a personal one to the Ephesians), **and gave up Himself** (absolute; not to be joined with “to God”) **for us** (see note on Gal. iii. 13:—‘on our behalf,’ in fact, but not necessarily here implied, ‘in our stead’) **an offering and a sacrifice** (I believe the nearest approach to the truth in the question of the difference between **offering** and **sacrifice** will be made by regarding **offering** as the more general word, including all kinds of offering, —**sacrifice** as the more special one, usually involving the death of a victim. The great prominent idea here is the *one* sacrifice, which the Son of God made of Himself in his redeeming Love, in our nature—bringing it, in Himself, near to God —offering Himself as our representative Head: whether in perfect righteousness of life, or in sacrifice, properly so called, at his Death) **to God** (to be joined with the substantives “offering” and “sacrifice,” not with the verb, *gave Himself up*) **for an odour of sweet smell** (the question so much discussed, whether these words can apply to a sin-offering strictly so called, is an irrelevant one here. It is not [see above] the *death* of Christ which is treated of, but the whole process of His redeeming love. His death lies in the background, as one, and the chief, of the acknowledged facts of that process: but it does not give the character to what is here predicated of Him. The allusion primarily is to Gen. viii. 21, where after Noah had brought to God a sacrifice of every clean beast ‘and bird, “the Lord smelted a sweet savour,”—and the promise followed, that He would no more destroy the earth for man’s sake).

3–21.] Dehortation (for the most part) from works unbecoming the holiness of the life of children and imitators of God.

3.] **But** (not transitional merely: there is a contrast brought out by the very mention of *fornication* after what has just been said) **fornication, and all impurity**, or (see ch. iv. 19 note) **covetousness** (ib.), **let it not be even named** (i. e. let not the thing be even talked of. Compare Ps. xv. 4) **among you, as becometh saints** (meaning, that if it were talked of, such conversation would be *unbecoming* the holy ones of God);

4.] **and obscenity** (not in word only), **and foolish talking** (Trench well maintains, that in Christian ethics, this means more than mere ‘random talk’: it is that talk of fools, which is folly and sin together), **or** (disjunctive, marking off *jesting*, as *covetousness* before) **jesting** (much interest attaches to this word. It had at first a *good* signification: “the habit of one easy and genial,” but got a bad sense, the being time-serving, easily turned,—or given to levity and inconsistency in talk; then finally settled down to the sense of jesting, ordinarily in a profligate sense), **which are not becoming; but rather thanksgiving** (how are we to fill up this clause? Probably, “but rather thanksgiving is becoming:” or, “but rather let thanksgiving be named among you.” The former seems the more probable. The connexion is apparently, ‘your true cheerfulness and play of fancy will be found, not in buffoonery, but in the joy of a heart overflowing with a sense of God’s mercies’).

5.] **A appeal to their own knowledge that such practices exclude from the kingdom of God:** see below.—**For this ye know** (indicative, not imperative, “*For this know*”), **being aware that every fornicator or** (or now, not “and,” for individualization of each) **unclean man, or covetous man, which is** (i. e. which word means. This reading necessarily confines the reference to *that one word*) **an idolater** (compare Col. iii. 5, and Job xxxi. 24–28; Ps. lii. 7; Matt. vi. 24. Meyer remarks well, that it was very natural for St. Paul, whose forsaking of all things [2 Cor. vi. 10; xi. 27] so strongly contrasted with selfish greediness, to mark with the deepest reprobation the sin of *covetousness*), **hath not inheritance** (the *present* implying more the fixedness of the exclusion, grounded on the eternal verities of that Kingdom,—than mere future certainty: see 1 Cor. xv. 25) **in the kingdom of Christ and God** (not ‘*and of God*,’ as A.V. *No distinction* is to be made, **Christ and God** being, in the Greek, in the closest union. The words bear no legitimate rendering, except on the substratum of our Lord’s Divinity. But. on the other hand, we cannot safely say here, that the same *person* is intended by *Christ and God*).

6.] **Let no one deceive you with empty** (not containing the kernel of truth, of which words are but the shell—words with no underlying facts) **sayings** (the persons pointed at are heathen, or pretended Christian, palliators of the fore-mentioned vices. The caution was especially needed, at a time when moral purity was so generally regarded as a thing indifferent. Harless quotes from Bullinger,—“There were at Ephesus corrupt men, as there are in abundance among us now, who receive these salutary precepts of God with loud laughter, calling sins of uncleanness mere human weakness: acts of extortion, prudence:

idle jesting, pleasantry,—and inferring that God will not be very severe on lapses of this kind”): **for** (let them say what they will, it is a fact, that) **on account of these things** (the above-mentioned crimes, see Col. iii. 6) **cometh** (present, as “*hath*,” ver. 5) **the wrath of God** (not merely, nor chiefly, His ordinary judgments, “of which examples are before our eyes;” but His *special* wrath, His vengeance *for these sins*, over and above their state of *disobedience*) **on the sons of** (see on ch. ii. 2) **disobedience** (the active and practical side of the state of the *unbeliever* [John iii. 36] is here brought out. The word [which in the original may mean either] is a valuable middle term between unbelief and disobedience, implying their identity in a manner full of the highest instruction).

7.] Be not (the distinction ‘*Become not*’ is unnecessary and indeed unsuitable: it is not a gradual ‘becoming,’ but ‘being,’ like them, which he here dehorts from. See note, ch. iv. last verse) **therefore** (since this is so—that God’s wrath comes on them) **partakers** (see ch. iii. 6) **with them** (the *sons* of disobedience, not the *sins*:—sharers in that which they have in common, viz. these practices: their *present* habitude, not, *their punishment*, which is future).

8.] For (your state [present, see above] is a totally different one from theirs—excluding any such participation) **ye WERE** (emphatic) **once darkness** (stronger than “*in darkness*,” Rom. ii. 19; 1 Thess. v. 4: they were *darkness itself*—see on “*light*” below), **but now** (*are ye*, in the original, is not expressed—perhaps, as Stier suggests, not only for emphasis, but to carry a slight tinge of the coming exhortation, by shewing them what they *ought* to be, as well as were by profession) **light** (not “*enlightened*”—light has an active, illuminating power, which is brought out in ver. 13) **in** (‘*in union with*’—conditioning element) **the Lord (Jesus): walk** (the omission of “*therefore*” makes the inference rhetorically more forcible) **as children of light;**

9.] for (gives the reason of the introduction of the comparison in the context, connecting this with the moral details which have preceded) **the fruit of the light is in** (is borne within the sphere of, as its condition and element) **all goodness and righteousness and truth** (in all that is good [Gal. v. 22], right, and true);

10.] proving (to be joined with the verb **walk**, ver. 9 having been parenthetical. The Christian’s whole course is a continual proving, testing, of the will of God in practice: investigating not what pleases himself, but what pleases Him) **what is well pleasing unto the Lord.**

11.] And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (see Gal. v. 19, 22; on which Jerome says, “Vices finish with themselves and perish; virtues put forth fruit and abound.” See also the distinction in John iii. 20, 21; v. 29), **but rather even reprove them** (*in words*: not only abstain from fellowship with them, but attack them and put them to shame).

12.] For (the connexion seems to be, ‘reprove them—this they want, and this is more befitting you—for to have the least part in them, even in speaking of them, is shameful’) **the things done in secret by them it is shameful even to speak of** (the connexion being—‘I mention not, and you need not *speak* of, these deeds of darkness, much less have any fellowship with them—your connexion with them must be only that which the act of *reproof* necessitates’).

13.] But (opposition to *things done in secret*) **all things** (not only, all the things done *in secret*, as Ellicott after Jerome, al.: the Apostle is treating of the *general detecting power of light*, as is evident by the resumption of the all in the next clause) **being reproved are made manifest by the light: for every thing that is made manifest is light** (the meaning being, ‘the light of your Christian life, which will be by your reproof shed upon these deeds of darkness, will bring them out of the category of darkness into light’ (‘when it is manifested it becomes light,’ Chrysostom]. They themselves were thus ‘once darkness,’ but having been ‘reproved’ by God’s Spirit, had become ‘light in the Lord.’ The A.V. is doubly wrong—1) in ‘*all things that are reproved*:’ 2) in ‘*whatsoever doth make manifest is light*’ [which is also an ungrammatical reading of the Greek]: besides that such a proposition has absolutely no meaning in the context).

14.] Wherefore (this being so—seeing that every thing that is made manifest becomes light,—is shone upon by the detecting light of Christ,—objectively,—it only remains that the man should be shone upon *inwardly* by the same Christ revealed in his awakened heart. We have then in Scripture an exhortation to that effect) **He** (viz. God, in the Scripture: see ch. iv. 8 note. No other reading is allowable) **saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee** (*where is this citation to be found?* In the first place, by the introduction of the word **Christ** it is manifestly a *paraphrase, not an exact citation*. The Apostle cites, and had a perfect right to cite, the language of prophecy in the light of the fulfilment of prophecy: and that he is here doing so, the bare word ‘*Christ*’ shews us beyond dispute. I insist on this, that it may be plainly shewn to be no shift in a difficulty, no hypothesis among hypotheses,—but the *necessary* inference from the form of the citation. This being so,—of what passage of the Old Test. is this a paraphrase? I answer, of Isa. lx. 1, 2. There, the Church is set forth as being in a state of darkness and of death [cf. lix. 10], and is exhorted to awake, and become light, for that her light is come, and the glory of Jehovah has arisen upon her).

15.] He now resumes the hortative strain, interrupted by the digression of vv. 12–14, **Take heed then** (there is not any immediate connexion with the last verse: but the then resumes from the “*walk*” in ver. 8, and that which followed it there)

how ye walk strictly (the construction is exactly as in 1 Cor. iii. 10, “*Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*” ‘Take heed of what sort your *strict walking* is:’—the implication being, ‘take heed not only that your walk be exact, strict, but also of *what sort* that strictness *is*—not only that you *have* a rule, and *keep to it*, but that that rule be the *best one*.’ So that a double exhortation is involved), (**namely**) **not as unwise, but as wise** (qualification of the *walking strictly*, and expansion of the *manner of such walking*),

16.] buying up (for yourselves) (**the opportunity** (viz. of good, whenever occurring [best rendered in an English version by a plural, **opportunities**]; let it not pass by, but as merchants carefully looking out for vantages, make it your own: see Col. iv. 5), **because the days** (of your time,—in which you live) **are evil**.

17.] On this account (because ye have need so prudently to define your rule of life, and so carefully to watch for opportunities of good) **be not** (better than ‘do not become, which puts the *process of degeneracy* too strongly in English) **senseless (or foolish), but understand** (know intelligently,—as matter of fact, as the servant who knew his lord’s will and did it not, Luke xii. 47) **what is the will of the Lord.**

18.] The connexion seems to be: after the general antithesis in ver. 17, “*be not foolish, but understand,” &c.*,” he proceeds to give one prominent instance, in the same antithetical shape.

And (introducing a particular case after a general *injunction*) **be not drunken with wine, in which [practice]** (not, *in wine*, but the *being drunken with it*—the crime is not in *God’s gift*, but in the *abuse* of it: and the very arrangement of the sentence in the Greek, besides the spirit of it, implies the lawful use of wine—see 1 Tim. v. 23) **is profligacy** (the word in the Greek is derived from *not saving, squandering*: and, as spendthrifts are almost of necessity self-indulgent and reckless, the word comes to have the meaning of ‘*dissoluteness*,’ ‘*debauchery*,’ ‘*profligacy*’); **but** (contrast, see above) **be filled** (antithesis to *being drunken with wine*) **with** (literally, ‘*in*.’ let this be the region in, and the ingredient with which you are filled) **the Spirit** (*your own spirit, dwelt in and informed by the Holy Spirit of God*, see note on ch. iv. 23. If this is so, if you are full of the Spirit, full in Spirit, there will be a joy indeed, but not that of *profligacy*: one which will find its expression not in drunken songs, but in Christian hymns, and continual thankfulness);

19.] speaking to one another (ch. iv. 32; see also the parallel place, Col. iii. 16. It is perhaps too much to find in this the practice of antiphonal chanting: but it is interesting to remember that in Pliny’s letter the Christians are described as accustomed to meet on a set day before day, and to sing a song to Christ as God *by turns among themselves*: Nicephorus, Hist. xiii. 8, says, “The custom of antiphonal chanting the church has received from as far back as the Apostles”) **in psalms** (not to be confined, as Olshansen and Stier, to Old Test. hymns; see 1 Cor. xiv. 26; James v. 13. The word properly signified those sacred songs which were performed with musical accompaniment,—as **hymns** without it: but the two must evidently here not be confined strictly to their proper meaning) **and hymns** (see above) **and [spiritual] songs** (or, **odes**: the general name for all lyrical poetry, and applying especially to such effusions as persons used in the state of drunkenness; the Christian’s *ode* is to be spiritual, inspired by that fulness of the Spirit which is in him), **singing and playing** (as well as *speaking*, not explanatory of it: **singing and playing** corresponding to **hymns and psalms** above) **in your heart to the Lord** (i. e. Christ—compare Pliny’s letter above);

20.] giving thanks (another additional, not explanatory, clause) **always for all things** (see Phil. iv. 6: not only for blessings, but for every dispensation of God) **in the name** (the element in which the *giving thanks* must take place. “The name of the Lord is there, where He is named. *How* He is named, depends on the particular circumstances: it is one thing to be reproached [1 Pet. iv. 14], another to be saved [Acts iv. 12], another to be baptized [Acts x. 48], another to command [2 Thess. iii. 6], another to pray John xiv. 13], another to give thanks compare Col. iii. 17] in the name of the Lord..... The Apostle says, that all the Christian would do, he must do *in the name of Christ* [Col. iii. 17].” Harless) **of our Lord Jesus Christ to God and the Father** (see on ch. i. 3);

21.] submitting yourselves to one another (a fourth additional, not subordinate clause: *speaking,—singing and playing,—giving thanks,—submitting yourselves*: and then out of this last general injunction are unfolded all the *particular applications to the relations of life*, ver. 22—ch. vi. 9. It is not so easy to assign precisely its connexion with those which have preceded. I would regard it as a thought suggested by the “*Be not drunken,” &c.*,” with which the sentence began—that as we are otherwise to be filled, otherwise to sing and rejoice, so also we are otherwise to behave—not blustering nor letting our voices rise in selfish vaunting, as such men do,—but subject to one another, &c.) **in the fear of Christ** (this is an uncommon phrase: of Him, whose members we all are, so that any displacement in the Body is a forgetfulness of the reverence due to Him).

22—VI. 9.] The Church, in her relation to Christ, comprehending and hallowing those earthly relations on which all social unity (and hers also) is founded, the Apostle proceeds to treat of the *three greatest of those*: that of *husband and wife* (vv. 22—33), that of *parent and child* (ch. vi. 1—4), that of *master and servant* (vi. 5—9).

22—33.] Mutual duties of wives and husbands, arising from the relation between Christ and the Church.

22.] Wives (supply, as has been inserted, “*be subject*,” seeing that the subsequent address to husbands is in the 2nd person), **unto your own husbands** (**own**, as we often use the word [e. g. ‘He murdered his own father’], to intensify the recognition of the relationship, and to suggest its duties: see 1 Cor. vii. 2: also John v. 18), **as unto the Lord** (i. e. ‘in obeying your husbands, obey the Lord:’ not merely as in all things we are to have regard to Him, but because, as below expanded, the husband stands peculiarly in Christ’s place. But he is not thus identified in power with Christ, nor the obedience, in its nature, with that which is owed to Him). **For an husband** (any husband, taken as an example) **is head of his wife, as also** (introducing identity of category) **Christ is head of the Bienth** (see for the sentiment, 1 Cor. xi. 3 note), (*being*, in His case—see below) **Himself Saviour of the Body** (i. e. ‘in Christ’s ease the Headship is united with, nay gained by, His having SAVED the body in the process of Redemption: so that I am not alleging Christ’s Headship as one entirely identical with that other, for He has a claim to it and office in it peculiar to Himself.’ “The man is not the saviour of his wife: in that, Christ excels him: hence ‘nevertheless’ follows.” Bengel).

24.] Nevertheless (what I do say is, that notwithstanding this difference, thus far the two Headships are to be regarded as identical, in the *subjection of the body to the Head*) **as the church is subjected to Christ, so also** (again, identity of category) **let the wives be to their husbands in every thing.**

25.] I cannot refrain from citing Chrysostom’s very beautiful remarks on this next passage:—“You see the rule of obedience? Well, hear also the rule of love. Do you wish your wife to obey you, as the Church obeys Christ? Then take care for her, as Christ did for the Church: and even if you must give your life for her, or be cut in a thousand pieces, or whatever you must undergo and suffer, shrink not from it: and even if you suffer all this, you have not yet done any thing that Christ did: for you do this being already joined in marriage to her, but He suffered for a Bride who rejected and hated Him. As then He brought to His feet her who rejected Him and hated Him and scorned Him and despised Him, with wonderful care and affection, not with terror, not with threats, nor with any thing of the sort; so do you towards your wife: if you see her despising you, scorning you, treating you with contempt, you can bring her to your feet by spending care on her, love, and kindness. No bonds are more despotic than these, and especially between man and wife. A slave a man may perhaps bind by terror; but nay, not even him, for he soon will escape and be free: but the partner of your life, the mother of your children, the subject of all your joy, you ought to bind not by terror and threats, but by love and gentle consideration.”

Husbands, love your wives, as also (see above) **Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for her** (better than ‘it;’ the comparison is thus brought out as in the original);

26.] that (intermediate purpose, as regarded *her*; see below, ver. 27) **He might sanctify her, having purified her by the laver** (not ‘washing,’ as A.V.: a meaning the word never has: but the *laver* or *font* of the water (of which we all know: viz. the *baptismal water*, see Titus iii. 5. We can hardly set aside the reference to the purifying bath of the bride previous to marriage:—see below on ver. 27, and compare Rev. xxi. 2) **in the word** (*what word?* “*In the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost,*” says Chrysostom, alluding to the formula in Baptism: and so many Fathers:—others say, on which Baptism rests:—others, the preached *word of faith* [Rom. x. 8] of which confession is made in baptism, and which carries the real cleansing [John xv. 3; xvii. 17] and regenerating power [1 Pet. i. 23; iii. 21 (?)]—so Augustine, who uses those memorable words,—“Take away *the word*, and what is water but water? The word is added to the element, and it becomes a sacrament, as it were the word made visible.” And this certainly seems the sense most analogous to St. Paul’s usage. Thus, *the word*, preached and received, is the conditional element of purification,—the real water of spiritual baptism;—that wherein and whereby alone the efficacy of baptism is conveyed—that wherein and whereby we are regenerated, the process of sanctification being subsequent and gradual),

27.] that (further purpose of His giving *Himself for her*) **He might Himself present unto Himself** (as a bride, see 2 Cor. xi. 2: not as a sacrifice, which is quite against the context. The expression sets forth that the preparation of the Church for her bridal with Christ is exclusively by His own agency) **the church glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things; but that she may be holy** (perfect in holiness) **and blameless** (see on both, note, ch. i. 4). The *presentation* here spoken of is clearly, in its full sense, that future one at the Lord’s coming, so often treated under the image of a marriage (Matt. xxii. 1 ff.; xxv. 1 ff.; Rev. xix. 7 ff.; xxi. 2, &c.), not any progress of sanctification here below.

28.] Thus (two ways of understanding this **thus** are open to us: 1) as referring back to Christ’s love for the church,—‘Thus,’ ‘in like manner,’ &c., as [being] ‘their own bodies:’ and 2) as referring forward to the similitude below,—‘Thus,’ ‘so,’ &c., as [they love] *their own bodies*.’ After weighing maturely what has been said on one side and the other, I cannot but decide for the latter, as most in accordance with the usage of St. Paul and with ver. 83: also as more simple. The sense remains substantially the same, and answers much better to the comment furnished by the succeeding clauses:—husbands ought to love their own wives as they love their own bodies [i. e., themselves: for their wives are in fact part of their own bodies, ver. 31]: this being illustrated by and referred to the great mystery of Christ and His church, in which the same love, and the same incorporation, has place) **ought the husbands also** (as well as Christ in the archetypal example just given) **to love their own** (emphatic: see above on ver. 22) **wives as** (with the same affection as) **their own bodies. He that loveth his own** (see above)

wife loveth himself (is but complying with that universal law of nature by which we all love ourselves. The best words to supply before the following “*for*” will be, “And this we all do”).

29.] For (see above) **no man ever hated his own flesh** (meaning, *himself*, but put in this form to prepare for “*one flesh*” in the Scripture proof below); **but nourisheth it up and cherisheth it, as also (doth) Christ** (nourish and cherish) **the church:**

30.] for (again a link is omitted; ‘the church, which stands in the relation of marriage to Him: for, &c.’) **members we are of His Body [—(being) of His flesh, and of His bones]** (see Gen. ii. 23. As the woman owed her natural being to the man, her source and head, so we owe our entire spiritual being to Christ, our source and head: and as the woman was one flesh with the man in this natural relation, so we in our entire spiritual relation, body, soul, and Spirit, are one with Christ, God manifested in our humanity,—parts and members of His glorified Body).

31.] For this cause (the allusion, or rather free citation, is still carried on: compare Gen. ii. 24:—i. e. because we are members of Him in the sense just insisted on. This whole verse is said [see on ver. 32 below] not of human marriages, but of Christ and the church. HE is the **man** in the Apostle’s view here, the Church is the **woman**. I would regard the saying as applied to that, past, present, and future, which constitutes Christ’s Union to His Bride the Church: His leaving the Father’s bosom, which is *past*—His gradual preparation of the union, which is *present*: His full consummation of it, which is *future*. This seems to me to be necessary, because we are as truly now **one flesh** with Him, as we shall be, when heaven and earth shall ring with the joy of the nuptials;—and hence the exclusive future sense is inapplicable. In this allegorical sense most of the ancients, and the best of the moderns, interpret: and Eadie would have done well to study more deeply the spirit of the context before he characterized it as ‘strange romance,’ ‘wild and visionary,’ and said, ‘there is no hint that the Apostle intends to allegorize.’ That allegory, on the contrary, is the *key to the whole*) **shall a man leave father and mother, and shall be closely joined to his wife, and they two shall become** (see Matt. xix. 5, note) **one flesh** (“not only, as they were before, in respect of their origin, but in respect of their new conjunction.” Bengel).

32.] This mystery is great (viz. the matter mystically alluded to in the Apostle’s application of the text just quoted: the mystery of the spiritual union of Christ with our humanity, typified by the close conjunction of the marriage state. This meaning of **mystery**, which is strictly that in which St. Paul uses the word,—as something passing human comprehension, but revealed as a portion of the divine dealings in Christ,—is, it seems to me, required by the next words. It is irksome, but necessary, to notice the ridiculous perversion of this text by the Romish church, which from the Vulgate rendering, deduces that ‘marriage is a great sacrament in Christ and in His Church.’ It will be enough to say that this their foolish blunder of “*sacrament*” for “*mystery*,” had long ago been exposed by their own Commentators, Cajetan and Estius): **but I** (emphatic) **say** (allege) **i t with reference to Christ and [with reference to] the church** (i. e. *my* meaning, in citing the above text, is to call your attention, not to mere human marriage, but to that high and mysterious relation between Christ and His Church, of which that other is but a faint resemblance).

33.] Nevertheless (not to go further into the mystical bearings of the subject) **you also** (as well as Christ) **every one, let each so love his own wife as himself; and the wife** (in the making out of the sentence, a verb must be supplied:—but the wife, for her part,—‘*I order*,’ or, ‘*let her see*’), **that she fear** (so literally: (Ecumenius says, “As a wife ought to fear, not as a slave”) **her husband.**

Ephesians: Chapter 6

CH. VI. 1–4.] See on ch. v. 22.—*Duties of children and parents.* **Children, obey your parents [in the Lord** (i. e. Christ: the sphere in which the action is to take place, as usual: **in the Lord** belonging to **obey your parents**, not to the words **your parents** (“*your parents in the Lord*”), nor can this be combined, as a second reference, with the other, as Origen does, understanding ‘your fathers in the faith, “as Paul was of the Corinthians.” I should venture however to question whether the Apostle’s view was to hint that such commands of parents as might not be according to the will of God, should *not* be obeyed, as is very generally supposed: for in Col. iii. 20 he says, “*Obey your parents in all things.*” I should rather believe, that he regards both parents and children as *in the Lord*, and the commands, as well as the obedience, as having that sphere and element. How children were to regard commands *not answering to this description*, would be understood from the nature of the case: but it seems to violate the simplicity of this passage, which proceeds on the general principle of *being subject to one another*, to introduce into it a by-thought of this kind): **for this is right** (many regard the word **right** as explained by the next verse, and meaning *according to the law of God*. But it seems rather an appeal to the first principles of natural duty; that we should render obedience to those from whom we have received life).

2.] Honour thy father and thy mother; for such is the first commandment (in the Decalogue, which naturally stands at the head of all God’s other commandments; and which, though not formally binding on us as Christians, is quoted, in matters of eternal obligation [not of positive enactment], as an eminent example of God’s holy will) with a promise (i. e. with a special promise attached. The occurrence of the description of God as ‘shewing mercy unto thousands, &c.,’ after the second

commandment, does not, as Jerome and others have thought, present any difficulty—for that is *no special promise attached to the commandment*. Nor does the fact that no other commandment occurs in the *decalogue* with a promise);

8.] that it may be well with thee, and thou be long-lived upon the earth (he paraphrases the latter portion of the commandment: thus adapting the promise to his Christian readers, by taking away from it that which is special and peculiar to the Jewish people. It is surely a mistake to *spiritualize* the promise, and understand by **the earth**, the heavenly Canaan. The very fact of the omission of the special clause, “*which the Lord thy God giveth thee*,” removes the words from the region of type into undoubted reality: and when we remember that the persons addressed are “*children*,” we must not depart from the simplest sense of the words).

4.] And, ye fathers (the mothers being included, as in *subjugation to their own husbands*: these last being the fountains of domestic rule: not for any other less worthy reason, to which the whole view of the sexes by the Apostle is opposed), **irritate not** (“as,” says Chrysostom, “the generality do, disinheriting them, and driving them from their houses, and abusing them with coarse language, as if they were slaves, and not free.” But the Apostle seems rather to allude to provoking by vexatious commands, and unreasonable blame, and uncertain temper, in ordinary intercourse: compare Col. iii, 21) **your children; but bring them up in** (as the sphere and element) **the discipline and admonition** (the first word is wrongly rendered “*nurture*” by the A.V.: it imports *discipline by means of punishment*, and the second implies “*training by word—by the word of encouragement, when no more is wanted; of remonstrance, reproof, or blame where these are required.*” Trench) **of the Lord** (i. e. Christ: either objective,—‘*concerning the Lord*:’ or subjective,—‘*such as the Lord approves and dictates by His Spirit*’).

5-9.] See on ch. v. 22.—*Duties of masters and slaves.*

5.] Slaves (or, ‘*bondmen*.’) There is no reason to render this word ‘*servants*,’ as in A.V., for by this much of the Apostle’s exhortation is deprived of point), **obey your lords according to the flesh** (Chrysostom sees in these words, *according to the flesh*, a consolatory hint that the *lordship over them is temporary and of short duration*: Calvin, that their real liberty was still their own: Ellicott, in citing these, rightly observes, that however they may be doubted, still both, especially the latter, are obviously *deductions* which must have been made, and which the Apostle *might* have intended to have been made), **with fear and trembling** (see note on 1 Cor. ii. 3: whence it appears that the **fear and trembling** was to be not that of dread, arising from their condition as slaves, but that of *anxiety* to do their duty,—“*anxious reverence, which will be the fruit of simplicity of heart*,” as Calvin says), **in** (as its element) **simplicity** (singleness of view) **of your heart, as to Christ** (again—He being the source and ground of all Christian motives and duties);

6.] not in a spirit of (according to, measuring your obedience by) **eyeservice** (i. e. service while the master’s eye is on them, and then only. Xenophon relates an anecdote of a king who, having bought a capital horse, asked some skilful horsekeeper what would get him as soon as possible into good condition. The horsekeeper answered, “His master’s eye”), **as menpleasers; but as bondmen of Christ**

(the contrast is between **with eyeservice and as bondmen of Christ; and doing the will of God** is a qualification of **bondmen of Christ, doing the will of God** (serving not a *seen* master only [as the *eye-servant* does], but the great invisible Lord of all, which will be the surest guarantee for your serving your earthly masters, even when unseen),

7.] from your soul (so literally) with good will doing service (this arrangement, which is that of most of the ancient and principal moderns, seems to me far better than the other, as in A.V., which joins “*from the heart*” to “*doing the will of God*.” For 1) these words need here no such qualification as “*from the heart*:” if the will of God be the real object of the man’s obedience, that it is not an eye-service will be sufficiently ensured, whereas 2) the double qualification, “*from the heart with good will*,” attached to *doing service*, describes beautifully the source in himself [*from the heart*] and the accompanying feeling towards another [*with good will*] of Christian service), **as to the Lord, and not to men;**

8.] knowing (as ye do; i.e. seeing that ye are aware) **that each man, if he shall have done** (at Christ’s coming) **any good thing** (the reading is in some doubt. The sense comes to the same, whether it be read thus, or as the A.V., ‘*whatsoever good thing any man doeth*.’) But it must be, on either reading, **each man shall have done**), **this** (emphatic: ‘*this in full*,’ ‘*this exactly*’) **he shall receive** (see reff., where the same expression occurs—this he shall then receive in its value as then estimated,—changed, so to speak, into the currency of that new and final state) **from the Lord (Christ), whether he be slave or free.** Chrysostom beautifully gives the connexion of thought: “Hence it was probable that many masters, being unbelievers, would not, pay regard to nor requite their slaves for their obedience: see how he consoled them, that they might not be distressed at their requital, but be of good courage, respecting their ultimate reward. For just as those who receive a benefit, if they be not grateful to their benefactors, make God a debtor to them: so in this case the masters, if you treat them well and they make you no return, have in fact made a greater return, by making God your debtor.”

9.] And, ye masters, do the same things (i. e. act, analogously, as *they* are to remember one whom they serve, so [below] are

ye—and, *mutatis mutandis*, to act to them as they to you) **with regard to them, forbearing your** (usual: such as most masters do use) **threatening: knowing** (as ye do, see ver. 8) **that both of them and of yourselves the Master is in the heavens; and respect of persons** (warping of justice from regard to any man's individual pre-eminence) **exists not with Him.**

10–20.] General exhortation to the spiritual conflict and to prayer.

10.] Henceforth (Olshausen's remark, that the Apostle never addresses his readers as *brethren* in this Epistle, is perfectly correct: ver. 23 does not contravene it [jas Eadie], but rather establishes it. He there sends his apostolic blessing to the *brethren*, but does not directly address them) **be strengthened** (passive) **in the Lord** (Christ), **and in the power of his might** (see on ch. i. 19).

11.] Put on the entire armour (emphatic: repeated again ver. 18: offensive, as well as defensive. It is probable that the Apostle was daily familiarized in his imprisonment with the Roman method of arming) **of God** (i. e. as supplied, ministered by God), **that ye may be able to stand against the schemes** (the original word here also occurs in ch. iv. 14) **of the devil.**

12.] For (confirms the purpose just stated) **our** (or, 'your: ' the ancient authorities are divided) **wrestling** (this must be literally taken—it is a hand to hand and foot to foot 'tug of war'—that in which the combatants close, and wrestle for the mastery) **is not** (Meyer well remarks, that the negative is not to be softened down into *not so much*, or *not only*, as Grotius, &c.—the conflict which the Apostle means is absolutely *not* with men, but&c. Augustine says, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood," i.e. against *men*, whom you see raging against you. "They are vessels, which another uses: instruments, which another touches") **against flesh and blood, but** (see above) **against the governments, against the powers** (see note on ch. i. 21), **against the world-rulers** (compare John xii. 31 note; xiv. 30; xvi. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 4; 1 John v. 19) **of this** (present state of) **darkness** (see ch. ii. 2; v. 8, 11), **against the spiritual (armies) of wickedness in the heavenly places** (*what is the meaning?* Chrysostom connects **in the heavenly places** with "*our wrestling is*"—saying, "It is in heavenly matters that our fight takes place." Others do the same, understanding the *heavenly places*, properly so called, as the *scene* of the combat. "But how can the heavenly places, the scenes of divine blessing, of Christ's exaltation, &c., be the seat or abode of impure fiends?" But if they. are "*the scene of*" our "*combat*" with these fiends, how can our enemies be any where else but in them? Two ways then remain: to join the words **in the heavenly places** a) with the **spiritual hosts of wickedness**—b) with **wickedness** only. And in my Greek Testament I have concluded, on account of the form of the Greek sentence, that the former of these is preferable. And in sense, if properly understood, it is unobjectionable. That habitation of the evil spirits, which in ch. ii. 2 was said, when speaking of mere matters of fact, to be in the *air*, is, now that the difficulty and importance of the Christian conflict is being forcibly set forth, represented as "*in the heavenly places*"—over us, and too strong for us without the panoply of God).

13.] Wherefore (since our foes are in power too mighty for us,—and in dwelling, around and above us) **take up** (so literally: but not 'to the battle,' but 'to put it on') **the entire armour of God** (see on ver. 11), **that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day** (not as Chrysostom, who makes the *evil day* mean the *present life*:—for then the evil day would be upon the Christian before he has on the armour. The right interpretation is well given by Bengel—"The war is perpetual: the fight rages less on one day, more on another. It is *the evil day*, on the approach of death, or during life: longer or shorter, varying in itself, where the evil one attacks us and his malignant hosts infest us, ver. 12"), **and having accomplished all things** (requisite to the combat: being fully equipped and having bravely fought. The words must not be taken in the sense of, '*when the war is finished, and all foes overcome*', nor again, understood of *preparation only*. To finish, or accomplish, is the invariable Pauline usage of the word when taken in a good sense), **to stand firm** (at your post: that when you shall have done all that belongs to a good soldier, you may be able to stand and be firm:—that you may not, after having done your duty well in battle, fall off, but stand your ground to the end).

14–20.] Particulars of the armour, and attitude of the soldier.

14] Stand therefore (whether 'ready for the fight,' or 'in the fight,' matters very little), **having girt about your loins with** (literally *in*, and *local*: the girt person is within, surrounded by, the girdle: but this is necessarily expressed in English by 'with') **truth** (not *truth objective*, which is rather the "*word of God*" below, ver. 17: but '*truthfulness*,' subjective truth: to be understood however as based upon the faith and standing of a Christian, necessarily *his truthfulness in his place in Christ*. As the girdle [hardly here, however true that may have been, to be regarded as carrying the sword, for that would be confusing the separate images, compare ver. 17] kept all together, so that an ungirded soldier would be a contradiction in terms,—just so Truth is the band and expeditor of the Christian's work in the conflict, without which all his armour would be but encumbrance. Gurnall's notion [Christian Armour, vol. i.p. 378], that 'the girdle is used as an ornament, put on uppermost, to cover the joints of the armour, which would, if seen, cause some uncomeliness,' is against the context, and against the use of the phrase **to gird the loins** in the New Test.), **and having put on the breastplate of righteousness** (see Isa. in the reff., and Wisd. v. 19. As in those passages, righteousness *is* the breastplate—the genitive here being one of apposition. The righteousness spoken of is that of Rom. vi. 13—the purity and uprightness of Christian character which is the result of the work of the Spirit of Christ; the inwrought righteousness of Christ, not merely the imputed righteousness);

15.] and having shod your feet (as the soldier with his sandals. The Roman *caliga*, or soldier's buskin, may be in the Apostle's mind: see on ver. 11) **with** (local again, not instrumental: see on ver. 14) **the readiness** ('*the preparedness of*', i.e. arising from, suggested by, '*the Gospel of peace*') **of the Gospel of Peace** (the Gospel whose message and spirit is peace);

16.] besides (or, over) all (not as A.V. 'above all,' as if it were the most important. And the **all**, as no "these" is specified, does not apply only to the particulars of the armour which have been enjoined, but generally, to all things whatever. But it is perhaps doubtful, whether we ought not to read **in all things**, i.e. on all occasions), **having taken up** (see on ver. 13) **the shield** (the large oval shield, as distinguished from the small and light buckler. Polybius in his description [vi. 23] of the Roman armour, says of the shield, that its measure across the shorter axis was two feet and a half: across the longer, four feet) **of (genitive of apposition) faith, in which** (so literally: as lighting on it and being quenched in it; or perhaps, "as protected by and under cover of which") **you shall be able** (not to be referred to the last great future fight—but used as stronger than 'in which ye may, &c.,' implying the certainty that the shield of faith will at all times and in all combats, quench, &c.) **to quench all the fiery darts** (these are described as being cane arrows, with a head in the form of a distaff filled with lighted material. The idea that *poisoned* darts are meant [*'causing fever'*], is untenable) **of the wicked one** (see reff. and notes on Matt. v. 37; John xvii. 15. Here, the conflict being personal, the adversary must be not an abstract principle, but a concrete person).

17.] And take (receive, the Lord offering it to you) the helmet of (genitive of apposition as above) **salvation** (in the parallel, 1 Thess. v. 8, the helmet is the hope of salvation. Here, it is *salvation appropriated, by faith*), **and the sword of** (furnished, forged, by: not here the genitive of apposition, for **which is** follows after) **the Spirit, which sword is** (see on *is*, Gal. iv. 24 reff.) **the word of God** (the Gospel: see the obvious parallel, Heb. iv. 12: also Rom. i. 16: and our pattern for the use of this sword of the Spirit, Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10):

18.] with (as the state through which, as an instrument, the action takes place) **all (kind of) prayer and supplication** ("it has been doubted whether there is any exact distinction between **prayer** and **supplication**. Chrysostom and Theodoret on 1 Tim. ii. 1 explain **prayer** as the asking for good things,—**supplication** as the beseeching deliverance from trouble. The most natural and obvious distinction is that adopted by nearly all recent Commentators, viz. that **prayer** denotes *prayer in general*; **supplication**, a special character or form of it, a petition, or *rogation*"), **praying in every season** (literal: see Luke xviii. 1 note, and 1 Thess. v. 17. There seems to be an allusion to our Lord's saying, which is expressed in these same words, Luke xxi. 86) **in the Spirit** (the Holy Spirit: see especially Jude 20, and Rom. viii. 15, 26; Gal. iv. 6), **and thereunto** (with reference to their employment which has been just mentioned. Continual habits of prayer cannot be kept up without watchfulness to that very end) **watching in** (element in which: watching, being employed, in) **all (kind of) perseverance (or, importunity) and supplication** (i. e., '*importunity, and [accompanied with, i.e. exemplified by] supplication*') **concerning all the saints**;

19.] and (and brings into prominence a particular included in the general description) for me, that there may be given me utterance, in the opening of my mouth (many renderings have been proposed. The words must be joined with the preceding, not with the following, as in the A.V., which would [see below] be too tame and prosaic for the solemnity of the passage. The best rendering is, '*in [at] the opening of my mouth*,' i.e. 'when I undertake to speak:' thus we keep the meaning of *opening the mouth*, see Matt. v. 2; Acts viii. 35; x. 34; also Job iii. 1; Dan. x. 16, which always carries some solemnity of subject or occasion with it), **in boldness** (freedom of speech) **to make known** (the purpose of the gift) **the mystery of the gospel** (contained in the gospel: subjective genitive. The mystery of the gospel),

20.] on behalf of which I am an ambassador (of Christ: to whom, is understood: we need not supply, to the court of Rome) in chains (Wetst. remarks, an *ambassador in chains* was an unknown thing, ambassadors being, by the law of nations, inviolable. His being thus a captive ambassador, was all the more reason why they should pray earnestly that he might have boldness, &c.): **that in** (the matter of, in dealing with) **it I may speak freely, as I ought to speak.**

21–24.] CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE.

21.] But (transition to another subject: the contrast being between his more solemn occupations just spoken of, and his personal welfare) **that ye also** (the **also** may have two meanings: 1) as *I* have been going at length into the matters concerning *you*, so if *you also* on your part, wish to know my matters, &c.: 2) it may relate to some others whom the same messenger was to inform, and to whom he had previously written. Ifso, it would be an argument for the priority of the Epistle to the Colossians: for that was sent by Tychicus, and a similar sentiment occurs there, iv. 7. But I prefer the former meaning) **may know the matters concerning me, how I fare** (not, '*what I am doing*,' he was always doing *one thing*), **Tychicus** (Acts xx. 4. Col. iv. 7. 2 Tim. 2. Tit. ii. 12. He appears in the first-cited place amongst St. Paul's companions to Asia from Corinth, classed with *Trophimus* as *Asians*. Nothing more is known of him) **shall make known all to you, the beloved brother and faithful (trustworthy) servant (or, minister; the original is *diaconos*): 'minister' must not lead to the idea of Estius, who says, on the words in the Lord,— "It is hence fairly presumed, that Tychicus was in the holy orders of deacon: see Col. iv. 7, and note there") **in the Lord** (belongs to *minister*, not to both *brother* and *minister*. He *ministered in the Lord*, Christ's work being the field on which his labour was bestowed);**

22.] whom I sent to you for this very purpose (not, ‘*for the same purpose*,’ as A.V.), **that ye may know the matters respecting us** (see Col. iv. 8, where this verse occurs word for word, but with “that he may know *your affairs*” for these words. Does not this variation bear the mark of genuineness with it? The “*us*” are those mentioned Col. iv. 10), **and that he may comfort** (we need not assign a reason why they wanted comfort:—there would probably be many in those times of peril) **your hearts.**

23, 24.] Double APOSTOLIC BLESSING; addressed (23) to the brethren, and (24) to all real lovers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

23.] Peace (need not be further specified, as is done by some:—the Epistle has no special conciliatory view. It is sufficiently described by being *peace from God*) **to the brethren** (of the Church or Churches addressed: see Introd. to this Epistle, §ii.: not as addressed to the Jews, and the next verse to the Gentiles: for least of all in this Epistle would such a distinction be found), **and love with faith** (faith is perhaps presupposed as being theirs: and he prays that love may always accompany it, see Gal. v. 6: or both are invoked on them, see 1 Tim. i. 14), **from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ** (see note on Rom. i. 7).

24.] General benediction on all who love Christ: corresponding with the malediction on all who love Him not, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. **May the grace** (so literally: viz. of God, which comes by Christ) **be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility** (i. e. whose love is incorruptible. The way to explain this difficult expression will be to endeavour to find some clue to the idea in the Apostle’s mind. He speaks, in Col. ii. 22, of worldly things which become *corrupt* with the using. *Incorruptible* is with him an epithet of God [Rom. i. 23. 1 Tim. i. 17]: the dead are raised *incorruptible* [1 Cor. xv. 52]: the Christian’s crown is *incorruptible* [1 Cor. ix. 25]. The word always elsewhere in N.T. signifies the *incorruptibility* of future immortality. If we seek elsewhere in the Epistles for an illustration of the term as applied to inward qualities, we find a close parallel in 1 Pet. iii. 4; where the ornament of women is to be “*the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptibility of a meek and quiet spirit*”—the contrast being between the “*corruptible things, gold and silver*,” and the *incorruptible* graces of the renewed spiritual man. I believe we are thus led to the meaning here;—that the love spoken of. is *in incorruptibility*;—in, as its sphere and element and condition, *incorruptibility*—not a fleeting earthly love, but a spiritual and eternal one. And thus only is the word worthy to stand as the crown and climax of this glorious Epistle: whereas in the ordinary [A. V.] rendering, ‘*sincerity*,’—besides that this does not give the meaning of the Greek word,—the Epistle would end with an anti-climax, by lowering the high standard which it has lifted up throughout to an apparent indifferentism, and admitting to the apostolic blessing all those, however otherwise wrong, who are only not hypocrites in their love of Christ).

PHILIPPIANS

Chapter 1

Chapter 3

Chapter 2

Chapter 4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1.] Timothy seems to be named as being well known to the Philippians (Acts xvi. 3, 10 ff.), and present with St. Paul at this time. The mention is merely formal, as the Apostle proceeds (ver. 8) in the first person singular. Certainly no *official* character is intended to be given by it, as some have thought: for of all the Epistles, this is the least official: and those to the Romans and Galatians, where no such mention occurs, the most so. Observe, there is no title of *Apostle* subjoined to *Paul* (as in Col. i. 1), probably because the Philippians needed no such reminiscence of his authority. Compare also 1 and 2 Thess.

all] both here and in vv. 4, 7, 8, 25; ch. ii. 17, 26, is best accounted for from the warm affection which breathes through this whole Epistle (see on ver. 3), not from any formal reason, as that the Apostle wishes to put those Philippians who had not sent to his sup-port, on a level in his affection with those who had,—that he wishes to set himself above all their party divisions (ch. ii. 3): &c.

with the bishops] Theodoret remarks, “He calls the presbyters, bishops: for at that time they had both names,”—and alleges Acts xx. 28, Tit. i. 5, 7, as shewing the same. See on the whole subject, note on Acts xx. 17.

and deacons] See on Rom. xii. 7; xvi. 1.—Chrysostom enquires why he writes *here* to the *clergy* as well as to the *saints*, and not in the Epistles to the Romans, or Corinthians, or Ephesians. And he answers it, “because they had joined in sending to the Apostle, and had borne fruit for him, and themselves had sent Epaphroditus to him.” But the true reason seems to be, the late date of our Epistle. The ecclesiastical offices were now more plainly distinguished than at the time when the two former of those Epistles were written. That to the Ephesians rests on grounds of its own.—The simple juxtaposition of the officers with the members of the Church, and indeed *their* being placed *after* those members, shews, as it seems to me, the absence of hierarchical views such as those in the Epistles of the apostolic fathers.

2.] See on Rom. i. 7.

3–11.] THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR FELLOWSHIP REGARDING THE GOSPEL (3–5), CONFIDENCE THAT GOD WILL CONTINUE AND PERFECT THE SAME (6–8), AND PRAYER FOR THEIR INCREASE IN HOLINESS UNTO THE DAY OF CHRIST (9–11).

3.] See the similar expressions, Rom. i. 9; 1 Cor. i. 4; Eph. i. 16; Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2; Philem. 4,

4.] **always—every—for you all**—here we have the overflowings of a full heart. The sense is, that every time he prayed, he joyfully offered up that portion of his prayers which was an intercession for them.

5.] **for (ground of the last assertion) your fellowship** (with one another: entire accord, unanimous action: not your fellowship *with me*) **as regards the Gospel** (not ‘*in the Gospel*,’ as A.V. Their mutual accord was *for the purposes of the Gospel*—i. e. the perfecting, of which he proceeds to treat. The expression “your fellowship as regards the Gospel” may include without expressly mentioning their contribution (ch. iv. 15) to the Apostle’s necessity:—that particular manifestation of this *fellowship*, which so especially marked the liberal and warmhearted Christians of Philippi) **from the first day** (of your receiving it) **until now;**

6.] **being** (i. e. seeing I am) **confident of this very thing** (it points out sharply and emphatically, implying, as here, that the very matter of confidence is one which will ensure the success of the *prayer*), **that He who began in you a good work** (viz. God: compare ch. ii. 13.—By ‘*a good work*,’ he refers his confidence to the *general* character of God as the doer and finisher of good: the one good work in his mind, being their *fellowship*, &c.—**The words up to the day of Jesus Christ** assume the nearness of the coming of the Lord. Here, as elsewhere, Commentators (even Ellicott recently) have endeavoured to escape from this inference. Thus Theophylact and OEcumenius refer the saying not only to the then existing generation of Philippians, but *also to their descendants*: Estius, in the case of each man, “*up to his own death:*” Calovius, understanding not the continuance till the day of Christ, but “term and complement of perfection which we shall possess at that, day:” and so nearly Calvin, but saying very beautifully,—“Although they who are freed from the mortal body, no longer war with the lusts of the flesh, and are as they say beyond range of the enemy: yet there will be nothing out of place in speaking of them as still in progress, because they have not yet attained to the point at which they aspired: they are not yet in possession of the felicity

and glory for which they hoped: in a word, the day has not yet dawned which is to reveal the treasures hidden in hope. And on this account, whenever hope is spoken of, the eyes must be fixed on the blessed resurrection as their point of reference.” Doubtless, this is *our* lesson, and must be our application of such passages: but this surely was not the sense in which the Apostle wrote them).

7.] *Justification of the above-expressed confidence*:—it was fair and right for him to entertain it.

to be thus minded] viz. with the confidence of ver. 6.

for you all] because it is an opinion involving their good.

you have me] The Greek will equally admit the rendering of the A.V. But the context here clearly determines for the other. *Their* bearing *him* always in mind was the ground of his confidence that they were prospering in the Gospel—**His bonds** were his situation: his **defence and confirmation of the Gospel**, his *employment* in that situation;—whether he refers to a *public* defence (2 Tim. iv. 16), or only to that defence of the Gospel, which he was constantly making in private. However this may be, the two, his *defence* and his *confirmation*, are most naturally understood as referring to one and the same course of action. One such *defence* and *confirmation* we have recorded in Acts xxviii. 23 ff

being partakers of my grace (the grace vouchsafed to me by God in Christ: not the grace of *suffering in Him*, as ver. 29, still less the grace of *apostleship*, Rom. i. 5, which the Philippians had furthered by their subsidies: ver. 8 decides the **grace** to be spiritual in its meaning).

8.] Confirmation of ver. 7. On the words, **in the tender heart** (literally, **bowels**) of **Christ Jesus**, Bengel remarks, “In Paul, it is not Paul that lives, but Christ Jesus: therefore Paul is moved, not in his own heart, but in that of Christ Jesus.” All real spiritual love is but a portion of the great love wherewith He hath loved us, which lives and _ yearns in all who are vitally united to Him.

9–11.] *The substance of his prayer* (already, ver. 4, alluded to) *for them*.

9.] **And** refers back to the *prayer* of ver. 4: ‘and this is the purport of my prayer.’ At the same time this purport follows most naturally, after the expression of desire for them in the last verse.

your love] not, ‘towards me,’—nor towards *God and Christ*, but either perfectly general, or, ‘towards one another:’ virtually identical with the “fellowship” of ver. 5. In the words, **your love**, its existence is recognized: in the prayer, *that it may abound more and more*, its deficiency is hinted at.

in is not to be taken as if *knowledge* and *perception* were departments of Love, *in which* it was to increase; but they are rather elements, in whose increase in their characters Love is also, and as a separate thing, to increase: as if it had been said, ‘that your love may increase, but not without an increase in *knowledge* and *perception*.’ For by these Love is guarded from being ill-judged and misplaced, which, separate from them, it would be: and accordingly, on the increase of these is all the subsequent stress laid.

knowledge means, accurate knowledge of moral and practical truth: **perception**, the power of apprehending the same: “the contrary of that dulness and inactivity of the *inward senses*, which brings about moral want of judgment, and indifference.” It has been well explained as **moral tact**.

10.] *Purpose of the increase in knowledge and perception: with a view to your distinguishing things that are more excellent (or, different)*, and so choosing the good, and refusing the evil. Whichever meaning, *more excellent or different*, we choose, the thing to be done amounts to the same,’ the selection of the good.

without offence] i.e. *not giving no offence* (to others), but **void of offence**, or **stumbling**, yourselves.

unto the day of Christ] See above on ver. 6: but **unto** is not exactly “*up to*;” it has more the meaning of ‘*for*,’—‘so that when that day comes, ye may be found.’ Our temporal use of ‘against’ exactly gives it 11.] **filled with the fruit of righteousness** (that result of work for God’s glory which is the product of a holy life: **righteousness** being here, the whole purified moral habit of the regenerate and justified man. Gal. v. 22; Eph. v. 9; James iii. 18), **which is** (specifies the *fruit*—that it is not of nor by man, but) **through Jesus Christ** (by the working of the Spirit which He sends from the Father. “We are wild olives and useless, till we are grafted into Christ, who by His living root makes us fruit-bearing trees.” Calvin), **unto the glory and praise of God** (belongs to **being filled**).

12–26.] DESCRIPTION OF HIS CONDITION AT ROME: HIS FEELINGS AND HOPES. And first he explains,

12–18.] how his imprisonment had given occasion to many to preach Christ: how some indeed had done this from unworthy motives, but still to his joy that, any how, Christ was preached.

12. rather] i.e. than the contrary: not, ‘more now than before.’

13.] so that (effect of this *falling out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel*) **my bonds** (the fact of my imprisonment) **have become manifest in Christ** (these words, not “*my bonds in Christ*,” as A.V., are to be taken together. They became known, not as a matter simply of notoriety, but of notoriety *in Christ*, i.e. in connexion with Christ’s cause,—as endured for Christ’s sake;—and thus the Gospel was furthered) **in the whole prætorium** (this may mean (1), the *barrack of the pretorian guards* attached to the palace of Nero. This idea seems supported by the greeting sent, ch. iv. 22, from “*those of Caesar’s household*,” who would, it is said, hardly have been mentioned, had the *prætorian camp* (see below) been meant. The word here, ‘*prætorium*,’ is also used of castles or palaces belonging to Cæsar, or to foreign princes, or even to private persons: it cannot be shewn ever to have signified the palatium at Rome, but the above meanings approach so nearly to this, that no serious objection can be taken to it. The fact here mentioned *may* be traced to St. Paul being guarded by a prætorian soldier, and having full liberty of preaching the Gospel [Acts xxviii. 30 f.]: but more probably his situation had been changed since then, —see Introd. to this Epistle, §iii. 6.—But the expression may also be taken (2) in its larger acceptation,—the quadrangular camp now forming part of Aurelian’s city walls,—including also the smaller camp on the Palatine. And this seems favoured by the words “*in all the palace*” (*prætorium*), **and to all others**, **and to all others** (literally, **the rest**, a popular hyperbole:—i.e., to others, besides those in the prætorium: not to be taken, as A.V., as signifying, ‘*in all other places*.’ The matter-of-fact interpretation would be, that the soldiers, and those who visited him, carried the fame of his being bound for Christ over all Rome);

14.] and (so) that most of (not ‘*many of*,’ as A.V.) **the brethren in the Lord** (this is the most natural connexion, and not that maintained by some, “*trusting in the Lord by my bonds*”), **encouraged by** (having confidence in) **my bonds** (“for if the preaching were not of God, said they, Paul would not have endured to be bound for it.” (Ecumenius), **are venturing more abundantly** (than before) **to speak the word [of God] fearlessly.**

15.] The two classes mentioned here are not subdivisions of the “*brethren in the Lord*” above, but the first are a new class, over and beyond those *brethren*, and the second are identical with the *brethren* above. The first were the anti-pauline Christians, of whom we hear so often in the Epistles (see Rom. xiv.; 1 Cor. iii. 10 ff.; iv. 15; ix. 1 ff.; 2 Cor. x. 1 ff.; xi. 1 ff. &c.).

for envy and strife, not strictly ‘*for the sake of*,’ so that they set envy (of me) and strife before them as their *object*—but ‘*in pursuance of*’—so **on account of**,—to forward and carry out.

and some also,—on account of, in pursuance of, **good will** (towards me).

16, 17.] The two classes here take up again those of the preceding verse, the last being treated first. **These last indeed** (preach Christ: omitted, as having just occurred: see below) **out of** (induced by) **love, knowing** (motive of their conduct) **that I am set** (not ‘*lie in prison*:’—‘am appointed by God’) **for the defence** (as in ver. 7; see note there: helping me in the solemn matter of my account of my ministry to God) **of the Gospel:**

17.] but the former out of self-seeking (or ‘*intrigue*:’ not ‘*contention*,’ as A.V., which has arisen from a mistake as to derivation of the word, see note, Rom. ii. 8) **proclaim Christ, insincerely, thinking** (explains *their insincerity*;—‘in that they think.’ In this expression is involved, ‘they do not succeed in their purpose’) **to raise up tribulation for** (me in) **my bonds** (i. e. **endeavouring to take opportunity**, by my being laid aside, to depreciate me and my preaching, and so to cause me trouble of spirit).

18.] What then (i. e. ‘what is my feeling thereupon?’)? **nevertheless** (literally **except that**: i.e. “nothing, except that:” notwithstanding this opposition to myself; it has no other result, than....), **in every way** (of preaching,—from whatever motive undertaken and however carried out), **in pretext** (with a by-motive, as in ver. 17), **or in verity** (‘truth and sincerity of spirit’), **CHRIST IS PROCLAIMED** (then these adversaries of the Apostle can hardly have been those against whom he speaks so decisively in Gal., and indeed in our ch. iii. 2, These men *preached Christ*, and thus forwarded, so far, the work of the Gospel, however mixed their motives may have been, or however imperfect their work); **and in this I rejoice, yea, and I shall (hereafter) rejoice;**

19.] for I know that this (viz. the greater spread of the preaching of Christ, last mentioned, ver. 18) **shall turn out to my salvation** (**salvation** is variously interpreted: of *deliverance* from present custody: of *sustenance in life*: of *victory* over foes: of the *salvation of others*). But from the context it must refer to *his own spiritual good*—his own fruitfulness for Christ and glorification of Him, whether by his life or death;—and so eventually his own *salvation*, in *degree* of blessedness, not in

relation to the absolute fact itself) **through your prayer** (his affection leads him to make this addition—i. e., if you continue to pray for me;—not without the help of **your prayers**: see similar expressions, 2 Cor. i. 11; Rom. xv. 30, 31; Philem. 22), **and (your) supply** (to me, by that prayer and its answer) **of the Spirit of Jesus Christ** (the construction obliges us to take **supply** as parallel with **prayer**, and as also included under the description **your**. Were the sense as A.V., and ordinarily, ‘*through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*,’ the form of the original would have been different. How such a meaning can be *doctrinally* objectionable, I am wholly unable to see. Surely, that intercessory prayer should *attain its object*, and the supply take place *in consequence of the prayer*, is only in accord with the simplest idea of any reality in such prayer at all.—By a delicate touch at the same time of personal humility and loving appreciation of their spiritual eminence and value to him, he rests the advancement of his own salvation on the supply of the Holy Spirit won for Him by their prayers),

20.] according to (for it is ‘*our confidence*, which hath great recompense of reward,’ Heb. x. 35 f.) **my expectation** (not, as A.V., ‘*earnest expectation*’) **and hope, that in nothing** (in no point, no particular) **I shall be ashamed** (general: have reason to take shame for my work for God, or His work in me), **but** (on the contrary) **in** (or with) **all** (as contrasted with *in nothing* above) **boldness** (contrast to *shame*:—boldness *on my part*, seeing that life or death are both alike glorious for me—and thus I, my body, the passive instrument in which Christ is glorified, shall any how be bold and of good cheer in this His glorification of Himself in me, **as always, now also** (that I am in the situation described above, ver. 17) **Christ shall be magnified** (*shewn to be what He is*: by His kingdom being spread among men: it is more than ‘*praised*’) **in my body** (*my body* being the *subject of life or death*,—in the occurrence of either of which he would not be ashamed, the one bringing active service for Christ, the other union with Him in heaven, ver. 21 ff.), **either by** (means of) **life or by** (means of) **death**.

21.] For (justification of the preceding expectation and hope, in either event) **to me** (emphatic) **to live** (continue in life, present) **(is) Christ** (see especially Gal. ii. 20. All my life, all my energy, all my time, is His—I *live Christ*), **and to die** (literally, **to have died**; the *act of living* is to him Christ; but it is the *state after* death, not the *act of dying*, which is gain to him) **(is) gain**. This last word has surprised some Commentators, expecting a repetition of *Christ*, or something at all events higher than mere *gain*. But it is to be explained by the foregoing context. ‘Even if my death should be the result of my enemies’ machinations, it will be no *shame* to me, but gain, and my boldness is secured even for that event.’

22.] But if (not the hypothetical ‘if’: but, assuming that it is so) **the continuing to live in the flesh** (expansion of “*to live*”), **this very thing** (this very *life* which I am undervaluing) **is to me the fruit of my work** (i. e. that in which the fruit of my apostolic ministry will be involved,—the condition of that fruit being brought forth), **then what** (i. e. which of the two) **I shall choose** (for myself) **I know not.**

23.] But (the contrast is to the decision involved in the word “*know*”) **I am perplexed** (literally, held in, kept back from decision, which would be a setting at liberty) **by** (*from the direction of*,—kept in on both sides) **the two** (which have been mentioned, viz. *life and death*: not, which *follow*), **having my desire towards** (the A.V., ‘*having a desire to*,’ entirely misses the delicate sense) **departing** (from this world—used on account of the “*being with Christ*” which follows), **and being with Christ** (“this place,” says Calvin, “suffices to refute their folly, who dream that our souls sleep when separated from our bodies: for Paul openly declares that we enjoy Christ’s presence when we are dissolved in death.” Thus much is true: but not perhaps that which some have inferred from our verse, that it shews a change of view respecting the nearness of the Lord’s advent—for it is only said *in case of* his death: he immediately takes it up [ver. 25] by an assurance that he should continue with them: and compare ver. 6; ch. iii. 20, 21, which shew that the advent was still regarded as imminent); **for it is by far better:**

24.] but to continue in my flesh is more needful on account of you (and others—but the expressions of his love are now directed solely to them).

25.] And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue alive with you all for your advancement and joy in your faith (both substantives belong to **in your faith**; it is their faith which is to advance, by the continuance of his teaching, and to rejoice, as explained below, on account of his presence among them);

26.] that your matter of boasting (not, as commonly rendered, ‘*your boasting*’ where the two can be distinguished they should be. Their Christian matter of boasting in him was, the possession of the Gospel, which they had received from him, which would abound, be assured and increased, by his presence among them) **may abound in Christ Jesus** (its field, element of increase, it being a Christian matter of glorying) **in me** (its field, element, of *abounding in Christ Jesus*, I being the worker of that which furnishes this material), **by means of my presence again with you.**

27—II. 18.] EXHORTATIONS TO UNITED FIRMNESS, TO MUTUAL CONCORD, TO HUMILITY; AND IN GENERAL TO EARNESTNESS IN RELIGION.

27.] Only,—i. e. I have but this to ask of you, in the prospect of my return.

conduct yourselves] literally, live as citizens of a polity. The “*polity*” being the heavenly state, of which you are citizens; see especially ch. iii. 20.

in one spirit] refers to the unity of spirit in which the various members of the church would be fused and blended in the case of *perfect unity*. This *one spirit* of Christians united for their common faith would of necessity be the Spirit of God which penetrates and inspires them: compare Eph. iv. 3, 4. Then, as this Spirit is the highest principle in us,—he includes also the lower portion, the animal soul;

with one soul striving together (the **soul**, receiving on the one hand influence from the spirit, on the other impressions from the outer world, is the sphere of the affections and moral energies, and thus is that in and by which the exertion here spoken of would take place. **striving together**, either *with one another* or *with me*. The former is I think preferable, both on account of the **one spirit** and **one soul**, which naturally prepare the mind for an *united* effort, and because *his own* share in the contest comes in as a new element in ver. 30) **for the faith** (compare Jude 3).

28.] The adversaries, from the comparison which follows with his own conflict, and the *suffering in Christ's behalf* spoken of in the next verse, must be the *adversaries of the faith*, whether Jews or Gentiles, compare 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

the which, viz. “*your not being terrified.*”

an evidence of perdition, because it will shew that all their arts are of no avail against your union and firmness and hopefulness: and thus their own ruin (*spiritual*, as the whole matter is spiritual), in hopelessly contending against you, is pointed out, not perhaps to themselves *as perceiving it*, but to themselves if they *choose* to perceive it.

but (is a sign) **of your salvation** (*spiritual* again: not merely, *rescue and safety from them*), **and this** (viz. the being a *sign*, to them of perdition, to you of your salvation: the sign is one from God) **from God**.

29.] Because (proof that the sign is from God, in that He has granted to *you* the double proof of His favour, not only, &c.) **unto you** (first emphasis) **it was granted** (second emphasis—it was *given by grace*), **on behalf of Christ** (the rendering ‘*to you it is given in the behalf of Christ*’ (A. V.), is wrong) **not only to believe on Him, but also on his behalf to suffer**;

30.] having (i. e., *ye having*) **the same conflict** (one in its nature and object) **as ye saw** (viz. when I was with you, Acts xvi. 16 ff.) **in me** (in my case as its example), **and now hear of in me** (he means, by report of others, and by this Epistle).

Philippians: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1–11.] Exhortation to unity and humility (1–4), after the example of Christ (5–11).

1.] He introduces in the fervour of his affection (“see how persistently, how vehemently, with what earnest sympathy,” Chrysostom) four great points of the Christian life and ministry, and by them enforces his exhortation. The four fall into *two pairs*, in each of which we have first the objective principle of Christian life (**in Christ,—of the Spirit**), and next the subjective principle “*of love*,”—*tenderness and compassions*. And thus the awakening of motives by these four points is at the same time powerful and touching. The first particular mentioned is here, **exhortation**, not “*consolation*,” which follows in the word **comfort**.

in Christ specifies the *element* of the exhortation. The Greek word, *paraklēsis*, signifies both *exhortation* and *consolation*: see Acts iv. 36.

of love is the subjective genitive,—‘consolation furnished by love.’

communion,—fellowship, of the *Holy Spirit*; compare 2 Cor. xiii. 13; **tenderness** (literally, **bowels**), of *affectionate emotion* in general: **compassions**, of the *compassionate emotions* in particular.—I may remark, that the exhortation being addressed to the Philippians, the **if there be any** is to be taken subjectively—**If there be with you any &c.**

2.] make.... full has the emphasis—‘he already had joy in them, but it was not *complete*, because they did not walk in perfect unity:’ com, ch. i. 9).

be of the same mind is more general than ‘*being of one mind*’ below. And this is all that can be reasonably said of the difference between them. In the more fervid portions of such an Epistle as this, we must be prepared for something very nearly approaching to tautology. “It is astonishing,” says Chrysostom, “how often he repeats the same thing, from his exceeding

earnestness").

having the same love] "i. e. equally loving and being loved," Chrysostom.

with united souls being of one mind] to be taken together as one designation only: **with union of soul unanimous** (minding one thing).

3.] entertaining no thought in a spirit of (according to, after the manner of) **self-seeking** (see note, Rom. ii. 8, on the common mistaken rendering of this word), **none in a spirit of vain-glory; but through your lowliness of mind** (assuming *lowliness* as a Christian grace which you possess. And it is this lowliness, thus existing already in you, which leads you to the estimate recommended. In the A.V. this fine point is lost, and the lowliness of mind appears as if it were the grace *recommended*, instead of *assumed*) **esteeming one another superior to yourselves** (i. e. each man his neighbour better than himself).

4.] Each regarding not their own matters but each also the matters of others ("this second clause [Mey.] is a feebler contrast than might have been expected after the absolute negation in the first." The **also** shews that that first is to be taken with some allowance, for by our very nature, each man must *look on his own things* in some measure).—On the nature of the strife in the Philippian Church, as shewn by the exhortations here, see Introduction, §ii. 7.

5–11.] The exhortation enforced, by the example of the self-denial of Christ Jesus.

5.] Think this in yourselves, which was also (the mind) in Christ Jesus (it is disputed whether this is said of the Son of God *before*, or *since* His Incarnation. See below. I assume now, and will presently endeavour to prove, that the Apostle's reference is first to the *taking on him* of our humanity, and then to his *further humiliation* in that humanity):

6.] who, subsisting (originally. Less cannot be implied in this word than eternal *præ-existence*. The participle is hardly equivalent to "although he subsisted," still less "inasmuch as he subsisted;" but simply states its fact as a link in the logical chain, "subsisting as He did;" without fixing the character of that link as causal or concessive) **in the form of God** (not merely the *nature* of God, which however is *implied*: but, as in Heb. i. 3, the "*brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person:*" compare John v. 37 with xvii. 5. "The divine nature had an infinite beauty in itself, even without any creature to look on it." Bengel. See also Col. i. 15; 2Cor. iv. 4. That the divine *nature* of Christ is not here meant, is clear: for He did not with reference to *this empty Himself*, ver. 7), **deemed not his equality with God a matter for grasping** (on the difficulty of the rendering, and the reasons for pressing that here adopted, see in my Greek Test. The *meaning* is plain enough. Our Lord possessed equality with God. In "the mind which was in Him, He regarded not this His equality a thing to be grasped at by Him, so as to hold it firm for Himself, but" &c. We have now to enquire, whether the opening of the passage will bear to be understood of our Lord *already incarnate*. De Wette and others have maintained that the name **Christ Jesus** cannot apply to *Him before His Incarnation*. But the answer to this is easy, viz. that that name applies to the *entire historical Person* of our Lord, of whom the whole passage is said, and not merely to Him in his pre-existent state. That one and the same person of the Son of God, "*existing in the form of God*," afterwards "*became in the likeness of men*," gathering to itself the humanity, in virtue of which He is now designated in the concrete, Christ Jesus. The dispute seems to me to be satisfactorily settled by the contrast between the two clauses just quoted. These two cannot belong to Christ in the same incarnate state. Therefore the former of them must refer to his *pre-incarnate state*),

7.] but emptied Himself (*Himself* is the emphatic word, *not the verb*).—He not only did not *enrich* himself, but he *emptied* himself:—He used His equality with God as an opportunity, not for self-exaltation, but for self-abasement. And the word simply and literally means, **emptied**. He emptied Himself of the *form of God* [not His *essential* glory, but its manifested possession: see on the words above: the glory which He had with the Father before the world began, John xvii. 5, and which He resumed at His glorification]—He ceased, while in this state of exinanition, to reflect the glory which He had with the Father), **[by] taking the form of a servant** (specification of the *method in which* He emptied Himself. The term **servant** is contrasted with 'equality with God'—and imports '*a servant of God*', —not a servant generally, nor a servant of man and God. And this state, of a *servant of God*, is further defined by what follows), **being made** (by birth into the world,—'*becoming*') **in the likeness of men** (compare Rom. viii. 3. He was not *a man pure and simple, and nothing else*, but the Son of God manifest in the flesh and nature of men. The expression, *in the likeness*, is forcible, in giving another subordinate specification, viz. that He was made in *like form* to men, who are *servants of God*).

8.] (the term, **being found**, serves to denote the taking up afresh of the subject, and introducing a new portion of the history. Hitherto of the act of laying aside the form of God, specified to have consisted in *taking the form of a servant*, and *being made in the likeness of men*. But now we take Him up again, this having past; we *find* Him in his human appearance—and what, then? we have further acts of self-humiliation to relate):

and when He was (having been) **found in habit** (guise, outward semblance; e.g. of look, and dress, and speech. The term is a

more specific repetition of “*in the likeness*” above: and is here *emphatic*: ‘being found in *habit*, &c.—He did not stop with this outward semblance, but.....) **as a man** (for He was not a man, but God [in Person], with the humanity taken on him: ‘**As a man**: for this was the nature which He took up into Him: He himself was not this, but He put this on.’ Theodoret), **He humbled himself** (in His humanity: a further act of self-denial. The stress here is on the verb, not on “*himself*:” in ver. 7 the weight rested on the *reflexive reference* of the act, but here it rests on the *reflexive act itself*) [**by**] **becoming** (this participle specifies, *wherein the humiliation consisted*) **obedient** (to God; as before in the term *servant*. See Rom. v. 19, Heb. v. 8 f., and ver. 9,—“*wherefore God also*,”—referring to the words “*to God*,” here understood) **even unto** (as far as) **death** (the climax of His obedience. **Unto death** must not be taken with “*humbled himself*,” which breaks the sentence awkwardly), **and that** (death) **the death of the cross** (i. e., “that accursed death, and appropriated to the worst of criminals.” Theophylact). **9–11.** *Exaltation of Jesus, consequent on this His humiliation:*—brought forward as an encouragement to follow His example. “He proves by Christ’s example, that they are blessed who voluntarily humiliate themselves with Christ: for from the most despised estate to the most exalted height, whoever humbles himself shall be in like manner exalted. Who then will refuse that submission by which he may rise to the glory of the heavenly kingdom?” Calvin.

9.] Wherefore (i. e. on account of this His self-humiliation and obedience: see Heb. ii. 9, note. But we must always bear in mind, that herein Christ was not *a man*, nor an example what we can do, but the eternal Son of God, lowering Himself to take the nature of men, and in it rendering voluntary and perfect obedience) **also** (introduces the result, Luke i. 35) **God** (on His part: on the reference, see on the word “*obedient*”) **highly exalted Him** (not only *exalted*, but **highly exalted**; His exaltation being a super-eminent one. Not, as A.V. above, ‘*hath highly exalted*;’ the reference is to an historical fact, viz. that of His Ascension), **and gave to Him** (the Father being greater than the incarnate Son, John xiv. 28, and having by His exaltation of Jesus to His throne, freely bestowed on him the kingly office, which is the completion of His Mediatorship, Rom. xiv. 9) **the name which is above every name** (the word must be kept, against most Commentators, to its plain sense of NAME,—and not rendered ‘glory,’ or understood of His office. The name is, the very name which He bore in His humiliation, but which now is the highest and most glorious of all names, the name of Jesus. Compare His own answer in glory, Acts ix. 5, “*I am JESUS, whom thou persecutes*”):

10.] that (intent of this exaltation) **in the name of Jesus** (emphatic, as the ground and element of the act which follows) **every knee should bend** (i. e. all prayer should be made [not, as A.V., ‘*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*,’—which the words of the original will not bear]. But *what* prayer? *to JESUS, or to GOD THROUGH HIM?*

The only way to answer this question is to regard the general aim of the passage. This undoubtedly is, the *exaltation of Jesus*. The clause, “*to the glory of God the Father*,” below, is no deduction from this, but rather an additional reason why we should carry on the exaltation of Jesus *until this new particular is introduced*. This would lead us to infer that the universal prayer is to be *to JESUS*. And this view is confirmed by the next clause, where every tongue is to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, when we remember the common expression, “*to call upon the name of the Lord*,” for prayer: Rom. x. 12 f.; 1 Cor. i. 2 [2 Tim. ii. 22]; Acts [vii. 59] ix. 14, 21; xxii. 16), **of those in heaven** (angels. Eph. i. 20, 21. Heb. i. 6) **and those on earth** (men) **and those under the earth** (the dead);

11.] and that every tongue (of all the classes just named) **should confess** (result of the *bending of every knee*) **that Jesus Christ is Lord** (see 1 Cor. xii. 3), **to the glory** (so as for such confession to issue in the glory) **of God the Father** (which is the great end of all Christ’s mediation and mediatorial kingdom, compare 1 Cor. xv. 24–28. “That the majesty of God may shine in Christ, and the Father be glorified in the Son; see John v. and xvii., and you will have the exposition of this place.” Calvin).

12–16.] After this glorious example, he exhorts them to earnestness after Christian perfection.

12. So then] i.e. as a consequence on this pattern set you by Christ. The **more obedient** answers to “*becoming obedient*,” ver. 8, and **salvation** to the exaltation of Christ. It is therefore better to refer “*so then*” to that which has just preceded, than to all the foregoing exhortations, ch. i. 27 ff.

ye were obedient] i.e. *to God*, as Christ above: not as ordinarily, ‘*to me*’ or ‘*my Gospel*.’ The following clauses are to be connected not with this, but with “*work out*,” &c., at the end of the verse.

as is by no means superfluous, but gives the sense **not as if** (it were a matter to be done) **in my presence only, but now** (as things are at present) **much more** (with more earnestness) **in my absence** (because spiritual help from me is withdrawn from you), **carry out** (bring to an accomplishment) **your own** (emphasis on *your own*, perhaps as directing attention to the example of Christ which has preceded,—as HE obeyed and won HIS exaltation, so do *you* obey and carry out *your own* salvation) **salvation** (which is *begun* with justification by faith, but must be carried out, brought to an issue, by sanctification of the Spirit—a life of holy obedience and advance to Christian perfection. For this reason, the A.V., ‘*work out your own salvation*, is bad, because ambiguous, giving the idea that the salvation is a thing to be gotten, brought in and brought about, by ourselves) **with fear and trembling** (lest you should fail of its accomplishment at the last. The expression indicates a state

of anxiety and self-distrust. And the stress of the exhortation is on these words:—considering the immense sacrifice which Christ made for you, and the lofty eminence to which God hath now raised Him, be ye more than ever earnest that you miss not your own share in such salvation. The thought before the Apostle's mind is much the same as that in Heb. ii. 3).

13.] Encouragement to fulfil the last exhortation—for you are not left to yourselves, but have the almighty Spirit dwelling in you to aid you.—This working must not be explained away, with Pelagius, into “a mere persuasion and encouraging by promises;” it is an efficacious working which is here spoken of: God not only *brings about* the will, but *creates* the will—we owe both the will to do good, and the power, to His indwelling Spirit.

in you, as in 1 Cor. xii. 6, and 2 Cor. iv. 12; Eph. ii. 2; Col. i. 29.

for [the sake of] His good pleasure,—i. e. in order to carry out that good counsel of His will which He hath purposed towards you.

14 ff.] *More detailed exhortations*, as to the manner of their Christian energizing.

murmuring, in every other place in the N.T., as also in Exod. xvi. 7, 9, signifies murmuring against men, not against God. And the context here makes it best to keep the same sense: such murmurings arising from selfishness, which is especially discommended to us by the example of Christ.

disputings] by the same rule, we should rather understand disputings with men, than doubts respecting God or duty.

15.] The whole clause is a reminiscence of Deut. xxxii. 8.

ye shine] indicative, not “*shine ye*,” imperative: for this *is* the position of Christians in the world: see Matt. v. 14; Eph. v. 8. Not ‘lights’ merely, but **luminaries**, ‘heavenly bodies.’ But this can hardly be satisfactorily given in an English version. **16.]** Probably as E.V., **holding forth** (to them, **applying** to them).

for (result of your thus walking, *as concerns myself*) **a matter of boasting for me against** (temporal: reserved for) **the day of Christ, that I did not run** (the past tense is from the point of view of that day) **for nothing, nor labour for nothing.**

17, 18.] These verses are closely connected with the preceding; not as De Wette and others maintain, with ch. i. 26, which is most unnatural, and never would occur to any reader. The connexion is this: in ver. 16 he had tacitly assumed that he should live to witness their blameless conduct even till the day of Christ. *Now* he puts the other alternative—that the dangers which surrounded him would result in his death:—and in that case equally he rejoiced, &c.

17. Yea, if even] In the present case (see on the construction in my Greek Test.), the Apostle seems to believe the supposition which he makes: that it veritably will be so.

if I am even being poured out, because the danger was besetting him *now*, and waxing onward to its accomplishment. He uses the word literally, with reference to the shedding of his blood. “He represents his whole apostolic work for the faith of the Philippians, as a *sacrifice*: if he is put to death in the course of it, he will be, by the shedding of his blood, poured out as a libation upon this sacrifice, as among the Jews (Num. xxviii. 7; xv. 4 ff.) and heathens, in their sacrifices, libations of wine were usual, which were poured over the offerings.” Meyer.

ministration here means, **priest's ministration** at the sacrifice.

of your faith] your faith *is the sacrifice*, which I, as a priest, offer to God. The image is precisely as in Rom. xv. 16, where he is the priest, offering up the Gentiles to God. And the case which he puts is, that he, the priest, should have his own blood poured out at, upon his sacrificing and presentation to God of their faith.

I joy] not to be joined with “*with you*,” but absolute, **I rejoice for myself and congratulate you** (not, ‘*rejoice with you*,’ as A.V. and many Commentators. Meyer well observes that the following verse is decisive against this: for if *they rejoiced* already, what need of “*do ye also joy?*”—congratulate you, viz. on the fact that I have been thus poured out for your faith, which would be an honour and a boast for you.)

18.] And on the same account do ye joy (answer to his *congratulation*,—for this your honour), **and congratulate me** (answer to his *joy* above,—on this my *joy*).

19–30.] ADDITIONAL NOTICES RESPECTING THE APOSTLE'S STATE IN HIS IMPRISONMENT: HIS INTENDED MISSION or TIMOTHY AND ACTUAL MISSION OF EPAPHRODITUS. The connexion with the foregoing seems to be,—

‘and yet this pouring out of my blood is by no means certain, for I hope to hear news of you soon, nay, to see you myself.’ **19.] in the Lord Jesus**] ‘my hope is not an idle one, as a worldly man’s might be; but one founded on faith in Christ.’ **shortly**, see ver. 23. **I also**] ‘as well as you, by your reception of news concerning me,’

20.] Reason why he would send Timothy above all others: **For I have none else like-minded** (with myself, not with Timothy), **who** (of that kind, who) **will really** (emphatic:—with no secondary regards for himself, as in ver. 21) **care for your affairs** (have real anxiety about your matters, to order them for the best).

21.] For they all (my present companions: who these were, we know not: they are characterized, ch. iv. 21, merely as “*the brethren who are with me*”—certainly not Luke—whether Demas, in transition between Philem. 24 and 2 Tim. iv. 10, we cannot say) **seek their own matters, not those of Jesus Christ** (no weakening of the assertion must be thought of, as that of understanding the word all as hyperbolically put for *many*, or *most*,—or understanding the assertion, *care more about&c. than&c.*,—as many Commentators: nor must it be restricted to the *love of ease, &c., unwillingness to undertake so long a journey*, as Chrysostom and others: both all and the assertion are absolute).

22.] But the approved worth of him ye know (viz. by trial, when we were at Philippi together, Acts xvi. 1, 3,—xvii. 14), —**viz.: that as a son (serveth) a father, he served with me for the Gospel**. The construction is this: the Apostle would have written, ‘as a son a father, so he served me,’—but changes it to ‘so he served *with me*,’ from modesty and reverence, seeing that we are not servants one of another, but all of God, in the matter of the Gospel.

24. in the Lord] See above, ver. 19. **also**, as well as Timothy.

25–30.] Of Epaphroditus: his mission: and recommendation of him. Epaphroditus is not elsewhere mentioned. The name was a common one. There is perhaps no reason for supposing him identical with Epaphras (Col. i. 7; iv. 12. Philem. 23), who was a minister of the Colossian church.—We must not attempt to give a strict official meaning to each of the words predicated of Epaphroditus. The accumulation of them serves to give him greater recommendation in the eyes of the Philippians.

25. to send] it was actually a sending back, though not so expressed here: see ch. iv. 18. The term **fellow-soldier** applies to the combat with the powers of darkness, in which the ministers of Christ are the leaders: see besides ref., 2 Tim. ii. 8. **but your**)—the contrast is to **my** above. **apostle**—not in the ordinary sense of apostle, in Rom. xi. 13,—but as in 2 Cor. viii. 23 (where see note).

26.] Reason for the necessity. The past tense, imperfect, *was longing* would become true when they received the letter. His longing was then actually present: an English letter-writer would have said, “is longing.” **full of heaviness]** Whether there was any special reason, more than affection, which made Epaphroditus anxious to return on account of this, we cannot say.

27. sorrow upon sorrow] i.e. if to his bonds had been added the loss of his friend,—“sorrow coming upon sorrow.” The second *sorrow* refers to his own distress in his imprisonment, so often implied in this Epistle: see Introd. §iii. 4, 5.

28.] The **that I may be the less sorrowful** is one of the Apostle’s delicate touches of affection. If *they rejoiced* in seeing Epaphroditus, *his own* trouble would be thereby lessened.

29.] therefore, as accom-plishing the purpose just expressed. The stress is on the request to *receive* him. There certainly seems to be something behind respecting Epaphroditus, of which we are not informed. If extreme affection had been the sole ground of his being *full of heaviness*, no such exhortation as this would have been needed.

30.] for the work [of Christ], viz. of the Gospel, or of Christ (probably the original text had only, **for the work**);—part of which it was, to sustain the minister of the Gospel, **he came nigh unto death**] he incurred so serious and nearly fatal a sickness:—not to be understood, as Chrysostom and others do, of danger incurred by the hostility of the authorities. **that he might fill up** (1 Cor. xvi. 17) **your deficiency** (viz. on account of your absence) **in the ministration to me** (this ministration was the contribution of money, which had been sent by Epaphroditus. The only *deficiency* in this kind service was, their inability, through absence, to minister it to the Apostle themselves: and this Epaphroditus filled up, and in so doing risked his life in the way above hinted at, i.e. probably by too constant and watchful attendance on the Apostle. So that there is no blame on them conveyed by the sentence,—but the whole is a delicate way of enhancing Epaphroditus’s services—‘that which you would have done if you could, he did for you—therefore receive him with all joy’).

Philippians: Chapter 3

CH. III. 1—IV. 1.] WARNING AGAINST CERTAIN JUDAIZERS,—ENFORCED BY HIS OWN EXAMPLE (1–16): ALSO AGAINST IMMORAL PERSONS (17—iv. 1).

1.] He appears to have been closing his Epistle (**finally**, &c.), but to have again gone off, on the vehement mention of the Judaizers, into an explanation of his strong term rendered **concision. the same things**] It seems to me that Wiesinger has rightly apprehended the reference of this somewhat difficult sentence. The **rejoice in the Lord**, taken up again by the **thus stand fast in the Lord**, ch. iv. 1, is evidently put here emphatically, with direct reference to the warning which follows—**let your joy (your boast) be in the Lord**. And this same exhortation, **rejoice**, is in fact the ground-tone of the whole Epistle. See ch. i. 18, 25; ii. 17; iv. 4, where the addition “*and again I say*” seems to refer back again to this saying. So that there is no difficulty in imagining that the Apostle may mean by “*the same things*,” his exhortation to rejoice. The description of this course as being **safe** is no objection to this: because the *rejoicing in the Lord* is in fact an introduction to the warning which follows: a provision, by upholding the antagonist duty, against their falling into deceit. And thus all the speculation, whether the **same things** refer to a lost Epistle, or to words uttered when he was with them, falls to the ground. And the inference from Polycarp’s words in his Epistles to these Philippians, “*who (viz. St. Paul) when absent wrote to you Epistles*,” may be a true one, but does not belong here.

2. **Beware of**] more properly, **observe**, with a view to avoid: so “*mark*,” Rom. xvi. 17. **the dogs**] profane, impure persons. The appellation occurs in various references; but in the Jewish usage of it, uncleanness was the prominent idea; see Deut. xxiii. 18; Ps. xxii. 16; Isa. lvi. 10, 11; Matt. xv. 26, 27. Rev. xxii. 15. **evil workers**] or, **workmen**. He seems to point out persons who actually *wrought*, and professedly for the Gospel, but who were ‘*doing the work of evil*,’ not mere ‘*evil-doers*.’ **the concision**] Thus only, by a hardly intelligible English word, can we express the contemptuous term which the Apostle uses, reserving the honourable appellation of “*the circumcision*” for Christians, who only could truly be so called. **Observe** (i. e. in fact, **Beware of**) **the** (I will not say, circumcision, but mere) concision (‘*amputation* who have no true circumcision of heart, but merely the cutting off of the flesh).

3.] **For we are the real CIRCUMcision** (whether bodily circumcised, or not—there would be among them some of both sorts: see Rom. ii. 25, 29; Col. ii. 11), **who worship** (pay religious service and obedience) **by the Spirit of God** (see John iv. 23, 24. ‘The Spirit of God is the agent, whereby our service is rendered: see Rom. v. 5; viii. 14; xii. 1; Heb. ix. 14. The emphasis is on it: for *both* profess a *worship*. **Of God is** expressed for solemnity), **and glory in** (stress on *This*,—are not ashamed of Him and seek our boast in circumcision, or the law, but make our *boast* in Him) **Christ Jesus, and trust not in the flesh** (‘but in the Spirit—in our union with Christ’).

4.] **Although I** (emphatic), **have** (not, ‘*might have*,’ as A.V. *I have it*, but do not choose to make use of it: *I have it*, in the flesh, but I am still, in spirit, of the number of *those who put no confidence in the flesh*) **confidence** (not, ‘*ground of confidence*:’ there is no need to soften the assertion, see above: nor to understand it of the unconverted state of the Apostle) **also** (over and above) **in the flesh. If any other man thinketh** (spoken of *his own judgment of himself*, not to be rendered ‘*seemeth*,’ and understood of other men’s judgment of him: for how can other men’s judging of the *fact* of his having confidence be in place here?—But it is his own judgment of the existence of the *right to have confidence* which is here in comparison) **to trust in the flesh, I more:**

5.] Reasons why. He compares himself with them in three particulars: 1. pure Jewish extraction: 2. legal exactitude and position: 3. legal zeal. **In circumcision** (so literally: i.e. ‘as regards circumcision’) **of eight days** (Gen. xvii. 12: as distinguished from those who, as proselytes, were circumcised in after life), **of the race of Israel** (compare Rom. xi. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 22; *not born of proselyte descent*, Thdt.), **of the tribe of Benjamin** (*a tribe not to be ashamed of*, Chrys.: it was one of the two faithful ones: it had furnished the first king of Israel, after whom indeed the Apostle was named), **an Hebrew, of Hebrews** (i. e. from Hebrew parents and ancestry on both sides); **as regards the law** (with reference to relative legal position and observance), **a Pharisee** (compare Acts xxiii. 6; xxvi. 5);

6.] **as regards zeal** (for the law), **a persecutor of the church** (of Christ); **as regards righteousness which is in** (as its element: consists in the keeping of) **the law, become blameless** (i. e. having carried this righteous-ness so far as to have become perfect in it, in the sight of men. Calvin well distinguishes between the real and apparent righteousness in the law—the former before God, never possessed by any man: the latter before men, here spoken of by Paul:—He was therefore in men’s judgment holy, and spotless from all legal blame. A rare praise, and almost singular: and yet let us see how much he esteemed it’).

7.] **But whatsoever things** (emphatic and general: these above mentioned, and all others. The *law itself* is not included among them, but only his “*gains*” from this and other sources) **were to me gains** (different kinds of gain), these (emphatic) **I have esteemed for Christ’s sake** (see it explained below, vv. 8, 9) **as loss** (“this *one* Loss he saw in all of which he speaks: hence no longer the plural, *losses*.” Meyer).

8.] **But moreover** (or, nay more, not only have I once for all passed this judgment, but I *continue to count*, &c. The contrast is of present *judgment to his past one*, mentioned above), **I also continue to esteem [them] all** (not, as A.V., *all things*) **to be loss on account of the super-eminence** (above them all) **of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord** (“he calls Him his

Lord to express the vehemence of his affection.” Calvin): **on whose account** (in what manner on His account, is explained below) **I suffered** (not, as A.V., “*have suffered*”) **the loss of ALL THINGS** (now, emphatic and universal), **and esteem them to be refuse, that I may** (by so disesteeming them: *it gives the aim of what went before*) **gain Christ** (not, as the rationalizing Grotius, ‘*the favour of Christ:*’ no indeed, it is Christ Himself;—His perfect image, His glorious perfection, which he wishes to win. He has Him now, but not in full: this can only be when his course is finished, and to this time the next words allude),

9.] and be found (now, and especially at His coming; see 2 Cor. v. 3) **in Him** (living and being, and included, in Him as my element), **not having mine own righteousness** (see on ver. 6), **which is of** (arising from) **the law, but that which is through** (as its medium) **the faith of** (in) **Christ** (or we may render, “not having as my righteousness that righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ”), **the righteousness which is of** (answering to **of the law**,—as its source, see Eph. ii. 8) **God on my faith** (built on, grounded on, granted on condition of, my faith).

10.] (aim and employment of this righteousness,—taking up again the “*excellency of the knowledge,*” ver. 8), **that I may know Him** (know, in that fulness of experimental knowledge, which is only wrought by being

like Him), **and** (not equivalent to ‘*that is to say*’ but additional: His Person, and... and...) **the power of His resurrection** (i. e. not ‘*the power by which He was raised,*’ but the power which His resurrection *exercises* on believers—in assuring them of their justification, Rom. iv. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 17;—mostly however here, from the context which goes on to speak of con-formity with His sufferings and death,—in *raising them with Him*,—compare Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12), **and the participation of His sufferings** (which is the necessitating condition of being brought under the power of His resurrection, see as above, and 2 Tim. ii. 11), **being conformed to His death** (it does not appear to me that St. Paul is here speaking, as Meyer and others maintain, of his imminent risk of a death of martyrdom, but that his meaning is general, applying to his whole course of suffering and self-denial, as indeed throughout the sentence. This conformity with Christ’s death was to take place by means of that perfect self-abjuration which he here asserts of himself—see Rom. viii. 29; 2 Cor. ii. 14; iv. 10 ff; 1 Cor. xv. 31, and especially Gal. ii. 20);

11.] if by any means (the original expression is one used when an end is proposed, but failure is presumed to be possible. “After all this,” says Chrysostom, “he is not yet confident, but speaks as elsewhere, ‘He that thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall?’ and, ‘I fear lest having preached to others, I myself may become a castaway’”) **I may attain** (on the sense, see Acts xxvi. 7; from which alone, it is evident that it does not signify ‘*live until*,’ as some maintain) **unto the resurrection from the dead** (viz. the blessed resurrection of the dead in Christ, in which “*they who are Christ’s*” shall rise “*at His coming,*” 1 Cor. xv. 23, see also 1 Thess. iv. 16).

12–14.] This seems to be inserted to prevent the misapprehension, that he conceived himself already to possess this knowledge, and to have grasped Christ in all His fulness.

12.] Not that (I do not mean, that---) **I have already acquired** (this *having gained Christ*: not the *praise* mentioned below, which is an image subsequently introduced, whereas the reference here must be to something foregoing; nor *the resurrection*, which has just been *stated* as an object of his wishes for the future: but as Calvin, “the entire participation of Christ’s sufferings, the perfect experience of the power of His resurrection, the clear knowledge of Himself”), **or am already completed** (in spiritual perfection): **but I pursue** (the image of a runner in a course is already before him), **if I may also** (besides *pressing on*. We cannot express this double “*also*” in an English version) **lay hold of that for which I was also laid hold of** (for the sense, compare 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The time referred to when he was thus laid hold of by Christ, was his *conversion*: but we need not, as Chrysostom and others, press the image of the race, and regard him as *flying*, and *overtaken*) **by Christ.**

13.] Emphatic and affectionate re-statement of the same, but not merely so;—he evidently alludes to some whom he wishes to warn by his example. **Brethren, I** (emphatic) **do not reckon myself** (emphatic) **to have laid hold: but one thing** (I do: there is nothing expressed in the original: we must not supply “*I reckon,*” nor “*I follow,*” nor “*I think,*” none of which correspond to the explanation following: nor can we say that no-thing requires to be supplied: the sense must have a logical supplement), **forgetting the things behind** (me, as a runner in the course; by which image, now fully before him, the expressions in this verse must be explained: “For a runner does not think how many times round the course he has completed, but how many remain to be completed:.... for what profit to us is the past if it be not completed?” Chrysostom), **but ever reaching out towards** (as the runner whose body is bent forwards in his course. “By *reaching out* is meant eagerly advancing onward the body even beyond the feet in their course, leaning the whole man forward, and reaching forth the hands, that the speed may be enhanced.” Chrysostom) **the things before** (i. e. the perfection not yet reached),

14.] I pursue towards the goal for (to reach, with a view to; or perhaps simply in the direction of) **the prize** (see 1 Cor. ix. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Rev. ii. 10) **of my heavenly** (see Heb. iii. 1; xii. 22: the allusion is to his appointment, having been made directly in heaven, not by delegation on earth) **calling** (not as we familiarly use the word,—‘*calling in life,*’&c.—but to be

kept to the *act of his being called* as an Apostle: q.d. ‘the prize consequent on the faithful carrying out of that summons which I received from God in heaven’) **of God** (who was the caller: but we must not think of Him, as Grotius and others,—as the arbiter sitting above and summoning to the course,—for in these last words the figure is dropped, and the *heavenly calling* represents real matter of fact) **in Christ Jesus** (to what are these last words to be referred? Not to the *pressing towards the mark*: but to “*the heavenly calling of God*”).

15, 16.] Exhortation to them to be unanimous in following this his example. In order to understand this somewhat difficult passage, we must remember (1) that the description of his own views and feelings which he holds up for their imitation (ver. 17) began with having no confidence in the flesh (ver. 3), and has continued to ver. 14. Also (2) that the description commencing with **as many as be perfect**, is taken up again from ver. 3, “*For we ave the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus,*” &c. These two considerations will keep us from narrowing too much the exhortation, **be thus minded**, and from misunderstanding the *perfection* meant.

15.] As many of us then (refers to ver. 3: see above) **as are perfect** (mature in Christian life—those described above, ver. 3), **let us be of this mind** (viz. that described as entertained by himself, vv. 7–14): **and if in any thing ye be differently minded** (it gives the meaning of diversity in a bad sense. The difference referred to seems to be that of too much self-esteem as to Christian perfection: see below), **this also** (as well as the rest which he has revealed) **will God reveal to you** (i. e. in the progress of the Christian life, you will find the true knowledge of your own imperfection and of Christ’s all-sufficiency revealed to you by God’s Spirit, Eph. i. 17 ff.). **even this** must not be taken as representing *the fact, that ye are otherwise minded*, but is *the thing, respecting which ye are otherwise minded*.

16.] Let not however this diversity, respecting which some of you yet await deeper revelations from God’s Spirit, produce any dissension in your Christian unity. **Nevertheless** (notwithstanding that some of you, &c. as above), **as far as we have attained** (towards Christian perfection: including both knowledge and practice, of both which he spoke above in his own case), **walk by the same (path)** (not, ‘*let us walk*,’ as A.V.).—The exhortation refers to the onward advance of the Christian life—go on together, each one in his place and degree of advance, but all in the same path,

17—IV. 1.] Exhortation to follow his example (17): warning against the enemies of the cross of Christ (18, 19): declaration of the high privileges and hopes of Christians (20, 21), and affectionate entreaty to steadfastness (iv. 1).

17.] Be imitators together (i. e. with one another: not imitators together with those mentioned below) **of me, and observe** (for imitation) **t hose who walk in such manner as ye have an example in us.**

18.] For (reason for the foregoing command in the form of warning against, others who walk differently) **many walk** (no need to supply any thing, as “*wickedly*,” or “*far otherwise*:” the word *walk* stands by itself here, and is defined afterwards), **whom I many times mentioned to you** (viz. when I was with you), **but now mention even weeping** (“why weeping? Because the evil was growing, because these even were well worth his tears... thus Paul weeps where others laugh and are wanton. So full of sympathy is he; so does he bear all men in his heart.” Chrysostom), **the enemies** (the article designates the particular class intended) **of the cross of Christ** (not of the *doctrine* of the Cross:—nor is there any reason to identify these with those spoken of ver. 2. Not Judaistic but Epicurean error, not obliquity of creed but of practice, is here stigmatized. And so Chrysostom,—“There were some who professed indeed to be Christians, but were living in laxity and self-enjoyment: and this is contrary to the Cross”):

19.] of whom perdition (everlasting, at the coming of the Lord: see ch. i. 28) **is the** (fixed, certain) **end, of whom their belly is the God, and their glory in their shame** (**their glory** is subjective—that which is glory in the judgment of these men,—and **their shame** objective,—that which is shame according to the reality of morals), **who regard** (it is not easy to give the original verb, in this sense, by one word in English. It betokens the whole aspect, the set of the thoughts and desires: “*earthly things*” are the substratum of all their feelings) **the things on earth** (in opposition to the things above, compare Col. iii. 1 ff.).

20.] For (I may well direct you to avoid those who *regard the things on earth*:—*for*—our state and feelings are wholly alien from theirs) **our** (emphatic) **country** (the *state* to which we belong, of which we by faith are citizens; meaning the Kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem [Gal. iv. 26. Col. iii. 1 ff.]. This objective meaning of the word is better than the subjective one, ‘*our citizenship*,’ or, ‘*our conversation*,’ as A.V., which rendering seems to want precedent. *Life* is worse, even supposing it justifiable, as giving the English reader the idea of *eternal life*, and so misleading him) **subsists** (the word is more solemn, as indicating priority and fixedness, than merely is would be: see ch. ii. 6. But in a *version*, which is to be idiomatic English, the difference cannot well be expressed) **in the heavens; from whence also** (additional particular, following on heaven being our country) **we wait for** (expect till the event arrives) a Saviour (emphatic: therefore we cannot “*regard the things on earth*,” because we are waiting for One to deliver us from them: neither is our *end perdition*, because One is coming to rescue us from it. Or, **as Saviour**: but perhaps the other is preferable, as being simpler), (viz.) **the Lord Jesus Christ:**

21.] (describes *the method, in which* this Saviour shall save us—a way utterly precluding our making a god of our body) **who shall transform** (see 1 Cor. xv. 51 ff. The words assume, as St. Paul always does when speaking incidentally, the persons in whose name he is speaking, and among whom he includes himself, surviving to witness the coming of the Lord. The change from the dust of death in the resurrection, however we may *accommodate* the expression to it, was not originally contemplated by it; witness the **looking for Christ, and the body of our humiliation**) **the body of our humiliation** (beware of the rendering “*our vile body*,” by which most Commentators, and the A.V., here enervate the Apostle’s fine and deep meaning. The *body* is that object, that material, in which our *humiliation* has place and is shown, by its suffering and being degraded.—Christ once had such a *humiliation*, and has passed through it to His glory—and He shall change us so as to be like him.—Whereas the rendering ‘*our vile body*’ sinks all this, and makes the epithet merely refer to that which is common to all humanity by nature), (**so as to be**) **conformed to the body of His glory** (in which, as its object or material, His glory has place and is displayed: again beware of the inadequate rendering “*his glorious body*,” A.V., see above), **according to** (after the analogy of) **the working of His power, even** (besides the *change, &c.* spoken of) **to subject to Him all things** (*the universe*: see the exception, 1 Cor. xv. 25–27).

Philippians: Chapter 4

IV. 1.] *Concluding exhortation*, referring to what has passed since ch. iii. 17,—not further back, for there first he turns directly to them in the second person, with **brethren** as here,—there also **thus** occurs, answering to the **thus** here,—and there, in the Christian’s hopes, vv. 20, 21, lies the ground of the **wherefore** here. **Wherefore**] since we have such a home, and look for such a Saviour, and expect such a change:—“so then, even if. ye see these men rejoicing, even if lightly spoken of, stand firm.” Chrysostom. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 58. **my joy and crown**] from 1 Thess. ii. 19, both words apply to the future great day in the Apostle’s mind. And indeed even without such reference to his usus loquendi, it would be difficult to dissociate the “crown” from such thoughts as that in 2 Tim. iv. 8. **so**] see above: ‘as I have been describing.’ **in the Lord**] as the element wherein your stedfastness consists. **my be-loved**] An affectionate repetition. “He closes his teaching after his manner with more earnest exhortations, that he may fix it more firmly in men’s minds. And he insinuates himself into their affections with tender appellations: which however are not used in flattery, but in sincere love.” Calvin.

2–9.] *Concluding exhortations to individuals (2, 8), and to all (4–9).*

2.] Euodia (not Euodias, as A.V., which is a blunder) **and Syntyche** (both *women*) appear to have needed this exhortation on account of some disagreement; both however being faithful, and fellow-workers [perhaps deaconesses, Rom. xvi. 1] with himself in the Gospel. The repetition of the verb **beseech** not merely signifies vehemence of affection, but hints at the present separation between them. **to be of the same mind**] see ch. ii. 2, note. He adds **in the Lord**, both to shew them wherein their unanimity must consist, and perhaps to point out to them that their present alienation was not in the Lord. **3.] Yea** assumes the granting of the request just made, and carries on further the same matter, see Philem. 20 and note. **true** (‘*genuine*;’—true, as distinguished from counterfeit) **yoke-fellow**] Who is intended, it is quite impossible to say. Various opinions have been, (1) that St. Paul addresses *his own wife*. So Clement of Alexandria, saying, “And Paul indeed does not hesitate in a certain Epistle to address his wife as his yoke-fellow, whom he did not lead about with him for the sake of the greater despatch of the ministerial work.” But this is evidently an error, and Theodoret says rightly, “This yoke-fellow some have stupidly imagined to be the Apostle’s wife, forgetting what he wrote to the Corinthians, numbering himself among the unmarried” (1 Cor. vii. 8). (2) that he was the husband, or brother, of Euodia or Syntyche: so Chrysostom doubtfully, and others. But then the epithet, “yoke-fellow,” would hardly be wanted—nor would the expression be at all natural. (3) that he was some fellow-labourer of the Apostle. So Theodoret,— “He calls him yoke-fellow, as bearing the same yoke of the Christian faith;” and others,—and of these some have under-stood *Epaphroditus*, others *Timothy*,—Bengel (but afterwards he preferred *Epaphroditus*), *Silas*,—Luther, the *chief bishop* at Philippi. (4) Others have regarded *Synzygus*, the Greek word rendered “yoke-fellow,” as a proper name. In this case the adjective **true** would mean, ‘who art veritably, as thy name is,’ a yoke-fellow. And this might be said by the Apostle, who elsewhere compares the Christian minister to the *ox treading out the corn*. It seems to me that we must choose between the two last hypotheses. The objections to each are about of equal weight: the Apostle nowhere else calls his fellow-labourers *yoke-fellows*,—and the proper name *Synzigus* is nowhere else found. But these are no reasons, respectively, against either hypothesis. We may safely say with Chrysostom, that “whether it be one or the other, it is not a matter to be particular about.” **help them**] Euodia and Syntyche: but not, as Grotius thinks, in *getting their livelihood*: it is *the work of their reconciliation* which he clearly has in view, and in which they would need help. **inasmuch as, or seeing that they....** The A.V. here is in error, ‘*help those women which....* The Gospel at Philippi was first received by women, Acts xvi. 13 ff., and these two must have been among those who having believed, laboured among their own sex for its spread. **with Clement also**] These words belong to la **boured with me**, not to **help them**, and are rather an additional reminiscence, than a part of the exhortation: ‘*as did Clement also&c.*’ as much as to say, ‘not that I mean, by naming those women with distinction, to imply forgetfulness of those others&c., and especially of Clement.—Clement must have been a fellow-worker with the Apostle at *Philippi*, from the context here; and from the non-occurrence of any such name among Paul’s fellow-travellers, and the fact that his other fellow-labourers must have been Philippians,—himself a native of Philippi. It is perhaps arbitrary, seeing that the name is so common, to assume his identity with Clement afterwards bishop of Rome, and author of the

Epistles to the Corinthians. This is done by Eusebius, Origen, and Jerome: but Chrysostom does not notice any such idea, whose names are in the

book of life] This description belongs to the others, whom *he does not name*: **whose names are** (not a wish, as Bengel, nor are they to be regarded as *dead* when this was written) **in the book of life** (see Luke x. 20). An absurd mistake is often made with regard to this verse, and by persons who might know better. It is continually said that *Clement is mentioned as having his name written in the book of life*: whereas nothing of the kind is here said: but, Euodia and Syntyche and Clement having been specified by name, others are mentioned whom the Apostle does not name, but of whom he beautifully says, that their names are written elsewhere, viz. in the book of life.

4-9.] Exhortation to ALL.

4.] AGAIN I will say it] referring to ch. iii. 1, where see note. It is the ground-tone of the Epistle.

5. your moderation] or, your forbearance, *reasonableness of dealing*, wherein not strictness of legal right, but consideration for one another, is the rule of practice. Aristotle defines it to be that which fills up the necessary deficiencies of *law*, which is *general*, by dealing with particular cases as the law-giver would have dealt with them if he had been by. By the prescribing that it is to be known to all men, the Apostle rather intends, ‘let no man know of you any inconsistency with *this reasonableness*.’ The universality of it justifies its application even to those described above, ch. iii. 18 f,—that though warned against them, they were to shew all moderation and clemency towards them. Meyer observes well, that the succession of these precepts seems to explain itself psychologically by the disposition of spiritual joy in the Lord exalting us both above rigorism, and above anxiety of mind (ver. 6). **The Lord is at hand]** These words may apply either to the foregoing—‘**the Lord will soon come**, He is the avenger; it is yours to be moderate and clement:’ or to the following—‘**the Lord is near**, be not anxious.’ Per-haps we may best regard it as the tran-sition from the one to the other: Christ’s coming is at hand—this is the best enforcer of clemency and forbearance: it also leads on to the duty of banishing anxiety. **The Lord** means *Christ*, and **at hand** refers to the day of His coming; see on ch. iii. 20.

6.] in every thing by your prayer and your supplication: or even better, **by the prayer and the supplication** appropriate to each thing. On the difference between *prayer* and *supplication* see on Eph. vi. 18, 1 Tim. ii. 1.—Not “with your thanksgiving,” because the matters themselves may not be recognized as grounds of *thanksgiving*, but *it should accompany every request*.

7.] Consequence of this laying every thing before God in prayer with thanksgiving—*peace unspeakable*, **And]** i.e. **and then the peace of God**, that peace which rests in God and is wrought by Him in the soul, the counterpoise of all troubles and anxieties—see John xvi. 33. **which surpasseth all understanding]** i.e. which is a more blessed thing than the human mind can take in. The **understanding** here is the *intelligent faculty*, the perceptive and appreciative power. On the sentiment itself, compare Eph. iii. 19. **your hearts and your thoughts]** The **heart** is the fountain of the **thoughts**, i.e. designs, plans (not minds, as A.V.): so that this expression is equivalent to, ‘*your hearts themselves, and their fruits*.’ in **Christ Jesus** is not the predicate after *shall keep—shall keep &c. in Christ*, i.e. keep them from falling from Christ: but, as usual, denotes the sphere or element of the *custody* thus bestowed—that it shall be a Christian security:—the verb *shall keep* being *absolute*.

8, 9.] Summary exhortation to Christian virtues not yet specified.

8.] Finally resumes again his intention of closing the Epistle with which he had begun ch. iii, but from which he had been diverted by incidental subjects. It is unnatural to attribute to the Apostle so formal a design as De Wette does, of now speaking of man’s part, as he had. hitherto of God’s part:—Chrysostom has it rightly,—“What does ‘Finally’ mean? It means, I have said all. It denotes one in haste, and having nothing to keep him where he is.”—This beautiful sentence, full of the Apostle’s fervour and eloquence, derives much force from the frequent repetition of “*whatsoever*,” and then of “*if there be any*.” **true** here is subjective, **truthful**: not, *true* in matter of fact. The whole regards ethical qualities. **seemly]** It is difficult to give the meaning in any one English word: ‘*honest*’ and ‘*honourable*’ are too weak: ‘*reverend*’ and ‘*venerable*,’ ‘*grace*,’ are seldom applied to *things*. Nor do I know any other more eligible. **right]** not ‘*just*,’ in respect of others, merely—but **right**, in that wider sense in which *righteousness* is used—before God and man: see this sense Acts x. 22; Rom. v. 7. **pure]** not merely ‘*chaste*’ in the ordinary confined acceptation: but **pure** generally: ‘*chastity in all departments of life*,’ as Calvin says. **lovely]** in the most general sense: for the exhortation is markedly and designedly as *general* as possible: of good report] again, general, and with reference to general fame. **whatever virtue there is, &c.]** sums up all which have gone before and generalizes still further. The A.V. ‘*if there be any virtue*,’ &c. is objectionable, not as expressing any doubt of the existence of the thing in the abstract, which it does not,—but as carrying the appearance of an *adjuration* ‘*by the existence of*, &c., which conveys a wrong impression of the sense—**whatever virtue there is, &c. virtue**, in the most general ethical sense: **praise**, as the companion of virtue. **these things**—viz., all the foregoing—**these things meditate**: let them be your thoughts.

9.] These general abstract things he now particularizes in the concrete as having been exemplified and taught by himself when among them. It is not, *both learned*, as A.V.: but as in text: which, besides what I have said recommending them above, were also recommended to you by my own example. **learned**] again, not as A.V., ‘*have learned*,’ &c.—but all past,—referring to the time when he was among them. **Those things which** (not ‘*whatsoever things*:’ we are on generals no longer: nor would he recommend to them *all* his own sayings and doings; but the *also* expressly provides for their being of the kinds specified above) **ye also learned, and received** (here of receiving not by *word of mouth*, but by knowledge of his character: the whole is not doctrinal, but ethical), **and heard** (again not of preaching, but of his tried and acknowledged Christian character, which was in men’s mouths and thus heard), **and saw** (each for himself) **in me; these things practise. and]** and then: see ver. 7. On **peace**, see there.

10–20.] *He thanks them for the supply received from Philippi.*

10.] **But** is transitional; the contrast being between the personal matters which are now introduced, and those more solemn ones which he has just been treating. **in the Lord**] See above, ch. iii. 1, ver. 4. “Every occurrence, in his view, has reference to Christ,—takes from Him its character and form.” Wiesinger. **now at length**] No *reproach* is conveyed by the expression, as Chrysostom thinks: see below. **ye revived**] literally, **ye came into leaf** (a metaphor from trees. But it is fanciful to conclude with Bengel, that it *w as Spring*, when the gift came: see on a similar fancy in 1 Cor. v. 7)—**ye budded forth again in caring for my interest** (see below). Your care for *me* was, so to speak, the *life* of the tree; it existed just as much in winter when there was no vegetation, when *ye lacked opportunity*, as when the buds were put forth in spring. This is evident by what follows. **for which purpose** (the purpose namely, of flourishing, putting forth the supply which you have now sent) **ye also were anxious** (all that long time), **but lacked opportunity** (Wiesinger well remarks that we must not press this *lack of opportunity* into a definite hypothesis, such as that their financial state was not adequate—that they had no means of conveyance, &c.—it is perfectly general, and all such fillings up are mere conjecture).

11.] Inserted to prevent misunderstanding of the last verse. See ch. iii, 12: **my meaning is not, that.... in respect of**, i.e. **according to**, i.e. **in consequence of**: **for I** (emphatic: **for my part**, whatever others may feel) **learned** (in my experience, my training for this apostolic work: not ‘*h ave learned*;’ the simple past is much simpler and more humble—‘I was taught: the *present* result of this teaching comes below, but not in this word), **in the state in which I am** (not ‘*in whatsoever state I am*,’ A.V. But the expression does not apply only to the Apostle’s *present circumstances*, but to any *possible* present ones: ‘*in which I am at any time*:’ see next verse) **to find competence** (we have no word for the original here. ‘*Self-sufficing*’ will express its meaning of independence of external help, but is liable to be misunderstood: ‘*competent*’ is not in use in this sense, though the abstract noun **competence** is: the German *genülam* gives it well).

12.] See above. **I know** (by this teaching) **also** (this expresses that, besides the general finding of competence in all circumstances, he specially has been taught to suffer humiliation and to bear abundance) **how to be brought low** (generally: but here especially by *need*, in humiliation of circumstances. Meyer remarks that 2 Cor. iv. 8; vi. 9, 10, are a commentary on this), **I know also** (*also* as before, or as an addition to *that clause*) **how to abound** (*to be uplifted*, as Wiesinger remarks, would be the *proper* general op-posite: but he chooses the special one, which fits the matter of which he is treating): **in every thing** (not, as A.V., ‘every where, nor ‘at every time:’—but as usually in St. Paul) **and in all things** (the expression conveys *universality*, as ‘*in each and all*,’ with us) **I have been taught the lesson (initiated)**: but no stress to be laid, as by Bengel, “I have been taught by secret discipline, unknown to the world:” see the last example below) **b oth to be satiated and to hunger, both to abound and to be in need.**

13.] ‘After these special notices, he declares his *universal* power,—how triumphantly, yet how humbly? Meyer. **I can do all things** (not ‘*all these things*:’ ‘the Apostle rises above mere relations of prosperous and adverse circumstance, to the *general*’) **in** (in union with,—by means of my spiritual life, which is not mine, but Christ living in me, Gal. ii, 20: the A.V. ‘*through*’ does not give this union sufficiently) **him who strengtheneth me** (i. e. *Christ*, as the gloss rightly supplies: compare 1 Tim. i. 12).

14.] “He is careful that in speaking thus boldly and trustingly, he may not seem to despise their bounty.” Calvin. “Do not think,” he says, “that because I am not in necessity, [had no need of what you sent: I did need it, on your account.” Chrysostom. **in that ye made yourselves partakers with my present tribulation** (not *poverty*: by their *sympathy* for him they suffered with him; and their gift was a *proof* of this sympathy).

15–17.] *Honourable recollection of their former kindness to him.*

15.] **But** contrasts this former service with their present one. **yourselves also**] “as well as I myself.” He addresses them *by name* (as 2 Cor. vi. 11) to mark them particularly as those who did what follows: but not to the absolute exclusion of others: others may have done it too, for aught that this appellative implies: that they did not, is by and by expressly asserted. **in the beginning of the gospel**] i.e. of *your* receiving the Gospel: he places himself in their situation; dates from (so to speak) *their* Christian era. This he specifies by **when I departed from Macedonia**. See Acts xvii. 14, By this is not meant, as commonly

understood, the supply which he received at Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 9), but that mentioned below: see there. **no church communicated with me as to (in) an account of giving and receiving** (so literally, i.e. every receipt being part of *the department of giving and receiving*, being *one side* of such a reckoning, ye alone opened such an account with me. It is true the Philippians had all the giving, the Apostle all the receiving: the debtor side was vacant in *their* account, the creditor side in *his*: but this did not make it any the less an account of “giving-and-receiving,” categorically so called. This explanation is in my view far the most simple, and preferable to the almost universal one, that his creditor and their debtor side was that which he *spiritually* imparted to them: for the introduction of spiritual gifts does not belong to the context, and therefore disturbs it), **but you only.**

16.] Since even in Thessalonica (which was an early stage of my *departing from Macedonia*, before the departure was consummated. The **since** gives a reason for and proof of the former assertion—ye were the only ones, &c.,—and ye began as early as when I was at Thessalonica) **ye sent both once and twice** (so literally: the account of the expression being, that when the first arrived, they had sent *once*: when the second, not only once, but twice) **to my necessity.**

17.] Again he removes any chance of misunderstanding, as above in ver. 11. It was not for his own sake but for theirs that he rejoiced at their liberality, because it multiplied the fruits of their faith. **Not that** (see above, ver. 11) **I seek** (present, ‘it is my character to seek’) **the gift** (in the case in question): **but I do seek** (the repetition of the verb is solemn and emphatic) **the fruit which** (thereby, in the case before us) **aboundeth to your account** (this mention of **your account** refers to the same expression, ver. 15—*fruit, reward* in the day of the Lord, the result of your labour for me in the Lord).

18.] But (notwithstanding that the gift is not that which I *desire*, I have received it, and been sufficiently supplied by it) **I have** (emphatic,—‘I have no more to ask from you, but have enough’) **all (I want), and abound** (over and above): **I am filled** (repetition and intensification of “*I abound*”), **having received at the hands of Epaphroditus the remittance from you, a savour of fragrance** (a clause in apposition, expressing a judgment. On the expression, see Eph. v. 2, note), **a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God** (see Heb. xiii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 5).

19.] An assurance taken up from the words “*to God*” above. **My God**, because he (St. Paul) was the receiver: this was his return to them: “My God, who will pay back what is given to His servant.” Bengel. **shall fully supply**] All refers to vv. 16, 18; —as *ye supplied my want, every need*,—and not only in the department alluded to, but in **all. in glory**] To be connected with **shall fully supply**: not with **his riches in glory**: not, *gloriously*, as many Commentators, which is weak and flat in the extreme: but **glory** is the instrument and element by and in which ‘all your need’ will be supplied: in **glory**: but not only at the coming of Christ, but in the whole glorious imparting to you of the unsearchable riches of Christ, begun and carried on here, and completed at that day. **in Christ Jesus**] And this filling (or, ‘this glory’) is, consists, and finds its sphere and element, **in Christ Jesus.**

20.] The contemplation both of the Christian reward, of which he has been speaking, and of the glorious completion of all God’s dealings at the great day,—and the close of his Epistle,—suggests this ascription of praise. **But**—however rich you may be in good works, however strong I may be by Christ to bear all things,—not to us, but to our God and Father be the glory. On the expression rendered **for ever and ever**, see note, Eph. iii. 21.

21–23.] GREETING AND FINAL BENEDICTION.

21.] He greets **every individual saint**. The singular has love and affection, and should not be lost, as in Conybeare’s translation, “*all God’s people.*” **in Christ Jesus**] belongs more probably to **salute**,—see Rom. xvi. 22; 1 Cor. xvi. 19,—than to “*saint,*” as in ch. i. 1, where, as Meyer observes, the expression has a diplomatic formality, whereas here there is no reason for so formal an adjunct. **The brethren which are with me**] These must, on account of the next verse, have been his closer friends, perhaps his colleagues in the ministry, such as Aristarchus, Epaphras, Demas, Timotheus. But there has arisen a question, how to reconcile this with ch. ii, 20? And it may be answered, that the lack of *oneness of mind* there predicated of his companions, did not exclude them from the title “*brethren,*” nor from sending greeting to the Philippians: see also ch. i. 14.

22. All the saints] i.e., all the Christians here. **they that are of Caesar’s household**] These perhaps were slaves belonging to the (technically so called) *familia* (i. e. all attached to the palace, including slaves and every dependant) of Nero, who had been con-verted by intercourse with St. Paul, probably at this time a prisoner in the pretorian barracks (see ch. i. 13, note) attached to the palace. This is much more likely, than that any of the actual *family* of Nero should have embraced Christianity. The reason of these being specified is not plain: the connexion perhaps between a *colony*, and some of the imperial household, might account for it.

23.] See Gal. vi. 18.

COLOSSIANS

Chapter 1

Chapter 3

Chapter 2

Chapter 4

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Colossians: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1. through the will of God] see on 1 Cor. i. 1. and Timothy] as in 2 Cor. i. 1 (see also Phil. i. 1; Philem. 1, and 2 Thess. i. 1). our brother] see on 2 Cor. i. 1. On his presence with the Apostle at the time of writing this Epistle, see Introd. to Pastoral Epistles, §i. 5.

2.] On COLOSSÆ, or COLASÆ, see Introd. §ii. 1. Grace&c.] see Rom. i. 7. [3–29.] INTRODUCTION, but unusually expanded, so as to anticipate the great subjects of the Epistle. And herein, 3–8.] *Thanksgiving for the faith, hope, and love of the Colossians, announced to him by Epaphras.*

3.] We (I and Timothy. In this Epistle, the plural and singular are too plainly distinguished to allow us to confuse them in translating: the plural pervading ch. i., the singular ch. ii, and the two occurring together in ch. iv. 3, 4, and the singular thenceforward. The change, as Meyer remarks, is never made without a reason) give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always (praying for you),

4.] having heard of (not, because we heard: see Eph. i. 15. The facts which he heard, not the fact of his hearing, were the ground of his thanksgiving) your faith in (the immediate element of their faith) Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have towards all the saints,

5.] on account of (this does not render a reason for the *thanksgiving*: the ground of such thanksgiving is ever in the spiritual state of the person addressed, see Rom. i. 8; 1 Cor. i. 4 ff.; Eph. i. 15, &c.; and this can hardly be said to be of such a kind: but for *their love to all the saints* just mentioned. “These saints were indeed afflicted and persecuted: but common hope was the bond of common love.” So Chrysostom) the hope (here, as elsewhere, used to signify the matter which is the object of hope: see Gal. v. 5; Tit. ii. 13; Heb. vi. 18) which is laid up for you in the heavens (see, besides reff., Matt. v. 12; vi. 20; xix. 21; Phil. iii. 20), of which ye heard (at the time when it was preached among them) before (not before this letter was written, as usually: nor, before ye had the hope: nor, before the hope is fulfilled: but ‘before,’ in the absolute indefinite sense which is often given to the idea of priority,—‘ere this’) in (as part of) the word of the truth of the gospel (the word or preaching whose substance was that truth of which the Gospel is the depository and vehicle);

6.] which is present (emphatic: is now, as it was then) with you, as it is also in all the world (“seeing that men are most confirmed by having many companions in their tenets, he adds as in all the world. It every where prevails: it every where stands firm.” Chrysostom. The expression to all the world is no hyperbole, but the repetition of the Lord’s parting command. Though not yet announced to all nations, it is present in all the world,—the whole world being the area in which it is proclaimed and working); bearing fruit and increasing (as Meyer observes, the figure is taken from a tree, whose bearing of fruit does not exclude its growth: with corn, it is otherwise), as also [it doth] in you, from the day when ye heard (it) (the Gospel), and came to know the grace of God in truth (not adverbial, ‘truly,’ but generally said, ‘truth’ being the whole element, in which the grace was proclaimed and received: ‘ye knew it in truth,—in its truth, and with true knowledge):

7.] as (viz. in truth:—‘in which truth’) ye learned from Epaphras (mentioned again ch. iv. 12 as of Colossæ, and Philem. 23, as then a fellow-prisoner with the Apostle. The name may be identical with Epaphroditus. A person of this latter name is mentioned, Phil. ii. 25, as sent by St. Paul to the church at Philippi, and ib. iv. 18, as having previously brought to him offerings from that church. There is no positive reason disproving their identity: but probability is against it) our beloved fellow-servant (of Christ, Phil. i. 1), who is a minister of Christ faithful on our behalf (the stress of the predatory sentence is on *faithful on our behalf*, which ought therefore in the translation not to be sundered. He was one acting faithfully as the Apostle’s deputy, and therefore not lightly to be set aside in favour of the new and erroneous teachers);

8.] who also made known to us your love in the Spirit (viz. the love of which he described himself in ver. 4 as having heard; their love to all the saints. This love is emphatically a gift, and in its full reference the chief gift, of the Spirit [Gal. v. 22; Rom. xv. 30], and is thus in the elemental region of the Spirit,—as distinct from those unspiritual states of mind which are in the flesh. This love of the Colossians he lays stress on, as a ground for thankfulness, a fruit of the hope laid up for them,—as being that side of their Christian character where he had no fault [or least fault, see ch. iii. 12–14] to find with them. He now proceeds, gently and delicately at first, to touch on matters needing correction).

9–12.] Prayer for their confirmation and completion in the spiritual life.

9.] **For this reason** (on account of your love and faith, &c. which Epaphras announced to us) **we also** (on our side—the Colossians having been the subject before; used too on account of the close correspondence of the words following with those used of the Colossians above), **from the day when we heard** [it] (viz. as in ver. 4), **do not cease praying for you** (he made general mention of his prayers in ver. 3: now he specifies what it is that he prays for), **and** (brings into prominence a special after a general; compare “and for me” Eph. vi. 18, 19) **beseeching that ye may be filled with the [thorough] knowledge** (a stronger word than mere knowledge: but we can hardly express this in the version) **of His** (God’s, understood as the object of our prayer) **will** (respecting your walk and conduct, as the context shews: not so much His purpose in Christ, as Chrysostom, “that you have access to Him through His Son, not through angels;” see Eph. i. 9: but of course not excluding the great source of that special will respecting you, His general will to be glorified in His Son) **in all wisdom and spiritual understanding** (the instrument by which we are to be thus filled,—the working of the Holy Spirit. **On wisdom and understanding**, the general and particular, see note, Eph. i. 8: so Bengel here,—“Wisdom” is something more general: “under-standing” is a certain aptitude, causing that to occur to the mind at every time which is then and there appropriate. “Understanding is in the intellect: wisdom, in the whole complex of the faculties of the soul”),

10.] **[so as] to walk** (aim of the foregoing imparting of wisdom: ‘so that ye may walk.’ “Here he speaks of their life and works: for he ever joins faith and conversation together.” Chrysostom) **worthily of the Lord** (Christ, see reff. and compare 3 John 6) **unto** (‘with a view to,’ subjective: or, ‘so as to effect,’ objective: the latter is preferable) **all** (all manner of, all that your case admits) **well-pleasing** (the meaning is, ‘so that in every way ye may be well-pleasing to God’), in (exemplifying element of the *bringing forth fruit*; see below) **every good work** (not to be joined with the former clause, as if bringing forth fruit were parenthetical: for this destroys the parallelism) **bearing fruit** (the good works being the fruits: the “*walking worthily of the Lord*” is now further specified, being subdivided into four departments, noted by the four participles “*bringing forth fruit*,” “*growing*,” “*strengthened*,” and “*giving thanks*”), **and increasing** (see on ver. 6 above) **by the knowledge of God** (the instrument of the increase. It is the knowledge of God which is the real instrument of *enlarge-ment*, in soul and in life, of the believer—not a *knowledge* which puffeth up, but an *accurate knowledge* which buildeth up);

11.] **in** (or **with**,—betokening the element. The instrument of this strength comes in below) **all** (departments of every kind of **strength being strengthened according to** (in pursuance of, as might be expected from) **the might of His glory** (beware of the rendering ‘*his glorious power*,’ into which A.V. has fallen here: the attribute of His glorious majesty here brought out: is its **might** [see Eph. i. 19, note], the power which it has thus to strengthen. In the very similar expression Eph. iii. 16, it was the “*riches of His glory*,” the *exuberant abundance* of the same, from which, as an inexhaustible treasure, our strength is to come), **to** (so as to produce in you, so that ye may attain to) **all patient endurance** (not only in tribulations, but generally in the life of the Spirit. Endurance is the result of the union of outward and inward strength) **and longsuffering** (not only towards your enemies or persecutors, but also in the conflict with error, which is more in question in this Epistle) **with joy** (some join these words with the next verse: but besides other objections, we thus lose the essential idea of joyful endurance,—and the beautiful train of thought, that joyfulness in suffering expresses itself in thankfulness to God);

12.] **giving thanks to the Father** (the connexion is not, as Chrysostom and others, with “*we do not cease*,” in ver. 9, the subject being we, Paul and Timothy,—but with the last words [see above], and the subjects are ‘you.’ **The Father**, viz. of our Lord Jesus Christ), **which made** (historical—by His gift of the Spirit through His Son: not “*hath made*,” as A.V.) **us** (Christians) **meet** (or, **capable**) **for the share** (participation) **of the inheritance of the saints in [the] light** (it is much disputed with what in [the] light is to be joined. Meyer, after Chrysostom and others, regards it as instrumental—as the means of the *making meet* which has been mentioned. But this seems unnatural, both in sense, and in the position of the words, in which it stands too far from “*made us meet*” to be its qualifying clause. It connects much more naturally with the word “*inheritance*,” or perhaps better still with the whole, “*the portion of the inheritance of the saints*,” giving “*the light*” as the region in which the inheritance of the saints, and consequently our share in it, is situated. Some would take “*the saints in (the) light*” together: but it does not seem so natural, as giving too great prominence to “*those who shall gain*” the inheritance, and not enough to the inheritance itself. The question as to whether he is speaking of a present inheritance, or the future glory of heaven, seems best answered by Chrysostom, who says, “He seems to me to be speaking at the same time of things present and things to come.” The inheritance is begun here, and the meetness conferred, in gradual sanctification: but completed hereafter. We are “*in the light*” here: see Rom. xiii, 12, 13; 1 Thess. v. 5; Eph. v. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 9 al.):

13.] **Transition (in the form of a laying out into its negative and positive sides, of the “making us meet” above) to the doctrine concerning Christ, which the Apostle has it in his mind to lay down.—Who rescued us out of the power** (i. e. region where the power extends—as in the territorial use of the words ‘kingdom,’ ‘county,’ &c.) **of darkness** (as contrasted with light above: not to be understood of a person, Satan, but of the whole character and rule of the region of unconverted human nature where they dwelt), **and translated [us]** (the word is strictly local in its meaning) **into the Kingdom** (not to be referred exclusively to the *future* kingdom, nor is this *translated* anticipatory, but a historical fact, realized at our conversion) **of the Son of His love** (genitive subjective: the Son upon whom His Love rests: the strongest possible contrast to that darkness, the very opposite of God’s Light and Love, in which we were. The Commentators compare *Benoni*, ‘the son of my sorrow,’ Gen.

xxxv, 18, Beware of missing all the force by rendering “*his dear Son*,” as A.V.). **14–20.] Description, introduced by the foregoing, of the pre-eminence and majesty of the Son of God, our Redeemer.**

14.] In whom (as its conditional element: as in the frequent expressions, “*in Christ*,” “*in the Lord*,” &c.: see the parallel, Eph. i. 7) **we have** (see note, *ibid.*) **our redemption** (or simpler, redemption), [even] **the remission of our sins** (note, Eph. i. 7. There we have “*trespasses*,” the more special word: but here **sins**, the more general: the meaning being the same)

15.] (the last verse has been a sort of introduction, through our own part in Him, to the Person of the Redeemer, which is now directly treated of, as against the teachers of error at Colossæ. He is described, *in His relation 1) to God and His Creation* [vv. 15–17]: 2) *to the Church* [18–20]) **who is** (now—in His glorified state—essentially and permanently: therefore not to be understood of the *historical* Christ, God manifested in our flesh on earth: nor again of the *eternal Word*: but of Christ’s present glorified state, in which He is exalted in our humanity, but exalted to that glory which He had with the Father before the world was. So that the following description applies to Christ’s whole Person in its essential glory,—now however, by His assumption of humanity, necessarily otherwise conditioned than before that assumption. See for the whole, notes on Phil. ii. 6, and Heb. i. 2 f.) **the image of the invisible God** (the adjunct invisible is of the utmost weight to the understanding of the expression. The same fact being the foundation of the whole as in Phil. ii. 6 ff., that the Son *subsisted in the form of God*, that side of the fact is brought out *here*, which points to His being the *visible* manifestation of that in God which is *invisible*: the word of the eternal silence, the *shining forth* of the *glory* which no creature can bear, the *expressed mark* of that *Person* which is incomparably God’s; in one word, the *declarer* of the Father, whom none hath seen. So that while the epithet **invisible** includes in it not only the *invisibility*, but the incomparability of God, the term **image** also must not be restricted to Christ corporeally visible in the Incarnation, but understood of Him as the manifestation of God in His whole Person and work—pre-existent and incarnate. It is obvious, that in this expression, the Apostle approaches very near to the Alexandrian doctrine of the *Logos* or *Word*: how near, may be seen by an extract from Philo: “As they who cannot look upon the sun, behold the sunshine opposite to him as himself, and the changing phases of the moon as being himself: so men apprehend the *image of God, His Angel the Word, as being Himself*.” St. Paul is, in fact, as St. John afterwards did, adopting the language of that lore as far as it represented divine truth, and rescuing it from being used in the service of error), **the first-born of all creation** (such, and not ‘*every creature*,’ is the meaning. See the reason for maintaining this in my Greek Test.—Christ is THE FIRST-BORN, Heb. i. 6. The idea was well known in the Alexandrian doctrine, and found in the writings of Philo. That the word is used as one whose meaning and reference was already known to the readers, is shewn by its being predicated of Christ as compared with two classes so different, the *creatures*, and the *dead* (ver. 18).—The first and simplest meaning is that of *priority of birth*. But this, if insisted on, in its limited temporal sense, must apply to our Lord’s birth from his *human mother*, and could have reference only to those brothers and sisters who were born of her afterwards; a reference clearly excluded here. But a secondary and derived meaning of “*first-born*,” as a designation of *dignity and precedence, implied by priority*, cannot be denied. See Ps. lxxxix. 27, “*I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth*.” Exod. iv. 22; Rom. viii. 29, and Heb. xii. 28. It would be obviously wrong here to limit the sense entirely to this reference, as the very expression below, “*He is before all things*,” shews, in which His priority is distinctly predicated. The safe method of interpretation therefore will be, to take into account the two ideas manifestly included in the word, and here distinctly referred to—priority, and dignity, and to regard the technical term “*first-born*” as used rather with reference to both these, than in strict construction where it stands. “First-born of every creature” will then imply, that Christ was not only first-born of His mother in the world, but first-begotten of His Father, before the worlds,—and that He holds the rank, as compared with every created thing, of first-born in dignity: BECAUSE, &c., ver. 16, where this assertion is justified. See below on ver. 18):

16.] because (explanatory of the words “*first-born of all creation*”—it must be so, seeing that nothing can so completely refute the idea that Christ Himself is included in creation, as this verse) **in Him** (as the conditional element, pre-existent and all-including: not ‘*by Him*,’ as A.V.—this is expressed afterwards, and is a different fact from the present one, though implied in it) **were all things created** (*was created the universe* would better give the force of the Greek singular with the collective neuter plural, which it is important here to preserve, as ‘*all things*’ may be thought of individually, not collectively—viz.), **things in the heavens and things on the earth** (an inexact designation of heaven and earth, and all that in them is, Rev. x. 6), **things visible and things invisible, whether thrones, whether lordships, whether governments, whether authorities** (these or nearly these distinctive classes of the heavenly powers occur in a more general sense in Eph. i. 21, where see note. It would be vain to attempt to assign to each of these their places in the celestial world. Perhaps the Apostle chose the expressions as terms common to the doctrine of the Colossian false teachers and his own: but the occurrence of so very similar a catalogue in Eph. i. 21, where no such object could be in view, hardly looks as if such a design were before him. Meyer well remarks, “For Christian faith it remains fixed, and it is sufficient, that there is testimony borne to the existence of different degrees and categories in the world of spirits above; but all attempts more precisely to fix these degrees, beyond what is written in the New Test., belong to the fanciful domain of theosophy”): **the whole universe** (see above on all things, ver. 16) **has been created** (not now of the mere act, but of the resulting endurance of creation—leading on to the “*subsisting*” below) **by Him** (instrumental: He is the agent in creation—the act was His, and the upholding is His: see John i. 3, note) **and for Him** (with a view to Him: He is the end of creation, containing the reason in Himself why creation is at all, and why it is as it is. See my Sermons on Divine Love, Serm. i. ii.):

17.] and He Himself (emphatic, His own person) **is** (as in John viii. 58, of essential existence: “*was*”? might have been used, as in John i. 1: but, as Meyer well observes, the Apostle keeps the past tenses for the explanatory clauses referring to past facts, vv. 16, 19) **before** (in *time*; bringing out one side of the *primo-genitive* above: not in *rank*, as the Socinians), **all things, and in Him** (as its conditional element of existence, see above on “*in him*,” ver. 16) **the universe subsists** (‘keeps together,’ ‘is held together in its present state.’ “Not only did He call it out of nothing into being, but He also holds it together now.” Chrysostom).

18–20.] Relation of Christ to the Church (see above on ver. 15).

18.] And He (emphatic; not any angels nor created beings: the whole following passage has a controversial bearing on the errors of the Colossian teachers) **is the Head of the body, the Church** (the genitive is one of apposition, inasmuch as in St. Paul, it is the church which *is*, not which *possesses*, the body): **who** (as if it had been said, ‘in that He is:’ the relative has an argumentative force) **is the beginning** (of the Church of the First-born, being Himself *first-born from the dead*. Compare “*Christ the firstfruits*,” 1 Cor. xv. 23, and especially Gen. xlxi. 3; Deut. xxi. 17; Rev. iii. 14. But the word evidently has, standing as it does here alone, a wider and more glorious reference than that of mere temporal precedence: see note on Rev. iii. 14: He is the Beginning, in that in Him is begun and conditioned the Church, vv. 19, 20), **the First-born from** (among) **the dead** (i. e. the first who arose from among the dead: but the term *first-born* [see above] being predicated of Christ in both references, he uses it here, regarding the resurrection as a kind of birth. On that which is implied in *it*, see above on ver. 15); **that He** (emphatic again: see above) **may become** (the *aim and purpose* of this his priority over creation and in resurrection) **in all things pre-eminent** (*first in rank*: the word is a transitional one, from priority in time to priority in dignity, and shews uncontestedly that the two ideas have been before the Apostle’s mind throughout).

19.] Confirmatory of the above-said priority:—‘*of which there can be no doubt, since it pleased*,’ &c.—**Because in Him He was pleased** (the subject here is naturally understood to be *God*, as expressed in 1 Cor. i. 21; Gal. i. 15: clearly not *Christ*, as some think, thereby inducing a manifest error in the subsequent clause, ‘by Himself He willed to reconcile all things to Himself,’ for it was not to Christ but to the Father that all things were reconciled by Him, see 2 Cor. v. 19) **that the whole fulness** (of God, see ch. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 19, and on the *word*, note, Eph. i. 10, 23. We must bear in mind here, with Meyer, that the meaning is not active, *that which fills any thing*, but passive, *that with which any thing is filled*: all that fulness of grace which is the complement of the divine character, and which dwells permanently in Christ. The various other interpretations see in my Greek Test.) **should dwell** (“this indwelling is the foundation of the reconciliation,” Bengel);

20.] through Him (as the instrument, in Redemption as in Creation, see above ver. 16 end) **to reconcile again** (see note on Eph. ii. 16) **all things** (the universe: not to be limited to ‘*all intelligent beings*,’ or ‘*all men*,’ or ‘*the whole Church*:’ these *all things* are broken up below into terms which will admit of no such limitation. On the fact, see below) **to Him** (viz. to **Himself**, i.e. to God, Eph. ii. 16: the writer has in his mind two Persons, both expressed by *He* and *Him*, and to be understood from the context); **having made peace** (the subject is not Christ [as in Eph. i. 15], but the Father: He is the subject in the whole sentence since the beginning of ver. 19) **by means of the blood of** (genitive possessive, belonging to, figuratively, as being shed on) **His cross,—through Him** (emphatic repetition, to bring *HIM*, the Person of Christ, into its place of prominence again, after the interruption occasioned by the last clause),—**whether** (*all things* consist of) **the things on the earth, or the things in the heavens.**—It has been a question, in what sense this reconciliation is predicated of the whole universe. Short of this meaning we cannot stop: we cannot hold with Erasmus and others, that it is a reconciliation of the *various portions of creation to one another*: nor, for the same reason, with Schleiermacher, understand that the elements to be reconciled are the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who were at variance about earthly and heavenly things, and were to be set at one in reference to God. The Apostle’s meaning clearly is, that by the blood of Christ’s Cross, reconciliation with God has passed on *all creation as a whole*, including angelic as well as human beings, unreasoning and lifeless things, as well as organized and intelligent. Now this may be understood in the following ways: 1) creation may be strictly regarded in its entirety, and man’s offence viewed as having, by inducing impurity upon one portion of it, alienated the whole from God: and thus “*all things*” may be involved in our fall. Some support may seem to be derived for this by the undeniable fact, that *the whole of man’s world* is included in these consequences (see Rom. viii. 19 f.). But on the other side, we never find the *angelic beings* thus involved: nay, we are taught to regard them as our model in hallowing God’s name, realizing His kingdom, and doing His will (Matt. vi. 9, 10). And again the terms here used, “*whether... whether..?* would not suffer this: reconciliation is thus predicated of each portion *separately*. We are thus driven, there being no question about *the things on the earth*, to enquire, how *the things in the heavens* can be said to be reconciled by the blood of the Cross. And here again, 2) we may say that angelic, celestial creation was alienated from God because a portion of it fell from its purity: and, though there is no idea of the reconciliation extending to *that portion*, yet the whole, as a whole, may need thus reconciling, by the final driving into punishment of the fallen, and thus setting the faithful in perfect and undoubted unity with God. But to this I answer, a) that such reconciliation (?) though it might be a result of the coming of the Lord Jesus, yet could not in any way be effected by the *blood of His cross*: b) that we have no reason to think that the fall of some angels involved the rest in its consequences, or that angelic being is evolved from any root, as ours is from Adam: nay, in both these particulars, the very contrary is revealed. We must then seek our solution in some meaning which will apply to angelic beings in their essential nature, not as regards the sin of some among them. And as thus applied, no reconciliation must be thought of which shall resemble *ours* in its process—for Christ took not upon Him the

seed of angels, nor paid any propitiatory penalty in the root of their nature, as including it in Himself. But, forasmuch as He is their Head as well as ours,—forasmuch as in Him they, as well as ourselves, live and move and have their being, it cannot be but that the great event in which He was glorified through suffering, should also bring them nearer to God, who subsist in Him in common with all creation. And at some such increase of blessedness does our Apostle seem to hint in Eph. iii. 10. That such increase might be described as a *reconciliation*, is manifest. In fact, every such nearer approach to Him may without violence to words be so described, in comparison with that previous greater distance which now seems like alienation;—and in this case even more properly, as one of the consequences of that great propitiation whose first and plainest effect was to reconcile to God, in the literal sense, the things upon earth, polluted and hostile in consequence of man's sin. So that our interpretation may be thus summed up: All creation subsists in Christ: all creation therefore is affected by His act of propitiation: sinful creation is, in the strictest sense, *reconciled*, from being at enmity: sinless creation, ever at a distance from his unapproachable purity, is lifted into nearer participation and higher glorification of Him, and is thus *reconciled*, though not in the strictest, yet in a very intelligible and allowable sense.

21–23.] Inclusion of the Colossians in this reconciliation and its consequences, if they remained firm in the faith.

21, 22.] **And you, who were once alienated** (subjective or objective?—‘estranged’ [in mind], or ‘banished’ [in fact]? In Eph. ii. 12, it is decidedly objective, for such is the cast of the whole sentence there: in Eph. iv. 18 it describes the objective result, with regard to the life of God, of the subjective ‘being darkened in the understanding.’ It is better then here to follow usage, and interpret objectively—‘alienated’—made aliens) **from God** (not from the *commonwealth of Israel*, nor from the *life of God*: for ‘God’ is the subject of the sentence), **and at enmity** (active or passive? ‘hating God,’ or ‘hated by God?’ Meyer takes the latter, as necessary in Rom. v. 10 [see note there]). But here, where the *mind* and *wicked works* are mentioned, there exists no such necessity: the objective state of enmity is grounded in its subjective causes;—and the intelligent responsible being is contemplated in the whole sentence: see the appeal, “*provided that ye abide*,” &c., below. I take **enmity** therefore actively, ‘hostile to Him’) **in** (specifies the *part in which*) **your understanding** (intellectual part: see on Eph. ii. 3, iv. 18) **in your wicked works** (sphere and element in which you lived, applying to both the *alienation* and the *enmity*), **now however hath He** (i. e. God, as before) **reconciled in** (of the *situation* or *element* of the reconciliation, so ver. 24, ‘*in my flesh*,’ and 1 Pet. ii. 24) **the body of his** (Christ’s) **flesh** (why so particularized? Bengel says, ‘to distinguish from the Church which is called the body of Christ:’—but this is irrelevant here: no one could have imagined that to be the meaning:—and other irrelevant reasons are given. But the true one is doubtless this, which Meyer suggests: ‘He found occasion enough to write of the reconciliation as he does here and ver. 20, in the angel-following of his readers, in which they ascribed reconciling mediatorship with God partly to higher spiritual beings, who were without a *body of flesh*’) **through His Death** (that being the instrumental cause, without which the reconciliation would not have been effected), **to** (aim and end) **present you** (see Eph. v. 27 and note: not, as a sacrifice) **holy and unblameable and irreproachable** (*holy* represents the positive, *blameless* and *unreproachable* the negative side of holiness. The question whether *inherent* or *imputed sanctity* is here meant, is best answered by remembering the whole analogy of St. Paul’s teaching, in which it is clear that progressive sanctification is ever the end, as regards the Christian, of his justification by faith. Irrespective even of the strong testimony of the next verse, I should uphold here the reference to inherent holiness, the work of the Spirit, consequent indeed on entering into the righteousness of Christ by faith. ‘It is,’ says Calvin, ‘a passage worthy of observation, testifying that no *gratuitous* righteousness is conferred upon us in Christ, but that we must be born again by the Spirit, to the obedience of righteousness: as he elsewhere teaches (1 Cor. i. 30), that Christ is made unto us righteousness’) **before His** (own) **presence** (at the day of Christ’s appearing):

23.] (condition of this presentation being realized: put in the form of an assumption of their firmness in the hope and faith of the Gospel)—**if, that is** (i. e. ‘provided, or assuming that,’ see note on 2 Cor. v. 3), **ye persist in the faith grounded** (see Eph. iii. 18, note: and on the sense, Luke vi. 48, 49) **and stedfast** (I Cor. xv. 58, where the thought also of *immovability* occurs), **and not being moved away from the hope of** (belonging to, see Eph. i. 18: the sense ‘*wrought by the Gospel*’ is true in fact, but hardly expresses the construction) **the Gospel which ye heard** (not, *have heard*). ‘Three considerations enforcing the *not being moved away*:—it would be for the Colossians themselves inexcusable, inconsistent with the universality of the Gospel, and contrary to the personal relation of the Apostle to the Gospel.’ Meyer),—**which was preached** (‘he saith not, is being preached, but speaks of it as already believed on and preached.’ Chrysostom) **in all creation** (see Mark xvi. 15. See above, ver. 15, note) **which is under the heaven,—of which I Paul became a minister** (as Chrysostom remarks, ‘This enhances his dignity and trustworthiness, as being put in charge with this Gospel thus widely spread, and so constituted the teacher of the world’).

24.] Transition from the mention of himself to *his joy in his sufferings for the Church, and (25–29) for the great object of his ministry*:—all with a view to enhance the glory, and establish the paramount claim of Christ.—**I now** (refers to what he beforetime *became*—extending what he is about to say down to the present time—emphatic, of *time*, not transitional merely) **rejoice in** (as the state in which I am when I rejoice, and the element of my joy itself. Our own idiom recognizes the same compound reference) **my sufferings on your behalf** (not, ‘as a substitute for you;’ but strictly ‘for your advantage,’ that you may be confirmed in the faith by [not my example merely], but the glorification of Christ in my sufferings), **and am filling up the deficiencies** (plural, because the *afflictions* are thought of individually, not as a mass: those sufferings which are wanting)

of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh (these words, ‘*in my flesh*,’ belong to the verb *am filling up*, not to “*the afflictions of Christ*:” for if it were so, the clause, “*the afflictions of Christ in my body*,” would contain in itself that which the whole clause asserts, and thus make it flat and tautological) **on behalf of His body, which is the Church** (the meaning being this: all the tribulations of Christ’s body are Christ’s tribulations. Whatever the whole Church has to suffer, even to the end, she suffers for her perfection in holiness and her completion in Him: and the tribulations of Christ will not be complete till the last pang shall have passed, and the last tear have been shed. Every suffering saint of God in every age and position is in fact filling up, in his place and degree, the *afflictions of Christ*, in his flesh, and on behalf of His body. Not a pang, not a tear is in vain. The Apostle, as standing out prominent among this suffering body, predicates this of himself especially: the *filling up*, to which we all contribute, was on his part so considerable, as to deserve the name of *a compensation* itself, for so the remarkable word implies, which we render *fill up*—I am contributing *afflictions* which one after another fill up the *defects*. Notice that of the SUFFERINGS of Christ not a word is said [see however 2 Cor. i. 5]: the context does not concern, nor does the word *afflictions* express, those meritorious sufferings which He bore in His person once for all, the measure of which was for ever filled by the one sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, on the cross; He is here regarded as suffering with His suffering people, bearing them in Himself, and being as in Isa. lxiii. 9, “afflicted in all their affliction.” On other suggested interpretations, see in my Greek Test.):

25.] of which (in service of which, on behoof of which) **I** (emphatic, resuming “*I Paul*” above) **became a minister,** **according to** (so that my ministry is conducted in pursuance of, after the requirements and conditions of) **the stewardship** (see on 1 Cor. ix. 17; iv. 1, al.: also Eph. i. 10; iii. 2: not, ‘*dispensation*:’ the simpler meaning here seems best, especially when taken with the word **given**. “In the house of God, which is the Church, I am steward, as it were dispensing to the whole family, i.e. to individual Christians, the goods and the gifts of God my Lord.” Cornelius a Lapide) **of God** (of which God is the source and chief) **which was given** (entrusted) **me towards** (so literally: i.e., with a view to or for) **you** (among other Gentiles; but as so often, the particular reference of the occasion is brought out, and the general kept back), **to** (object and aim of the giving of the stewardship) **fulfil the word of God** (exactly as in Rom. xv. 19, to fulfil the duty of the stewardship *towards you*, in doing all that this preaching of the word requires);

26.] (namely) the mystery (see on Eph. i. 9) **which hath been hidden from** (the time of; the preposition is temporal, not, ‘from’ in the sense of ‘hidden from’) **the ages and the generations** (before us, or of the world: the expression is historical, and within the limits of our world), **but now** (in these times) **was manifested** (so in the original: but in English in connexion with **now**, we must say, *hath been*. ‘The expression is historical: it was manifested at the glorification of Christ and the bestowal of the Spirit) **unto His saints** (all believers, not merely as in Eph. iii. 5, where the reference is different, the Apostles and prophets [see there], as some of the Commentators have explained it):

27.] to whom (equivalent to, “*seeing that to them*:” this verse setting forth, not the contents of the mystery before mentioned, but a separate particular, that these *saints* are persons to whom God, &c.) **God willed to make known what** (how full, how inexhaustible) **is the richness of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles** (is this the [subjective] glory of the elevated human character, brought in by the Gospel: or is it the glory of God, manifested [objective] by His grace in this mystery, revealing His Person to the Gentiles? Neither of these seems to satisfy the conditions of the sentence, in which the **glory** reappears below with **the hope** prefixed. On this account, we must understand it of the glory of *which the Gentiles are to become partakers* by the revelation of this mystery: i.e. the glory which is begun here, and completed at the Lord’s coming, see Rom. viii. 17, 18. And it is the glory of, belonging to, this mystery, because the mystery contains and reveals it as a portion of its contents. The richness of this glory is unfolded and made known by God’s Spirit as the Gospel is received *among the Gentiles*, as the most wonderful display of it: the Gen-tiles having been sunk so low in moral and spiritual degradation); **which** (mystery: this is more in analogy with St. Paul’s own method of speaking than to understand **which of the riches**. Besides which [*this mystery*] [*among the Gentiles*] is strictly parallel with, being explained by [*Christ*] (*among you*) **is** (consists in) **Christ** (Himself: not to be weakened away into the *knowledge of Christ*,—or the *doctrine of Christ*: compare Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 17; 1 Tim. iii. 16) **among you** (not to be confined to the rendering, ‘*in you*,’ individually, though this is the *way in which* Christ is among you: **among you** here is strictly parallel with **among the Gentiles** above: before the Gospel came they were “*separate from Christ*,” Eph. ii. 12), **the HOPE** (emphatic; explains how Christ among them was to acquaint them *what is the riches*, &c., viz. by being Himself the HOPE of that glory) **of the glory** (not abstract, ‘*of glory*? it is, the glory which has just been mentioned):

28.] whom (Christ) **we** (myself and Timothy: but generally, of all who were associated with him in this true preaching: not, ‘*I*,’ which here quite destroys the force. We preach Christ—not circumcision, not angel-worship, not asceticism, as the source of this hope) **proclaim** (as being this **hope of the glory**), **warning** (see on Eph. vi. 4, and below) **every man, and teaching every man** (I am inclined with Meyer to take **warning** and **teaching** as corresponding in the main to the two great subjects of Christian preaching, repentance and faith) **in all wisdom** (these words represent the method of this teaching); **that we may present** (see above ver. 22) **every man** (notice the emphatic triple repetition of every man, shewing that the Apostle was jealous of every the least invasion, on the part of the false teachers, of those souls with whom he was put in charge. At the same time it carries a solemn individual appeal to those thus warned and taught) **perfect in Christ** (element of his perfection, in union with and life in Him,—comprehending both knowledge and practice. The presentation spoken of is clearly that at the

great day of Christ's appearing)?

29.] His own personal part in this general work—for which end (viz. the *presenting*, &c.) **I labour also** (also implies the addition of a new particular over and above the *proclaiming*, carrying it onwards even to this), **earnestly contending** (in spirit; in the earnestness with which he strove for this end, see ch. ii. 1–3: not, with adversaries: this was so, but is not relevant here. See Phil. i. 30; 1 Thess. ii, 2) **according to** (after the proportion of, as is to be expected from) **His** (Christ's—see Phil. iv. 13: not God's) **working, which worketh in me mightily** (there is no allusion to miraculous gifts, as some have thought).

Colossians: Chapter 2

CHAP. II.] FIRST PART OF THE EPISTLE. His earnestness in entering into and forwarding the Christian life among them, so amply set forth in ch. i., is now more pointedly directed to warning them against false teachers. This he does by 1) *connecting his conflict, just spoken of, with the confirmation in spiritual knowledge of themselves and others whom he had not seen* (vv. 1–3); 2) *warning them against false wisdom which might lead them away from Christ* (vv. 4–23): and that a) *generally and in hints* (vv. 4–15),—b) *specifically and plain-spokenly* (vv. 16–23).

1.] **For** (follows on, and justifies, while it exemplifies the *contention just spoken of*, ch. i. 29) **I would have you know how great** (emphatic: not only that I have a *contention*, but how great it is) **a conflict** (of anxiety and prayer, ch. iv. 12: his present imprisoned state necessitates this reference here: he could not be in conflict with the false teachers) **I have on behalf of you, and those at Laodicea** (who probably were in the same danger of being led astray, see ch. iv. 16: on Laodicea, see Introd. to Apocalypse,§iii. 13), **and (for) as many as have not seen my face in the flesh** (the tendency of this verse is, to exalt the importance of the Apostle's bodily presence with a church, if its defect caused him such anxiety, so that we must not say, with some, that he shews them how little his bodily presence mattered compared with his presence in the spirit which they always had),

2.] **that** (object of the *contention*) **their hearts may be confirmed** (it can hardly be doubted here, where he is treating, not of troubles and persecutions, but of being shaken from the faith, that the word, so manifold in its bearings, and so difficult to express in English, carries with it the meaning of strengthening, not of comforting merely. If we could preserve in 'comfort' the trace of its derivation from the Latin '*confortari*', it might answer here: but in our present usage, it does not convey any idea of strengthening), **they being knit together in love** (the bond of perfectness, as of union: disruption being necessarily consequent on false doctrine, their being knit together in love would be a safeguard against it. Love is thus the *element* of the *being knit together*), **and** (besides the elementary unity) **unto** (as the *object* of the *knitting together*), **all the riches of the full assurance of the** (Christian) **understanding** (the accumulated substantives shew us generally the Apostle's anxious desire for a special reason to impress the importance of the matter on them. "I know," he says, "that you believe, but I wish you to be completed, not only unto the riches, but to *all* the riches, that ye may be complete in all things and fully." Chrysostom), **unto** (parallel with the former, and explaining *all the riches*, &c., by the *thorough knowledge*, &c.) **the thorough knowledge** (on *thorough knowledge* and *knowledge*, here clearly distinguished, see on ch. i. 9) **of the mystery of God** (the additions here found in the received text, and in other authorities, seem to be owing to the common practice in the MSS., of annotating in the margin on the divine name, to specify to which Person it belongs. Thus it would seem likely that, **of God** having been all that was in the original, "*the Father*" was placed against it by some, "*Christ*" or "*the Christ*" by others: and then these found their way into the text in various combinations, some of which from their difficulty gave rise again to alterations. The reading in the text, as accounting for all the rest, has been adopted by Griesbach, Scholz, Tischendorf, Olshausen, De Wette, and others): **in which** (mystery, which is in fact Christ: see ch. i. 27; 1 Tim. iii. 16) **are all the hidden** (the ordinary rendering is, to make hidden the predicate after are: '*in which* (or, *whom*) *are all the treasures*&c. *hidden*',) The objection to this is, that it is contrary to fact: the treasures are not hidden, but revealed. The rendering which I have adopted is that of Meyer, and I am persuaded on consideration that it is not only the only logical but the only grammatical one also. See the subject discussed in my Greek Test.) **treasures of wisdom and knowledge (wisdom, the general, knowledge, the particular; see note on Eph. i. 8).**

4.] See summary at the beginning of the chapter.—**But** (the contrast is between the assertion above, and the reason of it, now to be introduced) **this** (viz. vv. 1–3, not ver. 3 only, for ver. 1 is alluded to in ver. 5,—and vv. 1–3 form a logically connected whole) **I say, in order that** (aim and design of it) **no one may beguile you with persuasive discourse** (see 1 Cor. ii. 4).

5.] Personal ground why they should not be deceived: **For though I am absent** (there is no ground whatever from this expression for inferring that he *had been at Colossæ*: nor would the mere expression in 1 Cor. v. 3 authorize any such inference, were it not otherwise known to be so) **in the flesh** (ver. 1), **yet in the Spirit** (contrast to "*in the flesh*" not meaning, as some think, that God revealed to him by the Spirit the things that took place at Colossæ) **I am with you rejoicing** (at their general state: rejoicing, as such presence would naturally suggest: the further explanation of such joy following) **and seeing your order** (the orderly arrangement of your harmonized and undivided church), **and** (the *order* just spoken of was the outward manifestation; this is the inward fact on which it rested) **the solid basis** (the word does not mean '*stedfastness*' [A.

V.], nor indeed any abstract quality at all: but, the concrete product of the abstract quality the **basis or foundation**) of your **faith on Christ**.

6.] **As then** (he has described his conflict and his joy on their behalf—he now exhorts them to justify such anxiety and approval by consistency with their first faith) **ye received** (from Epaphras and your first teachers) [**the**] **Christ Jesus [as] the Lord** (so literally. The expression here used occurs only this once. It is necessary, in order to express its full sense, to give something of a predicative force both to “*the Christ*” and to “*the Lord*:” see 1 Cor. xii. 3. On the sense, Bisping says well: “Notice that Paul here says, ‘*ye received the Christ*,’ and not ‘*ye received the word of Christ*.’ True faith is a spiritual communion: for in faith we receive not only the doctrine of Christ, but Himself, into us: in faith He Himself dwells in us: we cannot separate Christ, as Eternal Truth, and His doctrine”), **in Him walk** (carry on your life of faith and practice);

7.] **rooted** (see Eph. iii. 18) **and being continually built up in Him** (as both the soil and the foundation—in both cases the conditional element. It is to be noticed 1) how the fervid style of St. Paul, disdaining the nice proprieties of rhetoric, sets forth the point in hand by inconsistent similitudes: the walking implying *motion*, the rooting and building, rest: 2) that the rooting, answering to the first elementary grounding in Him, is in the *past*: the being built up, answering to the continual increase in Him, is *present*. See Eph. ii. 20, where this latter is set forth as a fact in the past), **and confirmed in the (or, your) faith as ye were taught, abounding therein in (or, with) thanksgiving** (the field of operation, or element, in which that abundance is manifested).

8-15.] See summary, on ver. 1—*general warning against being seduced by a wisdom which was after men’s tradition, and not after Christ,—of whose perfect work, and their perfection in Him, he reminds them.*

8.] **Take heed lest there shall be** (the future indicative expresses strong fear lest that which is feared should really be the case) **any one who** (the expression points at some known person) **leadeth you captive** (the original word is an unusual one. It occurs in the sense of carrying off a virgin, which idea of *abduction* is very near that here) **by means of his** (or, *the* current, popular, philosophy of the day: but I prefer the possessive meaning) **philosophy and empty deceit** (the *philosophy* is not necessarily *Greek*, as many have thought; for Josephus calls the doctrine of the Jewish sects philosophy. The character of the philosophy here meant, as gathered from the descriptions which follow, was that mixture of Jewish and Oriental, which afterwards expanded into gnosticism), **according to the tradition of men** (this tradition, derived from men, human and not divine in its character, set the rule to this his philosophy, and according to this he *captivated men*), **according to the elements** (see on Gal. iv. 3: the rudimentary lessons: i.e. the ritualistic observances in which they were becoming entangled) **of the world** (all these belonged to the earthly side—were the carnal and imperfect phase of knowledge—now the perfect was come, the imperfect was done away), **and not** (negative characteristic, as the former were the affirmative characteristics, of this philosophy) **according to Christ** (“who alone is,” as Bisping observes, “the true rule of all genuine philosophy, the only measure as for all life acceptable to God, so for all truth in thought likewise: every true philosophy must therefore be *according to Christ*, must begin and end with Him”).

9.] (Supply, ‘as all true philosophy ought to be’) **Because in Him** (emphatic: in Him alone) **dwellmeth** (now, in His exaltation) **all the fulness** (compare on i. 19, and see below) **of the Godhead** (Deity: the essential being of God. ‘The fulness of the Godhead’ here spoken of must be taken, as indeed the context shews, metaphysically, and not as ‘all fulness’ in ch. i. 19, where the historical Christ, as manifested in redemption, was in question. There, the lower side, so to speak, of that fulness, was set forth—the side which is presented to us here, is the higher side) **bodily** (i. e., manifested corporeally, in His present glorified Body—compare Phil. iii. 21. Before His incarnation, it dwelt in Him, as the *word non-incarnate*, but not *bodily*, as now that He is the *Word Incarnate*. This is the obvious, and I am persuaded only tenable interpretation).

10.] **And ye are** (already) **in Him** (in your union with Him,—“since you have been once grafted into Christ”) **filled up** (with all divine gifts—so that you need not any supplementary sources of grace such as your teachers are directing you to.—What follows, shews them that He, their perfection, is not to be mixed up with other dignities, as objects of adoration, for He is the Head of all such), **which** (i. e. Christ) **is the Head of every government and power**:

11.] (nor do you need the rite of circumcision to make you complete, for you have already received in Him the spiritual *substance*, of which that rite is but the shadow) **in whom ye were also circumcised** (not as A.V. “*are circumcised*,”—the reference being to the historical fact of their baptism) **with a circumcision not wrought by hands** (see Eph. ii. 11, and Rom. ii. 29. The same reference to spiritual [ethical] circumcision is found in Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6; Ezek. xliv. 7; Acts vii. 51), **in** (consisting in—which found its realization in) **your putting off** (i. e. when you threw off: put off and laid aside, as a garment: an allusion to actual circumcision,—see below) **of the body of the flesh** (i. e. as ch. i. 22, the body of which the material was flesh: but more here: so also its designating attribute, its leading principle was fleshliness—the domination of the flesh which is a “*flesh of sin*,” Rom. viii. 3. This body is put off in baptism, the sign and seal of the new life. “When ethically circumcised, i.e. translated by *change of heart* out of the state of sin into that of the Christian life of faith, we have no more the *body of the flesh*: for the body, which we bear, is disarrayed of its sinful *flesh as such*, as far as regards its sinful quality: we are no more *in the flesh* as before, when lust wrought in our members [Rom. vii. 5, see ver. 23]; we are no more ‘*carnal, sold under sin*’

[Rom. vii. 14], and *walk no more according to the flesh, but in newness of spirit* [Rom. vii. 6], so that our members are *instruments of righteousness unto God* [Rom. vi. 13]. This Christian transformation is set forth in its *ideal conception*, irrespective of its imperfect realization in our experience." Meyer) **in** (parallel to "in" before—then the circumcision without hands was *explained*, now it is again adduced with another epithet bringing it nearer home to them) **the circumcision of Christ** (belonging to, brought about by union with, Christ: nearly the same as, but expresses more than '*Christian circumcision*,' inasmuch as it shews that the root and cause of this circumcision without hands is in Christ, the union with whom is immediately set forth. Two other interpretations are given: 1) that in which Christ is regarded as the *circumciser*: so Theophylact says, "Christ circumcises in baptism, stripping off from us our former life." 2) that in which Christ is the *circumcised*—"the circumcision to which Christ submitted Himself for man." The objection to both is, that they introduce irrelevant elements into the context. *The circumcision which Christ works* would not naturally be followed by "*having been buried with Him*," i. e., *union with Him: that which was wrought on Him* might be thus followed, but would not come in naturally in a passage which describes, not the universal efficacy of the rite once for all performed on Him, but the actual undergoing of it in a spiritual sense, by each one of us):

12.] (goes on to connect this still more closely with the person of Christ,—as if it had been said, 'in the circumcision of Christ, to whom you were united,' &c.) **having been buried together** (i. e. 'when you were buried') **with Him in your baptism** (the new life being begun at baptism,—an image familiar alike to Jews and Christians,—the process itself of baptism is regarded as the burial of the former life: originally, perhaps, owing to the practice of immersion, which would most naturally give rise to the idea: but to maintain from such a circumstance that immersion is *necessary* in baptism, is surely the merest trifling, and a resuscitation of the very ceremonial spirit which the Apostle here is arguing against. As reasonably might it be argued, from the metaphor of "*putting off*" being used here, that nakedness was an essential in that sacrament. The things represented by both figures belong to the essentials of the Christian life: the minor details of the sacrament which corresponded to them, may in different ages or climates be varied; but the spiritual figures remain. At the same time, if circumstances concurred,—e. g. a climate where the former practice was always safe, and a part of the world, or time of life, where the latter would be no shock to decency,—there can be no question that the external proprieties of baptism ought to be complied with. And on this principle the baptismal services of the Church of England are constructed); **wherein** (i. e. in baptism: not, as most expositors, '*in whom*,' i.e. Christ) **ye were also raised again with Him** (not your material, but your spiritual resurrection is in the foreground: it is bound on, it is true, to *His* material resurrection, and brings with it in the background, *yours*: but in the spiritual, the material is included and taken for granted, as usual in Scripture) **through** (by means of: the mediate, not the efficient cause; the hand which held on, not the plank that saved) **your** (or, the) **faith in the operation of God** (in Christ—that mighty power by which the Father raised Him, compare Rom. viii. 11; Eph. i. 20), **who raised Him from the dead** ("for believing in the power of God we wait for the resurrection, having as a pledge of it the resurrection of Christ our Lord." Theodoret. But there is very much more asserted than the mere *waiting for the resurrection*—the power of God in raising the dead to life is one and the same in our Lord and in us—the physical power exerted in Him is not only a pledge of the same physical power to be exerted in us, but a condition and assurance of a spiritual power already exerted in us, whereby we are in spirit risen with Christ, the physical resurrection being included and taken for granted in that other and greater one).

13–15.] Application, first to the (Gentile) Colossians, then to all believers, of the whole blessedness of this participation in Christ's resurrection, and assertion of the superseding of the law, and subjection of all secondary powers to Christ.

13.] And you, being (more strictly, **when you were dead** (allusion to the words immediately preceding) **in your trespasses** (see Eph. ii. 1, notes) **and (in) the uncircumcision of** (i. e. which consisted in) **your flesh** (i. e. having on you still your fleshly sinful nature, which now, as spiritual, you have put away), **He** (God—who, not Christ, is the subject of the whole sentence, vv. 13–15] **quickened you together with Him** (Christ: brought you up—objectively at His Resurrection, and subjectively when you were received among His people,—out of this death. The question as to the reference, whether to spiritual or physical resurrection, is answered by remembering that the former includes the latter), **having forgiven** (this is not contemporaneous with the *quicken*ing, but antecedent: this forgiveness was an act of God wrought once for all in Christ. See 2 Cor. v. 19; Eph. iv. 32) **us** (he here passes from the particular to the general—from the Colossian Gentiles to all believers) **all our transgressions;**

14.] blotting out (or **having blotted**, or **wiped out**, contemporary with *having forgiven*—in fact the same act explained in its conditions and details) **the handwriting in decrees** (compare the similar expression Eph. ii. 15, and notes. The *handwriting* represents the *whole law*, the obligatory bond which was against us [see below], and is apparently used because the Decalogue, representing that law, was written on tables of stone with the finger of God. Respecting the various interpretations of it, see my Greek Test.) **which was hostile to us** (the repetition of the sentiment already contained in the words "*that was against us*" seems to be made by way of stronger emphasis, as against the false teachers, reasserting and invigorating the fact that the law was no help, but a hindrance to us), **and** (not only so, but) **hath taken it** (the *handwriting itself*, thus obliterated) **away** (i. e. 'from out of the way'), **[by] nailing it to the cross** ("since by the death of Christ on the cross the condemnatory law lost its hold on us, inasmuch as Christ by this death bore the curse of the law for mankind [Gal. iii. 13],—in the fact of Christ being nailed to the Cross *the Law* was nailed thereon, in so far as, by Christ's crucifixion, it lost its obligatory power

and ceased to be *in our way*.” Meyer).

15.] The utmost care must be taken to interpret this verse according to the requirements of grammar and of the context. The *first* seems to me to necessitate the rendering, not, as the great majority of Commentators, ‘*having spoiled*,’ a meaning unexampled, and precluded by the plain usage, by the Apostle himself, a few verses below, ch. iii. 9, of the same word,—but ‘*having stripped off*,’ divested himself of.’ Then the second must guide us to the meaning of **the principalities and the powers**. Most Commentators have at once assumed these to be the *infernal powers*, or *evil angels*: relying on Eph. vi. 12, where undoubtedly such is the specific reference of these general terms. But the terms *being general*, such specific reference must be determined by the context of each passage,—or, indeed, there may be no such specific reference at all, but they may be used in their fullest general sense. Now the words have occurred before in this very passage, ver. 10, where Christ is exalted as the *head of all principality and power*: and it is hardly possible to avoid connecting our present expression with that, seeing that in “**the principalities and the powers**,” the articles seem to contain a manifest reference to it. Now, what is the context? Is it in any way relevant to the fact of the law being superseded by God in the great Sacrifice of the atonement, to say that He, in that act (or, according to others, Christ in that act), spoiled and triumphed over the *infernal potentates*? Or would the following “*therefore*” deduce any legitimate inference from such a fact? But, suppose the matter to stand in this way. The law was “*ministered by angels*” (Gal. iii, 19: see Acts vii. 53), “*the word spoken by angels*” (Heb. ii, 2:—they were the promulgators of the “*handwriting in ordinances*.”) In that promulgation of theirs, God was pleased to reveal Himself of old. That writing, that investiture, so to speak, of God, was first wiped out, soiled and rendered worthless, and then nailed to the Cross—abrogated and suspended there. Thus God *stripped off the principalities and the powers*—divested Himself of, put off from Himself, that *ministration of angels*, manifesting Himself henceforward without a veil in the exalted Person of Jesus. And the act of triumph, by which God has for ever subjected all principality and power to Christ, and made Him to be the only Head of His people, in whom they are complete, was that sacrifice, whereby all the law was accomplished. In that, the *principalities and powers* were all subjected to Christ, all plainly declared to be powerless as regards His work and His people, and triumphed over by Him, see Phil. ii. 8, 9; Eph. i. 20, 21. No difficulty need be created, on this explanation, by the objection, that thus more prominence would be given to angelic agency in the law than was really the fact: the answer is, that the prominence which is given, is owing to the errors of the false teachers, who had evidently *associated the Jewish observances* in some way with the worship of angels: St. Paul’s argument will go only to this, that whatever part the angelic powers may have *had*, or be supposed to have had, in the previous dispensation, all such interposition was now entirely at an end, that dispensation itself being once for all antiquated and put away. Render then,—**Putting off** (by the absence of a copula, the vigour of the sentence is increased. The participle is contemporary with “*hath taken out of the way*” above, and thus must not be rendered ‘*having put off*’) **the governments and powers** (before spoken of, ver. 10, and ch. i. 16: see above), **He** (God, who is the subject throughout: see also ch. iii, 3:—not *Christ*, which would awkwardly introduce two subjects into the sentence) **exhibited them** (as completely subjected to Christ;—not only put them away from Himself, but shewed them as placed under Christ) **in** (element in which he made a show of them) **openness** (of speech; declaring and revealing by the Cross that there is none other but Christ the Head of all principality and power. Observe, that “*in openness*” is equivalent in English to **openly**), **triumphing over them** (as in 2 Cor. ii. 14, we are said [see note there] to be led captive in Christ’s triumph, our real victory being our defeat by Him,—so here the principalities and powers, which are next above us in those ranks of being which are all subjected to and summed up in Him) **in Him** (Christ: not, as A.V., ‘*in it*;’ viz. *the cross*, which gives a very feeble meaning after the declaration that God “*raised Him*,” and “*quickened us together with Him*” above). 16–23.] *More specific warning against false teachers* (see summary on ver. 1), and that *first* (vv. 16, 17) with reference to legal observances and abstinence.

16.] Let no one therefore (because this is so—that ye are complete in Christ, and that God in Him hath put away and dispensed with all that is secondary and intermediate) **judge you** (pronounce judgment of right or wrong over you, sit in judgment on you) in eating (not, in St. Paul’s usage, *meat* as A.V.) **and in drinking** (i. e. in the matter of the whole cycle of legal ordinances and prohibitions which regarded eating and drinking: these two words being perhaps taken not separately and literally,—for there does not appear to have been in the law any special prohibition against *drinks*,—but as forming together a category in ordinary parlance. If however it is desired to press each word, the reference of “*drinking*” must be to the Nazarite vow, Numb. vi. 3), **or in respect of feasts or new moon, or sabbaths** (i. e. yearly, monthly, or weekly celebrations):

17.] which (the relative may refer either to the aggregate of the observances mentioned, or to the *last* mentioned, i.e. the Sabbath. Or it may refer to all) **is** (or, **are**; not, ‘*was*.’) he speaks of them in their nature, abstractedly) **a shadow of things to come** (the blessings of the Christian covenant: these are the substance, and the Jewish ordinances the mere type or resemblance, as the shadow is of the living man); **but the body** (the substance, of which the other is the shadow) **belongs to Christ** (i. e. the substantial blessings, which those legal observances typified, are attached to, brought in by, found in union with, Christ: see on the whole figure, Heb. viii. 5; x. 1). We may observe, that if the ordinance of the Sabbath had been, *in any form*, of lasting obligation on the Christian church, it would have been quite impossible for the Apostle to have spoken thus. The fact of an obligatory rest of one day, whether the seventh or the first, would have been directly in the teeth of his assertion here: the holding of such would have been still to retain the shadow, while we possess the substance. And no answer can be given to this by the transparent special-pleading, that he is speaking only of that which was *Jewish* in such observances: the whole argument being general, and the axiom of ver. 17 universally applicable.

18–23.] See above—warning, 2ndly, with reference to angel-worship and asceticism.

18.] **Let no one of purpose** (such is by far the best rendering of the difficult expression in the original,—to understand it precisely as in 2 Pet. iii. 5, “*this they willingly are ignorant of.*” This imputes to the false teachers not only error, but insidious designs also) **defraud you of your prize** (this deprivation of their prize, and this wrong, they would suffer at the hands of those who would draw them away from Christ the giver of the prize [2 Tim. iv. 8; James i. 12; 1 Pet. v. 4] and lower them to the worship of intermediate spiritual beings. “There were some old heretics who said, that it was not fitting to call on Christ to help us, or for access to God, but on the angels, for that the calling on Christ for these benefits was a privilege beyond our deserts. This they said in a kind of humility.” Chrysostom) **in** (as the element and sphere of his *defrauding*) **lowliness of mind** (Augustine, Confessions, x. 42, says: “Whom could I find to recon-cile me to Thee? Should I go to the angels? Many, striving to return to Thee, and not sufficient of themselves to do so, have, as I hear, attempted this, and have fallen into a longing for curious visions, and have been delivered up to illusions.” So that no ironical sense need be supposed) **and** (explicative, or appending a specific form of the general *lowliness of mind*) **worship of the angels** (genitive objective, ‘*worship paid to the holy angels.*’ With reference to the fact of the existence of such teaching at Colossae, Theodoret gives an interesting notice: “They who were the supporters of the law taught them also to worship the angels, saying that by them the law was given. And this weakness remained in Phrygia and Pisidia for a long time: insomuch that a council which assembled in Laodicea of Phrygia forbade the praying to the angels: and even to this day one is shewn oratories of St. Michael among the Phrygians and their neighbours.” The canon of the council of Laodicea [a. p. 860] runs thus: “It is not fitting that Christians should leave the church of God and go astray, and call on angels, and make celebrations to them in unlawful ways. If therefore any be found employed in this covert idolatry, let him be accursed, inasmuch as he is a denier of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and a pervert to idolatry.” See, for an account of subsequent legends and visions of the neighbourhood, Conybear and Howson, Life of St. Paul, ii. p. 480, note, edn. 2), **insisting on things which he hath seen** (an inhabitant of the realm of sight, not of faith: as Augustine above, “*falling into a longing for curious visions.*”—This insisting on his own

. visual experience is the result of fleshly pride as contrasted with the spiritual mind. On the reading and meaning, see my Greek Test.), **vainly** (groundlessly) **puffed up** (no inconsistency with the “*lowliness of mind*” above: for as Theodoret says, “*that* they made a profession of, but their real mental state was that of pride”) **by** (as the working principle in him) **the mind** (in-tent, bent of thought and apprehension) **of his own flesh** (his *mind* is not only *carnal*, but is **of his flesh**,—the *flesh*, the ordinary sensuous principle, is the fons of the *mind*, which therefore dwells in the region of visions of the man’s own seeing, and does not in true humility hold the Head and in faith receive grace as one of His members),

19.] **and not** (objective negative source of his error) **holding fast** (want of firm holding of Christ has set him loose to *insist on his visions as the evidence of his faith*) **the Head** (Christ: see on Eph. i. 22. Each must hold fast the Head for himself, not merely be attached to the other members, however high or eminent in the Body), **from whom** (better than A.V., ‘*from which*,’ viz. the head) **all the body** (in its every part. On the whole passage (see Eph. iv. 16, an almost exact parallel) **by means of the joints and bands** (sinews and nerves which bind together, and communicate between, limb and limb) **being sup-plied and compounded** (see on Eph. Notice, as there, the present participles, denoting that the process is now going on. *Wherewith* the body is supplied and compounded, is here left to be inferred, and need not be, as by some Commentators, minutely pursued into detail. It is, spiritual life, and growth:—the *being*, and *well-being*, as Chrysostom. The supply is as the sap to the vine: as all sensation and motion to the body), **increaseth with the increase of God** (i. e. ‘the increase wrought by God,’—God being the first cause of life to the whole, and carrying on this growth in subordination to and union with the Head, Jesus Christ.—The Roman Catholic Commentators endeavour by all kinds of evasions to escape the strong bearing of this passage on their following (and outdoing) of the heretical practices of the Judaizing teachers in this matter of the *worship of the angels.*’ One of them, Bisping, remarks,—“It is plain from this passage, as indeed from the nature of things, that the Apostle is not blaming every honouring of the angels, but only such honouring as put them in the place of Christ. The true honouring of the angels and saints is after all in every case an honouring of Christ their Head”? On this I may remark 1) that the word ‘honouring’ is simply disingenuous, there being no question of honouring, but of worship in the strict sense. 2) That whatever a Commentator may say in his study, and Romanists may assert when convenient to them, the honour and worship actually and practically paid by them to angels and saints does by very far exceed that paid to Christ their Head. Throughout Papal Europe, the worship of Christ among the body of the middle and lower orders is fast becoming obliterated, and supplanted by that of His Mother).

20.] **Warning against asceticism.** **If ye died** (in your baptism, as detailed above, vv. 11 if) **with Christ from** (i. e. ‘died, and so were set free from’) **the elements** (compare ver. 8: the rudimentary lessons, i.e. ritualistic observances) **of the world** (see on ver. 8; Christ Himself was set free from these, when, being made under the law, He at His Death bore the curse of the law, and thus it was superseded in Him), **why, as though living** (emphatic, as though you had *not died*, see Gal. vi. 14) **in the world, are ye being prescribed to** (literally, are ye being dogmatized, brought under ordinances.—The reference to the word [dogmas] “*ordinances*,” in ver. 14, is plain. They were being again put under that *handwriting in ordinances* which was wiped out and taken away),

21.] **“Handle not, neither taste, nor even touch”** (it will be understood that these words follow immediately upon what went

before, without a stop, as being the things prescribed. Then as to the meaning,—I agree with Calvin, Bengel, and Meyer, in referring all the three to *meats*,—on account mainly of vv. 22, 23 [see below], but also of **taste**, coming as a defining term between the two less precise ones **touch** and **handle**);

22.] **which things** (viz. the things forbidden) **are** (emphatic, ‘whose very nature is...’) **all of them for destruction** (by corruption) **in their consumption** (i. e. are appointed by the Creator to be decomposed and obliterated by their consumption by us. The argument in fact is similar to that in Matt. xv. 17, and 1 Cor. vi. 13), **according to** (connects with *are being prescribed to*, *Handle not*, &c., the subsequent clause being a parenthetical remark; thus defining the prescriptions to consist in human, not divine commands) **the commands and teachings** (the teaching is the wider term comprising many **commands**. Here we rise from the examples of separate commands which have been given, to the system of doctrine of which they are a part) **of men** (not merely *of men*, bringing out the individual authors of them, but *of mankind*, describing them generically as *human*, not divine)?

23.] **Such as** (this defining term brings us from the general objective, human doctrines and systems, to the specific subjective, the particular sort of doctrines and systems which they were following: q.d., ‘and that, such sort of *commandments and teachings as...*’) **are possessed of** (‘enjoy,’ as we say) **a reputation indeed of wisdom in** (element of its repute) **voluntary worship** (the *worship* was mainly that of *angels*, see above, ver. 18: but the generality of the expression here may take in other voluntary extravagancies of worship also) **and humility** (see ver. 18), **and not sparing of the body, not in any honour [of it]** (on the interpretations, see below. The same word is used by St. Paul of honour or respect bestowed on the body, in 1 Cor. xii. 23, 24: of honourable conduct in matters relating to the body, 1 Thess. iv. 4: and such is the meaning I would assign to it here—these *ordinances* have the repute of wisdom for, &c., and for unsparingness of the body, not in any real honour done to it—its true honour being, dedication to the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. 18), **to the satiating of the flesh**. I connect these words not with the preceding clause, but with “*a re ye prescribed to*” above—*why are ye suffering yourselves to be thus prescribed to* [in the strain “*touch not, &c.*” according to, &c., which are, &c.], *and all for the satisfaction of the flesh*,—for the following out of a *teaching*, the ground of which is the *puffed up according to the fleshy mind*, ver. 18? Then after this follow most naturally the exhortations of the next chapter; they are not to seek the *satisfying of the flesh—not to mind earthly things*, but “*make dead their members which were upon earth.*”—The other renderings, and my objections to them, see in my Greek Test.

Colossians: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1—IV. 6.] SECOND PART OF THE EPISTLE. *Direct exhortations to the duties of the Christian life—founded on their union with their risen Saviour.*

1–4.] *Transition to the new subject, and grounding of the coming exhortations.*

1.] **If then** (as above asserted, ch. ii. 12, 20: the **if** implies no doubt of the fact, but lays it down as ground for an inference, see ch. ii. 20) **ye were raised up together with Christ** (not as A.V. ‘are risen? the allusion, as above, ch. ii. 11–13, is to a definite time, your baptism. And it is important to keep this in view, that we may not make the mistake so commonly made, of interpreting this *being raised* in an *ethical* sense, and thereby stultifying the sentence—for if the participation were an ethical one, what need to exhort them to its ethical realization? The participation is an objective one, brought about by that faith which was the condition of their baptismal admission into Him. This faith the Apostle exhorts them to energize in the ethical realization of this resurrection state), **seek the things above** (heavenly, spiritual things: compare Matt. vi. 33; Gal. iv. 26; Phil. iii. 20), **where Christ is** (if you are united to Him, you will be tending to Him; and He is in heaven), **sitting on the right hand of God** (see Eph. i. 20. Here, as every where, when the present state of Christ is spoken of, the Ascension is taken for granted).

2.] **Set your mind on** (or, **care for**) **the things above** (extending to the whole region of their thought and desire), **not the things on the earth** (compare Phil. iii. 19: i.e. matters belonging to this present mortal state—earthly pleasure, self, and pride).

3.] **For ye died** (ch. ii. 12: ‘*are dead*,’ though allowable, is not so good as merely asserting a state, whereas the other recalls the fact of that state having been entered on. That being made partakers with Christ’s death, cut you loose from the *things on the earth*: see Rom. vi. 4–7), **and your life** (that resurrection life, which is “your real and true life.” The only real life of the Christian is his resurrection life in and with Christ. Compare Rom. viii. 19–23) **is hidden** (“*is not yet manifested*,” 1 John iii. 2: is laid up, to be manifested hereafter: that such is the sense, the next verse seems plainly to shew) **with Christ** (who is also Himself hidden at present from us, who wait for His *revelation* [1 Cor. i. 7, 2 Thess. i. 7. 1 Pet. i. 7, 13; iv. 13], which be also ours, see ver. 4 and Rom. viii. 19) **in God** (with Christ who is “*in the bosom of the Father*;”—it is in Him, as in a great depth, that all things concealed are hidden, and He brings them out as seems good to Him).

4.] **When Christ is manifested** (shall emerge from his present state of hidden-ness, and be personally revealed), **who is our** (no emphasis—our applies to Christians generally—see on “*ye also*” below) **life** (Christ is personally Himself that life, and we

possess it only by union with Him and His resurrection: see John xiv. 19), **then shall ye also** (*also* takes out the special from the general—ye, as well as and among, other Christians) **with Him be manifested in glory** (see on the whole, the parallel 1 John iii. 2. Though the *completed life of the resurrection* seems so plainly pointed out by this last verse as the sense to be given to “our life,” this has not been seen by many Commentators, who hold it to be *ethical*; hidden, inasmuch as inward and spiritual, Rom. ii, 29, and ideal: or, inasmuch as it is unseen by the world. The root of the mistake has been the want of a sufficiently comprehensive view of that resurrection life of ours which is now hidden with Christ. It includes in itself both spiritual, ethical, and corporeal: and the realization of it as far as possible, here, is the sum of the Christian’s most earnest endeavours: but the life itself, in its full manifestation, is that perfection of body, soul, and spirit, in which we shall be manifested with Him at His appearing. Theodoret says well: “For when He rose, we all rose with Him: but we see not yet the end of the matter. The mystery of our resurrection is hidden in Him”).

5–17.] General exhortations: and herein (5–11)—to laying aside of the vices of the old man,— (12–17) to realizing the new life in its practical details.

5.] Put to death therefore (the therefore connects with “*ye died*” in ver. 3: follow out, realize this state of death to things on earth—and that by a definite act, and once for all—so the original denotes) **your members which are upon the earth** (literally, as to “*your members:*” your feet, hands, &c.: reduce these to a state of death as regards their actions and desires below specified—as regards, in other words, their denizenship of this earth. With this you have no concern—they are members of Christ, partakers of his resurrection, renewed after His image),—**fornication** (these which follow, are the carnal functions of the earthly members), **uncleanness, lustfulness, evil concupiscence** (or, *shameful desire*), and **covetousness** (see on Eph. iv. 19), **for it is idolatry** (the *covetous man* has set up self in his heart—and to serve self, whether by accumulation of goods or by satiety in pleasure, is his object in life. He is therefore an idolater, in the deepest and worst, namely, in the practical significance),

6.] on which account (on account of *covetousness*, which amounts to idolatry, the all-comprehending and crowning sin, which is a negation of God, and brings down His especial anger) **cometh** (down on earth, in present and visible examples) **the wrath of God:**

7.] in which (vices) ye also once walked when ye lived (before your death with Christ to the world) **in these things** (the assertion is not tautological: see Gal. v. 25, “*If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.*” When ye were alive to these things, ye regulated your course by them, walked in them. “Living and walking differ, as do the power, and the act: living precedes, walking follows.” Calvin).

8.] But now (that ye are no longer *living* in them: opposed to “*once... when*” above) **do ye also** (as well as other believers) **put away the whole** (this seems to have a backward and a forward reference—‘the whole,—both those things which I have enumerated, and those which are to follow’),—**anger, wrath** (see on Eph. iv. 31), **malice** (ib.), **evil speaking** (ib.), **foul language** (the context makes it more probable here, than ‘*filthy conversation*,’ that this means ‘*abusive conversation*,’ for these four regard want of charity, of kindness in thought and word, rather than sins of uncleanness, which were before enumerated) **out of your mouth** (these words most naturally belong to the two last specified sins, and must be construed either with “*lay ye aside*,” which seems best, or with “*proceeding*,” implied in the word *conversation*).

9.] Lie not unto (or towards: the lie is regarded as aiming in its direction at him to whom it is spoken) **one another,—having put off** (the participles contain the motive for all the preceding, from the beginning of ver. 8: **seeing that** ye have put off, &c.) **the old man** (i. e., the nature which they had before their conversion: see Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 22)**with his deeds** (habits, ways of acting),

10.] and having put on the new (the other was the negative ground: this is the positive. See on Eph. iv. 23, and ii. 15), **which is continually being renewed** (notice the present tense. “The new man is not any thing ready at once and complete, but ever in a state of development [by the Holy Spirit, Tit. iii. 5], by which a new state and nature is brought, about in it, specifically different from that. of the old man.” Meyer) **unto perfect knowledge** (which excludes all falsehood, and indeed all the vices mentioned above) **according to the image of Him that created him** (the new creation of the spirit unto fulness of knowledge and truth, the highest form of which would be the perfect knowledge of God, is regarded by the Apostle as analogous to man’s first creation. As he was then made in the image of God, so now: but it was then his naturally, now spiritually in *perfect knowledge*. Thus the rule and method of the renewal is, “*after the image of Him that created him*” [the new man],—i. e. God, who is ever the Creator, not Christ. To understand the whole passage as referring to a restoration of the image of God in the first creation, is to fall far short of the glorious truth. It is not to restore the old, but to create the new, that redemption has been brought about. Whatever may have been God’s image in which the first Adam was created, it is certain that the image of God, in which Christ’s Spirit re-creates us, will be as much more glorious than that, as the second man is more glorious than the first):

11.] wherein (viz. in the realm or sphere of the new man) **there is not Greek and Jew** (difference of nation; with special

allusion also to the superseding of the Abrahamic privilege as regarded his natural seed), **circumcision and uncircumcision** (difference of legal ceremonial stand-ing),—**Barbarian** (having as yet specified by pairs, he now brings forward a few single categories, which in the new man were non-existent as marks of distinction; see below. The proper *contrast to Barbarian* would have been *Greek*, which has been already expressed), **Scythian** (the Scythians were esteemed the most barbarous of the barbarous), **bond, free** (he perhaps does not say ‘*bond and free*,’ because these relations actually subsisted: but the persons in them were not thus regarded in Christ—no man is, as a *Christian, bond*, nor [see also Gal. iii. 28] *free*): **but CHRIST is all** (every distinctive cate-gory of humanity is done away as to worth or privilege, and all have been absorbed into and centre in this one, to be **Christ’s**, yea to be **Christ**—His members, in vital union with Him), **and in all** (equally sprinkled on, living in, working through and by every class of mankind).

12.] Put on therefore (as a consequence of having put on the new man, to whom these belong), **as God’s elect** (see 1 Thess. i. 4), **holy [and] beloved, an heart of pity** (literally, **bowels of compassion**: see reff., and Luke i. 78. The expression is a Hebraism: and the account of it to be found in the literal use of *bowels* as the seat of the sympathetic feelings: compare Gen. xlili, 30), **kindness** (see on Gal. v. 22), **lowliness** (towards one another—see on Eph. iv. 2), **meekness** (Eph. ib.: but here it is primarily *towards one another*; not however excluding but rather implying meekness towards God as its ground), **long-suffering** (ib.); **13.] forbearing one another** (see ib.), **and forgiving each other, if any have cause of blame: as also** (also: i.e. *besides*, and more eminent than, the examples which I am exhorting you to shew of this grace) **the Lord** (Christ: in Eph. iv. 32, the forgiveness is traced to its source, “*God in Christ*”) **forgave** (see on Eph. iv. 32) **you, so also ye** (viz. *forgiving*—do not supply an imperative, by which the construction is unnecessarily broken).

14.] But (the contrast lies between *all these things*, which have been individually mentioned, and *over all these things*, that which must over-lie them as a whole) **over** (carrying on the image of *putting on* in ver. 12—see below. The A.V., ‘*above all these things*,’ looks ambiguous, bearing the meaning, “*more especially than all these things*:” but by repeating ‘*put on*,’ it seems as if our translators meant ‘*above*’ to be taken locally and literally) **all these things** (*put on*) **love** (in the original, “*the love*:” and the article gives a fine and delicate sense here, which we cannot express—not merely love, but ‘*the* [well-known] *love which becomes Christians*:’ the nearest rendering would perhaps be ‘*Christian love*,’ but it expresses too much), **which [thing]** (there is a slight causal force,—‘*for it is*’) **is the bond of perfectness** (the idea of an upper garment, or perhaps of a girdle, seems to have been before the Apostle’s mind. This completes and keeps together all the rest, which, without it, are but the scattered elements of completeness. Those who, as some of the Roman Catholic ex-positors (not Bisping), find here justification by works, must be very hard put to discover support for that doctrine. The whole passage proceeds upon the ground of previous justification by faith: see ch. ii, 12, and our ver. 12).

15.] And (simply an additional exhortation, not an inference, ‘and so;’ compare Eph. iv. 3, where peace is the bond. It is exceedingly interesting to observe the same word occurring in the same trains of thought in the two Epistles, but frequently with different application. See the Introd. to this Epistle, §iv. 7) **let Christ’s peace** (the peace which He brings about, which He left as his legacy to us [John xiv. 27], which is emphatically and solely His. This peace, though its immediate and lower reference here is to mutual concord, yet must not on account of the context be limited to that lower side. Its reference is evidently wider, as its office of *ruling* shews: see below. It is the whole of Christ’s Peace in all its blessed character and effects) **rule** (sit umpire—be enthroned as decider of every thing) **in your hearts,—to which** (with a view to which, as your blessed state of Christian perfection in God—see Isa. xxvi. 3; lvii, 19: Eph. ii. 14–17) **ye were also** (the also marks the introduction of an additional motive—‘to which, besides my exhortation, ye have this motive: that, &c.) **called** (by God) **in one body** (as members of one body—oneness of body being the sphere and element in which that peace of Christ was to be carried on and realized. This reminiscence refers to the whole context from ver. 8, in which the exhortations had been to mutual Christian graces); **and be ye thankful** (to God, who called you: so the context before and after certainly demands: not ‘one to another.’ See Eph. v. 4; and ib, 19, 20: where the same class of exhortations occurs).

16.] “Having exhorted them to be thankful, he now shews them the way.” Chry-sostom. This thankfulness to God will shew itself in the rich indwelling in you and outflowing from you of the word of Christ, be it in mutual edifying converse, or in actual songs of praise. **Let Christ’s word** (the Gospel: genitive subjective; the word which is His—He spoke it, inspired it, and gives it power) **dwell in you** (not ‘among you.’ St. Paul’s usage seems to require that the indwelling should be individual and personal. Still we may say that the “*you*” need not be *restricted* to individual Christians; it may well mean the whole community—you, as a church. The word dwelling in them richly, many would arise to speak it to edification, and many would be moved to the utterance of praise) **richly** (i. e. in abundance and fulness, so as to lead to the following results); **in all wisdom** (these words seem to be better taken with the following than with the foregoing. For 1) ch. i. 28 already gives us these two same participles, “*teaching and admonishing*,” joined with “in all wisdom.” 2) The verb “*dwell*” has already its qualifying adverb “*richly*” emphatically placed at the end of the sentence. 3) The two following clauses will thus correspond — “*in all wisdom teaching*.... “*in grace singing*.” The usual arrangement has been, with A.V., to join them with the preceding) **teaching and warning** (see on ch. i. 28) **each other** (see on ver. 13) **in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs** (on the meaning of the words, see notes, Eph. v. 19. Meyer’s note here is important: “Notice moreover that Paul here also [see on Eph. as above] is not speaking of ‘divine service’ Properly. so called, for this teaching and admonishing is required of his *readers generally* and mutually, and as a proof of their rich possession of the word of Christ: but of the communication of the

religious life among one another (e. g. at meals, at the Agape (love-feasts), and other meetings, in their family circles, &c.), wherein spiritual influence caused the mouth to overflow with the fulness of the heart, and gave utterance to brotherly instruction and reproof in the higher form of psalms, &c.; perhaps in songs already known,—or extemporized, according to the peculiarity and productivity of each man's spiritual gift: perhaps sung by individuals alone [which would especially be the case when they were extemporized], or in chorus, or in the form of antiphonal song." Religious singing was common in the ancient church, independently of 'divine service' properly so called. Eusebius testifies to the existence of a collection of rhythmical songs which were composed from the first by Christians. On singing at the Agape, Tertullian says, "After water for the hands, and lights, have been brought, as each is able, from the Holy Scriptures or his own genius, he is encouraged to sing publicly to God"), **in [the] Grace** (*the grace*—of Christ. The article marks 'the grace,' which is yours by God's indwelling Spirit) **singing in your hearts to God** (this clause has generally been understood as qualifying the former. But such a view is manifestly wrong. That former spoke of their teaching and warning one another in effusions of the spirit which took the form of psalms, &c.: in other words, dealt with their intercourse *with one another*; this on the other hand deals with their own private intercourse *with God*.) The second participle is co-ordinate with the former, not subordinate to it. The mistake has partly arisen from imagining that the former clause related to public worship, in its external form: and then this one was understood to enforce the genuine heartfelt expression of the same. But this not being so, that which is founded on it falls with it. The singing to God is an analogous expression to that in 1 Cor. xiv. 28,—"Let him speak... *to God*." So the words "*in your hearts*" describe the method of uttering this praise, viz. by the thoughts only: "*to God*" designates to whom it is to be addressed,—not, as before, to one another, but to God).

17.] General exhortation, comprehending 'all the preceding special ones. **And every thing whatsoever ye do in word or work, all things** (do) **in the name of the Lord Jesus** (meaning much as the common expression **in Christ**—so that the name of Christ is the element in which all is done—which furnishes a motive and gives a character to the whole), **giving thanks to God the Father** (where our *Father* is not expressed, these words must be taken as approximating in sense to that more technical meaning which they now bear, without exclusive reference to either our Lord or ourselves,—and should be rendered as here) **through Him** (as the one channel of all communication between God and ourselves, whether of grace coming to us, or of thanks coming from us).

18—IV. 1.] SPECIAL EXHORTATIONS TO RELATIVE SOCIAL DUTIES: 18, 19, *to the married*: 20, 21, *to children and parents*: 22—IV. 1, *to slaves and masters*.—Seeing that such exhortations occur in Ephesians also in terms so very similar, we are not justified in assuming that there was any thing in the peculiar circumstances of the Colossian church, which required more than common exhortation of this kind. It has been said, that it is only in Epistles addressed to the Asiatic churches, that such exhortations are found: but in this remark the entirely general character of the Epistle to the Ephesians is forgotten. Besides, the exhortations of the Epistle to Titus cannot be so completely severed from these as to be set down in another category.—See throughout the section, for such matters as are not remarked on, the notes to Eph. v. 22—vi. 9.

18.] The words **in the Lord** belong to "*it is fit*," not to "*submit yourselves*," as is shewn by the parallel expression in ver. 20: was fitting, in that, element of life designated by "*in the Lord*."

19.] See the glorious expansion of this in Eph. v. 25–33.

20.] See Eph. vi. 1, **in all things**, the exceptions not being taken into account: St. Paul's usual way of stating a general rule,

21.] See on Eph. vi. 4. In the words "*that they be not disheartened*" it is assumed that the result of such irritation will be to cause repeated punishment, and so eventual desperation, on the part of the child. It would be well if all who have to educate children took to heart Bengel's remark here; "A broken spirit is the pest of youth."

22.] See on Eph. vi. 5 ff. **the Lord**, Him who is absolutely, and not merely *according to the flesh*, your Master. "This," says Chrysostom, "is fearing God, when we in secret, where none is looking on, abstain from evil. If we then commit evil, our fear is not of God, but of men." **23.]** heartily (as Chrysostom, "with good heart, not from servile necessity, but of a liberal mind, and choice.")

24.] Equivalent to Eph. vi. 8, but more specific as to the *Christian* reward. **knowing as ye do..]** The words **of the Lord** are emphatically prefixed—'that it is from the Lord that you shall....' You must look to Him, not to men, as the source of all Christian reward. Here the word **recompense** would appear to be used with a marked reference to their present state of slavery, **the compensation**. The very word **inheritance** should have kept the Roman Catholic expositors from introducing the merit of good works here.—The last clause, without the "*for*," is best. taken imperatively, as a general comprehension of the course of action prescribed in the former part of the verse: **serve ye the Lord Christ**.

25.] This verse seems best to be taken as addressed to the slaves by way of encouragement to regard Christ as their Master, and serve Him—seeing that all their wrongs in this world, if they leave them in His hands, will be in due time righted by Him, the just judge, with whom there is no respect of persons. **For he that doeth wrong shall receive** (see, as on the whole, Eph. vi. 8)

that which he did wrongfully (the tense is changed because in the *first* case he is speaking of present practice—in the *second*, he has transferred the scene to the day of the Lord, and the wrong is one of past time): **and there is not respect of persons.** At His tribunal, every one, without regard to rank or wealth, shall receive the deeds done in the body. So that in your Christian uprightness and conscientiousness you need not fear that you shall be in the end overborne by the superior power of your masters: there is a judge who will defend and right you.

Colossians: Chapter 4

CH. IV.]

1. equality] i.e. **equity,—fairness**: an extension of *justice* to matters not admitting of the application of strict rules—a large and liberal interpretation of justice in ordinary matters. **knowing**] see ch. iii. 24. **also**] as well as they: ‘as you are masters to them, so the Lord to you.

2–6.] SPECIAL CONCLUDING EXHOR-TATIONS: and **2–4.] to prayer;** see Rom. xii. 12: 1 Thess. v. 17.

2.] watching therein, i.e. not remiss and indolent in your occupation of prayer, but active and watchful, cheerful also, as with thanksgiving, which defines and characterizes the watchfulness,

3.] for us also, not, “*for me:*” see ch. i. 1, 3. This is plainly shewn here by the singular following after. **a door for the word**] an opening of opportunity for the extension of the Gospel by the word. This would, seeing that the Apostle was a prisoner, naturally be given first and most chiefly, so far as he was concerned, by his liberation: see Philem. 22. for (on account of) **which** (mystery) **I am** (not only a minister but) **also bound.** **4.]** This second **that** gives the purpose of the previous verse, not the purpose of his *being in bonds*,—nor to be joined with “*praying.*” If that might be so, the door opened, &c.,—then he would make it known as he ought to do—then he would be fulfilling the requirements of that apostolic calling, from which now in his im-prisonment he was laid aside, Certainly this is the meaning,—and not, as ordinarily understood, that he might boldly declare the Gospel in *his imprisonment*.

5, 6.] Exhortations as to their behaviour in the world. **6.] in** (as an element) **wisdom** (the practical wisdom of Christian prudence and sound sense). **toward**, as signifying simply **in relation to**, in the intercourse of life. **them that are without**] Those outside the Christian brotherhood. “Towards the members of our own house we do not want so much caution as towards those without: for where brethren are, there are many allowances and affections.” Chrysostom. **buying up opportunities**] See on Eph. v. 16. The opportunity *for what*, will be understood in each case from the circumstances, and our acknowledged Christian position as watching for the cause of the Lord. **6.] Let your speech (to those without still) be always in** (as its characteristic element) **grace** (i. e. gracious, and winning favour: compare Luke iv. 22), **seasoned with salt** (not insipid and void of point, which can do no man any good: we must not forget that both these words have their spiritual meaning: *grace*, so common an one as to have almost passed out of its ordinary acceptation into that other,—the grace which is conferred on us from above, and which our words and actions should reflect:—and *salt*, as used by our Saviour in Mark ix. 50, as symbolizing the unction, freshness, and vital briskness which characterizes the Spirit’s presence and work in a man. There seems to be no allusion here to the conservative power of salt: the matter in hand at present is not avoiding corrupt conversation. Still less does the meaning of wit belong to this place. A local allusion is just possible: we are told by Herodotus that there was a lake from which salt was made in the neighbourhood of Colossae), **that ye may know**] Compare 1 Pet. iii. 15, which however is but one side of that readiness which is here recommended.

7–18.] CLOSE OF THE EPISTLE.

7–9.] Of the bearers of the Epistle, Tychicus and Onesimus. **7.]** On Tychicus, see Eph. vi. 21. **the beloved brother**, as dear to his heart: **faithful minister**, as his tried companion in the ministry,—**fellow-servant in the Lord**, as one with him in the motives and objects of his active work: “so that,” says Chrysostom, “he collects together from every quarter what may recommend him.” There is a delicate touch of affection in the words “*that he may know your state,*” which can hardly, although the reading is somewhat doubtful, be the work of a corrector. It implies that there were painful circumstances of trial, to which the sub-sequent mention of **comfort** also has reference “He hints that they were in trouble.” Chrysostom.

9. with Onesimus] There can hardly be a doubt [compare ver. 17 with Philem. 2, 10 ff.] that this is the Onesimus of the Epistle to Philemon, **one of you**] Most probably, a native of your town.

10–14.] Various greetings from brethren.

10.] Aristarchus was a Thessalian (Acts xx. 4), first mentioned Acts xix. 29, as dragged into the theatre at Ephesus during the tumult, together with Gaius, both being “*fellow-travellers of Paul.*” He accompanied Paul to Asia (ib. xx. 4), and was with

him in the voyage to Rome (xxvii. 2). In Philem. 24, he sends greeting, with Marcus, Demas, and Lucas, as here, On **fellow-prisoner** Meyer suggests an idea, which may without any straining of probability be adopted, and which would explain why Aristarchus is here “*fellow-servant*,” and in Philem. 23, “*fellow-prisoner*,” whereas Epaphras is here, ch. i. 7, merely a “*fellow-prisoner*,” and in Philem. 23, a “*fellow-worker*.” His view is, that the Apostle’s friends may have voluntarily shared his imprisonment by turns: and that Aristarchus may have been his fellow-prisoner when he wrote this Epistle, Epaphras when he wrote that to Philemon. “*Fellow-prisoner*” belongs to the same image of *warfare*, as “*fellow-soldier*,” Phil. ii. 25; Philem. 2. **Mark**] can hardly be other than John Mark, compare Acts xii. 12, 25, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas in part of their first missionary journey, and because he turned back from them at Perga (ib. xiii. 13; xv. 38), was the subject of dispute between them on their second journey. That he was also the Evangelist, is matter of pure tradition, but not therefore to be rejected. **cousin**] not ‘*sister’s son*:’—this is a mistake, or at all events, as has been suggested, an obsolete way of expressing the relation which we know as *cousin*. **touching whom...**] What these commands were, must be left in entire uncertainty. They had been sent previous to the writing of our Epistle, but from, or by whom, we know not. They concerned Marcus, not Barnabas: and one can hardly help connecting them, associated as they are with *the command following*, with the dispute of Acts xv. 38. It is very possible, that in consequence of the rejection of John Mark on that occasion by St. Paul, the Pauline portion of the churches may have looked upon him with suspicion.

11. Jesus, which is called Justus] Entirely unknown to us. A Justus is mentioned Acts xviii. 7, as an inhabitant of Corinth, and a proselyte: but there is no further reason to identify the two. The surname Justus was common among the Jews: see for example, Acts i. 23. **These alone who are of the circumcision** (this leaves untouched the fact that there were other *fellow-workers*, not of the circumcision, who had been a comfort to him. The Judaistic teachers were for the most part in opposition to St. Paul: compare his complaint, Phil. i. 15, 17) **are my fellow-workers towards the kingdom of God, men that proved** (i. e. *inasmuch as they proved*. The past tense alludes to some event recently passed: to what precisely, we cannot say) **a comfort to me.**

12.] On Epaphras, see ch. i. 7 note. By mentioning Epaphras’s anxious prayers for them, he works further on their affections, giving them an additional motive for stedfastness, in that one of themselves was thus striving in prayer for them. **that ye may stand,—perfect and fully persuaded,—in** (be firmly settled in, without danger of vacillating or falling: the preposition belongs to the verb “*ye may stand*,” not to “*fully assured*”) **all the** (literally, ‘*in every*:’ but we cannot thus express it in English) **will of God.**

13.] On account of this mention of Laodicea and Hierapolis, some have thought that Epaphras was the founder of the three churches. See Introd. §ii. 2, 7. LAODICEA was a city of Phrygia Magna, large and rich (Rev. iii. 17; and Introd. to Rev. §iii. 13; and Tacitus says that when destroyed by an earthquake, the inhabitants rebuilt it without imperial assistance), on the river Lycus, formerly called Diopolis, and afterwards Rhoas; its subsequent name was from Laodice, queen of Antiochus II. In A.D. 62, Laodicea, with Hierapolis and Colossae, was destroyed by an earthquake (see above), to which visitations the neighbourhood was very subject. There is now on the spot a desolate village called Eske-hissar, with some ancient ruins. **Hierapolis**] Six Roman miles north from Laodicea: famed for mineral springs (Strabo de-scribes them at length, also the caverns which exhale noxious vapour), which are still flowing.

14.] This **Luke** has ever been taken for the Evangelist: Introd. to St. Luke, §i. In the designation, **the beloved physician**, there may be a trace of what has been supposed, that it was in a professional capacity that he first became attached to St. Paul, who evidently laboured under grievous sickness during the earlier part of the journey where Luke first appears in his company. Compare Gal. iv. 13 note, with Acts xvi. 6, 10. But this is too uncertain to be more than an interesting conjecture. **Demas**] one of Paul’s *fellow-workmen*, Philem. 24, who however afterwards deserted him, from love to the world, 2 Tim. iv. 10. The absence of any honourable or endearing mention here may be owing to the commencement of this apostasy, or some unfavourable indication in his character.

15–17.] Salutations to friends.

15.] and before *Nymphas*, as so often, selects one out of a number previously mentioned: Nymphas was one of these Laodicean brethren. On the **church** spoken of, see note, Rom. xvi. 5.

16.] this (literally, the) epistle. the epistle from Laodicea] i.e. an epistle which I have written to Laodicea, to be forwarded from thence to you. On this Epistle, see Introd. to Eph. §ii. 17, 19; and Philem. §iii. 2, 3. I only indicate here the right rendering of the words. They cannot well be taken, as some whom Chrysostom mentions took them, to mean, an Epistle *from them to St. Paul*, both on account of the awkwardness of the sense commanding them to read an Epistle sent from Laodicea, and not found there, and on account of the phrase in the original. We may safely say that a letter not *from*, but *to* the Laodiceans is meant. For the construction of this latter sentence, “cause,” before “that,” is of course to be supplied.

17.] Archippus is mentioned Philem. 2, and called the Apostle’s *fellow-soldier*, I have treated on the inference to be drawn from this passage as to his abode, in the Introd. to Philemon, §iii. 1. He was evidently some officer of the church, but *what*, in

the wideness of the term “*ministry*,” we cannot say: and conjectures are profitless. Meyer well remarks, that the authority hereby implied on the part of the congregation to exercise reproof and discipline over their teachers is remarkable: and that the hierarchical turn given to the passage by some, making it mean that they were not to be surprised if he did fulfil his ministry eventually, by rebuking them (Iso Theophylact, &c.), belongs to a later age. **Look to the ministry which thou receivedst in the Lord** (the sphere of the *reception* of the ministry; in which the recipient lived and moved and promised at his ordination: not, of the ministry itself,—nor is **in** to be diverted from its simple local meaning), **that** (aim and end of the *looking*,—in order that) **thou fulfil it.**

18.] AUTOGRAPH SALUTATION. See ref. 1 Cor., where the same words occur. **Remember my bonds]** These words extend further than to mere pecuniary support, or even mere prayers: they were ever to keep before them the fact that one who so deeply cared for them, and loved them, and to whom their perils of false doctrine occasioned such anxiety, was a prisoner in chains: and that remembrance was to work and produce its various fruits—of prayer for him, of affectionate remembrance of his wants, of deep regard for his words. When we read of ‘his chains,’ we should not forget that they moved over the paper as he wrote. His *right* hand was chained to the soldier that kept him. Compare Eph. vi. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Tit. iii. 15. **Grace]** literally **the grace:** see ch. iii. 16. ‘The grace’ in which we stand (Rom. v. 2): it seems to be a form of valediction be-jong: ng to the later period of the Epistles of St. Paul.

1 THESSALONIANS

Chapter 1

Chapter 4

Chapter 2

Chapter 5

Chapter 3

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

1 Thessalonians: Chapter 1

Chap. I. 1.] ADDRESS AND GREETING. The Apostle names Silvanus and Timothy with himself, as having with him founded the church at Thessalonica, see Acts xvi. 1; xvii. 14. Silvanus is placed before Timothy, then a youth (Acts xvi. 1 f., see further in Introd. to 1 Tim. §i. 3, 4), as being one “chief among the brethren” (Acts xv. 22, 32; xviii. 5), and a prophet (ib. xv. 32, see also 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Pet. v. 12). He does not name himself *an Apostle*, probably because his Apostleship needed not any substantiation to the Thessalonians. For the same reason he omits the designation in the Epistle to the Philippians.

unto the church] So in 2 Thess., Gal., 1 and 2 Cor.: in the other Epistles, viz, Rom., Eph., Col., Phil., more generally, e.g.,—“*to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.*” This is most probably accounted for by the circumstances of, the various Epistles. We may notice that the genitive plural of the *persons constituting the church* occurs only in the addresses of these two Epistles. We may render ‘of Thessalonians,’ or ‘of the Thessalonians:’ better the former.

in God the Father marks them as not being heathens,—and the **Lord Jesus Christ** as not being Jews.—The **in**, as usual, denotes *communion* and *participation in*, as the element of spiritual life. “Grace and peace from God be unto you, that you who are deprived of human favour and secular peace, may have both these with God.” Anselm. The words which follow in the A.V., are not yet added in this, St. Paul’s first Epistle. Afterwards they become a common formula with him.

2—III. 13.] FIRST PORTION OF THE EPISTLE, *in which he pours out his heart to the Thessalonians respecting all the circumstances of their reception of and adhesion to the faith.*

2—10.] Jowett remarks, that few passages are more characteristic of the style of St. Paul than this one: both as being the overflowing of his love in thankfulness for his converts, about: whom he can never say too much: and as to the very form and structure of the sentences, which seem to grow under his hand, gaining force in each successive clause by the repetition and expansion of the preceding.

2.] **We give thanks**, coming so immediately after the mention of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, can hardly be here understood of the Apostle alone, as it is by many Commentators. For undoubted as it is that he often, e.g. ch. iii. 1, 2, where see note, uses the plural of himself alone, yet it is as undoubted that he uses it also of himself and of his fellow-labourers—e. g., 2Cor. i. 18, 19.

always for you all] We have the same alliteration Eph. v. 20. On the latter words in this verse, see Rom. i. 9 f.

unceasingly seems, by the nearly parallel place, Rom. i. 9, to belong to *what goes before*, not to *what follows*. Such a formula would naturally repeat, itself, as far as specifications of this kind are concerned.

3.] faith, love, hope, are the three great Christian graces of 1 Cor. xiii. See also ch. v. 8; Col. i. 4, 5.

the labour of your love] probably *towards the sick and needy strangers*, compare Acts xx. 35; Rom. xvi. 6, 12. **of... love**, not as *springing from*, but as *belonging to*, love,—*characterizing it*. **the endurance (or, patience) of your hope**—i. e. endurance (in trials) which belongs to (see above), characterizes, your hope; and also nourishes it, in turn: compare Rom. xv. 4.

of our Lord Jesus Christ] specifies the hope—that it is a hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (compare ver. 10). Olshausen refers the words to all three ceding substantives—but this seems alien from St. Paul’s style. On all the three Jowett says well, “Your faith, hope, and love; a faith that had its outward effect on your lives: a love that spent itself in the service of others: a hope that was no mere transient feeling, but was content to wait for the things unseen when Christ should be revealed.”

before God connects most naturally with ver. 2—**making mention.... before God**: not to the genitives preceding (see Rom. iv. 17; xiv. 22).

4.] knowing refers back to *remembering, in that we know*—or, **for we know**. It must not be paraphrased “*in that ye know*,” as some have done. The words **by God** belong to “*beloved*,” as in 2 Thess. ii. 13, see also Rom. i. 7: not, as A.V., to ‘*your*

election,” which is an ungrammatical rendering.

The word **election** must not be softened down: it is the election unto life of individual believers by God, so commonly adduced by St. Paul (reff.: and 1 Cor. i. 27.

your election, i.e. **the election of you**: knowing that God elected you.

5. Because] Verses 5, 6 ff. are meant not to explain *wherein* their election *consisted*, but to give reasons in matter of fact for concluding the existence of that election. These reasons are (1) the power and confidence with which he and Silvanus and Timothy preached among them (ver. 5), and (2) the earnest and joyful manner in which the Thessalonians received it (vv. 6 ff.). Both these were signs of God’s grace to them—tokens of their election vouchsafed by Him.

our gospel] i.e. the gospel which we preached.

came unto you] literally, **became to you**—proved to be, in its approach to you. The preposition **in**, thrice repeated, indicates the form and manner in which the *preaching was carried on*, not that in which the Thessalonians received it, which is not treated till ver. 6.

in power] not ‘*in miracles*,’ but **in power** of utterance and of energy.

and in the Holy Ghost] i.e. not only in force and energy, but **in the Holy Ghost**—in a manner which could only be ascribed to the operation of the Holy Spirit.

in much confidence (of faith). This confidence (see above) was that in which *Paul and Silvanus and Timothy preached to them*: not **that in which they received the preaching**.

even as, &c.] Appeal to their knowledge that the fact was so. These words restrict the foregoing to the *preachers*, as explained above. This interpretation is fixed by the term **even as**, referring back to the whole previous description,

what manner of men we proved] The point of the fact appealed to is, the proof given, what manner of men they were, by the manner of their preaching. “The *quality* was evinced, in the power and confidence with which they delivered their message.” Ellicott: *the proof given by the manner of their preaching*.

for your sakes] conveying the purpose of the Apostle and his colleagues, and in the background also *the purpose of GOD*—‘you know what God enabled us to be,—how mighty in preaching the word,—for your sakes—thereby proving that He loved you, and had chosen you for His own.’

6.] Further proof of the same, that ye are *elect*, by the method in which *you received the Gospel* thus preached by us. It is somewhat difficult here to fix exactly the point of comparison, in which they imitated their ministers and Christ. Certainly it is not merely, in *receiving the word*—for to omit other objections, this would not apply at all to Him:—and therefore, not in any qualifying detail of their *method* of reception of the word.—So far being clear, we have but one particular left, and that respects the circumstances under which, and the spirit with which: and here we find a point of comparison even with Christ Himself: viz. joyful endurance in spirit under sufferings. This it was in which they imitated the Apostles, and their divine Master, and which made them patterns to other churches (see below).—For this affliction in which they *received the word*, see Acts xvii. 5–10; ch. ii. 14; iii. 2, 3, 5.

receiving] i.e. **in that ye received**.

joy of the Holy Spirit] i.e. **joy wrought by the Holy Spirit**.

7.] *Further specification of the eminence of the Thessalonians’ Christian character.*

an example] said of the whole church as one.

to all that believe] **to the whole of the believers**: not as Chrysostom understands it, all that believed before you: for it was not so: the only church in Europe which was in Christ before the Thessalonian, was the Philippian (Acts xvi. 12—xvii. 1; see ch. ii. 2).

Macedonia and Achaia, compare Rom. xv. 26; Acts xix. 21: the two Roman provinces, comprehending Northern and Southern Greece. There is no reference, as Theodoret thinks, to the *Greeks* being “very great nations, and admired for wisdom,” and so *their praise* being the greater: these are mentioned simply because the Apostle had been, since their

conversion, in Macedonia, and had left Silvanus and Timothy there,—and was now in Achaia.

8.] *Proof of the praise in ver. 7.*

from you is merely local; not by you, as preachers.

hath sounded out] Chrysostom remarks that the similitude is from the clear sound of a trumpet, filling all the space surrounding. The sense seems to be that your ready reception and faith as it were sounded forth the word of the Lord, the Gospel message, loudly and clearly, through all parts.

toward God] directed towards God as its object (and here, as contrasted with idols, see next verse). De Wette supposes with some probability that the report of the Thessalonians' faith may have been spread by Christian travel-ling merchants, such as Aquila and Pris-cilla.

so that we need not...] The report being already rife, we found no occasion to speak of your faith, or in your praise.

9.] **they**, the people in Macedonia and Achaia and in every place.

concerning US] Paul and Silvanus and Timothy; '*us both*,' including the Thessalonians. The *things reported* here correspond to the two members of the above proof, verses 5 and 6.

living, as distinguished from lifeless idols: **true**, as from those who were falsely called gods.

10.] The especial aspect of the faith of the Thessalonians was *hope*: hope of the re-turn of the Son of God from heaven: a hope, indeed, common to them with all Christians in all ages, but evidently entertained by them as pointing to an event more immediate than the church has subsequently believed it to be. Certainly these words would give them an idea of the *nearness* of the coming of Christ: and. perhaps the misunderstanding of them may have contributed to the notion which the Apostle corrects, 2 Thess. ii. 1 ff.: see note there. By the words, **whom he raised from the dead**, that whereby (Rom. i. 4) Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power, is emphatically prefixed to His name.

who delivereth: not, as A.V., past, '*who delivered*,' but descriptive of His office, our Deliverer.

which is coming] compare **Eph. v. 6**; Col. iii. 6.

1 Thessalonians: Chapter 2

CH. II. 1–16.] *He reminds the Thessalonians of his manner of preaching among them* (1–12, answering to ch. i. 9a): *praises them for their reception of the Gospel, and firmness in persecution* (13–16, answering to ch. i. 9 b).

1.] **For** refers back to ch. i. 9: 'not only do strangers report it, but you know it to be true.' He makes use now of that knowledge to carry out the description of his preaching among them, with a view, by recapitulating these details, to confirm them, who were as yet but novices, in the faith.

in vain] or, **empty**. It is evident from vv. 2 ff., that this does not here apply to the *fruits*, but to the *character* of his **preaching**: the *result* does not appear till ver. 13. And within this limitation, we may observe that the verb is **hath been**, not **was**; to be understood therefore not of any mere intent of the Apostle at the time of his coming among them, but of some abiding character of his preaching. It probably expresses, that his *entering in* was and continued '*no empty scheme*' ('*no light matter*', as we say), but an earnest, bold, self-denying endeavour for their good. This he proceeds to prove.

2.] On the facts, see Acts xvi.

were bold to speak] i.e. **we had the confidence to speak**.

our God, because all true confidence is in God as *our God*. This word reproduces the feeling with which Paul and Silas opened their ministry among them.

of God is expressed for solemnity, to add to the weight of their *entering in*.

in (amidst) much conflict, viz. under outward circumstances conflicting much with our work: and therefore that work could be no *empty thing*, which was thus maintained.

3, 4.] Reasons why he was bold to speak... in much conflict:—viz. the true and single-minded character of his ministry, and his duty to God as the steward of the Gospel.

3.] our exhortation to you, viz. our whole course of preaching. There is in the original no verb after **exhortation**: but the sense of the sentence is present; not past, as in A.V.: compare “*even so we speak*” below.

impurity] hardly, as Chrysostom, “that we busied not ourselves with abominable matters, as magicians, &c. do,”—though such a reference is certainly possible, con sidering the vile degradation of that class at the period,—but here apparently of the impure desire of gain, compare ver. 5, where “*in pretext of covetousness*” seems to correspond with **from impurity** here.

in guile] This is said of the *manner*, or perhaps the *ethical sphere, in which*: “nor did we make use of deceit to win our way with our **exhortation**. See 2 Cor. ii. 17.

4.] according as, in proportion as.

we have been approved,—thought fit: compare 1 Tim. i. 12. We must not introduce any ascertained fitness of them in themselves into the idea: it is only the free choice of God which is spoken of.

pleasing, in the strict sense of the *present tense*,—**going about to please,—striving to please.**

our hearts is not said generally, of all men: but of us, Paul and Silvanus and Timothy.

5 ff.] Proofs again of the assertions of vv. 3, 4. For neither did we become conversant in (i. e. in English, **did we practise**, as in the text) **speech of** (consisting of) **flattery, as ye know, nor (did we become conversant) in pretext** (em ployed in that which was meant to be a pretext) **of** (serving to conceal) **avarice; God is witness** (it has been observed, that, he appeals to *them* as witnesses that he did not flatter them; but to God, who alone knows the hearts, that he had no selfish ends in view. But perhaps it is simpler to refer **God is witness** to the whole).

6.] The glory which they sought was not at all to come out of human sources, whether actually from the Thessalonians or from any others.

though we might have been burdensome] Some refer this to *covetousness*, mentioned above, and understand it of using the power of living by the gospel, which St. Paul, &c., might have done, but did not: so ver. 9: 2 Thess. iii. 8; 2 Cor. xii. 16; xi. 9. But the words are separated from the mention of *covetousness* by the new idea beginning at ver. 6, to which, and not to the former clause, this is subordinated. I therefore take them with Chrysostom and many others, as referring to the claim of honour and deference, which as Apostles they might have put forward. They are equivalent to, **when we might have stood on our dignity.**

as (being) Apostles of Christ] It is simpler to take Apostles here in its wider sense, than to limit the sentence to St. Paul alone.

7.] But contrasts, not with the mere subordinate clause of the last verse (“*though we might*,” &c.), but with its whole sense, and introduces the positive side of their behaviour: as if it were said, ‘so far from being any of the aforesaid, we were...’

we proved, as before, were found by experience to be: *became*, as your estimate of us became more accu-rate and thorough.

among you] i.e. ‘in our converse with you;’ but with an allusion to our not lifting ourselves above you;—*as being ourselves your fellows*. ‘The emphasis on **her own** should not be lost sight of—**as when a nurse** (a suckling mother) **cherishes her own children**. See Gal. iv. 19, for the same figure.

8.] thus belongs to **became willing**, and answers to **as** above. The expression **our own lives**, as remarked above, shews beyond doubt that he is including here Silas and Timothy with himself. The term **to impart** will not strictly apply to *our own lives*, but we must borrow from it the idea of giving, or offering.—The comparison is exceedingly tender and beautiful: as the nursing-mother, cherishing her children, joys to give not only her milk, but her life, for them,—so we, bringing up you as spiritual children, delighted in giving, not only the milk of the word, but even (and here it was matter of fact) our own lives, for your nourishment in Christ. And that, **because ye became very dear unto us.**

9.] Proof of the dearness of the Thessalonians to Paul and his com panions: not of these last proving gentle among them, to which it would be irrelevant,—nor of their readiness to give their lives, &c., for this verse does not refer to dangers undergone, but to *labour, in order not to trouble any*.

our labour and toil] a repetition to intensify: no distinction can be established.

working] in its strict meaning of manual labour—viz., at tent-cloth making, Acts xviii. 3.

night and day] The *night* is mentioned first, not merely because the Jews and Athenians so reckoned it, but *for emphasis*, being the most noteworthy, and the *day* following as matter of course. See ch. iii. 10; Mark v. 5; 2 Tim. i. 3; Isa. xxxiv. 10; Acts xx. 31.

that we might not burden any of you, viz. by accepting from you the means of sustenance. On the supposed inconsistency of the statement here with the narrative in Acts xvii., see Introd., §ii. 3, and note.

10–12.] General summary of their behaviour and teaching among the Thessalonians.

10.] Ye are witnesses, of the outward appearance.

God, of the heart.

holiness is more a quality having respect to God: **justice**, to men. This distinction, perhaps precarious where the words occur separately, or seem to require no very precise application, is requisite here where both divine and human testimony is appealed to.

toward you that believe] The former verse having referred to *external* occupation, in which he must have consorted with *unbelievers*, he here narrows the circle, to speak of his behaviour among the brethren them-selves.

11, 12.] Appeal to the detailed judgment of each one, that this was so. This “*holily and justly and unblameably*” is substantiated by the fact, that *St. Paul and his companions* busied themselves in establishing every one of them in the faith.

11.] God calls us to His *kingdom*, the kingdom of our Lord Jesus, which He shall establish at His coming: and He calls us to His *glory*,—to partake of that glory in His presence, which our Lord Jesus had with Him before the world began; John xvii. 5, 24. See Rom. v. 2.

13.] for this cause is best and most simply referred to the fact announced in the preceding words—viz. that God *calleth you unto His kingdom and glory*, &c. Seeing that He is thus calling you, your thorough reception of His word is to us a cause of thanksgiving to Him.

we also, i.e. as well as *all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia*.

when ye received... ye accepted] The former verb denotes only the *hearing*, as objective matter of fact: the latter, the *receiving into their minds* as subjective matter of belief. There is a significant contrast, St. Paul distinguishing himself and his companions, as mere publishers, from God, the great Source of the Gospel.

ye accepted, not (no ‘as’ must be inserted: he is not speaking of the *Thessalonians’ estimate* of the word, but [see above] of the fact of their receiving it as it really was) **the word of men** (having man for its author), **but as it is in truth, the word of God, which** (Bengel and others take **which** as referring to “God:” but the more probable reference is to **the word**: see the reason in my Greek Test.) **is also** (besides being merely heard) **working in you that believe**.

14.] Proof of this working,—that they had imitated in endurance the Judean churches.

imitators] not in intention, but in fact. ‘The reason for introducing this character of the Jews here was because (Acts xvii. 5 ff.) *they* had been the stirrers up of the persecution against himself and Silas at Thessalonica, to which circumstance he refers below. By the mention of them as the adversaries of the Gospel in Judaea he is carried on to say that there, as well as at Thessalonica, they had ever been its chief enemies. And this is a remarkable coincidence with the history in the Acts, where we find him at this time, in Corinth, in more than usual conflict with the Jews (Acts xviii. 5, 6, 12).

the churches of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus] Œcumenius remarks that the language is carefully accurate: the synagogues of the Jews as such claiming to be *in God*, those which believed were also, over and above this, *in Christ Jesus His Son*. These countrymen of the Thessalonians were not Jews, wholly nor in part, but Gentiles only. For they are set in distinct contrast here to *the Jews*.

they, the members of the Judean churches mentioned above.

15, 16.] *Characterization of the Jews as enemies of the Gospel and of mankind.* Jowett's note is worth quoting: "Wherever the Apostle had gone on his second journey, he had been persecuted by the Jews: and the longer he travelled about among Gentile cities, the more he must have been sensible of the feeling with which his countrymen were regarded. Isolated as they were from the rest of the world in every city, a people within a people, it was impossible that they should not be united for their own self-defence, and regarded with suspicion by the rest of mankind. But their inner nature was not less repugnant to the nobler as well as the baser feelings of Greece and Rome. Their fierce nationality had outlived itself: though worshippers of the true God, they knew Him not to be the God of all the nations of the earth: hated and despised by others, they could but cherish in return an impotent contempt and hatred of other men. What wonder that, for an instant (?) on all this see below), the Apostle should have felt that this Gentile feeling was not wholly groundless? or that he should use words which recall the expression of Tacitus, in characterizing the Jews,— 'that they had the hatred of enemies towards all other nations?'"

15. killed Jesus the Lord] The arrangement of the words in the original is peculiar, throwing "*the Lord*" into strong emphasis —Jesus who was their Lord, whom they ought to have welcomed and obeyed.

drove out us] by persecution, viz., from among you, Acts xvii. 5 ff.

16.] us refers to Paul and Silas. In the words **are contrary to all men**, most. Commentators, and recently Jowett (see above), have seen the "*hatred of the human race,*" ascribed to the Jews by Tacitus, and by several other classic authors. But it is hardly possible that St. Paul, himself a Jew, should have blamed an exclusiveness which arose from the strict monotheism and legal purity of the Jew: and besides this, the construction having been hitherto carried on by copulae, but now dropping them, most naturally goes on from this *contrariety* to what next follows, viz., *their forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles*, specifying wherein the contrariety consists, viz. in opposing the salvation of mankind by the Gospel.

to the end that they may fill up their sins alway] This is said, not of the intention of the Jews themselves, but of their course of conduct, viewed as having an intent in the divine purposes: as so often in St. Paul. The meaning of the expression is, that they may bring up the measure of their sins to the pre-scribed point. **But** (this their opposition to God and men shall not avail them: for) **the** (predestined, or predicted, or merited) **wrath** (of God) **came upon them** (he looks back on the fact in the divine counsels as a thing in past time, i.e. 'was appointed to come:' not as in A, V. "is come") **to the uttermost** (to the end of it, i.e. the wrath: so that it shall exhaust all its force on them).

17—III. 13.] *He relates to them how he desired to return after his separation from them: and when that was impracticable, how he sent Timothy; at whose good intelligence of them he was cheered, thanks God for them, and prays for their continuance in love and confirmation in the faith.*

17.] But we resumes the subject broken off at ver. 13: the **but** introducing a contrast to the description of the Jews in vv. 15, 16.

when we had been separated] literally, **orphaned of; bereaved of.**

for a short time] literally, **for the space of an hour.** The expression refers, not to his present impression that the time of separation would still be short, but to the time alluded to in the preceding past participle—**when we had been separated from you for the space of an hour. the more abundantly** (because our separation was so short. Lünenmann says well: "Universal experience testifies, that the pain of separation from friends and the desire of return to them are more vivid, the more freshly the remembrance of the parting works in the spirit, i.e. the less time has elapsed since the parting") **endeavoured** (implies actual setting on foot of measures to effect it) **in much desire** (i. e. very earnestly) **to see your face.**

18. Wherefore (as following up this earnest endeavour) **we would fain have come** (had a plan to come) **unto you, even I Paul** (the introduction of these words here, where he is about to speak of himself alone, is a strong confirmation of the view upheld above [on ch. i. 9] that he has hitherto been speaking of himself and his companions), **both once and again** (literally, 'both once and twice:' meaning, that on *two special occasions* he had such a plan), **and** (not, 'but.' the simple copula, as in Rom. i. 13, gives the matter of fact, without raising the contrast between the intention and the hindrance) **Satan** (i. e. the devil: not any human adversary or set of adversaries; whether Satan acted by the Thessalonian Jews or not, is unknown to us, but by whomsoever acting, the agency was *his*) **hindered us.**

19.] accounts for this his earnest desire to see them, by the esteem in which he held them.

in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming] The Apostle, after having asked and answered the question, "*what is our hope? &c.,*" breaks off, and specifies that wherein this hope and joy mainly consisted, viz. the glorious prospect of their being found in the Lord at his appearing. But he does not look forward to this as anticipating a reward for the conversion of the Thessalonians, or that their conversion will compensate for his having persecuted the Church before, but from generous desire to be found at that day with the fruits of his labour, and that they might be his boast and he theirs before the Lord; see 2 Cor. i.

14; Phil. ii. 16.

20.] The words **at his coming** further specify what went before: that it is not merely in His presence, always about His people, but then, when He shall be clearly and finally manifested. I should be inclined to ascribe to ver. 20 a wider range than ver. 19 embraces: as if it had been said, **you will be our joy in the day of the Lord: for ye are** (at all times, *ye are abstractedly*) **our glory and joy.**

1 Thessalonians: Chapter 3

III. 1.] **Wherefore**, because of our affection for you just expressed; the narration which follows is the proof of his affection for them.

being no longer able to forbear (our continued absence from communication with you), **we** (I Paul, from above, ch. ii. 18) **thought it good** (i. e. ‘it was our pleasure’) **to be left behind** (see Acts xvii. 15, 16) **alone in Athens,**

2.] **and sent Timothy, our brother and fellow-worker with God in** (the field of his working) **the Gospel of Christ** (there does not appear to be any special reason for this honourable mention of Timothy, further than the disposition to speak thus highly of him on the part of the Apostle. Such is the more natural view, when we take into account the fervid and affectionate heart of the writer. See, however, note on 1 Tim. v. 23; with which timid character of Timothy such designations as this may be connected), **in order to confirm you, and exhort you on behalf of** (in order for the furtherance of) **your faith:**

3.] **that no one might be disquieted in these afflictions** (which are happening to us both):

for yourselves know...] *Reason why no one should be shaken.*

thereunto, viz. to *afflictions*, **we** meaning ‘we Christians.’

4.] reason for the assumption of this knowledge.

ye know, viz. by experience.

5.] **For this cause**, because tribulation had verily begun among you (“*as it came to pass*”).

The words **I also** seem to convey a delicate hint that Timothy also was anxious respecting them: or it may have the same reference as “*we also*,” ch. ii. 13,—viz. to the other Christians who had heard of their tribulation.

6-8.] *Of the good news brought by Timothy.*

6. **But Timothy having just now come**] See Acts xviii. 5. This settles the time of our Epistle being written. It was very soon after this arrival of Silas and Timothy.—First their Christian state comforted him,—then, their constant remembrance of himself. Theodoret remarks: “He mentions three things which have excited his affection to them: their faith, their love, their remembrance of their teacher. Their faith shews the stability of their piety; their love, their practical virtue; and their remembrance of their teacher and desire for him testifies to their loyalty in matters of doctrine.”

7.] **for this cause**, viz. on account of what has just been mentioned, from the beginning of the last verse—**this** combining the whole of the good news in one.

over you] *You* were the object of our consolation: the faith which you shewed was the means whereby that object was applied to our minds.

in (ie. ‘*in the midst of*,—‘*in spite of*’) **all our distress and affliction** (*what* distress and affliction does not appear;—but clearly some external trouble, not *care and anxiety for you*, for this would be removed by the message of Timothy. We may well imagine such external trouble, from Acts xviii. 5–10):

8.] **since now** (not so much an adverb of *time*, here, as implying the fulfilment of the condition which follows) **we live** (the distress and affliction being conceived as a *death*: but not to be referred to *everlasting* life, as Chrysostom, but with reference to the infringement of the powers of life by *dis-tress* and *affliction*: we are in full strength and freshness of life, we do not feel the sorrows and tribulations with which the outer world surrounds us), **if ye stand fast in the Lord**. There were (ver. 10) **deficiencies** in their faith, requiring *filling up*.

9.] And this vigour of life shews itself in the earnest desire of abundant thanksgiving: so the **for** accounts for, and specifies the action of, the “life” just mentioned.

what—i. e. what sufficient—?

can we render again] *Thanks* is itself a *return* for God’s favours; see especially Ps. cxvi. 12.

for all the joy] i.e. **in return for**.

all the joy, i.e. not the joy from so many different sources, but the joy in its largeness and depth: as if he had said, **this great joy**.

before our God shews the joy to be of the very highest and best,—no joy of this world, or of personal pride, but one which will bear, and does bear, the search-ing eye of God, and is *His* joy (John xv. 11).

10. night and day] see on ch. ii. 9.

praying, i.e. **praying as we do**, belongs to the question of ver. 9: as if it had been said, ‘what thanks can we render, &c., proportioned to the earnestness of our prayers, &c.?’. These **defects** were consequences of their being as yet novices in the faith: partly theoretical, e.g. their want of stability respecting the *coming of the Lord*, and of fixed ideas respecting those who had fallen asleep in Christ,—partly practical, ch. iv. 1.

11–13.] Good wishes, with respect to this his earnest desire, and to their continued progress in love and holiness.

11. himself] This word exalts the absolute power of God and the Lord Jesus—if He expedites the way, it will be accomplished. **Himself** then is in contrast with *ourselves*, who have once and again tried to come to you, but have been hindered by Satan.

direct] We cannot express in an English version what appears in the Greek, where this verb *direct*, though preceded by two personal nominatives, “*God*,” and “*our Lord Jesus*,” is in the singular *number*. This is the case also in 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. It would be hardly possible that it should be so, unless some reason existed in the subjects of the verb. Mere *unity of will* between the Father and the Son would not be enough, unless absolute unity were also in the writer’s mind. Athanasius therefore seems to be right in drawing from this construction an argument for the unity of the Father and the Son.

12. you yourselves] In the original it is **you**, in the emphatic place: i.e. whether we come or not.

the Lord may refer either to the Father, or to Christ. I should rather understand it of the Father: see 2 Cor. ix. 8

make you to increase: enlarge you—not merely in *numbers*, as some explain it, but in *yourselves*, in richness of gifts and largeness of faith and knowledge—fill up your *defects*, ver. 10.

toward all, not merely *all your brethren*, but all, whether brethren or not.

as we also—abound in love—**toward you**.

13.] to the end that he may establish (the further and higher aim of *making you to increase and abound*) **your hearts** (“not merely *you*,” says Chrysostom: “for out of the heart come evil thoughts”) **unblameable** (i. e. so as to be unblameable) **in holiness** (belongs to “*unblameable*,”—the sphere in which the blamelessness is to be shewn:—not to the verb “*stablish*”) **before** (Him who is) **God and our Father** (or, **our God an Father**). This ensures the genuineness of this absence of blame in holiness: that it should be not only before men, but also before God), **at (in) the coming, &c.**

his saints—we need not enter into any question whether these are angels, or saints properly so called: the expression is an Old Test. one,—Zech. xiv. 5,—and was probably meant by St. Paul to include both. Certainly (2 Thess. i. 7; Matt. xxv. 31, al.) He will be accompanied with the *angels*: but also with the spirits of the just, compare ch. iv. 14.

1 Thessalonians: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1—V. 24.] SECOND PORTION OF THE EPISTLE: consisting of exhortations and instructions.

1–12.] Exhortations: and

1-8.] to a holy life.

1.] **Furthermore** has no reference to time, as Chrysostom, “*always and for ever*,” but introduces this second portion, thus dividing it from the first, and implying the *close* of the Epistle. St. Paul uses it towards the end of his Epistles: see 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Eph. vi. 10; Phil. iv. 8 (“*finally*,” but the same word in the Greek.)

then, in furtherance of the wish of ch. iii, 12, 13.

we exhort you in (as our element of exhortation; in whom we do all things pertaining to the ministry [see Rom. ix. 1]: Eph. iv. 17—not, as A.V., ‘*by*,’ which is contrary to the New Test. usage of the word here found) **the Lord Jesus, that as ye received** (see on ch. ii. 13) **from us how ye ought to walk and to please God** (i. e. to please God in your walk and conduct:—to walk, and thereby to please God), **even as also ye are walking, that ye abound yet more** (viz. *in thus walking*).

2.] takes up the “*as ye received of us*” of the former verse, and appeals to their memory in its confirmation. See similar appeals in Gal. iv. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 1.

by the Lord Jesus] i.e. **coming from Him**, by His order and appointment.

3.] *Further specification (“for”) of these commands*: see above. The words **the will of God** serve to take up again the preceding assertion that the commandments were given “*by the Lord Jesus*.”

your sanctification is in apposition with **the will of God**, as a matter patent to all, the will of God respecting us being known to be, our sanctification, and then this sanctification being afterwards specified as consisting in *abstinence from fornication*. Therefore *sanctification* must be taken in the most general sense, and that which is afterwards introduced, as forming a *part* of our *sanctification*.

your sanctification] i.e. **the sanctification of you**.

4.] On the meaning of the expression, **his own vessel**, there has been much difference. Very many Commentators understand it of ‘*the body*.’ But it is fatal to this interpretation, (1) that it must force an untenable meaning on the pre-ceeding verb, which can only mean ‘*to acquire*,’ not, as in A.V., ‘*to possess*.’ Chrysostom, whose sense of Greek usage led him to feel this, tries to fit the mean-ing ‘*to acquire*’ into the sense: saying, “We do really *acquire* the body, when it remains pure, and is in *sanctification*” (so Dr. Vaughan also). But this is lame enough, and would not, as De Wette remarks, answer for the other member of the sentence, “*not in the lust of carnal desire*.” (2) That the mere use of the word **vessel**, without any explanation, could hardly point at the **body**. In all the passages ordinarily quoted to support it, the metaphor is further explained by the context. 2 Cor. iv. 7 is evidently no case in point, the epithet “*earthen*” being there added, and the body being simply *compared to an earthen vessel*. (3) The order of the words in the original is against it, by which the whole stress is laid on the word *own*. This would be without meaning if “*vessel*” meant the body: for how could a man *acquire* another’s body? (4) But a more fatal objection than any of the former is, that the context is entirely against the meaning. The *sanctification* has been explained to consist in abstaining from **fornication**. And now this *fornication* comes to be specified, wherein it consists, and how it may be guarded against: viz. in carrying on the divinely-appointed commerce of the sexes in holiness and honour. In fact, the thought is exactly as in 1 Cor. vii. 2, “*Because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband*.” Many have therefore understood vessel in its literal meaning as applied to ‘*the matter*’ in hand,—i. e. the *woman* (or indeed the *man*, on the other side, inasmuch as the *woman* has *power* over his body, see 1 Cor. vii. 4.—So that thus it would be an exhortation to the *woman* also). Thus the context would be satisfied, and the emphatic position of **his own** (as in 1 Cor. vii. 2);—and **acquire** would re-tain its proper meaning: **that each of you should know how to acquire his own vessel** (for this purpose) **in sanctification and honour**. This sense of *vessel* is found in the Jewish books; and the verb rendered “*acquire*” was commonly used of taking a wife. This interpretation is that of some of the principal among the ancients, including Augustine, and of many of the principal moderns. The objection to it alleged by Calvin and others, that thus only *men* would be addressed, is easily answered (besides as above, under 4) by observing that in other places also, where *fornication* is in question, the male only is exhorted, e.g. 1 Cor. vi. 15–18: the *female* being included by implication, and bound to interpret on her side that which is said of the other.

6.] I cannot help regarding it as most unnatural, to interpret this verse of a new subject introduced, viz. the not *wronging* one another *in the business of life*. How some of the best modern Commentators can have entertained this view, I am at a loss to imagine. For (1) the sense is carried on from vv. 4, 5, without any thing to mark a change of topic: and (2) when the Apostle sums up the whole in ver. 7, he mentions merely impurity, without the slightest allusion to the other. To say that more than one kind of sin must be mentioned because he speaks of “*all these things*” is mere trifling: this expression merely generalizes from the sin mentioned to a wider range. I understand the verse, with Chrysostom, and most of the ancients and moderns, to refer to the *sins of uncleanness*, and continue vv. 4, 5:—**that he should not** (viz. **any of you**, repeated from “*every one of*

you" above) **go beyond** (or **set at nought**, which perhaps is more strictly accurate; but the word means both, and the other is perhaps best in English) **and overreach his brother in the** (i. e. this) **matter** (viz. of acquiring his own vessel—that there should be among you no strifes on account of the *lusts of carnal desire*. The matter, viz. which is now in hand: not,—nor can the words by any possibility mean, "*any matter*," as A.V.: nor "*the business of life*," as some have interpreted it: see above. "It is probable that the obscurity of the passage arises partly from the decency in which the Apostle clothes it." Jowett): **because God is the avenger** ('righter,' in such cases of setting at nought and overreaching) **of all these things** (viz. cases of *going beyond and overreaching*, and by inference, lustful sins like them), **as also** (see on ver. 5) **we before told you and (constantly) testified.**

7.] This verse (see above) is in my view decisive for the above rendering of ver. 6. There is no mention here of *avarice*: nor is it possible to understand the word **uncleanness**, when ver. 3 has gone before, of any thing but carnal impurity.

for] for the purpose of,—on condition of:—in, 'in the element of.'

sanctification is the whole sphere of our Christian life.

8.] Hence, the sin of (rejecting) setting at nought such limitations and rules is a fearful one—no less than that of setting at nought God the giver of the Holy Spirit. In the words **despiseth not man** there is an obvious allusion to *going beyond and overreaching* above. There is no need to supply any thing after **despiseth**: **he that despiseth** simply describes him who commits the act of despising, **the despiser**—*what* he despises, is not to be supplied in the construction, but is clear from the context—viz. *his brother*.

who also gave] i.e. who also is the AUTHOR of our sanctification.

By the word **also** new force is given to the matter to be mentioned. It introduces a climax, whereby the sin is intensified.

gave—not *giveth*—once for all, as being one great definite act of God by his Son.

his Spirit, which is holy] I have retained here the form of the original rather than render merely *His holy Spirit*: the Apostle doubtless chose this form for precision, to bring out the *holiness* of the Spirit, as connected with *sanctification* preceding.

9-12.] *Exhortations to brotherly love* (9, 10a), *and to honest diligent lives* (10b—12).

9.] **But** is transitional, the implied contrast being to the sin last spoken of.

brotherly love here refers more immediately (compare ver. 10) to deeds of kindness by way of relief to poor brethren.

ye need not] This is a not unusual touch of delicate rhetoric with St. Paul (see 2 Cor. ix. 1: Philem. 19: ch. v. 1). It conveys tacit but gentle reproof. The knowledge and the practice already exist: but the latter is not quite in proportion to the former. "In saying, 'there is no need,' he makes it greater than if he had said, 'there was need.'" Chrysostom.

10.] follows up the last verse by a matter of fact, shewing the teaching to have been in some measure effectual.

to abound, viz. in this *love*.

There does not seem any reason, with Jowett, to ascribe the want of quietness, here implied, **to be quiet**, to their *uneasiness about the state of the dead*: much rather [as he also states: see below] to their mistaken anticipations of the immediate coming of the Lord. It would seem as if, notwithstanding their liberality to those without, there were some defect of diligence and harmony within which prompted this exhortation: see 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12. Theodoret assigns another reason for it: "This exhortation is not inconsistent with the foregoing praises. For the state of things was, that one party zealously ministered charity to the needy, and that the latter on account of this zealous ministrant neglected their own duties: he naturally therefore praised the one and gave fitting advice to the others." It has been objected to this, that thus the Church would be divided into two sections, the one exhorted to persist and abound in their liberality, the other to work diligently to support themselves; whereas there is no trace in the text of such a division. But we may well answer, that instances are frequent enough of exhortations being addressed to whole churches which in their application would require severing and allotting to distinct classes of persons.

11.] **to study** (literally, **to make it your ambition**) **to be quiet**—have no other *ambition* than that of a quiet industrious holy life. From the exhortation to **work with your hands**, it appears that the members of the Thessalonian church were mostly of the class of persons thus labouring.

12.] Purpose of ver. 11.

becomingly] or, **honourably**: “*disorderly*,” 2 Thess. iii. 6, 11, is the opposite.

them that are without] the unbelieving world.

13.—CH. V. 11.] INSTRUCTIONS AND EXHORTATIONS CONCERNING THE TIME OF THE END: and herein,

13–18.] *instructions respecting the resurrection of the departed at the Lord's coming*.—We can hardly help suspecting some connexion between what has just preceded, and this section. It would certainly seem as if the preaching of the kingdom of Jesus at Thessalonica had been partially misunderstood, and been perverted into a cause why they should not quietly follow active life, and why they should be uneasy about those who fell asleep before that kingdom was brought in, imagining that they would have no part in its glories. Compare Acts xvii. 7.

13.] **we (or I) would not have you ignorant**.... is with our Apostle (compare Rom. i. 13; xi, 25; 1 Cor. x. 1; xii. 1; 2 Cor. i. 8) a common formula of transition to the imparting of weighty information.

them which are sleeping] This was an expression (see reff.) conveying definite meaning to the Thessalonians as importing *the dead in Christ* (ver. 16). No inference must therefore be drawn from the Apostle's use of this word, as to the intermediate state: for the word is a mere common term.

that ye may not sorrow] object of my not wishing you to be ignorant.

The word **sorrow** is *absolute*, **that ye mourn not at all**:—not to be joined with what follows, and to be made only to mean that. ye sorrow not in the same manner as&c. He forbids **mourning** altogether. But we must remember, *what sort of mourning* it was. It was mourning for *them*: not mourning for *our* loss in their *absence*, but for *theirs*, and *in so far*, for ours also.

the rest] viz. the heathen, and those **Jews** who did not believe a resurrection.

have no hope] viz. in the *resurrection*. Examples of this “*no hope*” are easily given from the Pagan writers. Lünemann cites,—Theocritus, “Hope goes with life—all hopeless are the dead.” Æschylus, “Once dead, there is no resurrection more.” Catullus, “Suns may set and may return; We, when once our brief light wanes,|Have eternal night to sleep.” Lucretius, “None ever woke again|Whom the cold pause of life hath overta' en.” Jowett adds ‘the sad complaints of Cicero and Quintilian over the loss of their children, and the dreary hope of an immortality of fame in Tacitus and Thucydides.’ This shews of *what kind* their **mourning** was: viz. a grief whose ground was unbelief in a resurrection: which regarded the dead as altogether cut off from Christ's heavenly kingdom.

14.] *Substantiation (for) of that implied in last verse, that further knowledge will remove this their grief*. and that knowledge, grounded on the resurrection of our Lord.

if] not ‘*seeing that*:’ but hypothetical: ‘*supposing*, that we, &c.’

died and rose again go together,—forming the same process through which ‘*the sleeping*’ are passing. “The Apostle here, as always, uses the direct term ‘died’ in reference to our Lord, to obviate all possible misconception: in reference to the faithful he appropriately uses the consolatory term ‘sleep.’” Ellicott.

even so] The two clauses do not accurately correspond. We should expect “*we believe also that even thus they who fell asleep through Jesus will rise again*,” or the like. Still the **even so** betokens identity of lot for the two parties concerned, viz. death, and resurrection. In this they resemble: but in the expressed particulars here, they differ. Christ's was simply “*rose again*:” theirs shall be a resurrection through Him, at His coming.

which fell asleep through Jesus] On the necessary connexion of the words **through Jesus** with **fell asleep**, see in my Greek Test.

God will bring (back to us) **with Him** (Jesus): i.e. when Jesus shall appear, they also shall appear with Him, being (as below) raised at His coming. Of their disembodied souls there is here no mention: nor is the meaning, as often understood, that God will bring them (their disembodied souls, to be joined to their raised bodies) with Him: but the bringing them with Jesus, i.e. their being raised when Jesus appears.

15.] *Confirmation of last verse by direct revelation from the Lord.*

this—this which follows: taken up by **that**.

in (virtue of: an assertion made within the sphere and element of that certainty, which the word of the Lord gives) **the word of the Lord**,—i. e. by direct revelation from Him made to me. “That is,” says Chrysostom, “we say it not of ourselves, but having learned it from Christ.” That St. Paul had many special revelations made to him, we know from 2 Cor. xii. 4.. Compare also Gal. i, 12; Eph. Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3, and notes.

we which are living] Then beyond question, he himself expected to be alive, together with the majority of those to whom he was writing, at the Lord’s coming. For we cannot for a moment accept the evasion of Theodoret (so also Chrysostom and the majority of ancient Commentators, down to Bengel, and even some of the best of the moderns, warped by their subjectivities: even Ellicott here),—“that he said this not in his own person, but in that of the men who should be surviving at that time (!)” —nor the ungrammatical rendering of some, ‘we, if we live and remain’ —nor the idea of Ecumenius, al., that *we who live* are the *souls, they who sleep the bodies*:—but must take the words in their only plain grammatical meaning, that **we which are living, who remain behind**, are a class distinguished from **them which fell asleep**, by being yet in the flesh when Christ comes, in which class, by prefixing **we**, he includes his readers and himself. That this *was* his expectation, we know from other passages, especially from 2 Cor. v. 1–10, where see notes. It does not seem to have been so strong towards the end of his course; see e.g. Phil.—26. Nor need it surprise any Christian, that the Apostles should in this matter of detail have found their personal expectations liable to disappointment, respecting a day of which it is so solemnly said, that no man knoweth its appointed time, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son (Mark xiii. 32), but the Father only. At the same time it must be borne in mind, that this inclusion of himself and his hearers among the “*living and remaining behind*” does not in any way enter into the fact revealed and here announced, which is respecting that class of persons only as they are, and must be, *one portion* of the faithful at the Lord’s coming: not respecting the question, *who shall*, and *who shall not* be among them in that day.

shall in no wise (emphatic—; there is no reason to fear, that we shall....) **gain an advantage over** (literally, *get before, outstrip, anticipate*: in the old sense of the word, *prevent*, so that they be left behind, and fail of the prize).

16.] A reason of the foregoing assertion, by detailing the method of the resurrection. Because the Lord Himself (said for solemnity’s sake, and to shew that it will not be a *mere gathering to Him*, but HE HIMSELF will descend, and we all shall be summoned before Him) **with** (literally, ‘in, as the element,—the accompanying circumstance) **a signal-shout** (the word signifies primarily not only ‘*the shout of battle*,’ as Conybeare; but is used of any signal given by the voice, whether of a captain to his rowers, of a man shouting to another at a distance, of a huntsman to his dogs. Here it seems to include in it the two which follow and explain it), **viz. with the voice of an** (or, the) **archangel** (Christ shall be surrounded with His angels, Matt. xxv. 31 al. To enquire, *which archangel*, is futile: to understand the word of *Christ Himself*, or the Holy Spirit, impossible), and **with the trump of God** (the trumpet especially belonging to and used in the heavenly *state* of God; not, *commanded by God* [Pelt, Olsb., al.],—nor does **of God** import *size* or *loudness* [Bengel], although these qualities of course are understood. On the trumpet as summoning assemblies, compare Num. x. 2; xxxi. 6; Joel ii. 1:—as accompanying the divine appearances, Exod. xix. 16; Ps. xlvi. 5; Isa. xxvii. 13; Zech. ix. 14; Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 52) **shall come down from heaven** (see Acts i. 11): **and the dead in Christ shall first rise** (this *first* has no reference whatever to the *first resurrection* [Rev. xx. 5, 6], here, for *only the Lord’s people* are here in question: but answers to **then** below: *first*, the dead in Christ shall rise: *then, we, &c.*); **then we who are living, who remain behind** (as above), **shall be caught up** (the great change spoken of, 1 Cor. xv. 52, having first suddenly taken place) **all together** (see Rom. iii. 12; ch. v. 10 note: **together** does not belong to “*with them*”), **with them** (the raised of ver. 16), **in (the) clouds, to meet the Lord** (as He descends. Christ is *on His way to this earth*: and when De Wette says that there is no plain trace in St. Paul of Christ’s Kingdom on earth,—and Lünemann, that, the words shew that the Apostle did not think of Christ as descending down to the earth, surely they cannot suppose him to have been so ignorant of Old Test. prophecy, as to have allowed this, its plain testimony, to escape him. To *meet* occurs twice more in the New Test.: and each *_time* implies meeting one who was *approaching*—not merely ‘meeting with’ a person), **into the air** (belongs to **shall be caught up**, not to the words “*to meet the Lord*,” as in A.V.): **and thus we** (i. e. we and they united, who were the subject of the last sentence) **shall be always with the Lord**. That he advances no further in the prophetic description, but breaks off at our union in Christ’s presence, is accounted for, by his purpose being accomplished, in having shewn that they who have died in Christ, shall not be thereby deprived of any advantage at His coming. The rest of the great events of that time—His advent on this earth, His judgment of it, assisted by His saints (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3),—His reign upon earth,—His final glorification with His redeemed in heaven,—are not treated here, but not therefore to be conceived of as alien from the Apostle’s teaching.

18.] So then: seeing that this is so.

these words, which I have by inspiration delivered to you. It will be manifest to the plain, as well as to the scholar-like reader, that attempts, like that of Mr. Jowett, to interpret such a passage as this by the rules of mere figurative language, are entirely beside the purpose. The Apostle’s declarations here are made in the practical tone of strict matter of fact, and are given as literal details, to console men’s minds under an existing difficulty. Never was a place where the analogy of symbolical apocalyptic language was less applicable. Either these details must be received by us as matter of practical expectation, or we

must set aside the Apostle as one divinely empowered to teach the Church. It is a fair opportunity for a crucial experiment, to test Christian faith and unbelief: and such test cannot be evaded by Mr. Jowett's intermediate expedient of figurative language.

1 Thessalonians: Chapter 5

CH. V. 1–11.] *Exhortation to watch for the day of the Lord's coming, and to be ready for it.*

1–3.] *the suddenness and unexpectedness of that day's coming.*

1.] On **times** and **seasons**, see Acts i. 7, note. They had no need, for the reason stated below: that St. Paul had already by word of mouth taught them as much as could be known.

2.] **the day of the Lord** is not the *destruction of Jerusalem*, as some think,—nor the day of *each man's death*, as Chrysostom and others,—but *the day of the Lord's coming*, which has been spoken of, in some of its details, above. ‘This is plain, by comparing 2 Thess. ii. 2; 1 Cor. i. 8; v. 53 2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. i. 6, 10; ii. 16.—It is both the suddenness, and the terribleness of the Day's coming, which is here dwelt on: see next verse.

so fills up the comparison—as a **thief in the night** (comes), **so.. it comes.**

3.] Following out of the comparison the *thief in the night*, into detail.

they say, viz. men in general—the children of the world, as opposed to the people of God: compare what follows. The vivid description dispenses with any copula.

cometh upon them] The Greek word is generally used of any sudden unexpected appearance: as for example in Luke xxi. 34: Acts iv. 1.—It is pressing too close the comparison which follows, when De Wette says that it “assumes the day to be *near*,—for that such a woman, though she does not know the day and the hour, yet has a definite knowledge of the *period*:” for it is not the woman, nor her condition, that is the subject of comparison, but the *unexpected pang* of labour which comes on her.

4, 5.] But the Thessalonians, and Christians in general, are not to be thus over-taken by it.

4.] **in darkness** refers back to “*in the night*” above—in the ignorance and moral slumber of the world which knows not God. Not, ‘*that day*,’ but the **DAY**—the meaning of the **day** as distinguished from **the darkness** being brought out, and *the day* being put in the place of emphasis accordingly. That this is so, is plain from what follows, ver. 5.

5.] You (a) and all we Christians (b) have no reason to fear, and no excuse for being surprised by, the **DAY** of the Lord: for **we are sons of light and the day** (signifying that we *belong to*, having our origin from, the light and the day), **and are not of** (do not supply ‘sons’—the genitives signify possession—**we belong not to**) **night nor darkness**. See, on the day of the Lord as connected with darkness and light, Amos v. 18 ff. There, its aspect to the ungodly is treated. of:—here, its aspect to Christians.

6–8.] *Exhortation to behave as such:* i.e. to watch and be sober.

6.] **the rest**—i. e. the careless world.

7.] Explanation of the assertion regarding “*the rest*” above from the common practice of men. The expressions are not to be taken in a spiritual sense, as Chrysostom and others, but literally.

8.] Contrast of our course, who are of the day. And this not only in being awake and sober, but in being *armed*—not only watchful, but as sentinels, on our guard, and *guarded ourselves*. Notice, that these arms are defensive only, as against a sudden attack—and belong therefore not so much to the Christian's conflict with evil, as (from the context) to his guard against being surprised by the day of the Lord as a thief in the night. The best defences against such a surprise are the three great Christian graces, Faith, Hope, Love,—which are accordingly here enumerated: see ch. i. 3, and 1 Cor. xiii. 13. In Eph. vi. 13–17, we have offensive as well as defensive weapons, and the symbolism is somewhat varied, the *breastplate* being *righteousness*, *faith* being the *shield*; while the helmet remains the same. See on the figure, Isa. lix. 17; Wisd. v. 17 ff. We must not perhaps press minutely the meaning of each part of the armour, in the presence of such variation in the two pas-sages.

9.] Explanation of the “*hope of salvation*,”—‘and we *may* with confidence put on such an hope as our helmet’—**For God set us not** (‘appointed **us not**’ {reff.}; keep the historical past meaning,—referring to the time when He made the appointment) **to**

(‘with a view to’—so as to issue in, become a prey to) **wrath**, but to acquisition of salvation through (through... refers to “acquisition of salvation,” not to “appointed”) **our Lord Jesus Christ, 10.] who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep** (in what sense? surely not in an ethical sense, as above: for they who sleep will be overtaken by Him as a thief, and His day will be to them darkness, not light. If not in an ethical sense, it must be in that of *living* or *dying*, and the sense as Rom. xiv. 8. For we cannot adopt the trifling sense given by Whitby, al.—‘whether He come in the night, and so find us taking our natural rest, or in the day when we are waking.’ Thus understood however, it will be at the sacrifice of perspicuity, seeing that the words **wake** and **sleep** have been used ethically throughout the passage. If we wish to preserve the uniformity of metaphor, we *may* [though I am not satisfied with this] interpret in this sense: that our Lord died for us, that whether we watch [are of the number of the watchful, i.e. already Christians] or sleep [are of the number of the sleeping, i.e. unconverted] we should live, &c. Thus it would be equivalent to, ‘who died that all men might be saved:’ who came, not to call the righteous only, but sinners to life. There is to this interpretation the great objection that it confounds with the “rest” the “we,” who are definitely spoken of as set by God not to wrath but to *the obtaining of salvation*. So that the sense **live or die**, must, I think, be accepted. and the want of perspicuity with it).

together: not to be joined to “with Him.” **11.] Conclusion from the whole—Wherfore**, seeing that these things are so.

12–24.] Miscellaneous exhortations, ending with a solemn wish for their perfection in the day of Christ.

12, 13.] In reference to their duties to the rulers of the church among them. The connexion (**but**, a slight contrast with that which has just passed) seems to be this: that, as the duty of comforting and building up one another has just been mentioned, the transition is now made to those whose especial work this is; and one part of forwarding the work is, the recognition and encouragement of them by the church.

12.] to know: i.e. favourably and honourably to recognize. Compare 2 Tim. ii. 19: also 1 Cor. xvi. 18.—The persons indicated by them **which labour... preside... admonish...**, are the same, viz. the *presbyters* or *bishops*: see note on Acts xx. 17, 28.

in the Lord, as the element in which, the matter with regard to which, their presidency takes place: ‘in divine things.’

13.] very highly is best taken with *in Jove*: it will not form a suitable qualification for the verb **esteem**, as that word is used in the original.

for their work’s sake may mean, **because of the nature of their work**, viz. that it is the Lord’s work, for your souls: or, **on account of their activity in their office**, as a recompense for their work. Both these motives are combined in Heb. xiii. 17. This exhortation, **be at peace among yourselves**, seems to be suggested by the foregoing, as enforcing peaceful and loving subordination without party strife: see the mention of the *unruly* below.

14–22.] General exhortations with regard to Christian duties. There appears no reason for regarding these verses as addressed to the presbyters, as some have done. They are for *all*: for each to interpret according to the sphere of his own duties. By the word **brethren**, he continues the same address as above.

14. disorderly] This, as ch. iv. 11, 2 Thess. iii. 6, 11, certainly implies that there was reason to complain of this **disorder** in the Thessalonian church. The original word is especially said of the soldier who does not remain in his rank: hence **disorderly**.

fainthearted] such e.g. as needed the comfort of ch. iv. 13 ff.

support] literally, **keep hold of**.

the weak must, be understood of the spiritually weak, not the literally sick.

15.] This gives a slight warning that the practice might creep on them unawares. It is not addressed to any particular section of the church, but to all: to each for himself, and the church for each.

16.] Chrysostom refers this to ver. 15: “When we have such a disposition as to hurt no one but to do good to all, whence can the sting of grief enter? For he who so joys in being injured as to requite his injurer by good offices, whence shall he receive annoyance for the future?” But perhaps this is somewhat far-fetched. The connexion seems however to be justified as he proceeds: “And how, means the Apostle, is this possible? if we will, it is possible. And then he shews the way: ‘pray unceasingly’ &c.” And so Theophylact: “For one accustomed to converse with God and to give thanks to Him for all that happens, as good for him, will clearly possess unbroken joy.”

17.] See Chrysostom and Theophylact above.

pray, not of the mere spirit of prayer, as Jowett: but, as in the parallel, Eph. vi. 18, of direct supplications to God. These may be unceasing, in the heart which is full of his presence and evermore communing with Him.

18. in Christ Jesus] in, as its medium; Christ being the Mediator.

19.] Chrysostom, &c. understand this ethically: that an unclean life quenches the Spirit within. But there can be no doubt that the *supernatural* agency of the Spirit is here alluded to,—the speaking in tongues, &c., as in 1 Cor. xii. 7 ff. It is conceived of as a flame, which may be checked and quenched: hence the “fervent (boiling) *in the Spirit*” of Acts xviii. 25; Rom. xii. 11.

20.] On **prophesying** see 1 Cor. xii. 10, note. They were liable to be despised in comparison with the more evidently miraculous gift of tongues: and hence in 1 Cor. xiv. 5, &c. he takes pains to shew that prophecy was in reality the greater gift.

21.] This refers back to the foregoing: **but try all** (such **spiritual gifts**): see 1 Cor. xii. 10; xiv. 29; 1 John iv. 1.

hold fast that which is good is best regarded as beginning a new sentence, and opposed to that which follows: not however as disconnected from the preceding, but suggested by it. In this, and in all things, **hold fast the good**.

22.] These words cannot by any possibility be rendered as in A.V., ‘*abstain from all appearance of evil*.’ For (1) the Greek word (*eidos*) never signifies ‘*appearance*’ in this sense: (2) the two members of the sentence would thus not be logically correspondent, but a new idea would be introduced in the second which has no place in the context: for it is not against being deceived by false *appearance*, nor against giving occasion by behaviour which *appears like* evil, that he is cautioning them, but merely to distinguish and hold fast that which is good, and reject that which is evil. The Greek word means the *species*, as subordinated to the *genus*:—**abstain from every species (or form) of evil**.

23, 24.] But may the God of peace Himself—contrast to all these feeble endeavours on your own part.

peace, here most probably in its wider sense, as the accomplishment of all these Christian graces, and result of the avoidance of all evil. It seems rather far-fetched to refer it back to ver. 13.

wholly (in original, **entire**, an adjective, agreeing with **you**) seems to refer to the entireness of sanctification, which is presently expressed in detail.

and introduces the detailed expression of the same wish from the lower side—in its effects.

spirit and soul and body] The SPIRIT (*pneuma*) is the highest and distinctive part of man, the immortal and responsible *soul*, in our common parlance: the SOUL is the lower or animal soul, containing the passions and desires which we have in common with the brutes, but which in *us* is ennobled and drawn up by the *spirit*. That St. Paul had these distinctions in mind, is plain from such places as 1 Cor. ii. 14. The spirit, that part whereby we are receptive of the Holy Spirit of God, is, in the unspiritual man, crushed down and subordinated to the animal soul (*psyché*): he therefore is called “*a psychic man*, not having a spirit,” Jude 19: see also note on 1 Cor. as above.

in the coming—for it will be *in* that day that the result will be seen,—that *the having been kept whole without blame* will be accomplished.

24.] Assurance, from God's faithfulness, that it will be so.

Faithful, i.e. **true** to His word and calling.

he that calleth] not “**he that called**,” but bringing out God’s office as the caller of His people: compare Gal. v. 8.

will do it, viz. that which was specified in the last verse.

25–28.] CONCLUSION.

26.] From this verse and the following, it would appear that this letter was given into the hands of the *elders*.

27.] The meaning of this adjuration is, that an assembly of all the brethren should be held, and the Epistle then and there publicly read.

Jowett offers many solutions for the Apostle’s vehemence of language. I should account for it, not by supposing any distrust

of the elders, nor by the other hypotheses which he suggests, but by the earnestness of spirit incidental to the solemn conclusion of an Epistle of which he is conscious that it conveys to them the will and special word of the Lord.

all] i.e. in Thessalonica, assembled together. **28.]** See on 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

2 THESSALONIANS

Chapter 1

Chapter 3

Chapter 2

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

2 Thessalonians: Chapter 1

CH. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING. On ver. 1, see 1 Thess. i. 1, note.

3–12.] INTRODUCTION. *Thanksgiving for their increase in faith and love, and their endurance under persecution* (vv. 3, 4): *promise of a rich recompense at Christ's coming* (vv. 5–10), and good wishes for their Christian perfection (vv. 11, 12).

3.] **as it is meet**—refers to the whole preceding sentence.

because does not state why we give thanks, but is dependent on the clause preceding, it is meet, because, &c.—“**We are bound** expresses the duty of thanksgiving from its *subjective* side as an inward conviction,—**as it is meet**, on the other hand, from the *objective* side, as something answering to the state of circumstances.” Lünemann.

4.] **we ourselves**—as well as our informants, and others who heard about you,—see 1 Thess. i. 8. There is ample reason for the emphasis on **we ourselves**. The fact of an Apostle making honourable mention of them in other churches was one which deserved this marking out, to their credit and encouragement.

in the churches of God] i.e. at Corinth and in Achaia.

your patience and faith] There is not the slightest necessity to take faith here in a different sense from that in ver. 3. The same faith which was receiving so rich increase, was manifesting itself by its fruit in the midst of persecutions and afflictions.

ye are enduring: the persecutions continued at the time of the Epistle being written.

5–10.] *Comfort under these afflictions, to think that they were only part of God's carrying out His justice towards them and their persecutors.*

5.] In Phil. i. 28 we have the like sentiment.

a token or proof: manifested in you being called on and enabled to suffer for Christ, and your adversaries filling up the measure of their opposition to God. The **just judgment** is, that just judgment which will be completed at the Lord's coming, but is even now preparing—this being an earnest and token of it.

that ye may be, &c.] belongs to the implied assertion of the foregoing clause—‘which judgment is even now bringing about, &c.’—It is said not merely of the *result*, nor is it of the *purpose* of your endurance, as Estius characteristically explains it, to bring in the Romish doctrine of merit:—but of the purpose of God's dispensation of just judgment by which you will be ripened and fitted for His kingdom.

6.] **If so be that** (this refers back to the words **just judgment** above, and introduces a substantiation of this expression by an appeal to our ideas of strict justice) **it is just with** (in the esteem of) **God to requite to those who trouble you tribulation** (according to the strict rule of recompense), **and to you who are troubled rest** (literally **relaxation**: “the glory of the kingdom of God on its negative side, as liberation from earthly affliction.” Lünemann) **with us** (viz. the writers, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, who are troubled like yourselves: not ‘*with us [all] Christians*, as some interpret it,—for all Christians were not *afflicted*, which is the condition of this rest in our sentence: still less, ‘*with us Jews*,’ you being Gentiles, as Beugel and others), **at the revelation** (manifestation in his appearing) **of the Lord Jesus from heaven** (compare 1 Thess. iv. 16) **with the angels of His might** (no hendiadys—not to be rendered as A.V., ‘*his mighty angels*,’ which, as usual, obscures and stultifies the sense: for the *might of the angels* is no element here, but HIS *might*, of which they *are the angels*—serving His power and proclaiming His might), **in (the) fire of flame** (so literally: further specification of the **revelation** above: does not belong to the following, as punctuated in A.V. On the analogy, see Exod. iii. 2; xix. 18; Dan. vii. 9, 10), **bestowing** (or, **allotting**: distributing as their portion) **vengeance on them that know not God** (the Gentiles), **and on them** (the demonstrative pronoun repeated indicates a new class of persons) **that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus** (the unbelieving Jews, see Rom. x. 3, 16): **the which** (this expression, generic and classifying, refers back to their characteristics just mentioned, thus containing in itself the reason for *their punishment*, &c., following) **shall be punished with** (literally, **pay**

the penalty of everlasting destruction from (‘apart from,’ see Matt. vii. 23. It has been interpreted of *time*,—‘from the time of the appearing, &c.,’ but the words **from the presence** will not bear this) **the presence (face) of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power** (i. e. from the manifestation of his power in the glorification of his saints [see Isa. ii. 10, 19, 21]); **when he shall [have] come to be glorified** (by the great manifestation at His coming) **in** (they will be the *element* of His glorification: He will be glorified *in them*, just as the sun is reflected in a mirror) **his saints** (not angels, but holy men), **and to be admired** (wondered at) **in** (see above) **all them that believed** (past participle, looking back from that day on the past)—**because our testimony to you** (not “among you,” as A.V.) **was believed** (parenthesis, serving to include the Thessalonians among *them that believed*)—**in that day** (the day of which we all know: this connects with what went before the parenthesis). We may observe, as against Jowett’s view of the arguments here being merely “they suffer now; therefore their enemies will suffer hereafter: their enemies will suffer hereafter; therefore they will be comforted hereafter,”—that the arguments are nothing of the kind, resting entirely on the assertion that it is a **righteous thing**: thus bringing in all the relations of the Christian covenant, of them to God, and God to them,—and by contrast, of God to their enemies and persecutors.

11.] **With a view to which** (consummation, the *being glorified*, &c., above, in *your case*, as is shewn below: not ‘wherefore, as A.V., &c.) we pray also (as well as wish) **always concerning you, that our God may count** YOU (emphatic) **worthy** (not—‘make you worthy,’ which the word cannot mean) **of your calling** (just as we are exhorted to *walk worthily of the calling whereunto we were called*, Eph. iv. 1—the calling being taken not merely as the first act of God, but as the enduring state produced by that act [see especially 1 Cor. vii. 20], the normal termination of which is, *glory*), **and may fulfil** (complete, —bring to its fulness in you) **all (possible) right purpose of goodness** (it is quite impossible with many ancient Commentators, A.V., &c., to refer this expression to *God*—‘*His good plea-sure*.’ See the construction discussed in my Greek Test. It must apply to the Thessalonians, as it does to human agents in Phil. i. 15. And then it may either mean “approval of that which is good,”—or right purpose, good pleasure, *consisting in goodness*. The latter I own seems to me far the best) **and** (all) **work of faith** (activity of faith: see ref. 1 Thess. note. The genitive is again one of apposition), **with (in) power** (belongs to **fulfil**, q.d. *mightily*);—**that**, &c. On the **name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, compare Phil. ii. 9 ff.

2 Thessalonians: Chapter 2

CH. II. 1–12.] DOGMATICAL PORTION OF THE EPISTLE. *Information (by way of correction) concerning the approach of the day of the Lord: its prevenient and accompanying circumstances.*

1.] **But** (passing from those things which he prays *for* them, to those which he prays *of* them) **we beseech you, brethren** (to win their affectionate attention), **in regard of** (the A.V., and many ancient Commentators, render this preposition ‘*by*,’ and understand it as introducing a *formula of adjuration*. But this construction is not found in the New Test.; and it is most unnatural that the Apostle should thus conjure them by that concerning which he was about to teach them. It is best therefore to take it as above; with a slight tinge of the meaning “*on behalf of*” for the subject had been misrepresented, and justice is done to it by the Apostle) **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together** (i. e. the gathering together of us, announced in 1 Thess. iv. 17) **to Him**,

2.] **[in order] that** (aim of the request) **ye should not be soon (lightly, and with small reason) shaken** (properly of the waves agitated by a storm) **from your mind** (your mental apprehension of the subject:—not ‘your former more correct sentiment,’ as some interpret it), **nor yet be troubled, neither by spirit** (by means of spiritual gift of prophecy or the like, assumed to substantiate such a view), **nor by word (of mouth:** belongs closely to “*nor by letter*” following, as is shewn by ver. 15, where they again appear together) **nor by letter, as by** (agency of) **us** (pretending to be from us. Let no pretended saying, no pretended epistle of mine, shake you in this matter. That there were such, is shewn by this parallel position of the clauses with *by spirit*, which last agency certainly was among them. Sayings, and an epistle, to this effect, were ascribed to the Apostle. So Chrysostom: “He seems to me here to hint, that some were going about with a forged Epistle pretending to be from Paul, and that shewing this they affirmed the day of the Lord to be already come, that they might deceive many.”—However improbable this may seem, our expression would seem hardly to bear legitimately any other meaning. Compare also ch. iii. 17, and note. It is impossible to understand the “*Epistle as by us*” of the first Epistle, *wrongly understood*, which certainly would have been more plainly expressed, and the Epistle would have been not, as here, *disowned, but explained*), **to the effect that** (‘*as if*,’ or ‘*as that*’) **the day of the Lord is present** (not, ‘*is at hand*:’ the verb here used occurs six times besides in the New Test., and always in the sense of *being present*; in two of those places, Rom. viii. 38, 1 Cor. iii. 22, *the things present* are distinguished expressly from *the things to come*. Besides which, we may without presumption say, St. Paul could not have so written, nor could the Spirit have so spoken by him. The teaching of the Apostles was, and of the Holy Spirit in all ages has been, that the day of the Lord *is at hand*. But these Thessalonians imagined it to be already come, and accordingly were deserting their pursuits in life, and falling into other irregularities, as if the day of grace were closed. So Chrysostom plainly, “The devil, when he could not persuade them that the announcements of things future were false, took another way, and having suborned certain pestilent fellows, endeavoured to deceive by persuading them that those great and glorious events had an end. At one time they said that the resurrection was already past: but in this case they said that the judgment was come, and the presence of Christ, &c., thus removing fear of retribution for the evil, and hope of reward for the good. And what was worst of all,

some of them repeated sayings of Paul to this effect, some feigned Epistles as having been written by him").

3.] **Let no man deceive you in any manner** (not only in either of the foregoing, but in any whatever): **for (that day shall not come)** (so A.V. supplies, rightly. There does not seem to have been any intention on the part of the Apostle to fill up the ellipsis: it supplies itself in the reader's mind), **unless there have come the apostasy first** (of which he had told them when present, see ver. 5: and probably with a further reference still to our Lord's prophecy in Matt. xxiv. 10–12), **and there have been revealed** (ch. i. 7. As Christ in His time, so Antichrist in his time, is '*revealed*'—brought out into light: he too is a *mystery* to be unfolded and displayed: see vv. 8, 9) **the Man of Sin** (in whom sin is as it were personified, as righteousness in Christ. The genitive, **of sin**, is called by Ellicott that of the *predominating quality*. Notice the variety,—**of lawlessness**, which is the term used below, vv. 7, 8), **the son of perdition** (see John xvii. 12, where our Lord uses the expression of Judas. It seems merely to refer to Antichrist himself, whose essence and inheritance is *perdition*,—not to his influence over others); **he that withstandeth** (the expression is absolute, '*he that withstands CHRIST*', the *anti-christ*, 1 John ii. 18), **and exalteth himself above** (in a hostile sense) **every one that is called God** (compare a similar expression, 1 Cor. viii. 5. "The expression includes the *true* God, as well as the false ones of the heathen—but **that is called** is a natural addition from Christian caution, as '*every God*' would have been a senseless and indeed blasphemous expression for a Christian." Lünemann), **or an object of adoration** (compare the close parallel in Dan. xi. 36, 37. Notice, that the meaning of these words cannot by any probability be fulfilled by any one who, as the Pope, creates objects of worship, and thus (by inference merely) makes himself greater than the objects which he creates: but it is required that this Antichrist should *set HIMSELF up as an object of worship*, above, and as superior to, "every one that is called God or worshipped"); **so that he sits in** (enters into, sets himself down in, and remains in) **the temple of God** (this, say some Commentators, cannot be any other than *the temple at Jerusalem*: on account of the definiteness of the expression, **sits in the temple of God**. But there is no force in this. *The temple of God* is used metaphorically by St. Paul in 1 Cor. iii. 17: and why not here? see also 1 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 21. From these passages it is plain that such figurative sense was familiar to the Apostle. And if so, the *sitting* makes no difficulty. Its figurative sense, as holding a place of power, sitting as judge or ruler, is more frequent still: see in St. Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 4: and Matt. xxiii. 2: Rev. xx. 4: to which indeed we might add the many places where our Lord is said to *sit* on the right hand of God, e.g. Heb. i. 3; viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2; Rev. iii. 21. Respecting the *interpretation*, see Introduction, §v.), **shewing himself** (not merely attempting to shew himself, but the words import that it is his *habit* and *office* to exhibit himself as God) **that he is God** (not '*a god*', but the word designates the divine dignity which he predicates of himself. The emphasis is on IS—*shewing himself that he IS God*).

5.] **conveys a reproach**—they would not have been so lightly moved, if they had remembered this.

6.] **And now** (not *temporal*, but as "*seeing that this is so*,"—in 1 Cor. xiii. 13,—'now' in our argument) **ye know that which hindereth** (viz. '*him*'—the man of sin: not, *the Apostle from speaking freely*,—nor the *coming of Christ*), **in order that** (the aim of *the hindrance* [in God's purposes])—'that which keeps him back, that he may not be revealed before his,' &c.) **he may be revealed** (see on ver. 3) **in his own time** (the time appointed him by God).

7.] For (explanation of last verse. I keep in my rendering in the notes to the literal force of the original) the **MYSTERY** (as opposed to the *revelation* of the man of sin) **ALREADY** (as opposed to "*in his own time*" above) **is working** (not '*is being wrought*.' I retain the inversion of the words, to mark better the primary and secondary emphasis: see below) **of lawlessness** (i. e. ungodliness—refusal to recognize God's law—see reff.—The genitive is one of apposition: the **lawlessness** is that wherein the *mystery* consists), **only until he that now hindereth be removed** (the phrase is used of any person or thing which is taken out of the way, whether by death or other removal).

8.] **And then** (when he that hinders shall have been removed: the emphasis is on this word) **shall be revealed the Lawless One** (the same as the **he** of ver. 6: viz. the "*man of sin*"), **whom** (by this relative clause is introduced his ultimate fate at the coming of the Lord. To this the Apostle is carried on by the fervency of his spirit, and has to return again below to describe the working of Antichrist previously) **the Lord Jesus will destroy by the breath of His mouth** (from Isa. xi. 4. It is better to keep the expression in its simple majesty, than to interpret it, as Theodoret, "that the Lord has but to speak, and shall deliver the wicked one to utter destruction"), **and annihilate** (not, as Olshausen, '*deprive of his influence*', nor can Rev. xix. 19 be brought to bear here) **by the appearance of His coming** (not '*the brightness* of his coming,' as very many Commentators, and A.V.; but as Bengel: "The apparition of His coming is anterior to it, or at all events is its first shining forth." the mere outburst of His presence shall bring the adversary to nought. Compare the sublime expression of Milton,—'*far off His coming shone*');)

9, 10.] **whose** (refers back to the "*whom*" above—going back in time, to describe the character of his agency) **coming is** (the present is not used for the future, nor is the Apostle setting himself at the time prophesied of,—but it describes the essential attribute, as so often) **accord-ing to** (such as might be expected from,—corresponding to) **the working of Satan** (Satan being the agent who works in the "*lawless one*") **in** (manifested in, consisting in) **all** (kinds of) **power and signs and wonders of falsehood** (**all** and **of falsehood** both belong to all three substantives: the varieties of his manifested power, and signs. and wonders, all have falsehood for their base, and essence, and aim), **and in all** (manner of) **deceit** (not, as A.V.

‘deceivableness,’ for it is the *agency* of the man of sin—active deceit, of which the word is used) **of unrighteousness** (belonging to, consisting in, leading to, *unrighteousness*) **for** (tending to the destruction of) **those who are perishing** (on their way to perdition. WHY? not by God’s absolute decree, but); **because** (in requital for this, that) **they did not** (when it was offered to them) **receive the love of the truth** (the opposite of the *falsehood* which characterizes all the working of the man of sin: see as before, John viii, 44) **in order to their being saved.**

11.] And on this account (because they did not receive, &c.) **God is sending to them** (not as A.V., ‘*shall send*:’ the verb is *present*, because the mystery of iniquity is already working. God’s *sending* must not for a moment be understood of *permissiveness* only on God’s part—He is the judicial sender and doer—it is He who hardens the heart which has chosen the evil way. All such distinctions are the merest folly: whatever God *permits*, he *ordains*) **the working of delusion** (is causing these seducing influences to work among them. The A.V. has weakened, indeed almost stultified the sentence, by rendering these words ‘*a strong delusion*,’ i.e. the passive state resulting, instead of the active cause), **in order that they should believe the falsehood** (which the mystery of sin is working among them): **that** (the higher or ultimate purpose of God) **all might be judged** (i. e. here ‘*condemned*,’ by the context) **who did not** (looking back over their time of probation) **believe the truth, but found pleasure in iniquity.**

I have above given the *rendering* of this important passage. For the history and criticism of its inter-pretation, see the Introduction, §v.

13—III. 15.] HORTATORY PORTION OF THE EPISTLE.

13–17.] Exhortation, grounded on thankfulness to God for their election by Him, to stand fast in the faith; and prayer that God would enable them to do so.

13.] But contrasts Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, with those of whom he has been recently speaking. Lünemann remarks, that as “*to God*” has preceded, and “*God*” follows, **the Lord** here must be the Lord Jesus: see Rom. viii. 37; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2, 25. Otherwise, the expression is perhaps more normally used of the Father, ver. 16: Eph. ii. 4: Col. iii. 12: John iii. 16, al. freq.

from the beginning must be taken in the general sense, as in reff.: not in the special, ‘from the beginning of the gospel,’ as Phil. iv. 15. It answers to “*before the worlds*,” 1 Cor. ii. 7; “*before the foundation of the world*,” Eph. i. 4; “*before eternal ages*,” 2 Tim. i. 9, all of which are spoken of the decrees of God.

to salvation] in contrast to the *perdition* lately spoken of.

in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth] the elements in which the *choosing to salvation* takes place: —**sanctification of** (wrought by) **the Spirit**: not, the ‘sanctification of (your) spirit.’ This is the divine side of the element: the human side follows,—‘your own reception, by faith, of the truth’

14.] to which (i. e. the being saved in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth) **He** (God) **called you through our Gospel** (our preaching of the Gospel to you), **in order to** (your) **acquisition** (see on 1 Thess. v. 9) **of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ** (i. e. your sharing in the glory which He *has*; see John xvii. 22; Rom. 17, 29).

15.] Therefore—seeing that such is God’s intent respecting you. Mr. Jowett here describes the Apostle as being “unconscious of the logical inconsistency” of appealing to them to do any thing, after he has just stated their election of God. Rather we should say, that he was deeply conscious, as ever, of the logical necessity of the only practical inference which man can draw from God’s gracious purposes to him. No human reasoning powers can connect the two,—God’s sovereignty and man’s free will: all we know of them is, that the one is as certain a truth as the other. In proportion then as we assert the one strongly, we must ever implicate the other as strongly: a course which the great Apostle never fails to pursue: see Phil ii. 12, 13, al. freq.

stand fast is a contrast to “*being shaken*,” ver. 2. **our epistle**, as contrasted with the “*epistle as from us*” of ver. 2, refers to 1 Thess.

16, 17.] Himself, as a majestic introduction, in contrast with *us*, who were the agents in the last verse: see 1 Thess. iii. 11, and as *ensuring* the efficacy of the wish, as if it were said, ‘and then you are safe’ Our Lord Jesus Christ is placed first, not merely because He is the mediator between men and God, but because the sentence is a climax, rising to “*God and our Father*” in the next clause.

which loved us—refers to a single fact—the love of the Father in sending His Son—or the love of the Father and Son in our accomplished Redemption.

and gave—by that act of Love.

consolation, under all trials, and that **eternal**,—not transitory, as this world's consolations: sufficient in life, and in death, and for ever: compare Rom. viii. 38 f. This for all time present: and then **good hope** for the future.

in grace (not, ‘*through grace*,’ as A.V.) belongs not to the words **good hope**, but to the verb **gave**, and is the medium through, or element in which the gift is made.

2 Thessalonians: Chapter 3

CH. III. 1–5.] *Exhortation to pray for him and his colleagues* (1, 2). *His confidence that the Lord will keep them* (3)—and that they will obey his commands (4). *Prayer for them* (5).

1.] **the word of the Lord**,—i. e. the Gospel.

may have free course] literally, **may run**. Contrast to ‘*being bound*: see 2 Tim. ii. 9—**may spread rapidly**. The word of the Lord is then **glorified**, when it becomes the power of God to salvation to the believer—see Rom. i. 16.

even as it is also with you] for they had thus received it: 1 Thess. i. 6.

2.] And in order for that to be the case,—that we may be free to preach it. The word rendered **perverse** is properly used of that which is not in its right place. When of *persons*, it designates one who does or says that which is inappropriate under the circumstances. But as some other words which had originally a milder meaning, it has come to mean one who sets himself against divine or human laws. Perhaps “*perverse*” is our nearest word to it. Who are these men? It is obvious that the key to the answer will be found in Acts xviii. They were the Jews at Corinth, who were at that time the especial adversaries of the Apostle and his preaching. And this is confirmed by the clause which he has added to account for their *perversity* and *wickedness*.

for to all men the (Christian) **faith does not belong**—all men do not receive it—have no receptivity for it—obviously pointing at Jews by this description.

3.] Calvin says, “These words shew that Paul was anxious for others, rather than for himself. Against him malignant men directed all the stings of their wickedness, against him all their attacks were made: but he directs all his care towards his Thessalonians, lest any temptation should beset them.”

But, in contrast with the men just mentioned.

the Lord is *Christ*: see ch. ii. 16, and ver. 5.

shall establish you] in reference to his wish, ch. ii. 17.

evil may also be rendered ‘the evil one,’ as in Matt. xiii. 19: Eph. vi. 16. But here the assurance seems, as before said, to correspond to the wish ch. ii. 17: in which case **evil** is *neuter*. We may observe that the words are nearly a citation from the Lord’s prayer.

4.] forms a transition to the exhortations which are to follow ver. 6 ff.

in the Lord, as the element in which his confidence is exercised, shews it to be one assuming that they will act consistently with their Christian profession: and so gives the expectation the force of an exhortation, but at the same time of a hopeful exhortation.

5.] There does not appear to be any distrust of the Thessalonians implied by this repeated wish for them, as De Wette supposes. Rather is it an *enlargement*, taken up by the **but** (not only so, but), of the *assurance* just expressed.

the Lord—*Christ*, as before.

the love of God here, from the fact of his wishing that their hearts may be *directed into it*, must be subjective, *the love of man to God*.

the patience of Christ has very generally been understood, as in A.V., ‘*the patient waiting for Christ*.’ But the substantive will not bear this meaning. It occurs thirty-four times in the New Test., and always in the sense of **endurance**,—**patience**. Nor

again can the expression mean ‘endurance for Christ’s sake,’ which the simple genitive will not convey: but it must be, as Chrysostom says, “that we may endure as He endured:” *the patience of Christ* (genitive possessive),—**which Christ shewed.**

6–15.] Dehortation from disorderly, idle habits of life. He had given a hint in this direction before, in the first Epistle (v. 14, 15): he now speaks more plainly doubtless because their restlessness and excitement concerning *the coming of Christ*

had been accompanied by an increase of such habits. His dissuading them from associating with such persons, seems to shew that the core of the Church was as yet sound in this respect.

6.] Moreover we command you takes up the assurance of ver. 4, and tests its general form by a special command.

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthens the *command*.

that ye withdraw yourselves] or, **keep yourselves from:** obviously without allusion as yet to any formal excommunication, but implying merely avoidance in intercourse and fellowship.—The term **tradition** refers to the oral instruction which the Apostle had given them when he was present, and subsequently confirmed by writing (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12).

which they received] The plural refers to the sum of the “*all*” implied in “every brother.”

7.] how ye ought to imitate us is a concise way of expressing ‘how ye ought to walk in imitation of us,’

8.] to eat bread is a Hebraistic expression for ‘to get sustenance:’ **from any man**, ‘at any one’s expense,’ **from any one** as a gift.

9.] See 1 Cor. ix. 4. ff., where he treats of his abstinence from this his apostolic power.

10.] For also,—and we carried this further: we not only set you an example, but inculcated the duty of diligence by special precept. The **for** is co-ordinate with that in ver. 7.

if any, &c.] The Commentators quote this saying from several places in the rabbinical books.

11.] Ground for reminding them of this his saying

being busybodies; or, being active about trifles; ‘busy only with what is not their own business.’ There is in the original a play on words, which it is of course difficult to represent in the English.

12.] in the Lord: see on ver. 6.

with quietness may be taken either subjectively,—**with a quiet mind;**—or, objectively, **with quiet**, i.e. in outward peace. The former is most probable, as addressed to the offenders themselves.

their own, emphatic—that which they themselves have earned.

13.] But ye—ye who are free from this fault.

well doing, from the context, cannot mean ‘*doing good*’ (*to others*), but **doing well**, living diligently and uprightly: see also Gal. vi. 9, where the same general sentiment occurs.

14. mark] The ordinary meaning of the word: put a *mark* on him, by noticing him for the sake of avoidance.

15.] And is more delicate than “*yet*” or “*but*” would be: ‘and I know that it will follow as a consequence of your being Christians, that ye will, &c.’

as in the first clause seems superfluous: it is perhaps inserted to correspond with the other clause, or still further to soften the *counting him an enemy*.

16.] Concluding wish.

On the **Lord Himself**, see on ch. ii. 16.

the Lord of peace] As the Apostle constantly uses also the expression, “*the God of Peace*” (see Rom. xv. 33; xvi. 20; 2 Cor.

xiii. 11, al.), we here must understand our Lord Jesus Christ.

peace must not be understood only of *peace with one another*: for there has been no special mention of mutual disagreement in this Epistle: but of *peace in general*, outward and inward, here and hereafter, as in Rom. xiv. 17. The stress is on **you**—**May the Lord of Peace give you** (that) **Peace always in every way** (whether it be outward or inward, for time or for eternity).

with you all] Therefore with those *who walked disorderly* also. The man who was to be admonished *as a brother*, would hardly be excluded from the Apostle's parting blessing.

17, 18.] CONCLUSION.

17.] *Autographic salutation*. The Epistle, as it follows from this, was not written with the Apostle's own hand, but dictated. So with other Epistles: see Rom. xvi. 22: 1 Cor. xvi. 21: Col. iv. 18. The whole of vv. 17, 18, not merely the benediction, are included in the term *the salutation*, as written by his own hand. By the words **so I write**, we must not conceive that any thing was *added*, such as *his signature*,—or “*farewell*,” or any thing of the kind: they are said of that which he is writing at the time. His reason for this caution evidently was, the “*epistle as from us*,” spoken of ch. ii. 2, And the words **in every epistle** must not be limited to any future Epistles which he might send to the Thessalonians, but understood of a caution which he intended to practise in future with all his Epistles: or at least with such as required, from circumstances, this identification. Thus we have (1 Thess. being manifestly an exception, as written before the rule was established) Gal. written with his own hand (see note on Gal. vi. 11); 1 Cor. authenticated (xvi. 21); 2 Cor. sent by Titus, and therefore perhaps not needing it (but it may have existed in xiii. 12, 13 without being specified); Rom. not requiring it, as not insisting on his personal authority (but here again the concluding doxology may have been autographic); Col. authenticated (iv. 18): Eph. apparently without it (but possibly vi. 24 may have been autographic); Phil. from its character and its bearer Epaphroditus not requiring it (but here again iv. 23 may be autographic): and the Epistles to individuals would not require such authentication, not to mention that they are probably all autographic—that to Philemon certainly is, see ver. 19 there.

1 TIMOTHY

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THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY

1 Timothy: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1. according to the commandment] See Rom. xvi. 26, Tit. i. 3: a usual expression of St. Paul, and remarkably enough occurring in the doxology at the end of the Epistle to the Romans, which there is every reason to think was written long after the Epistle itself. It is a more direct predication of divine command than “*by the will of God*” in the earlier Epistles.

and Christ Jesus] The Apostle loves these repetitions in his more solemn and formal passages—and the whole style of these Epistles partakes more of this character, as was natural in the decline of life.

our hope] It is not easy to point out the exact reference of this word here, any further than we may say that it gives utterance to the fulness of an old man’s heart in the near prospect of that on which it naturally was ever dwelling. It is the ripening and familiarization of “*Christ in us the hope of glory*,” Col. i. 27. See also Tit. i. 2. I am persuaded that in many such expressions in these Epistles, we are to seek rather a psychological than a pragmatical explanation. Theodoret notices the similar occurrence of words in Ps. lxxv. 5, “*O God our Saviour, who art the hope of all the ends of the earth*”—which is interesting, as it might have suggested the expression here, familiar as the Apostle was with Old Test. diction.

2. my true child] my genuine offspring, begotten by me unto the faith of Christ. Compare Acts xvi. 1: 1 Cor. iv. 14–17; and see Introd. to this Epistle, §i. 1 ff.

mercy and peace are found joined in Gal. vi. 16, in which Epistle are so many similarities to these (see Introd. to these Epistles, §i. 32, note).—The expression **God the Father**, absolute, is found in St. Paul, in Gal. i. 1, 3: Eph. vi. 23: Phil. ii. 11: Col. iii. 17: 1 Thess. i. 1: (2 Thess i. 2, various reading:) 2 Tim. i. 2: Tit. i. 4. So that it belongs to all periods of his writing, but chiefly to the later.

3–20.] From specifying the object for which Timothy was left at Ephesus (vv. 3, 4), and characterizing the false teachers (5–7), he digresses to the true use of the law which they pretended to teach (8–10), and its agreement with the gospel with which he was entrusted (11): thence to his own conversion, for the mercies of which he expresses his thankfulness in glowing terms (12–17). Thence he returns to his exhortations to Timothy (18–20).—On these repeated digressions, and the inferences from them, see Introd. ch. vii. §i. 36 f.

3.] The sentence begins **As I exhorted thee, &c.**, but in his negligence of writing, the Apostle does not finish the construction: neither verse 5, nor 12, nor 18, will form the conclusion to it without unnatural forcing.

besought thee] Chrysostom lays stress on the word, as implying great mildness—“Listen to his kind consideration, how he does not make use of the force of a master, but rather of a servant: he says not ‘I enjoined, nor ‘I commanded,’ nor ‘I recommended,’ but ‘I besought thee.’” See the whole subject discussed in the Introd. ch. vii. §ii.

some] so constantly in these Epistles, see vv. 6, 19; ch. iv. 1; v. 15; vi. 10, 21; 2 Tim. ii. 18: sometimes the gainsayers, Tit. i. 9, or *many*, ib. 10. Huther infers from this word that the number at this time was not considerable: but this is hardly safe, “The indefinite pronoun is more probably *slightly* contemptuous: see Jude 4, and Gal. ii. 12.” Ellicott.

4. fables] We can only judge from the other passages in these Epistles where the word occurs, what kind of fables are alluded to. In Tit. i. 14 we have “*Jewish fables*. ” In our ch. iv. 7, they are designated as “*profane and anile*. ” In 2 Tim. iv. 4, they are spoken of absolutely, as here. If we are justified in identifying the ‘fables’ in Titus with these, they had a Jewish origin: but merely to take them, as Theodoret, for the Jewish traditional comments on the law, does not seem to satisfy the *epithets* quoted above. And consequently others have interpreted them of the gnostic mythology. It does not seem easy to define them any further, but it is plain that any transitional state from Judaism to gnosticism will satisfy the conditions here propounded without inferring that the full-blown gnosticism of the second century must be meant, and thus calling in question the genuineness of the Epistle. On the whole subject, see Introd. to ch. vii. §i. 8 ff.

endless genealogies] De Wette, in his note on Tit i. 14, marks out well the references which have been assigned to this expression: “*genealogies* cannot mean 1) *properly genealogical registers*,—either for a pure genealogico-historical end, or for a dogmatico-historical one, to foster the religious national pride of Jews against Gentiles, see Phil. iii. 4 f., or to ascertain the

descent of the Messiah, least of all genealogies of Timothy himself,—for all this does not touch, or too little touches religious interests: nor are they 2) *gentile theogonies*; nor again 3) *cabalistic pedigrees*, which will hardly suit the word *genealogies*: nor 4) *Essenean genealogies of angels*, of the existence of which we have no proof: nor 5) *allegorizing genealogies*, applications of psychological and historical considerations to the genealogies contained in the books of Moses: as in Philo,—a practice too peculiar to Philo and his view: but most probably 6) *lists of gnostic emanations*.—But again, inasmuch as **genealogies** are coupled in Tit. iii. 9 with “*strifes about the law*,” it seems as if we must hardly understand the ripened fruits of gnosticism, but rather the first beginnings of these genealogies in the abuse of Judaism.

endless may be used merely in popular hyperbole to signify the tedious length of such genealogies.

the which] i.e. **of the kind which**.

minister] ‘afford,’ ‘give rise to,’ ‘furnish.’

rather than] is a mild way of saying “*and not*: see John iii. 19; Acts xxvii. 11; 2 Tim. iii, 4.

God’s dispensation...] This has been taken two ways: 1) objectively: the *dispensation of God* (towards man) *which is* (consists) *in (the) faith*: in which case the verb “*minister*” must bear something of a transferred meaning, as applied to “*dispensation*,” implying, “rather than they set forth,” &c. And to this there can be no objection. This meaning also suits that of *dispensation*, even in Eph. i. 16, and 1 Cor. ix. 17, where the dispensation is the objective matter wherewith the Apostle was entrusted, not his own subjective fulfilment of it. 2) subjectively:—‘*the exercising of the stewardship of God in faith*.’ But to this there is the serious objection, that the word *economy*, or *dispensation*, in this subjective sense, ‘*the fulfilment of the duty of a steward*,’ wants example: and even could this be substantiated, *to minister a dispensation*, in the sense required, would seem again questionable. I would therefore rest in the objective sense—**the dispensation of God**. **Then which is in faith** has also been variously taken. But the only legitimate meaning seems to be—**which is in faith**, i.e. finds its sphere, and element, and development among men, in faith. Thus **in faith** stands in contrast to *questions*, in which the *dispensation of God does not consist*: and the way for the next sentence is prepared, which speaks of *faith unfeigned* as one of the means to the great end of the gospel.

5.] But (contrast to the practice of these pretended teachers of the law) **the end** (purpose, aim) **of the commandment** (viz. of the law of God in [ver. 11] the gospel: not, although in the word there may be a slight allusion to it,—of that which Timothy was *to command*, ver. 3. This commandment is understood from the *dispensation* just mentioned, of which it forms a part) **is Love** (as Rom. xiii. 10. We recognize, in the re-stating of former axiomatic positions, without immediate reference to the subject in hand, the characteristic of a later style of the Apostle) **out of** (arising, springing from, as its place of birth—the heart being the central point of life: see especially ref. 1 Pet.) **a pure heart** (pure from all selfish views and leanings: see Acts xv. 9) **and good conscience** (is this *good conscience*, 1) a conscience good by being freed from guilt by the application of Christ’s blood,—or is it 2) a conscience pure in motive antecedent to the act of love? This must be decided by the usage of this and similar expressions in these Epistles, where they occur several times [1 Tim. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 2; Tit. i. 15]. From those examples it would appear that in the language of the pastoral Epistles *a good conscience* is joined with *soundness in the faith, a bad conscience with unsoundness*. So that we can hardly help introducing the element of *freedom from guilt by the effect of that faith on the conscience*. And the earlier usage of St. Paul in Acts xxiii. 1, compared with the very similar one in 2 Tim. i. 3, goes to substantiate this) **and faith unfeigned** (this connects with “*which is in faith*,” above: it is faith, not the pretence of faith, the mere *apparent faith* of the hypocrite, which, as in Acts xv. 9, “*purifieth the hearts*,” and as in Gal. v. 6, “*worketh by love*.’ Wiesinger well remarks that we see from this, that the general character of these false teachers, as of those against whom Titus is warned, was not so much error in doctrine, as leading men away from the earnestness of the loving Christian life, to useless and vain questionings, ministering only *strife*):

6.] (the connexion is—it was by declining from these qualities that these men entered on their paths of error) **from which things** (*the pure heart, good conscience, and faith unfeigned*)—the sources of *love*, which last they have therefore missed by losing them) **some having swerved** (‘missed their mark:’ but this seems hardly precise enough: it is not so much to miss a thing at which a man is aiming, as to leave unregarded one at which he ought to be aiming) **have been turned aside unto** (away from the path leading to the *end*, ver. 5, in which they should have been walking) **vain babbling** (of what kind, is explained ver. 7, and Tit. iii. 9, which place connects this expression with our ver. 4. It is the vain questions arising out of the law, which he thus characterizes); **wishing to be** (giving themselves out as, without really being) **teachers of the law** (of what law? and in what sense? To the former question, but one answer can be given. The law is that of Moses; *the law*, always so known. The usage of the term, *teacher of the law*, forbids our giving the word, as coming from a Jew, any other meaning. That this is so, is also borne out by Tit. i. 14. We may see clearly by the data furnished in these pastoral Epistles, that the Apostle had in them to deal with men who corrupted the material enactments of the moral law, and founded on Judaism not assertions of its obligation, but idle fables and allegories, letting in latitude of morals, and unholliness of life. It is against this *abuse of the law* that his arguments are directed: no formal question arises of the *obligation* of the law: these men struck, by their interpretation, at the root of all divine law itself, and therefore at that root itself does he meet and grapple with them. [See

more in the Introd.] Hence the following description), **though they understand neither the things which they say** (the actual diatribes which they themselves put forth, they do not understand: they are not honest men, speaking from conviction, and therefore lucidly: but men depraved in conscience [Tit. i. 14, 15], and putting forth things obscure to themselves, for other and selfish purposes), **nor concerning what things they make affirmation** (nor those objective truths which properly belong to and underlie the matters with which they are thus tampering).

8 ff.] On the other hand the law has its right use:—not that to which they put it, but to testify against sins in practice: the catalogue of which seems to be here introduced, on account of the lax moral practice of these very men who were, or were in danger of, falling into them. They did not set it aside, but perverted it, and practised the very sins against which it was directed. **But** (slight contrast to last verse, taking up the matter on general grounds) **we know** (see Rom. vii. 14: a thoroughly Pauline expression) **that. the law is good** (Rom. vii. 16: not only *profitable*, but in a far higher sense, as in Rom. vii. 12, 14: good abstractedly,—in accordance with the divine holiness and justice and truth: see ver. 18, ch. iv. 4), **if a man** (undoubtedly, in the *first place*, and mainly, a *teacher*: but not to be confined to that meaning: all that is here said might apply just as well to a private Christian's thoughts and use of the law, as to the use of it by teachers themselves) **use it lawfully** (i. e. not, as most expositors, *according to its intention as law*, and as directed against the following sins in *Christians*: but clearly, from what follows, **lawfully in the Gospel sense**: i. e. as *not binding on*, nor *relevant to Christian believers*, but only *a means of awakening repentance in the ungodly and profane*. Chrysostom's words are: "Who is he that uses it lawfully? He who knows not the need of it"), **and be aware of this** (the word implies both the possession and the application of the knowledge), **that for a righteous man** (in what sense? in the mere sense of '*virtuous*', righteous in the world's acceptation of the term? Such meaning is clearly excluded by ver. 11, which sets the whole sentence in the full light of Gospel doctrine, and necessitates a corresponding interpretation for every term used in it). **Righteous** therefore can only mean, righteous in the *Christian sense*, viz. by *justifying faith and sanctification of the Spirit*,—one who is included in the actual righteousness of Christ by having put Him on, and so not *forensically amenable to the law*,—par-taker of the inherent righteousness of Christ, inwrought by the Spirit, which unites him to Him, and so not *morally needing it*) **the law** (as before) **is not enacted but for lawless and insubordinate** (Tit. i. 6, 10: it. is very nearly the same as *disobedient*, see Tit. i. 16; iii. 3,—this latter being more subjective, whereas "*insubordinate*" points to the objective fact. This first pair of adjectives expresses opposition to *the law*, and so stands foremost as designating those for whom it is enacted), **for impious and sinful** (see especially i Pet. iv. 18. This second pair expresses opposition to *God*, whose law it is—**impious**, or **ungodly**, being the man who does not reverence Him, the **sinner**, the man who lives in defiance of Him), **for unholy and profane** (this last pair betokens separation and alienation from God and His law alike—those who have no share in His holiness, no relation to things sacred. "The *impious* is unholy through his lack of reverence: the *unholy*, through his lack of *inner purity*." Ellicott), **for father-smiters and mother-smiters** (not only *murderers*; the word often had a wider sense. Hitherto the classes have been general, and [see above] arranged according to their opposition to the law, or to God, or to both: now he *takes the second table of the decalogue, and goes through its commandments*, to the ninth inclusive, in order. Smiters of fathers and mothers are the transgressors of the *fifth*), **for manslayers (the sixth)**, **for fornicators, for sodomites** (sins of abomination against both sexes: the *seventh*), **for slave-dealers** (the Apostle puts the *slave-stealer and dealer* as the most flagrant of all breakers of the *eighth* commandment. No theft of a man's goods can be compared with that most, atrocious act, which steals *the man himself*, and robs him of that free will which is the first gift of his Creator. And of this crime all are guilty, who, whether directly or indirectly, are engaged in, or uphold from whatever pretence, the making or keeping of slaves), **for liars, for perjurors** (breakers of the *ninth* commandment. It is remarkable that he does not refer to that very commandment by which the law wrought on himself when he was alive without the law and sin was dead in him, viz. the *tenth*. Possibly this may be on account of its more spiritual nature, as he here wishes to bring out the grosser kinds of sin against which the moral law is pointedly enacted. The subsequent clause however seems as if he had it in his mind, and on that account added a concluding general and inclusive description), **and if any thing else** (he passes to sins themselves from the committers of sins) **is opposed to the healthy teaching** (i. e. that moral teaching which is spiritually sound: *the teaching according to godliness*, ch. vi. 3, where it is parallel with "*the wholesome sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ*." "The formula... stands in clear and suggestive contrast to the sickly [ch. vi. 4] and morbid [2 Tim. ii. 17] teaching of Jewish gnosis." Ellicott); **according to** (belongs to the whole preceding sentence,—the entire exposition which he has been giving of the freedom of Christians from the moral law of the decalogue) **the gospel of the glory** (not, '*the glorious gospel*,' A.V., see 2 Cor. iv. 4: all propriety and beauty of expression is here, as always, destroyed by this adjectival rendering. The gospel is '*the glad tidings of the glory of God*,' as of Christ in 2 Cor., inasmuch as it reveals to us God in all His glory, which glory would be here that of justifying the sinner without the law, by His marvellous provision of redemption in Christ) **of the blessed God (blessed)**, used of God, is one of those expressions which are peculiar to this later date and manner of the Apostle. On such, see Introduction), **with which I (emphatic) was** (indicating simply the past; pointing to the time during which this his commission had been growing into its fulness and importance) **entrusted** (*not these people*). The connexion with the following appears to be this: his mind is full of thankfulness at the thought of the commission which was thus entrusted to him: he does not regret the charge, but overflows with gratitude at the remembrance of Christ's grace to him, especially when he recollects also what he once was; how nearly approaching [for I would not exclude even that thought as having contributed to produce these strong expressions] some of those whom he has just mentioned. So that he now goes off from the immediate subject, even more completely and suddenly than is his wont in his other writings, as again and again in these pastoral Epistles: shewing thereby, I believe, the tokens of advancing age, and of that faster hold of individual habits of thought and mannerisms, which characterizes the decline of life).

12 ff.] (See summary on ver. 3.) **I give thanks** (this peculiar expression is only used by the Apostle here and in 2 Tim. i. 3) **to Him that put strength in me** (viz. for His work: he is here treating of the divine enlightening and strengthening which he received for the ministry: compare Acts ix. 22, where the same word in the Greek occurs, “*Saul increased in strength*”—a coincidence not to be overlooked), [even] **Christ Jesus our Lord, that He accounted me faithful** (compare the strikingly similar expression, 1 Cor. vii. 25, “*I give my opinion, as having received mercy from the Lord to be faithful.*”—He knew me to be such an one, in His foresight, as would prove faithful to the great trust), **appointing me** (compare 1 Thess. v. 9. The expression is there used of that appointment of God in His sovereignty, by which our course is marked for a certain aim or end: and so it is best taken here,—not for the act of ‘*putting me into*,’ the ministry, as A.V.) **to the ministry** (what sort of *ministry*, is declared, Acts xx. 24);

13. (and all the more is he thankful, seeing that he was once a direct opponent of the Gospel), **being before** (the participle is slightly concessive, *though I was before*) **a blasphemer** (see Acts xxvi. 9, 11), **and persecutor, and insulter** (one who added insult to persecution. The facts which justified the use of such a term were known to St. Paul’s conscience: we might well infer them, from his own confessions in Acts xxii. 4, 19, and xxvi. 9–12. He describes himself as “*being exceedingly mad against them*”): **howbeit** (“God’s mercy and St. Paul’s want of it are put in sharp contrast.” Ellicott) **I had mercy shewn me, because I did it ignorantly** (so Rom. x. 2, of the Jews, “*They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*” Compare also, as a most important parallel, our Lord’s prayer for His murderers, Luke xxiii. 34) **in unbelief** (*unbelief* was his *state*, of which his ignorance of what he did was a *consequence*. The clause is a very weighty one, as applying to others under similar circumstances: and should lead us to form our judgments in all charity respecting even persecutors—and if of them, then surely even with a wider extension of charity to those generally, who lie in the ignorance of unbelief, whatever be its cause, or its effects).

14.] **But** (contrast still to his former state, and explanatory of *his having found mercy*) **the grace of our Lord** (His mercy shewn to me—but not in strengthening me for His work, endowing me with spiritual gifts, &c., as Chrysostom and others, for the *mercy* shewn to him is the ruling idea through the whole, and he recurs to it again ver. 16, never having risen above it to that of his higher gifts) **superabounded with** (accompanied by) **faith and love** (see the same Pauline expression, Eph. vi. 23, and note there) **which is** (is probably meant to apply to both faith and love) **in** (as their element, and, as it were, *home*) **Christ Jesus** (all these three abounded—grace, the objective side of God’s *mercy* to him:—Christian faith and love—the contrast to his former hatred and unbelief,—God’s gifts, the subjective side. This is much better than to regard **with faith and love** as giving that wherein the *grace* superabounded).

15.] **Faithful** (worthy of credit: compare Rev. xxi. 5, “*These sayings are true and faithful:*” similarly xxii. 6. The formula “*Faithful is the saying*” is peculiar to the pastoral Epistles, and characteristic I believe of their later age, when certain sayings had taken their place as Christian axioms, and were thus designated) **is the saying, and worthy of all** (all possible i.e. universal) **reception** (we have a form of the same word used Acts ii. 46, “As many as *received* his word were baptized”), **that Christ Jesus came into the world** (an expression otherwise found only in St. John. In Matt. xviii. 11, and the parallel place in St. Luke, we have *came*, simply, thus used) **to save sinners** (to be taken in the most general sense, not limited in any way); **of whom** (sinners; the aim and extent of the Lord’s mercy intensifies the feeling of his own especial unworthiness) **I am** (not, ‘*was*’) **chief** (literally, **first**: but the expression does not refer to *time*, which would not be the fact [see below]: the expression is one of the deepest humility: “he oversteps the very limit of self-abasement,” says ‘Theodore: and indeed it is so, compare Phil. iii. 6; 1 Cor. xv. 9; Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16; but deep humility ever does this: it is but another form of “*me the sinner*,” Luke xviii. 13: other men’s crimes seem to sink into nothing in comparison, and a man’s own to be the chief and only ones in his sight).

16.] **Howbeit** (as A.V.: “not resumptive, but as in ver. 13, seclusive and antithetical, marking the contrast between the Apostle’s own judgment on himself, and the mercy which God was pleased to shew him.” Ellicott) **for this purpose I had mercy shewn me, that in me** (as an example; “in my case:” compare what follows—“for a pattern, &c.”) **first** (it can hardly be denied that in this same word here the senses of ‘*chief*’ and ‘*first*’ are combined. Though he was not in time ‘the first of sinners,’ yet he was the first as well as the most notable example of such marked longsuffering, held up for the encouragement of the church) **Christ Jesus might shew forth the whole of His** (‘*the whole*,’ ‘the whole mass of His longsuffering, of which I was an example’) **longsuffering** (Christ’s mercy gave him all that time for repentance, during which he was persecuting and opposing Him,—and therefore it was his *long* suffering which was so wonderful), **for an example** (literally, a *sketch*, an *outline*, afterwards to be filled up. This indeed the recorded history of Paul would be,—the filling up taking place in each man’s own case: see 2 Tim. i, 13, note) **of** (i. e. **to**, or **for**: their examples for their use) **those who should** (the time of the future pointed at is not the time of writing the Epistles, but that of the mercy being shewn: so that we must not say “*who shall*,” but “*who should*”) **believe on Him to** (belongs to **believe** [see above] as its aim and end [compare Heb. x. 39]) **eternal life.**

17.] **But** (this disjunctive particle takes the thought entirely off from himself and every thing else, and makes the following sentence exclusive as applied to God. Compare by all means the very similar doxology, Rom xvi. 25 ff.: and see, on their

similarity, the inferences in the Introduction,§i. 33, and note) **to the King** (this name, as applied to God, is found, in the New Test., only in Matt. v. 35 [not xxv. 33 ff.] and our ch. vi. 15. See below) **of the ages** (i. e. of eternity. In Ps. cxlv. 13 we have (see margin of A.V.) “*My Kingdom is a kingdom of all ages*: in Tobit xiii. 6, 10, God is called in the original, ‘the King of the ages:’ and in Eccl. xxxvi. 17, ‘the God of the ages. Comparing these with the well-known expression, *to the ages of the ages* (see below), and the like, it is far more likely that **the ages** here should mean eternity, than the ages of this world, as many have understood it. The doxology is to the Father, not to the Trinity, nor to the Son), **the incorruptible** (in Rom. xvi. 27 only used of God), **invisible** (see ch. vi. 16: John i. 18), **only God** (the word *wise* has apparently come from the doxology at the end of Romans, where it is most appropriate), **be honour and glory to the ages of the ages** (the periods which are made up of *ages*, as these last are of years,—as years are of days: see note, Eph. iii. 21). **Amen.**

18 ff.] He now returns to the matter which he dropped in ver. 3, not indeed formally, so as to supply the termination of the sentence there neglected, but virtually: the *commandment* not being the one there hinted at, for that was one not given to Timothy, but *to be given by him*. Nor is it that in ver. 5, for that is introduced as regarding a matter quite different from the present—viz. the aberrations of the false teachers, who do not here appear till the exhortation to Timothy is over. What this command is, is plain from the following.—**This command I commit** (as a deposit, to be faithfully guarded and kept) **unto thee, my child Timothy** (see on ver. 2), **according to** (in pursuance of) **the former prophecies concerning thee** (the directions, or, prophecies properly so called, of the Holy Spirit, which were spoken concerning Timothy at his first conversion, or at his admission [compare ch. iv. 14] into the ministry, by the “*prophets*” in the church. We have instances of such prophetic intimations in Acts xiii. 1, 2,—[ix 28,]—xxi. 10, 11. By such intimations, spoken perhaps by Silas, who was with him, and who was a *prophet* [Acts xv. 32], may St. Paul have been first induced to take Timothy to him as a companion, Acts xvi. 3), **that thou mayest** (purpose, and at the same time purport, of the *commandment*) **war** (this word extends to the whole business of the employed soldier; not indicating merely *fighting*, properly so called) **in them** (not, as A.V., ‘*by them*,’ but ‘*in*,’ as clad with them, as if they were his defence and confirmation) **the good warfare** (not as Conybear, ‘fight the good fight.’ It is the *whole campaign*, not the fight alone, which is here spoken of); **holding [fast]** (more than ‘*having*;’ but we must hardly carry on the metaphor and think of the shield of faith Eph. vi. 16, such continuation being rendered unlikely by the unmetaphorical character of the following words, *a good conscience*) **faith, and good conscience** (compare ver. 5), —**which** (latter, viz. *good conscience*—not, both) **some having thrust from them** (there is something in the word implying the violence of the act required, and the importance of conscience, reluctant to be so extruded) **made shipwreck** (the similitude is so common a one, that it is hardly necessary to extend the figure of a shipwreck beyond the word itself, nor to find in the *thrusting from them* allusions to a rudder, anchor, &c.) **concerning the faith** (objective: the things believed): **among whom is Hymenæus** (there is a Hymenæus mentioned 2 Tim. ii. 17, in conjunction with Philetus, as an heretical teacher. There is no reason to distinguish him from this one: nor any difficulty occasioned by the fact of his being here *delivered over to Satan*, and there mentioned as overthrowing the faith of many. He would probably go on with his evil teaching in spite of the Apostle’s sentence, which could carry weight with those only who were sound in the faith) **and Alexander** (in all probability identical with “*Alexander the coppersmith*,” 2 Tim. iv. 14. There is nothing against it in what is there said of him. He appears there to have been an adversary of the Apostle, who had withheld and injured him at his late visit to Ephesus: but there is no reason why he should not have been still under this sentence at that time); **whom I delivered over to Satan** (there does not seem to be, as almost always taken for granted, any necessary assertion of excommunication, properly so called. The delivering to Satan, as in 1 Cor. v. 5, seems to have been an apostolic act, for the purpose of active punishment, in order to correction. It might or might not be accompanied by extrusion from the church: it appears to have been thus accompanied in 1 Cor. v. 5:—but the two must not be supposed identical. The upholders of such identity allege the fact of Satan’s empire being conceived as including all outside the church [Acts xxvi. 18 al.]: but such expressions are too vague to be adduced as applying to a direct assertion like this. Satan, the adversary, is evidently regarded as the buffeter and tormentor, compare 2 Cor. xii. 7—ever ready, unless his hand were held, to distress and afflict God’s people,—and ready therefore, when thus let loose by one having power over him, to execute punishment with all his malignity.—Observe that the verb is not perfect, “*I have delivered*,” as A.V. wrongly, but past [**I delivered**]. He did this when he was last at Ephesus), **that they may be disciplined** (taught by chastisement: “*may be*,” because the effect of what was done still abides; the sentence was not yet taken off, nor the chastisement at an end) **not to blaspheme** (God, or Christ, whose holy name was brought to shame by these men associating it with unholy and unclean doctrines).

1 Timothy: Chapter 2

CH. II. 1–15.] *General regulations respecting public intercessory prayers for all men (1–4); from which he digresses into a proof of the universality of the gospel (4–7)—then returns to the part to be taken by the male sex in public prayer (8): which leads him to treat of the proper place and subjection of women (8–15).—I exhort then (them) takes up the general subject of the Epistle: ‘what I have then to say to thee by way of command and regulation, is this:’ see 2 Tim. ii. 1) **first of all** (is to be joined with **I exhort**, not, as in A.V., with “*be made*” below. This is, in order and importance, his first exhortation), **that supplications, prayers, intercessions** (the two former words are perhaps best distinguished as in Eph. vi. 18, by taking *the first* for *prayer* in general, *the second* for *supplication* or *petition*, the special content of any particular prayer. The third word should be marked with a reference to ‘request concerning others,’ i.e. *intercessory* prayer), **thanksgivings, be made** (literally,*

in the Greek, ‘I exhort... to make prayers, &c.;’ but our idiom requires the passive construction, as in the text) **for all men** (this gives the intercessory character to all that have preceded. On the wideness of Christian benevolence here inculcated, see the argument below, and Tit. iii. 2); **for** (i. e. ‘especially for’—this one particular class being mentioned and no other) **kings** (see Tit. iii. 1; Rom. xiii. 1 ff; 1 Pet. ii. 13. It was especially important that the Christians should include earthly powers in their formal public prayers, both on account of the object to be gained by such prayer [see next clause], and as an effectual answer to those adversaries who accused them of rebellious tendencies. And this was the uniform practice in the early church), **and all that are in eminence** (not literally, in *authority*, though the context, no less than common sense, shews that it would be so. Theodoret thinks that the Apostle added these words, including inferior officers, that his mention of kings might not seem to proceed from flattery. But the succeeding clause furnishes reason enough: the security of Christians would often be more dependent on inferior officers than even on kings themselves); **that** (aim of the prayer—not, as some think, subjective, that by such prayer Christian men’s minds may be tranquillized and disposed to obey,—but objective, that we may obtain the blessing mentioned, by God’s influencing the hearts of our rulers: or, as Chrysostom, that we may be in security by their being preserved in safety) **we may pass a quiet and tranquil life** (“for when they by their authority secure peace, we also have part in the calm, and fulfil the laws of piety in tranquillity,” Theodoret) **in all** (‘possible,’ ‘requisite’) **godliness** (we are obliged in an English version to take this meaning for the peculiar word (*e usebeia*), which here represents the life and practice of a Christian. It is one of the terms peculiar in this meaning to the pastoral Epistles, the second Epistle of Peter [reff.], and Peter’s speech in Acts iii. 12) **and gravity** (this word seems best to express the meaning. For as Chrysostom says, “For if they were not preserved, and met not with good success in their wars, it would throw our matters into trouble and disturbance. For either we must take up arms, when they are overthrown, or we must be scattered, and become fugitives:” and thus the gravity and decorum of the Christian life would be broken up).

3, 4.] For this (viz. *the making prayers, &c. for all men, &c.* ver. 1: what has followed since being merely the continuation of this) **is good and acceptable** (both adjectives are to be taken with “*in the sight of;*” &c., not, as some, the former as meaning “*good in and of itself;*” and the latter only referred to God’s estimate: compare 2 Cor. viii. 21, where “*honourable*” represents the same Greek word as is here used) **in the sight of our Saviour** (a title manifestly chosen as belonging to the matter in hand, compare the next verse. On it, see ch. i. 1), [**even:** there is no word herein the original] **God, who** (i. e. seeing that He) **willeth all men to be saved** (see ch. iv. 10: Tit. ii. 11. **All men** is repeated from verse 1. Chrysostom’s comment is very noble: “Imitate God. If He willed all men to be saved, why then we ought to pray for all mankind. If He willeth all to be saved, do thou will it too; and if thou willest it, pray. For prayer is the utterance of the will.” Notice, not “*God willeth to save all men,*” for in that case He would have done it: but **God willeth all men to be saved:** to accept the offered salvation. On this even God’s predestination is contingent. Calvin most unworthily shuffles out of the decisive testimony borne by this passage to universal redemption, saying, “The Apostle simply means, that no people or rank in the world is excluded from salvation: because God willeth the Gospel to be propounded to all without exception.... The discourse is of kinds of men, not of individual persons: for he merely intends to include in this number kings and foreign peoples.” As if kings and all in eminence were not in each case individual men), **and to come to (the) certain knowledge**

(the word imports a fuller and more assured acquaintance than mere *knowledge*, see 1 Cor. xiii. 12: Col. i. 11; ii, 2) **of (the) truth** (the expression is a favourite one in these Epistles, see 2 Tim. ii. 25; iii. 7; Titus i. 1. This realization of the truth is in fact identical with *salvation*,

not only as that *salvation* is a *rescue* from life in untruth, but in its deepest and widest sense of *salvation*, here and hereafter: compare John xvii. 3).

5.] For (further grounding of the acceptableness of prayer for all men,—in the UNITY of God. But this verse is joined by the **for** directly to the preceding, not to ver. 1. Chrysostom gives it rightly,—“shewing that He willeth all to be saved”) **there is ONE God** (He is ONE in essence and one in purpose—not of different minds to different nations or individuals, but of one mind towards all. Similarly Rom. iii. 30, and, which is important for the understanding of that difficult passage, Gal. iii. 20. The double reference, to the unity in essence and unity of purpose, for which I have contended there, is plain and unmistakeable here), **ONE Mediator** (this word **Mediator** occurs, besides Gal. iii. 19, 20, only in the Epistle to the Heb., 6; ix. 15; xii. 24. There is no necessity that the idea should be connected with that of a mutual covenant, and so be here far-fetched as regards the context: the word is used as standing alone, and representing the fact of Christ Jesus being the only *go-between*, in whatever sense) **also of (between) God and men** (if one only goes between, then that One aust be for *all*), **Christ Jesus [himself] man** (why *man*? Theodoret answers, “He calls Christ man because he called Him a Mediator: for He became Mediator by becoming man;” and so most Commentators. But it is not here the Apostle’s object, to set forth the nature of Christ’s mediation as regards its being brought about;—only as regards its unity and universality for mankind. And for this latter reason he calls him here by this name MAN,—that He gathered up all our human nature into Himself, becoming its second Head. So that the assertion that He is *man*, in fact carries with it the very strongest proof of that which he is maintaining. Notice it is not, as in A.V., “*the man Christ Jesus;*” in personality, our Lord was not *a man*, but in nature He was *man*. The stupidity of such writers as Baur and the Socinians, who regard such an expression as against the deity of Christ, is beyond all power of mine to characterize. In the face of the words “*one God, one Mediator between God and men,*” to maintain gravely such a position, shews utter blindness from party bias even to the plainest thoughts expressed in the plainest

words): **who gave himself a ransom** (literally, **a payment in recompense**: and this expresses more distinctly the reciprocity which is already implied in the simple word in each case. That the main fact alluded to here is the *death* of Christ, we know: but it is not brought into prominence, being included in, and superseded by the far greater and more comprehensive fact, that He gave HIMSELF, in all that He undertook for our redemption; see Phil. ii. 5–8) **on behalf of all** (not of a portion of mankind, but of *all men*; the point of ver. 1, *for all men*),—**the testimony** (‘that which was [to be] testified’ This oneness of the Mediator, involving in itself the universality of Redemption, was the great subject of Christian testimony: see below) **in its own seasons** (in the times which God had appointed for it). **For** (towards) **which** (the testifying) **I was placed as a herald** (this is a word used in these pastoral Epistles and 2 Pet. only), **and apostle** (the proclaiming this universality of the Gospel was the one object towards which my appointment as an apostle and preacher was directed. Those who hold the spuriousness of our Epistle, regard this returning to himself and his own ease on the part of the writer as an evidence of his being one who was acting the part of Paul. They have so far truth on their side, that we must recognize here a characteristic increase of the frequency of these personal vindications on the part of the Apostle, as we so often have occasion to remark during these Epistles:—the disposition of one who had been long opposed and worried by adversaries to recur continually to his own claims, the assertion of which had now become with him almost, so to speak, a matter of stock-phrases. Still, the propriety of the assertion here is evident: it is only in the manner of it that the above habit is discernible. See more on this in the Introduction. The same phrase occurs verbatim in 2 Tim. i. 11),—**I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not**—(in spite of all that some Commentators say of the evident appropriateness of this solemn asseveration here, I own I am unable to regard it as any more than a strong and interesting proof of the growth of a habit in the Apostle’s mind, which we already trace in 2 Cor. xi. 31, Rom. ix. 1, till he came to use the phrase with less force and relevance than he had once done. Nothing can be more natural than that one whose life was spent in strong conflict and assertion of his Apostleship, should repeat the fervour of his usual asseveration, even when the occasion of that fervour had passed away)—**a teacher of the Gentiles** (it was especially in this latter fact that the assertion of the universality of the Gospel found its justification. The historical proof of his constitution as a teacher of the Gentiles is to be found in Acts ix. 15, xxii. 21, xxvi. 17; but especially in Gal. ii. 9) **in (the) faith and (the) truth** (do these words refer subjectively to his own conduct in teaching the Gentiles, or objectively to that in which he was to instruct them? The former view is taken by Theodoret and most Commentators: the latter by some moderns. In judging between these, we must take into account the usage of “truth” above, ver. 4, in a very similar reference, when it was to be matter of teaching to all men. There it undoubtedly is *the truth* of God. I would therefore take it similarly here,—the sphere in which both his teaching and their learning was to be employed—*the truth of the Gospel*. Then, if so, it is surely harsh to make **faith** subjective, especially as the “*in*” is not repeated before “*truth*.” It too will most properly be objective,—and likewise regard that in which as an element or sphere, he was to teach and they to learn: *the faith*).

8.] See summary at beginning of chapter. **I will then that the men** (the A.V., by omitting the article, has entirely obscured this passage for its English readers, not one in a hundred of whom ever dream of a distinction of the sexes being here intended) **pray in every place** (these words regard the general duty of praying. It is a *local* command respecting prayer, answering to the temporal command, “*pray unceasingly*,” 1 Thess. v. 17. It is far-fetched and irrelevant to the context to find in the words, as Chrysostom and others, the Christian’s freedom from prescription of place for prayer), **lifting up holy hands** (see Ps. lxiii. 4; xxviii. 2; xliv. 20. Clement of Rome, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, says, “Let us approach unto Him in holiness of soul, lifting up unto Him chaste and undefiled hands.” These two passages testify to the practice in the Christian church. Those hands are holy, which have not surrendered themselves as instruments of evil desire: the contrary are *polluted hands*, 2 Macc. v. 16: compare, for the expression, Job xvii. 9, Ps. xxiv. 4, and in the New Test, especially James iv. 8), **without** (separate from, “putting away”) **wrath and disputation** (i. e. in tranquillity and mutual peace, or, **doubting**, which is a kind of disputation within one’s self).

9.] In like manner also (this, by the parallel passage, Tit. ii. 8, seems to be little more than a copula, not necessarily to refer to the matter which has been last under treatment), **I will that women** (without the article, the reference to “**the men**” above is not so pointed: i.e. we need not imagine that the reference is necessarily to the same matter of detail, but may regard the verse [see below] as being to the general duties and behaviour of women, as not belonging to the category of *those who are to pray in every place*. The question, ‘what then are women to do?’ is answered by insisting on modesty of appearance and the ornament of good works, as contrasted [ver. 12] with the man’s part. The public assemblies are doubtless, in ver. 12, still before the Apostle’s mind, but in a very slight degree. It is the general duties of women, rather than any single point in reference to their conduct in public worship, to which he is calling attention: though the subject of public worship led to his thus speaking, and has not altogether disappeared from his thoughts) **adorn themselves in orderly apparel** (see Tit. ii. 3, note: “in seemly guise,” Ellicott) **with shamefastness** (not, as modern reprints of the A.V., ‘shame-faced ness,’ which is a mere unmeaning corruption by the printers of a very expressive and beautiful word. Archbishop Trench says (Synonyms of the New Test., §20), “It is a pity that ‘shamefast’ and ‘shamefastness,’ which last word our translators used here, should have been corrupted in modern use to ‘shame-faced’ and ‘shame-facedness.’ The words are properly of the same formation as ‘steadfast,’ ‘steadfastness,’ ‘soothfast,’ ‘soothfastness,’ and those good old English words, now lost to us, ‘rootfast,’ and ‘rootfastness.’ As by ‘rootfast’ our fathers understood that which was firm and fast by its root, so by ‘shamefast’ in like manner, that which was established and made *fast* by an honourable *shame*. To change this into ‘shamefaced’ is to allow all the meaning and force of the word to run to the surface, to leave us ethically a far inferior word. It is very inexcusable that all modern reprints of the Authorized Version have given in to this corruption’), **and self-restraint** (or, **sobermindedness**) (“if,”

Trench concludes, “the former word is the ‘shamefastness,’ or tendency which shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty, as well as from the dishonour which would justly attach thereto, this word is that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to this from arising, or at all events’ from arising in such strength as should overbear the checks and hindrances which *shamefastness* opposed to it.” Ellicott explains it, “*the well-balanced state of mind, arising from habitual self-restraint*”; **not in plaits** (of hair: compare 1 Pet. iii. 3) **and gold** (“*putting on of golden ornaments*,” 1 Pet. as above: from the use of **and**, the gold is supposed to be twined among, or worn with, the plaited hair. See Rev. xvii. 4), **or pearls, or costly raiment** (*putting on of apparel*, 1 Pet. as above),—but (**which is becoming for women professing godliness**) by **means of good works** (not in again, because the adornment lies in a different sphere, and cannot be so expressed. The adorning which results from good works is brought about by their practice, not displayed by appearing to be invested with them).

11.] Let a (i. e. **the**, generic) **woman learn** (in the congregation, and every where: see below) **in silence in all** (possible) **subjection** (the thought of the public assemblies has evidently given rise to this precept [see 1 Cor. xiv. 34]; but he carries it further than can be applied to them in the next verse). **But** (the contrast is to a suppressed hypothesis of a claim to do that which is forbidden: compare a similar “*but*,” 1 Cor. xi. 16) **to a woman I permit not to teach (in the church** [primarily], or, as the context shews, any where else), **nor to lord it over the men, but** (supply ‘*I command her:*’ the construction in 1 Cor. xiv. 34 is the same) **to be in silence.**

13.] Reason of this precept, in the original order of creation.—For Adam was first (not of all men, which is not here under consideration, and would stultify the subsequent clause:—but first in comparison with Eve) **made** (compare 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9, and indeed that whole passage, which throws light on this), **then Eve.**

14.] Second reason—as the woman was *last in being*, so she was *first in sin*—indeed *the only victim* of the Tempter’s deceit. **And Adam was not deceived** (the serpent *deceived* the woman: the woman did not *deceive* her husband, but *persuaded* him. We read of no communication between the serpent and the *man*. The “*subtest beast of all the field*” knew his course better: *she* listened to the lower solicitation of sense and expediency: he to the higher one of conjugal ve), **but the woman** (not now *Eve*, but generic, as the next clause shews: for Eve could not be the subject of what is said in the next verse) **having been seduced BY THE DECEIT** (the verb is one implying the full success of the *deceit*) **has become involved** (the thought is—the present state of transgression in which the woman [and the man too: but that is not treated here] by sin is constituted, arose [which was not. so in the man] from her originally having been *seduced by deceit*) **in transgression** (here as always, breach of a positive command: compare Rom. iv. 15).

15.] But (contrast to this her great and original defect) **she** (general) **shall be saved through** (brought safely through, but in the higher, which is with St. Paul the only sense of to save, see below) **her childbearing** (in order to understand the fulness of the meaning of “*shall be saved*” here, we must bear in mind the history itself, to which is the constant allusion. The curse on the woman for her *transgression* was, “*In sorrow shalt thou bear children*” [Gen. iii. 16]. Her **childbearing** is that in which the curse finds its operation. What then is here promised her? Not only exemption from that curse in its worst and heaviest effects: not merely that she shall safely bear children: but the Apostle uses the words **shall be saved** purposely for their higher meaning, and the construction of the sentence is precisely as 1 Cor. iii. 15, “*He himself shall be saved, but so as through fire.*” Just as that man should be saved through, as passing through, fire which is his trial, his hindrance in his way, in spite of which he escapes,—so she shall be saved, through, as passing through, her childbearing, which is her trial, her curse, her (not means of salvation, but) hindrance in the way of it.—The other renderings which have been given seem to me both irrelevant and ungrammatical. See them treated in my Greek Test.), **if they** (generic plural, as before singular) **have remained** (so literally: shall be found in that day to have remained—a further proof of the higher meaning of “*shall be saved*”) **in faith and love and holiness** (see 1 Thess. iv. 4, 7; Heb. xii. 14, where the word is used in the same reference of holy chastity) **with sobermindedness** (see above on ver. 9).

1 Timothy: Chapter 3

CH. III. 1–13.] Precepts respecting overseers (presbyters) [1–7], and deacons [8–13].

1.] Faithful is the saying (see on ch. i. 15, from the analogy of which it appears that the words are to be referred to what follows, not, with Chrysostom and others, to what has preceded), **If any man seeketh (reacheth out after:** but it does not seem that he uses the word with any reference to an ambitious seeking. So that any inference respecting ambition for the episcopate betraying the late age of the Epistle, falls to the ground) **(the) bishopric** (office of an *overseer* or *bishop*: but it is merely laying a trap for misunderstanding, to render the word, at this time of the Church’s history, ‘the office of a Bishop,’ without giving an explanation, what that office was. The “*episcopi*” of the N.T. have officially nothing in common with our *Bishops*. In Acts xx. 17, the A.V. ought to have been consistent with itself, and to have rendered the word *bishops* always, not *bishoptis* in one place and *overseers* in another, to suit ecclesiastical prejudices. It would be better to adopt the other alternative, and always to render it **overseers**, were not that word to common English readers appropriated to another kind of office. Thus

we should avoid any chance of identifying it with a present and different office, and take refuge in the meaning of the word itself, which at the same time bears an important testimony to the duties of the post.—The identity of the “*bishop*” and “*presbyter*” in apostolic times is evident from Tit. i. 5–7: see also note on Phil. i. 1), **hedesireth a good work** (not ‘a good *thing*:’ but a good *employment*: see 1 Thess. v. 13; 2 Tim. iv. 5: one of the “*good works*” so often spoken of). **It behoves then (then** is best regarded as taking up the term “*a good work*,” and substantiating that assertion: “a good work must be entrusted to good men”) **a bishop** (generic) **to be irreproachable** (Theodoret draws an important distinction: “not to afford *just* cause for blame: this is what he says, not that he should not be the object of slander, for this the Apostle himself was in many ways”), **husband of one wife** (two great varieties of interpretation of these words have prevailed, among those who agree to take them as *restrictive*, not *injunctive*, which the spirit of the passage and the insertion of the word *one* surely alike forbid. They have been supposed to prohibit either 1) *simultaneous polygamy*, or 2) *successive polygamy*. 1) has somewhat to be said for it. The custom of polygamy was then prevalent among the Jews [Justin Martyr says that their Rabbis even then permitted them to have four or five wives apiece. This was in the middle of the second century], and might easily find its way into the Christian community. And such, it is argued, was the Apostle’s reference, not to second marriages, which he himself commands ch. v. 14, and allows in several other places, e.g. Rom. vii. 2, 3; 1 Cor. vii. 39. But the objection to taking this meaning is, that the Apostle would hardly have specified that as a requisite for the episcopate or presbyterate, which we know to have been fulfilled by all Christians whatever: no instance being adduced of polygamy being practised in the Christian church, and no exhortations to abstain from it. As to St. Paul’s command and permissions, see below. Still, we must not lose sight of the circumstance that the earlier Commentators were unanimous for this view. 2) For the view that *second marriages* are prohibited to aspirants after the episcopate,—is, the most probable meaning [see there] of “*wife of one husband*” in ch. v. 9,—as also the wide prevalence in the early Church of the idea that, although second marriages were not *forbidden* to Christians, abstinence from them was better than indulgence in them. See this proved by various authorities cited in my Greek Test. With regard to the Apostle’s own command and permissions of this state [see above], they do not come into account here, because they are confessedly (and expressly so in ch. v. 14) for those whom it was not contemplated to admit into ecclesiastical office. 3) There have been some divergent lines of interpretation, but they have not found many advocates. Some deny altogether the formal reference to 1) or 2), and understand the expression only of a chaste life of fidelity to the marriage vow: “that neither polygamy, nor concubinage, nor any offensive second marriage, should be able to be alleged against such a person.” But surely this is very vague, for the precise words “*husband of one wife*.” Bretschneider maintains that “*one*” is here the indefinite article, and that the Apostle means, a *bishop* should be the husband of a wife. This hardly needs serious refutation. Worse still is the Romanist evasion, which understands the “*one wife*” of the *Church*.—The view then which must I think be adopted, especially in presence of ch. v. 9 [where see note], is, that to candidates for the episcopate [presbytery] St. Paul forbids second marriage. He requires of them pre-eminent chastity, and abstinence from a licence which is allowed to other Christians. How far such a prohibition is to be considered binding on us, now that the Christian life has entered into another and totally different phase, is of course an open question for the present Christian church at any time to deal with. It must be as matter of course understood that regulations, in all *lawful* things, depend, even when made by an Apostle, on circumstances: and the superstitious observance of the letter in such cases is often pregnant with mischief to the people and cause of Christ), **vigilant** (probably in the more extended sense of the word;—a pattern of active sobriety and watchfulness: for all these five first adjectives are descriptive of *positive* qualities: “*no brawler*” giving the negative and more restricted opposite), **soberminded** (or, **discreet**; see above on ch. ii. 9), **orderly** (“what *soberminded* implies within, *orderly* implies without,” Bengel: thus expanded by Theodoret: “Both in voice and in manner and in look and in gait, so as to exhibit in his body the sobriety of his mind”), **hospitable** (loving, and entertaining strangers: see Heb. xiii. 2. This duty in the early days of the Christian church was one of great importance. Brethren in their travels could not resort to the houses of the heathen, and would be subject to insult in the public inns), **apt in teaching** (not merely *given to* teaching, but able and skilled in it. All *might teach*, to whom the Spirit imparted the gift: but *skill* in teaching was the especial office of the minister, on whom would fall the ordinary duty of instruction of believers and refutation of gainsayers).

3–7.] (His *negative qualities* are now specified; the positive ones which occur henceforth arising out of and explaining those negative ones):

3.] **not a brawler** (properly, ‘*one in his cups*,’ a man rendered petulant by much wine. And perhaps the literal meaning should not be lost sight of. At the same time the word and its cognates were often used without reference to wine: and it will be best to extend the meaning to signify rather the character, than the mere fact, of the circumstance), **not a striker** (this word also may have a literal and narrower, or a metaphorical and wider sense. In this latter it is taken by Theodoret. But perhaps the coarser literal sense is better, as setting forth more broadly the opposite to the character of a Christian *bishop*); **but** (this contrast springs out of the two last, and is set off by them) **förbearing** (reasonable and gentle. See note on Phil. iv. 5), **averse from contention** (compare 2 Tim. ii. 24), **not a lover of money** (not as some render it, *liberal*: it is not the positive virtue of liberality, but the negative one of abstinence from love of money, which, though it may lead to the other in men who *have* money, is yet a totally distinct thing).

4.] This positive requisite again seems to spring out of the negative ones which have preceded, and especially out of being *no lover of money*. The negatives are again resumed below); **presiding well over his own house** (“*his own*,” as contrasted with the church of God below.

house, in its wide acceptation, '*household*,' including all its members), **having children** (not "*keeping* [or having] *his children*," as A.V.) **[who are] in subjection with all gravity** ('*reverent modesty*,' see ch. ii. 2. These words are best applied to the *children*, not to the head of the house, which acceptance of them rather belongs to the rendering impugned above. It is the *gravity* of the children, the result of his *presiding* over them, which is to prove that he *knows how* to preside over his own house,—not his own *gravity* in governing them: the matter of fact, that he has children who are in subjection to him in all gravity,—not his own keeping or endeavouring to keep them so. Want of *success* in ruling at home, not want of will to rule, would disqualify him for ruling the church. So that the distinction is an important one); **but** (contrast, as in ch. ii. 12, to the suppressed but imagined opposite case) **if any man knoweth not how to preside over his own house** (shews, by his children being insubordinate, that he has no skill in domestic government), **how shall he** (this future includes '*how can he*,' but goes beyond it—appealing, not to the man's power, which conditions his success, but to the resulting matter of fact, which will be sure to substantiate his failure) **take charge of the church of God** ('he who knows not how to administer small things, how can he be entrusted with the charge of better and divine things?' Theodoret)?

6.] (The negative characteristics are resumed) **Not a novice** (a new convert. An objection has been raised to this precept, that it could hardly find place in the apostolic church, where all were *new converts*. It has been answered, that in Crete this might be so, and therefore such a precept would be out of place in the epistle to Titus, but the Ephesian church had been many years established. But it has been again rejoined to this, that the precepts are perfectly general, not of particular application. The real reply is to be found, partly by narrowing the range of the meaning of a new *convert*, partly in assigning a later date to these Epistles than is commonly held. The case here contemplated is that of one *very recently* converted. To ordain such a person to the ministry would, for the reason here assigned, be most unadvisable. But we cannot imagine that such period need be extended at the most to more than three or four years, in cases of men of full age who became Christians; and surely such a condition might be fulfilled by any of the Pauline churches, supposing this Epistle to bear any thing like the date which I have assigned to it in the Introd. §ii.), **lest being besotted with pride** (the word used is derived from a substantive signifying *smoke* or *steam*; and hence metaphorically, the pother which a man's pride raises about him so that he cannot see himself or others as they are. Hence the verb, which is used only in this metaphorical sense, means to be thus blinded, or bewildered, with pride or self-conceit) **he fall into the judgment of the devil** (these last words are ambiguous. **Is of the devil** [1] the genitive objective, '*the judgment into which the devil fell*,'—or [2] the genitive subjective, '*the judgment which is wrought by the devil?*' [1] is held by Chrysostom and many others ancient and modern ["into the same condemnation which came on *him* for his madness," Chrysostom]. [2] is held by Ambrose and others. Matthies says, "If a Christian church-overseer allowed himself to be involved in a charge of pride, the adversary (i. e., in the concrete, living men, his instruments) might by it have reason as well for the accusation of the individual as for inculpation of the congregation: compare ch. v. 14, Eph. iv. 27." In deciding between the above, one question must first be answered: are we obliged to preserve the same character of the genitive in verses 6 and 7? because, if so, we must manifestly take [2]: for the words there [see below] cannot bear any other meaning than '*the {reproach and} snare which the devil lays*.' This question must be answered, not by any mere consideration of uniformity, but by careful enquiry into the import of the substantive **judgment**. I conceive we cannot understand it here otherwise than as a *condemnatory sentence*. This being so, it must be remembered that it is not the prerogative of the *devil* to *judge* or to *condemn*, and that sense [2] is by this negatived. From the use of the decisive word **judgment**, I infer that it cannot be an act of the adversary which is here spoken of, but an act in which "*the ruler of this world has been judged*." Then as to uniformity with ver. 7, I should not be disposed to make much account of it. For one who so loved similarity of external phrase, even where different meanings were to be conveyed, as St. Paul, to use the genitives in "*judgment of the devil*," and "*snare of the devil*," in these different meanings, is surely nothing which need cause surprise:—**of the devil** is common to both: the devil's condemnation, and the devil's snare, are both alike alien from the Christian, in whom, as in his divine Master,

the adversary should find nothing, and with whom he should have nothing in common. The "**judgment** of the devil" is in fact but the consummation of that state into which the "**snare** of the devil" is the introduction. I therefore unhesitatingly adopt (1) —*the condemnation into which Satan fell through the same blinding effect of pride*).

7.] Moreover (bringing in the contrast of ad-dition; '*more than this*,'....) **he must have a good testimony also** (also, the addition itself of a new particular) **from those without** (the world, outside the church); **lest he fall into** (a question arises which must be answered before we can render the following words. Does *reproach* (1) stand alone, '*into reproach, and the snare of the devil*,' or is it (2) to be joined with *and the snare, as belonging to unto the reproach and the snare of the devil?*' I have discussed these views, which depend mainly on grounds unappreciable by the English reader, in my Greek Test., and have come to the conclusion that (2) should be adopted, but without strong disapproval of the other) **the re-proach and the snare of the devil** (this latter is usually taken as meaning, the danger of relapse: so Calvin: "lest being exposed to infamy, he begin to be hardened against shame, and with the greater licence prostitutes himself to all wickedness, which is to entangle himself in the nets of the devil. For what hope remains, when shame in sinners is gone?" Grotius gives it a different turn: "lest, being branded by contumelies, he seek to avenge himself." These, and many other references, may well be contained in the expression, and we need not, I think, be at the pains precisely to specify any one direction which the evil would take. Such an one's steps would be shackled—his freedom hampered—his tem-per irritated—his character lost—and the natural result would be a fall from his place, to the detriment not of himself only, but of the church of Christ).

8–13.] Precepts regarding deacons and deaconesses (see below on ver. 11).

8.] In like manner (this expression seems introduced by the similarity of character,—not merely to mark an additional particular) **the deacons** (mentioned as a class, besides here, only **Phil. i. 1**, where as here, they follow the “*bishops.*” Phoebe, Rom. xvi. 1, is a “*deacon [ess]*” of the church at Cenchreæ. The term or its cognates occur in a vaguer sense, but still indicating a special office, in Rom. xii. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 11. The connexion of the ecclesiastical deacons with the seven appointed in Acts vi. is very doubtful: see Chrysostom’s and (Ecumenius’s testimony distinguishing them, in note there. But that the ecclesiastical order sprung out of similar necessities, and had for its field of work similar objects, can hardly be doubted) **(must be) grave, not of double speech** (this may mean, either, saying one thing and thinking another, or, which is more probable, as carrying out better the idea of *double speech*, saying one thing to one man and another thing to another, the two sayings being inconsistent, with singleness of conviction and purpose), **not addicted** (applying themselves) **to much wine** (see Tit. ii. 3), **not greedy of gain** (hardly, as A.V., to be *doubly rendered*.— ‘*greedy of filthy lucre.*’ As also Theodore, “endeavouring to amass gain out of dis-graceful and preposterous things.” It would appear from Tit. i. 11, that all gain is *disgraceful* which is set before a man as a by-end in his work for God: so likewise in 1 Pet. v. 2,... ‘nor with a view to gain,’ such gain being necessarily base when thus sought. This particular of the deacons’ character assumes special importance, if we connect it with the collecting and distributing alms); **holding the mystery of the (or their) faith** (that great objective truth which man of himself knows not, but which the Spirit of God reveals to the faithful: compare Rom. xvi. 25 f.: 1 Cor. ii. 7–10: and even Him who in fact

is that mystery, the great object of all faith: see note on ver. 16. That expression makes it probable that the faith is here to be taken subjectively: *the, or their, faith*: the apprehension which appropriates to them the contents of God’s revelation of Christ. That revelation of the Person of Christ, their faith’s **mystery**, they are to hold) **in pure conscience** (see ch. i. 19. From those passages it appears, that we must not give the words a special application to their official life as deacons, but understand them of earnestness and singleness of Christian character: being in heart persuaded of the truth of that divine mystery which they profess to have apprehended by faith).

10.] And moreover (the *moreover* introduces a caution—the slight contrast of a necessary addition to their mere present character) let these (who answer, in their candidateship for the diaconate, to the above character) **be put to the proof first** (viz. with regard to their blamelessness of life, see the conditioning clause below: e.g. by testimonials, and publication of their intention to offer themselves: but no formal way is specified, only the reality insisted on); **then let them act as deacons** (or, simply, *let them minister*: but more probably here in the narrower technical sense), **if they are** (found by the *testing process* to be) **irreproachable.**

11.] (The) women in like manner (who are these? Are they (1) women who were to serve as deacons,—deaconesses?—or (2) wives of the deacons?—or (3) wives of the deacons and overseers?—or (4) women in general? I conceive we may dismiss (4) at once, for Chrysostom’s reason: “Why should he in the midst of writing on another subject insert any thing respecting *women?*”—(3) upheld by Calvin and others, may for the same reason, seeing that he returns to the deacons again in ver. 12, be characterized as extremely improbable:—(2) has found many supporters among modern Commentators: and it is the rendering of the A.V. But it has against it (a) the omission in the original of all expressed reference to the deacons: (b) the expression **in like manner**, by which the *deacons* themselves were introduced in ver. 8, and which seems to mark a new ecclesiastical class: (c) the introduction of the injunction respecting the deacons in ver. 12, as a new particular, which would hardly be if their wives had been mentioned before: (d) the circumstance connected with the mention of Phoebe as *deaconess* of the Church at Cenchreæ in Rom. xvi. 1, that unless these are deacon-esses, there would be among these injunctions no mention of an important class of persons employed as officers of the church. We come thus to consider (1), that these women are *deaconesses,—ministre*, as Pliny calls them in his letter to Trajan [see note on Rom. xvi. 1]. In this view the ancients are as far as I know unanimous: and it is held by some of the ablest among the moderns. It is alleged against it—(a) that thus the return to the *deacons*, verse 12, would be harsh, or, as Conybeare says, “on that view the verse is most. unnaturally interpolated in the midst of the discussion concerning the deacons.” But the ready answer to this is found in Chrysostom’s view of ver. 12, that under the word *deacons*, and their household duties, he comprehends in fact both sexes under one: (b) that the existence of *dea-conesses* as an order in the ministry is after all not so clear. To this it might be answered, that even were they nowhere else mentioned, the present passage stands on its own grounds; and if it seemed from the context that such persons were indicated here, we should reason from this to the fact of their existence, not from the absence of other mention to their non-indication here. I decide then for (1): that these women are *deaconesses*) **(must be) grave, not slanderers** (corresponds to “*not doubletongued*” in the males, *slander* being the vice to which the female sex is more addicted. The word used for *slanderer* in this sense is peculiar, in the New Test., to these Epistles), sober (see on ver. 2, corresponding to *not given to much wine*, ver. 8), **faithful in all things** (cor-

responds to *not greedy of gain*: trusty in the distribution of the alms committed to them, and in all other ministrations).

12.] General directions respecting those in the diaconate (of both sexes, the female being included in the male, see

Chrysostom, cited above), *with regard to their domestic condition and duties*, as above (verses 4, 5) respecting the episcopate. **Let the deacons be husbands of one wife** (see on this above, ver. 2), **ruling well over children** (the emphatic position in the original, as above, ver. 4, makes it probable that the *having children to rule* is to be considered as a qualification: see Titus i. 6, note) **and their own houses.**

13.] The importance of true and faithful service in the diaconate.—**For those who served well the office of deacon** (*past, not perfect, "have served,"* because the standing-point of the sentence is at first the great day, when their *diaconate* has passed by) **are acquiring** (thus literally: the Apostle having begun by placing himself at the great day of retribution, and consequently used the *past*, now shifts, so to speak, the scene, and deals with their *present* conduct: q.d., ‘Those who shall then be found to have served well, &c.... are now, &c.) for themselves (emphatic—besides the service they are rendering to the church) **a good standing-place** (viz. at the great day: compare ch. vi. 19:—and Dan. xii, 13, where however the metaphor is different).—The interpretations of this word, which literally means *a step*, or place to stand on, have been very various. (1) Very many, both ancients and moderns, understand it of a *degree of ecclesiastical preferment*, as that from the office of deacon to that of presbyter, and take “good” for a comparative. Against this is (a) the foreing of the word “good;” (b) the improbability that such a rise upwards through the ecclesiastical offices was known in the Apostle’s time: (c) the still greater unlikelihood, even if it were known, that he would propose as a motive to a deacon to fulfil his office well, the ambitions desire to rise out of it. (2) Some among the moderns, following Calvin and Luther, understand by it a high place of honour in the esteem of the church. Against this is (a) that there is not a more distinct reference made to the estimation of the church: (b) that thus again an unworthy motive would be set before the deacons: (c) that again [see below] “great boldness,” or “confidence,” will not on this interpretation, bear any legitimate rendering: (d) the use of the past, they who served: see above. (3) Some take it *spiritually*, as meaning *progress in the faith*. But (a) the whole is of too objective a character thus to be interpreted of a merely subjective process—besides that (b) thus also we should require “*are serving*,” *present, instead of “served,” past.* (4) Theodoret and others understand it nearly as above—of the station or standing-place which the faithful deacon acquires before God, with reference to his own salvation. The opinions of these Commentators are, however, somewhat various as to the exact time to which the standing on this *standing-place* is to be referred. Theodoret refers it to the next life. Others understand that they procure to themselves a *good expectation of salvation: a standing-place, i.e., in this life, with reference to the future one.* I believe that the truth will be found by combining the two views. The past verb, **served**, as above stated, is used with reference to their finished course at that day. The term are obtain-ing transfers the scene to the present time. The **standing-place** is that which they are now securing for themselves, and will be found standing on at that day: belonging therefore in part to both periods, and not necessarily involving the idea of different degrees of blessedness, though that idea [see 1 Cor. iii. 15] is familiar to St. Paul,—but merely predicating the soundness of the ground on which these **deacons** will themselves stand), and much confidence (this also is variously understood, according as the *standing-place* is interpreted. Those who think of *ecclesiastical preferment*, render it ‘freedom

of speech as regards the faith,’ i.e. in teaching, or in resisting error, or ‘a wide field for spiritual action.’ To these there might be no objection, but for the adjunct, *in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.* Thus defined, this *boldness*, or *confidence*, must necessarily have a subjective reference,—i. e. to the confidence towards God possessed by those who have made good advance in faith in Christ) **in [the] faith** (subjective, from what follows) **which is in** (reposing in) **Christ Jesus.**

14–16.] CLOSE OF THE ABOVE DIRECTIONS by a *solemn statement of their object and its glorious import.*—**These things** (the foregoing precepts, most naturally) **I write unto thee, hoping** (i. e. ‘though I hope’) **to come to thee sooner (than may seem)** (some supply,—before this Epistle come to thee: or, before thou shalt have need to put these precepts into practice: but the above filling up seems simpler, and suits better the usage else-where): **but if I should delay (coming)** (from “*hoping*” to “*delay*” may be regarded as parenthetical, the “*that*” belonging immediately to the preceding, “*I write unto thee*”), **that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to conduct thyself in the house of God** (see Heb. iii. 2, 5, 6, and notes: 1 Cor. iii. 16: 2 Cor. vi. 16: Eph. ii. 22: 1 Pet. ii. 5; iv. 17:—that congregation among whom God dwells, by His Spirit);—**for such** (the house of God) **is the congregation** (the word used commonly for *church*: but here, as Theodore of Mopsuestia observes, “he means, not the place where prayer is made, as many think, but the assembly of the faithful”) **of the living God** (thus designated for solemnity, and to shew His personal and active presence among them), **the pillar** (see below) **and basement** (it is a climax: the *pillar* is the intermediate, the *basement*, the final support of the building) of the truth (these latter words are variously referred. (1) Some of the modern Commentators break up the sentence, putting a period at “*the living God,*” and proceeding, the *pillar* and ground of the truth, and without controversy great is the mystery, &c. To this I can only say, that if any one imagines St. Paul, or any other person capable of writing this Epistle, able to have indited such a sentence, I fear there is but little chance in arguing with him on the point in question. To say nothing of its abruptness and harshness, beyond all example even in these Epistles, how palpably does it betray the botching of modern conjectural arrangement in the wretched anti-climax—*the pillar and basement* [rising in solemnity] *of the truth, and [what grander idea, after the basement of the whole building, does the reader suppose about to follow?] without controversy great!* These two last words, which have [see below] their appropriate majesty and grandeur in their literal use at the emphatic opening of such a sentence as the next, are thus robbed of it all, and sink into the very lowest bathos; the metaphor being dropped, and the lofty imagery ending with a vague generality. If a sentence like this occurred in the Epistle, I should feel it a weightier argument against its genuineness than any which its opponents have yet adduced. (2) By Gregory of Nyssa among the ancients, and by

some moderns, among whom are Chillingworth and Conybeare, it is taken as referring to TIMOTHY:— “*that thou mayest know how to conduct thyself in the house of God, which is, &c.... as a pillar and basement of the truth.*” Some of the Fathers seem also to have favoured the idea: but of these we must manifestly not claim for it those who have merely used the word pillar or column of an Apostle or teacher, or individual Christian,—as that is justified, independently of our passage, by Gal. ii. 9; Rev. iii. 12. Gregory of Nazianzum applies the very words to Eusebius of Samosata, and to Basil: and Basil in the Catena says, the Apostles also are pillars of Jerusalem, as it is said, “the

pillar and basement of the truth:” and in the Epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, it is said of Attalus, that “he has become for evermore the pillar and basement of the Christians there.” The principal modern reasons for adopting this view have been (a) polemical—as against Roman Catholic infallibility of the Church, or (b) for uniformity of symbolism, seeing that in Gal. ii. 9, Rev. iii. 12, *men* are compared to pillars. On both of these I shall treat expressly below.—Grammatically (see my Greek Test.) there is no objection to this view.—But to the sentence itself thus arranged and understood, there are weighty, and I conceive fatal objections, arising from the form of the clauses in the original. In this case also, the words, “*and without controversy,*” which follow, would most naturally refer, not to the great deposit of faith in Christ which is entrusted to the church to keep,—but to the very strong and unusual expression which had just been used of a young minister in the church,—‘and confessedly great is the dignity of the least of the ministers of Christ: for,’&c. (3) The reference to THE CHURCH is upheld by Chrysostom, Theodoret, &c., the Roman Commentators,—Luther, Calvin, Beza, Grotius, &c., &c. And this interpretation agrees with 2 Tim. ii. 19: see note there. But there is brought against it the objection, that there is thus introduced confusion of metaphor. The *church*, which was the *house* just now, becomes a *pillar*, a part of the *house*. This is not difficult to answer. The house contains in itself both *pillar* and *basement*—the pillar and the basement both belong to the house. Why may not the pillar be taken collectively? the very word *church* or *congregation*, occurring since, has pluralized the idea—the building consists of the *faithful*, who are so many *Pillars*—why should it not in the aggregate be described as *the pillar?* The way in which the congregation of the faithful is the pillar and basement of the truth is admirably given by Theodoret: “He calls the assembly of the faithful the house and church of God. These he names the pillar and basement of the truth. For they remain founded fixedly and immovably on the rock, and proclaiming by their actions the truths of the doctrines.” viz. in that it is the element in which and medium by which the truth is conserved and upheld),

16.] And follows on the preceding: it is indeed worth all thy care to conduct thyself worthily in this house of God—for that truth which is there conserved and upheld is great and glorious above all others, being [see below] none other in fact than THE LORD HIMSELF, in all His gracious manifestation and glorious triumph) **confessedly** (‘as is acknowledged on all hands’) **great is the mystery** (see ver. 9: that which was hidden from man until God revealed it, historically, in Redemption) **of godliness** (see ch. ii, 2, note: ‘of the religious life.’)—In order to comprehend fully what follows, we must endeavour to realize the train of thought in the Apostle’s mind at the time. This ‘*mystery*’ of the life of God in man, is in fact the unfolding of Christ to and in him: the key-text to our passage being Col. i. 27, “*To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this MYSTERY among the Gentiles: WHICH IS, CHRIST AMONG YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY.*” This was the thought in St. Paul’s mind; that the great revelation of the religious life is, CHRIST. And in accordance with his practice in these Epistles, written, as I believe, far on in his course, and after the figures and results of deep spiritual thoughts had been long familiar to him, he at once without explanation, or apology as beforetime in Col. i. 27, or expression of the word *Christ*, justifying the change of gender in the relative, joins the deep and latent thought with the superficial and obvious one, and without saying that the mystery *is in fact* Christ, passes from the mystery to the Person of Christ as being one and the same. Then, thus passing, he is naturally led to a summary of those particulars wherein Christ has been revealed as a ground for the godly recognition of His Church. And, idea of MYSTERY being prominent before him, he selects especially those events in and by which Christ was manifested forth—came forth from that secrecy in which he had beforetime been hidden in the counsels of God, and shone out to men and angels as the Lord of life and glory. Let me say in passing, that it should be noticed, in a question which now happily no longer

depends on internal considerations, how completely the whole glorious sentence is marred and disjoined by the substitution of the word GOD, found in the A.V., and so strenuously, even to this day, upheld by some. It is not the objective fact of *God being manifested*, of which the Apostle is speaking, but the *life of God lived in the church*,—the truth, of which the congregation of believers is the pillar and basement,—as identical [John xiv. 6] with Him who is its centre and heart and stock—as unfolded once for all in the unfolding of Him. The intimate and blessed link, furnished by the relative pronoun WHO, assuring the Church that it is not they that live, but Christ that liveth in them, is lost, if we understand *the mystery* merely as a fact, however important, historically revealed. There is hardly a passage in the New Test. in which I feel more deep personal thankfulness for the restoration of the true and wonderful connexion of the original text)—**who** (thus, and not ‘which,’ nor ‘He who,’ should we render, preserving the same transition, from the mystery, to Him of whom now all that follows is spoken. *Who* is, as stated in Ellicott, “a relative to an omitted though easily recognized antecedent, viz. Christ”) **was manifested in the flesh** (it has been often maintained of late, that these sentences, from their parallelism and symmetry, are taken from some hymn or confession of the ancient church. We cannot absolutely say that it may not have been so: but I should on all grounds regard it as very doubtful. I can see no reason why the same person who wrote the rhetorical passages, Rom. viii. 38, 39; xi. 33–36: 1 Cor. xiii. 4–7, and numerous others, might not, difference of time and modified mental characteristics being allowed for, have written this also. Once written, it would be sure to gain a place among the choice and treasured sayings of the

Church, and might easily find its way into liturgical use: but I should be most inclined to think that we have here its first expression. The reason which some of the above Commentators adduce for their belief,—the abrupt insulation of the clauses disjoined from the thought in the context, has no weight with me: I on the other hand feel that so beautiful and majestic a sequence of thoughts springing directly from the context itself, can hardly be a fragment pieced in, but must present the free expansion of the mind of the writer in the treatment of his subject. On the sense of this clause, compare John i. 14,—and 2 Tim. i. 10. This is put first in the rank, as being the preliminary to all the rest. It is followed by the next clause, because the assertion and assurance of Christ's perfect unsinning righteousness was the aim of his manifestation in our flesh all those thirty years which preceded His public ministry: see below), **was justified** (i. e. approved to be righteous,—according to the uniform Pauline usage: not as De W., al., ‘proved to be what he was.’ The Apostle is following the *historical order of events during the manifestation of our Lord on earth*. That this is so, is manifest by the final clause including the Ascension. I take these events then in their order, and refer this to our Lord's baptism and temptation, in which His righteousness was approved and proved) **in the Spirit** (He was dwelt on by the Spirit in His baptism—led up by the Spirit to His great trial, and *in the Spirit*, His Spirit, that of which he said “the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak,” He was proved to be righteous and spotless and separate from evil and its agent. See Rom. i. 3, 4, where another proof of this His spiritual perfection is given, viz. the great and crowning one of the Resurrection from the dead. Some have thought of that proof here also: others, of the continued course of His miracles, especially the Resurrection: some of the Resurrection and Ascension, by which He entered into His glory: others, in other ways. But I prefer keeping the historical order, though I would by no means limit the *justification* to that time only: *then it was chiefly and prominently manifested*), **was seen by angels** (viz. by means of His Incarnation, and specifically, when they came and ministered to Him after His temptation. This seems to be regarded as the first, or at all events is the first recorded occasion on which they ministered to Him. Theodoret says: “For even they saw not His invisible Godhead, but when He was incarnate, they beheld Him.” This, one of the particulars of the glory and manifestation of the incarnate Saviour, is, though not immediately

concerning the mystery of piety as upheld in the Church, cited as belonging to the *unfolding* of that mystery in Christ), **was preached among the nations** (that preaching commencing with the sending out of the Apostles, and though not then, in the strict technical sense, carried on *among the nations*, yet being the beginning of that which waxed onward till it embraced all nations. See and Compare Rom. xvi. 26 [Eph. iii. 8]. So that we are still proceeding with our Lord's ministry, taking *the nations* in that wider sense in which the Jews themselves are numbered among them, and the fact itself as the great commencement of the proclamation of Christ to men), **was believed on in the world** {including all that winning of faith first, from His disciples [John ii. 11], then from the Jews [ib. 28, viii. 30], and Samaritans [iv. 41, 42]: see also ib. x. 42. Our clause bears with it a reminiscence of His own great saying, John iii. 16 ff.), **was received up in glory** (at His Ascension. **in glory**: i.e. was taken up into, and reigns in, glory.—It is this distinct reference to the fact of our Lord's personal Ascension, which in my mind rules the whole sentence, and makes it, whatever further reference each clause may have, a chain of links of the divine manifestation of the Person of Christ, following in chronological order from His incarnation to His assumption into glory. The order and connexion of the clauses has been very variously understood, as may be seen in Wolf, and in De Wette. The triple antithesis, so characteristic of St. Paul, can hardly escape any reader: “*in the flesh, in the spirit,—angels, the nations,—in the world, in glory:*” but further it is hardly worth while to reproduce the distinctions which some have drawn, or motives for arrangement which they have supposed).

1 Timothy: Chapter 4

CH. IV. 1–16.] Of future false teachers (1–6); directions to Timothy in reference to them (7–11); general exhortations to him (12–16).

1.] Howbeit (contrast to the glorious mystery of godliness which has been just dwelt on) the Spirit (viz. the Holy Spirit of prophecy, speaking in the Apostle himself, or in others,—or, which is most probable, in both—in the general prophetic testimony which He bore throughout the church: compare “*this know,*” spoken from the same point of prophetic foresight, 2 Tim. iii. 1. Some have supposed the Apostle to refer to some prophetic passage of the Old Test., or to the general testimony of the Old Test. prophecies [Dan. vii. 25; viii. 23; xi. 30], or those of our Lord [Matt. xxiv. 4ff., 11], or of the Apostles [2 Thess. ii. 3 ff. 1 John ii. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 3. Jude 18], or all these combined. But in the two former cases, we should hardly have had **the Spirit saith**, but the *Scripture, or the Lord*, or the like; the words imply rather the present agency of the Spirit: and the latter is only a less clear way of putting the explanation given above: for why should writings be referred to, when the living men were yet testifying in the power of the Spirit among them? Besides, see the way in which such written prophecies are referred to, in Jude 17) **expressly** (‘plainly,’ ‘in so many words’) **saith, that in after times** (not as A.V. ‘*in the latter times,*’ which though not quite so strong as ‘*in the last times,*’ yet gives the idea of close connexion with them: whereas here the Apostle speaks only of times subsequent to those in which he was writing: see the difference in 2 Tim. iii. 1: and compare Acts xx. 29) **some** (not the false teachers: rather, those who will be the result of their false teaching) **shall depart** (or decline: not by formal apostasy, or the danger would not be that which it is here represented: but subjectively, declining in their own minds and lives from holding Christ in simplicity) **from the faith** (objective—the doctrine which faith embraces, as so often), **giving heed to** (the participle contains the reason and process of their declension: *because they give heed to*) **seducing spirits**

(**spirits** is in contrast with **the spirit**, ver. 1;—it is to be understood as in 1 John iv. 1 and 6, in which last verse we have the cognate expression, “*the spirit of error.*” The spirits are none other than the spirits of evil, tempting, energizing in, seducing, those who are described, just as *the Spirit* directs and dwells in those who abide in the faith), **and teachings of demons** (doctrines taught by, suggested by, evil spirits: compare James iii. 15. Two wrong interpretations have been given: (1) understanding the genitive as objective, ‘*teach-tings concerning daemons;*’ so Mede and Heydenreich, which latter calls the term ‘a characteristic designation of the EsseneGnostic false teachers, who had so much to say of the higher spirit-world, of the æons, &c.:’—but against the context, in which there is no vestige of allusion to idolatry [notwithstanding all that is alleged by Mede], but only to a false and hypocritical asceticism: (2) applying the agency to the false teachers, who would seduce the persons under description; but this is without example harsh and improbable); **in the** (following in the...., in giving the element, in which: see below) **hypocrisy of those who speak lies; of men branded** (with the foul marks of moral crime: a form of expression often found in secular writers. The verb used in the Greek is properly to burn in a mark with a branding-instrument of hot iron. The idea seems to be, as Ellicott explains it, that ‘they knew the brand they bore, and yet, with a show of outward sanctity, they strove to beguile and seduce others, and make them as bad as themselves’) on their **own conscience** (these false teachers are not only the organs of foul spirits, but are themselves hypocritical liars, with *their own* consciences seared by crime); **forbidding to marry** (this description has been thought by some to fit the Jewish sects of Essenes and Therapeutæ, who abstained from marriage. But the abstinence by and by mentioned seems too general to suit the idea that they were Jews [see below]: besides that the Epistle does not describe them as *present*—but as to *come* in after times), **(commanding)** (not expressed in the original. See a like ellipsis, in which a second but logically necessary verb is omitted, and must be supplied from the context,—in ch. ii. 12; 1 Cor. xiv. 34) **to abstain from meats** (compare Col. ii. 16. It does not appear here from what sort of food this abstinence would be enjoined: but probably the eating of flesh is alluded to. Eusebius quotes from Irenæus [i. 28] a description of men who called themselves Abstainers, or Temperance men, who preached celibacy and abstinence from eating flesh, These seem to be the persons here pointed at: and though the announcement of their success in after time is prophetic, we may fairly suppose that the seeds of their teaching were being sown as the Apostle wrote. The existence of gnosticism in its earlier form is certainly implied in ch. vi. 20: and in 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, we find that denial of the resurrection which characterized all the varieties of subsequent gnosticism. See the whole subject discussed in the Introd. ch. vi. §i. 12 ff.), **which God created unto participation with thanksgiving for those who believe and have received the (full) knowledge of the truth.** This last description of the worthy partakers of God’s bounties is Well explained by Calvin, saying that though pours forth His bounties on the just and unjust, it is only the faithful who are truly restored to that inheritance of the world which Adam had, but lost. On the words, **with thanksgiving**, see 1 Cor. x. 30: and below on ver. 4.

4, 5.] Reason for the above assertion. Because (**because** is more the objective,—**for**, which follows, the subjective causal particle: **because** introduces that which rests on a patent fact, as here on a Scripture quotation,—**for**, that which

is in the writer’s mind, and forms part of his own reasoning) **every thing which God has made is good** (in allusion to Gen. i. 31. See also Rom. xiv. 14, 20), **and nothing** (which God has made) **is to be rejected, if received with thanksgiving** (“properly, even without this condition, all things are pure: but he did not rise to this abstraction, because he was regarding meats not *per se*, but in *their use*, and this latter may become impure by an ungodly frame of mind.” De Wette): **for** (see on *because* and *for* above) it (this *subject* is gathered out of the preceding clause by implication, and means, ‘*every created thing* which is partaken of with *thanksgiving*’) **is sanctified** (more than ‘*declared pure*,’ or even than ‘*rendered pure*:’ the latter it does not want, the former falls far short of the work of the assigned agents. The emphasis is on this word, and a new particular is introduced by it—not purity merely, but *holiness*,—fitness for the godly usage of Christian men. To this, which is more than mere making or declaring pure, it is set apart by the *giving of thanks*; so that the lesser is proved by the greater. There is certainly a slight trace of reference to the higher consecration in the Lord’s Supper. The same word *thanks-giving* is common to both. Ordinary meals are set apart for ordinary Christian use by asking a blessing on them: *that meal*, for more than ordinary use, by asking on it its own peculiar blessing) **by means of the word of God and intercession** (*what word of God?* how to be understood? Treating the plainer word first, the *intercession* meant is evidently intercession [see on ch. fi. 1] *on behalf of the thing partaken of*—that it may be ‘sanctified to our use.’ This may serve to guide us to the meaning of the **word of God.** And first, negatively. It cannot mean any thing which does not form part of the *thanksgiving*: such as God’s word in the Scripture just cited, or in any other place: or, God’s word in the foundation truths of Christianity. Then, positively: it must mean in some sense the *thanksgiving*, or something in it. But not the ‘word addressed to God,’ or ‘prayer made to God,’ which would be an unprecedented meaning for the *word of God*: the only way open for us is, that the *thanksgiving* itself, or some part of it, is in some sense *the word of God.* This may be (1) by its consisting in whole or in part of Scripture words, or (2) by the effusion of a Christian man, speaking in the power of God’s Spirit, being known as *the word of God.* This latter is perhaps justified: but still it seems to me hardly probable, and I should prefer the former. It would generally be the case, that any form of Christian thanksgiving before meat would contain words of Scripture, or at all events thoughts in exact accordance with them: and such utterance of God’s revealed will, bringing as it would the assembled family and their meal into harmony with Him, might well be said to *sanctify the meats* on the table for their use. Many of the Commentators quote from the (apocryphal but very ancient) Apostolic Constitution, the following grace before meat, used. in the primitive times: “Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who nourishest me from my youth, who givest food to all flesh. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that always havingall competence, we may abound unto every good work in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom be

unto Thee honour and might for ever. Amen." Here almost every clause is taken from some expression of Scripture).

6–11.] *Recommendatory application to Timothy of what has been just said, as to form part of his teaching, to the avoidance by him of false and vain doctrine, and to the practice of godliness.*—**These things** (simply the matter treated since the beginning of the chapter,—the coming apostasy after these ascetic teachers, at the true grounds of avoiding it. This best suits the following context and the subsequent suggesting, which certainly would not be used of the *great mystery*) suggesting (so literally: or counselling, or setting forth) **to the brethren thou wilt be a good servant of Christ Jesus, training thyself in** (the idea of the word used is not '*to nourish oneself with*', but to grow up amongst, or to be trained in. The present tense denotes *continuance* in this training: see 2 Tim. iii. 14) **the words of the faith** (the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel), **and of the good instruction, the course of which thou hast followed** ('hast followed along, by tracing its course and accompanying it').

7.] But profane and anile fables (see notes on ch. i. 4 and 7, and Introd.) **decline** (literally, 'excuse thyself from'), **but rather exercise thyself for [unto] godliness, unto**, i.e., with a view to, as an athlete with a view to the games.

8.] For the exercise (gymnastic train-ing: see below) **of the body is to small extent** ('*for but a little*',—in reference only to a small department of a man's being) **profitable** (to what sort of exercise does he allude? Many take it as alluding to corporal austerities for religion's sake: so Calvin. But against this are two considerations: 1) that these are not now in question, but the immediate subject is the excellence of being trained and thoroughly exercised in piety: 2) that if they were, it would hardly be consistent with his previous severe characterization of these austerities, ver. 3, to introduce them thus with even so much creditable mention. It is therefore far better to understand the words with Chrysostom and many others, of mere gymnastic bodily exercise, of which the Apostle says, that it has indeed its uses, but these uses partial only): **but godliness** (the first member of the antithesis contained the *means, bodily exercise: this, the end, godliness;—that which is sought by exercise unto godliness*) **is profitable for all things** (not one portion only of a man's being, but every portion of it, bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal), **having** (seeing that it has) **promise of life, both that which is now, and that which is to come.**

9.] Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptation (see on ch. i. 15. The words refer to what follows, not to what went immediately before: see on for below. The connexion is with the mention of the *life to come*. Godliness has the promise of that life attached to it, according to the well-known Christian saying which follows. Otherwise verse 10 comes in disjointedly and unaccountably). **For** (for is introduced from a mixture of two constructions, rendering a reason for "*and that which is to come*," as if "*Faithful is the saying*" had not been inserted. We have the same construction in 2 Tim. ii. 11) **to this end** (viz. the salvation implied in that which follows) **we** (Christians in general) [both] toil (more than *labour*: it gives the idea of 'toil and moil') and suffer reproach (climax: we might toil and be had in honour, but as it is, we have both fatigue and shame to bear), **because we have set our hope** (the perfect refers to the time when the strong resolve and waiting began, and to its endurance since that time) **on the living** (inserted for emphasis and solemnity, to bring out the fact that the God in whom we trust is a

veritable personal agent, not a creature of the imagination) **God, who is the Saviour of all men** (compare ch. ii. 4; Tit. ii. 11: His will is that all men should be saved, and He has made full and sufficient provision for the salvation of all: so that, as far as salvation stands in Him, He is the Saviour of all men, And it is in virtue of this universality of salvation offered by God, that we have rested our hopes on Him and become *believers*), **especially them that believe** (in these alone does that universal salvation, which God has provided, become actual. He is the same *Saviour* towards and of all: but these alone appropriate His *salvation*).

11.] Command (see ch. i. 3) **these things** (viz. those insisted on since ver. 7) **and teach them.**

12–16.] *General exhortations to Timo-thy.* **Let no one despise thy youth** (as to the matter of the youth of Timothy, see Introd. ch. vi. §ii. 35, note; and remember, that his age, relative to that of the Apostle himself, whose place he was filling, rather than his absolute age, is evidently that which is here meant. By the words "*till I come*," we see that this comparison was before the Apostle's mind. The interpretation of Bengel, "So behave thyself, that no one may be able to despise thee as they would a youth," thus endeavouring to eliminate the *fact* of Timothy's youth, is forced, and inconsistent with the form of the sentence in the original. It is quite true [compare what follows] that the exhortation is to *him*, not to the Ephesian church: but it is grounded on the *fact of his youth*, in whatever light that fact is to be interpreted);—**but become** (by gaining their respect for the following acts and qualities) **a pattern of the believers,—in word** (the whole of thine utterances, in public and private: **in word** is elsewhere contrasted, as in Col. iii. 17, with *in deed*), **in behaviour** (the other outward sign of **the life within: in deed**, as in Col. iii. 17, but expressing more—'in thy daily habits.' These may testify, in cases where no actual deed is done), **in love, in faith** (the two great springs of Christian conduct, the one it is true set in motion by the other,—compare Gal. v. 6, "*faith working by love*,"—but both, leading principles of the whole man), **in purity** (probably, not chastity, in the more restricted sense, though in ch. v. 2 it certainly has this meaning from the context: but in the wider and higher meaning which the context here requires, all believers being in view, of general holiness and purity. Compare for this,—ch. v. 22: 2 Cor. vii. 11: James iii. 17; iv. 8: 1 Pet. i. 22. From these passages the quality would appear definable as *simplicity of holy motive*

followed out in consistency of holy action).

13.] Till I come (not as De Wette explains it, as long as thou in my absence president over the Ephesian church: for this supposes the Apostle to be the normal president of that Church, and Timothy his locum-tenens, which was not the case. Timothy was put there with a special commission from the Apostle: that commission would cease at the Apostle's coming, not because he would resume residence and presidency, but because he would enforce and complete the work of Timothy, and thus, the necessity for special interference being at an end, the church would revert to the normal rule of its own presbytery), **attend to the (public) reading** (of the Scripture in the church. Whether the Old Test. Scriptures alone, or in addition to them the earlier gospels were at this time included in this public reading, cannot be determined with any certainty. Justin Martyr seems to say that the “memoirs of the Apostles were read, as well as the books of the prophets”), **to the (also public) exhortation, to the (also public) teaching** (these two follow upon the reading: the one hortatory, the other explanatory: the one regards practice, the other knowledge).

14.] Do not neglect (see 2 Tim. i. 6,—do not suffer to decay and smoulder by carelessness. “They neglect gifts,” says Bengel, “who do not exercise them, and fancy that they shall not lose them”) **the spiritual gift which is in thee** (see more at length on 2 Tim. i. 6. The spiritual gift was that of teaching and ruling the church: it was not teaching only, but the whole grace of God given him for the office to which he was set apart by special ordination), **which was given thee** (by God, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 6) **by means of prophecy** (ch. i. 18 refers to the same fact as this—viz. that, either at the first conversion of Timothy, or at his ordination to the ministry [and certainly the latter seems here to be pointed at], the Holy Spirit spoke, by means of a prophet or prophets, His will to invest him with *gifts* for the work, and thus the gift was said to be conferred, as to its certainty in the divine counsels, by such prophecy, the Holy Spirit commanding it by the mouth of the prophets), **with laying on of the hands** (see on Acts vi. 6. There is no real difference between this and 2 Tim. i. 6. There was a special reason there for putting Timothy in mind of the fact that the Apostle’s own hands *were* laid on him: but that fact does not exclude this) of the **presbytery** (the body of elders who belonged to the congregation in which he was ordained. Where this was, we know not: hardly in Lystra, where he was first converted: might it not be in Ephesus itself, for this particular office?).

15.] These things (viz. the things enjoined vv. 12–14) **do thou care for; in these things be [employed]; that thy progress** (towards perfection; certainly in the Christian life: this is *implied*; but the more direct meaning is, ‘with reference to the duties of thine office:’ and especially as respects the caution given ver. 12, that no man despise thy youth) **may be manifest to all.**

16.] Give heed to thyself (summary of ver. 12), **and to thy teaching** (summary of ver. 13. “A good pastor ought to have two cares—to be earnest, in teaching, and to keep himself pure. And it is not enough if he fashion his life in all honesty, and with every care to set no bad example, unless he also join to his holy life zeal in teaching: nor will his doctrine avail much unless his honesty and sanctity of life be correspondent thereto.” Calvin); **continue in them** (most naturally, “*these things*,” of ver. 15: but the words are ambiguous and puzzling. I have punctuated so as to connect this clause with what follows, and thus to render it not quite so harsh, seeing that it then will assume the form of a recapitulatory conclusion), **for doing this** (so literally: ‘*in* doing this,’ as A.V., is better than ‘*by* doing this,’ which asserts too much) **thou shalt save** (in the day of the Lord: the highest meaning, and no other, is to be thought of in both cases) **both thy-self, and those that hear thee** (thyself, in the faithful discharge of the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord: thy hearers, in the power of thine influence over them, by God’s word and ordinances).

1 Timothy: Chapter 5

CH. V. 1–25.] GENERAL DIRECTIONS TO HIM FOR GOVERNING THE CHURCH. 1, 2.] Injunctions respecting his behaviour to the elder and younger of

either sex.

an elder] or it may be, a presbyter, as we are sometimes obliged to render the word. The reference to an office was called in question as early as Chrysostom: “Does he mean the office? I think not, but he is speaking of every oldman.” This indeed is evident from the quadruple specification in these verses: older men—elder women: younger men—younger women.

the younger men] Understand, *exhort*. Thus the prohibition, **rebuke not sharply**, applies to all, all being included in the command, *to exhort*, which is the other and adopted alternative. **as brethren]** as on an equality with them, not lording it over them.

as sisters] i.e. in all chastity. The rule of Jerome is simple: “All the young women and virgins of Christ do thou either equally avoid, or equally love.”

3–16.] Directions concerning widows. This whole passage is somewhat difficult, and has been very variously understood. The

differences will be seen below.

3. take into consideration] literally, **honour**: but how? Is “*honour*” to be interpreted generally, ‘*honour*’ merely, or with reference to the context? The best guide to an answer will be what follows. If the command be merely to hold them in honour, why should the destitute be held in more honour than those who had families? The command to *honour widows* would surely apply to all alike. But seeing that it *does not* apply to all alike, we must necessarily limit its general meaning to that particular in which the one would be honoured, and the other not. Thus without giving or seeking for an unusual meaning to the word, we may fairly interpret it of this particular kind of honour, viz. being inscribed on the Church’s *list* or *roll* (ver. 9), as a-fit object of charitable sustenance. That such a roll existed in the very earliest days of the church, we know from Acts vi. 1: from Ignatius,

Justin Martyr, and Eusebius.

that are widows indeed] Compare ver. 16 below,—**those who are really in a widowed (destitute) state**, as contrasted with those described ver. 4. But then the enquiry has been made, Is this *being a widow indeed* to be defined by mere external circumstances, or not rather by the religious character, described below, ver. 5? Or are we to bind (as Chrysostom and others do) the two together? In a certain sense I believe we must thus unite them. The Apostle commands, ‘Honour (by placing on the list) those who are widows indeed;’ for it is these especially, they who are destitute of earthly friends, who are most likely to carry out the true religious duties of a widow. Thus, without the two qualifications being actually united, the former is insisted on as ordinarily ensuring the latter.

4.] The case of the *widow* who is not a *widow indeed*, having earthly relations answerable for her support.

grandchildren] not as A.V., ‘*nephews*;?’ at least, not in its present sense: at the time when our version was made, the word seems to have borne the meaning of *grandchildren*.

let these learn] What is *the subject*? Who are to learn? (1) The ancient Commentators mostly understand the *widows*, implied in the words “*if any widow*” above. (2) But some of the ancients took the *children* or *grandchildren* as the subject.

first] Either, ‘*first of all duties*,’ which seems supported by ver. 8 below; or *first*, before applying to the church for sustenance. These meanings will apply to both the above alternatives: whether we understand the subject to be the *Widows*, or the *children and grandchildren*.

to shew piety to their own family] On hypothesis (1),—*to behave piously towards*, i.e. *to rule religiously* their own household. This seems somewhat to force the meaning of the verb, see below; while the sense of

“*their own household*” is thus the simple and usual one, as the widow in question would be the head of the household: On hypothesis (2), *to behave piously towards*, i.e. *to honour with the honour which God commands*, their own family, i.e. the widowed mother or grandmother who is one of their own family. This sense of the verb is common enough: the reference being generally (not always, it is true) to superiors,—those who demand *reverence*,—those who stand in the place of God. This sense of *their own family or household* is not so usual, but not therefore to be rejected. To dishonour their widowed mother or grandmother, would be to dishonour their own family, in that one of its members who most required respect.

and to requite their parents] On hypothesis (1), as Chrysostom, “They (their parents) are dead and gone—thou canst not requite them: thou didst not beget them, nor yet bring them up. Requite it to them in their grandchildren: pay your debt through their posterity.” But surely it is a very strange way of requiring our progenitors for their care of us, to be kind towards our own children: and besides, what would this have to do with the question, whether or not the widow was to be put on the charity roll of the church? But on hypothesis (2) this sentence certainly becomes more clear and natural. Let them, the children or grandchildren, learn first to be piously grateful to (these members of) their own families, and to give back returns (a return in each case) to their progenitors (so called, although living, because, the *mother and grandmother* having been both mentioned, parents was the only word which would include them in one category).

for this, &c.] See ch. ii. 3.

5.] See above on ver. 3.

she that is a widow indeed, as opposed to the widow just described; **and desolate**, as contrasting her condition with that of her who has children or grandchildren. Thus what follows is said more for moral eulogy of such a widow, than as commanding her to the charity of the Church: but at the same time, as pointing out that one who thus places her hopes and spends her time, is best deserving of the Church’s help.

hath set] The word implies, ‘and continues to set,’ **her hope**.

toward God, as its portion and ultimate aim,—as distinguished from “*on God*,” ch. iv. 10, on God as its present stay.

her (or, the) supplications and her (or, the) prayers (i. e. either her own, private, or the public prayers of the Church).

night and day] So St. Luke of Anna the prophetess, ii. 37.

6.] Contrast to the character just described: and that certainly with a view to point out that this kind of widow is no object for the charity of the Church, as not being at all a partaker of the life unto God.

is given to dissipation] The Greek word which I have thus rendered signifies to live riotously or retchlessly.

is dead while she liveth] while alive in the flesh, has no real life in the Spirit: see ref.—and Matt. viii. 22: Eph. v. 14, I cannot help regarding the idea as in the background,—‘and, if devoid of spiritual life, then not to be taken into account by the Church.’

7.] these things most naturally applies to the characters just given of widows, not more generally: and in that case the words “*that they may be irreproachable*” must refer to the widows also, not to the *children* and *grandchildren*, or to these and the widows together, or more widely still. This narrower reference is confirmed by the next verse, which takes up the duty of the relations, being connected not by “*for*,” but by “*but*.”

8.] any, not only of the *children* or *grandchildren* above, or any persons connected with widows,—**but**

the saying is perfectly general, grounding their duties on an axiomatic truth.

provide not for, viz. in the way noted above,—of support and sustenance.

his own seem to be, generally any connexions,—**those of his own house**, those more immediately included in one’s own family as dwelling in the same *house*.

he hath denied the faith] “For,” says Bengel, “the faith does not abolish natural duties, but perfects and confirms them.”—The Roman-Catholic commentator Mack has some good remarks here, on the faith of which the Apostle speaks: “Faith, in the sense of the Apostle, cannot exist, without, including love: for the subject-matter of faith is not mere opinion, but the grace and truth of God, to which he that believes gives up his spirit, as he that loves gives up his heart: the subject-matter of faith is also the object of love. Where therefore love is not nor works, there is not, nor works, faith either: so that he who fulfils not the offices of love towards his relatives, is virtually an unbeliever.”

worse than an unbeliever] For even among heathens the common duties of family piety are recognized: if therefore a Christian repudiates them, he lowers himself beneath the heathen. Compare Matt. v. 46, 47. Also, as Calvin suggests in addition, the Christian who lives in the light of the Gospel, has less excuse for breaking those laws of nature which even without the Gospel are recognized by men.—According to hypothesis (1) or (2) above, this general statement applies to the widows or to their children and grandchildren. But surely it would be very harsh to understand it of the widows: and this forms an additional argument for hypothesis (2).

9–16.] Further regulations respecting widows.

9.] Let a woman be inserted in the catalogue as a widow. But now, for what purpose? What *catalogue* are we to understand? Hardly, (1) that of those who are to receive relief from the Church (so Chrysostom and many others): for thus the rule, that she is to be *sixty years of age*, would seem a harsh one, as many widows might be destitute at a far earlier age: as also the rule that she must not have been *twice married*, especially as the Apostle himself below commands second marriage for the younger widows. Again, the duties enjoined in ver. 10 presuppose some degree of competence, and thus, on this hypothesis, the widows of the poorer classes would be excluded from sustenance by charity,—who most of all others would require it. Also, for the reason alleged in ver. 11, *sustenance* can hardly be in question—for then the re-marriage would simply take them off the roll, and thus be rather a benefit, than a detriment to the Church. Nor again (2) can we understand the roll to be that of the *deaconesses*, as some do: although the Theodosian code, founded on this interpretation, ordained “that none should be taken into the number of the deaconesses under sixty years old, according to the precept of the Apostle.” For, a) the age mentioned is unfit for the work of the deaconesses’ office, and in the council of Chalcedon the age of the deaconesses was fixed at forty: b) not only widows but virgins were elected deaconesses: (3) it is implied in ver. 12, that these widows were bound not to marry again, which was not the ease with the deaconesses. It seems therefore better to understand here *some especial band of widows*, sustained perhaps at the expense of the church, but not the only ones who were thus

supported:—set apart for ecclesiastical duties, and bound to the service of God. Such are understood here by Chrysostom himself in his homily on the passage. They are also mentioned as *the band of widows, as presbytresses, as having precedence of rank*: i.e. such widows as corresponded in office for their own sex in some measure to the presbyters,—sat unveiled in the assemblies in a separate place, by the presbyters, and had a kind of supervision over their own sex, especially over the widows and orphans: were vowed to perpetual widowhood, clad with “widow’s vestments,” and ordained by laying on of hands. This institution of the early church, which was abolished by the eleventh canon of the council of Laodicea, is sufficiently affirmed by many of the Fathers. De Wette makes the allusion to this ‘institute of widows’ one proof of the post-apostolic date of the Epistle: but on this see Introd. ch. vi. §i. 27. **Let a woman be enrolled a widow, who is not less than sixty years old, the wife of one husband** (compare ch. iii. 2. Here, as contemporaneous polygamy is out of the question, and thus one element of difficulty in the other case is eliminated, we can hardly understand any thing other than that the *aged widow* spoken of should *have been* the wife of only one husband: i.e., not married a second time. So that the parallel expressions here and in ch. iii. 2 will be consistently interpreted), **having a good character** (testimony from without, compare ch. iii. 7) **in** (the element or region in which that *testimony* is versed) **good works; if** (the conditions have as yet been expressed by participles in agreement with the noun: the construction is now changed for the hypothetical) **she at any time brought up children** (her own? or those of others? If [1], the *barren* might seem hardly dealt with: if [2], the word must be somewhat forced aside from its ordinary meaning. Still this latter, considering that *entertaining strangers* is the next good work specified, seems most probable), **if she** (at any time) **entertained strangers** (practised hospitality. This clearly points out a person above the rank of the poor and indigent: though Chrysostom pithily replies, “Even if she be poor, she has a house. For I don’t suppose she dwells in the open air.” One is glad to hear that all the Christian widows at Constantinople were so well off. But it can hardly have been so in the apostolic age. Compare, on the subject of hospitality, ch. iii. 2: Tit. i. 8: Rom. xii. 18: Heb. xiii. 2), **if she** (at any time) **washed the feet of the saints** (this may be an expression intended to signify performing the humblest offices. **Still, we must not dismiss from our consideration the**

external act itself: as Theodoret reminds us, it was an ancient practice among Christians: see John xiii. 14, and note, in which, though a formal ceremony in obedience to our Saviour’s words is repudiated, the principle of humbly serving one another, which would lead to such an act on occasion presented, is maintained), **if she** (at any time) **relieved the distressed** (not merely the *poor*, but those afflicted in any way), **if she followed every good work** (Chrysostom, in his fine homily on this passage, cited above, says: “What is the following every good work? It is, for example, the going into a prison and visiting the prisoners, the visiting the sick, the comforting the distressed, the soothing those who are in pain, the contributing in every way all that is possible, and declining nothing that may tend to the well-being and refreshment of them that are our brethren.” Bengel’s idea, “that it is the part of those in high station, and of *men*, to *set the example* of good works, and of women, to follow, in helping on as much as they can,” is ingenious but wrong. For the expression, “*to follow good works*,” is used in Greek of those who do them as a pursuit of life, without reference to any relative priority).

11.] **But younger widows decline** (to place on the *roll*, see above on ver. 9: not ‘avoid,’ *for fear of scandal*, as Chrysostom in the homily above cited: nor both of these combined, as Huther: nor ‘decline as objects for the alms of the church,’ as some above): **for when they shall wax wanton against Christ** (their proper bride-groom), **they desire to** (the A.V. has utterly confused the sense by rendering “they will marry,” as if it were a simple future) **marry** (again); **bearing** (on themselves, as a burden: see Gal. v. 10) **a judgment** (from God: and as the context necessarily implies, *condemnation*: but we must not so express it in a version: that which is left to be fixed by the context in the original, should be also left in a translation), **because they set at nought their first faith** (i. e. broke, made void, their former promise. Having devoted themselves to widowhood as their state of life, and to the duties of the order of *presbytresses* as their occupation, they will thus be guilty of a dereliction of their deliberate promise. Of the later vows of celibacy, and ascetic views with regard to second marriages, there is no trace).

13.] **Moreover they also learn to be idle** (it might be objected, that idleness is the cause, not the effect, of going about, &c.: but it may well be answered, that not only does a spirit of idleness give rise to such going about, but such going about confirms the habit of idleness), **going about from house to house** (literally, “the houses,” viz. of the faithful); **but** (so literally) **not only (to be) idle, but also gossips and busybodies, speaking things which are not fitting** (his fear is, that these younger widows will not only do the Church’s work idly, but make mischief by bearing about tales and scandal), **I will therefore** (‘in consequence of these things being so, I desire’) **that younger widows** (the word “*widows*” is not in the original: but such, and not the younger *women*, is evidently the Apostle’s meaning. The whole passage has concerned *widows*—and to them he returns again, ver. 16) **marry** (not as Chrysostom, “Seeing that they wish it, I wish it too. They should indeed have cared for the things of God,—they should have kept their faith: but since this may not be so, it is better that the other should take place” [so also, characteristically, the Roman-Catholic Mack]: for it is not younger widows *who have been taken into the catalogue*, of whom he is speaking, but *younger widows in general*: Chrysostom’s interpretation would make the Apostle contradict himself. The “*therefore*,” on which Mack lays stress as favouring this meaning, simply infers from the temptations of young widows just described. There is no inconsistency here with the view expressed in 1 Cor. vii. 39, 40: the time and circumstances were different), **bear children, govern households** (i. e. in their place, and with their share of the duties), **give no occasion** (starting-point, in their behaviour or language) **to the adversary** (who is meant? Chrysostom and the ancients for the most part understand, *the devil*: see 1 Cor. xvi. 9; Phil. i. 28: and so, lately, Huther. But St. Paul’s own usage of the word [also Tit. ii. 8] is our best guide. Ordinarily using it of human adversaries, he surely would here have

mentioned. *the devil* had he intended him. And the understanding him to be here meant brings in the next verse very awkwardly, as he there has an entirely new part assigned him. Understand, therefore, any adversary, Jew or Gentile, who may be on the watch to get occasion, by the lax conduct of the believers, to slander the Church) **for [the sake of] reproach** (to be joined with the word “*occasion:*” *the occasion*, when taken advantage of by the adversary, would be used *for the sake of reproach*, for the sake and purpose of reproaching the people of God). **For already** (he appeals to their experience) **some** (widows) **have turned away** (out of the

right path) **after** (so as to follow) **Satan** (De Wette doubts whether St. Paul’s experience could have been long enough to bear out such an assertion,—and thus impugns the genuineness of the Epistle. But this is very much a matter of dates: and even taking the earliest commonly assigned, the assertion might be strictly true, applying as it does not only to Ephesus, but to the far wider range of his apostolic ministry).

16.] Not a repetition of vv. 4, 8, but an extension of the same duty to more distant relatives than those there spoken of. **If any believing [man or] woman has widows** (in [his or] her family—dependent in any degree, however distant—e. g. as sister, or sister-in-law, aunt, niece, cousin, &c.), **let such person relieve them** (see above, ver. 10), **and let the church not be burdened** (with their support); **that it may relieve those who are widows in reality** (really *widowed*—destitute of help).

17–25.] *Directions respecting (17–19) presbyters; (20–25) church discipline: and certain matters regarding his own official and personal life.*

17.] Let the presbyters who well preside (viz. over their portion of the Church’s work: in earnestness and self-sacrifice, also with wisdom and ability) **be held worthy of double** (not, as compared with the *widows*, or the *deacons*, or the *poor*,—but as compared with those who have not distinguished themselves by *presiding well*; and evidently it is not to be taken in the mere literal sense of *double*, but implies increase generally—see below) honour (from other considerations, as well as from the context here, it is evident that not merely honour, but *recompense* is here in question: but the word need not be *confined* to that meaning: honour, and honour’s fruit, may be both included in it. Grotius conceives an allusion to the double portion of the firstborn [Deut. xxi. 17]; Elsner, to the double share of provision which used to be set before the presbyters in the Agapæ. But as De Wette remarks, that practice was much more probably owing to a misunder-standing of this passage), **especially those that labour in (the) word and teaching** (therefore the preaching of the word, and teaching, was *not the office of all the presbyters*. Conybeare rightly remarks, that this is a proof of the early date of the Epistle. Of these two expressions the word would more properly express preaching; the **doctrine**, the work of *instruction*, by catechetical or other means).

18.] Ground for the above injunction.—See the first citation (**an ox while treading**, &c., not, ‘*the ox that treadeth*,’ &c., as A.V.) treated by the Apostle at more length, 1 Cor. ix. 9. It is doubted whether the words “*the labourer is worthy of his hire,*” are a citation at all. Some have referred them to Lev. xix. 13: Deut. xxiv. 14, which passages however say nothing of the kind, being special directions about paying a labourer’s wages before night. Theodoret and Theophylact suppose it to be quoted from the New Testament; i.e. from our Lord’s saying, Matt. x. 10: Luke x. 7. But it is very unlikely that the Apostle should cite these under the title of the *Scripture*: and Calvin’s view seems most probable, that “*the Scripture saith*” refers only to the former citation, and that he adduces this sentiment, as our Lord Himself does, as a popular and well-known saying.—This verse it is, which makes it extremely probable, that

honour” above refers to the honorarium of pecuniary recompense.

19.] See the summary above. **Against a presbyter** (those are certainly wrong who suppose that age, not office is again here indicated: the whole passage is of presbyters by office—compare ver. 22 below) **entertain not an accusation, except on the word of** (in the construction of the original, the accusation is represented as resting upon the testimony of these witnesses) **two or three witnesses** (De Wette asks,—but were not these required in every case, not only in that of a presbyter? Three answers are given: one, that accuracy in the number of the witnesses was to be strictly insisted on because false informations were prevalent: another, and so Calvin more at length: that Timothy was not constituted judge in private men’s matters, only over the officers of the church in faults with which they might be charged as regarded the execution of their duty: a third, that a private man might by the law of Moses be cited with one witness only, not condemned; but that St. Paul prohibits the *citing* even of a presbyter without two or three. But this is manifestly a distinction without point—the *receiving an accusation* being used not of mere citation, but of entertaining the charge as a valid one: in other words, as including citation and conviction as well. The first reason seems the more probable: that he is only recalling the attention of Timothy to a known and prescribed precaution, which was in this case especially to be always observed).

20.] [But] those who are doing wrong (if “*but*” is read, these are the sinning presbyters, and cannot well be any others. Without the “*but*,” the application may be doubted) **reprove in the presence of all** (not all *the presbyters*, the “council of presbyters” see on what follows; but the whole congregation. Had it not been for ecclesiastical considerations, we should never have heard of such a limited meaning for the words **before all**), **that the rest also** (not, the other presbyters, which would have certainly been pointed out if intended,—but in its usual sense of ‘the rest,’ generally: the **also** seems to make this

even plainer: that the warning may not be confined to a few, but may also spread over the whole church) **may have fear** (see Deut. xiii, 11: fear, on seeing the public disgrace consequent on sin).

21.] I adjure thee in the presence of God, and of Christ Jesus (it has been supposed that, in the mention of “*God and Christ Jesus*,” the Apostle refers to one Person only. But the whole construction, and the practice of St. Paul, is against the idea), **and of the elect angels** (the holy angels, who are the chosen attendants and ministers of God. Thus the word **elect** is an epithet distributed over the whole extent of *the angels*, not one designating any one class of angels above the rest. The designation is given in order to excite reverence on the part of Timothy:—“the angels, God’s chosen ministers”), **that thou keep these things** (viz. the injunctions, vv. 19, 20) **without prejudice** (*pre-judgment*, previous condemnation before hearing a man’s case), **doing nothing according to partiality** (bias towards, as the other was bias against, an accused presbyter. Theodoret says well: “He forbids two things: the condemning through trusting to the mere credit of accusers, or doing this same through malice, without accurate enquiry: and, when the proofs are open and plain, deferring the condemnation, perverting justice through favour to the accused”).

22 f.] The same subject is continued, and direction given whereby the

scandal just dealt with may be prevented: viz., by *caution in ordaining* at first. The reference is primarily to presbyters: of course extending also in its spirit to all other church offices. This reference, which is maintained by most Commentators, is denied by some others, who understand the command to refer to receiving back into the church excommunicated persons, or heretics, which from later testimonies they shew to have been the practice: Huther, rightly rejecting this idea, yet interprets it of laying on of hands as merely conveying ecclesiastical blessing on many various occasions. But surely this is too vague and unimportant for the solemn language here used. Regarding the whole, to ver. 25, as connected, and belonging to one subject, I cannot accept any interpretation but the obvious and ordinary one: see especially ch. iv. 14: 2 Tim. i. 6.—**Lay hands hastily on no one, nor be par-taker in other men’s sins** (as he would do by being the means of negligently admitting into the ministry unfit and ungodly persons, being properly held responsible for the consequence of those bad habits of theirs which more care might have ascertained. The word *sin* points to the former expression, “*them that sin*”):—**Keep THYSELF** (highly emphatic: not merely others over whom thou art called to preside and pronounce judgment in admitting them to the ministry. And the emphasis is peculiarly in place here, as applying to that which has just preceded. If he were to admit improper candidates to the ministry from bias or from negligence, his own character, by his becoming a partaker in their sins, would suffer: whatever thou doest therefore, be sure to maintain, by watchful care and caution, *thyself* above all stain of blame) pure (not here to be referred to personal purity and chastity, though that of course would be the most important of all elements in carrying out the precept: but as above).—**No longer** (habitually) drink water, but use a little wine, on account of thy stomach, and thy frequent illnesses (the question, why this injunction is here inserted, has never been satisfactorily answered. Many take it as a modification of “*keep thyself pure*,” so as to prevent it from being misunderstood as enjoining asceticism. But on our explanation of the words, and I may add on any worthy view of the context, such a connexion will at once be repudiated. Chrysostom has caught the right clue, when he says, “Timothy seems to me to have been generally an invalid: and this the Apostle shews when he says, &c. as here:” but he has not followed it up. Timothy was certainly of a feeble bodily frame, and this feebleness appears, from other hints which we have respecting him, to have affected his character. See especially 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11, and note there. Is it not very possible, that such feebleness, and perhaps timidity, may have influenced him as an overseer of the church, and prevented that keen-sighted judgment and vigorous action which a bishop should ever shew in estimating the characters of those who are candidates for the ministry? If this was so, then it is quite natural that in advising him on this point, St. Paul should throw in a hint, in fatherly kindness, that he must not allow these maladies to interfere with the efficient discharge of his high office, but take all reasonable means of raising his bodily condition above them. I feel compelled to adopt this view, from the close connexion of the next verse with the whole preceding passage, and the exceedingly unnatural isolation of this, unless it bears such a reference).

24.] The same subject continued. If my view of the last verse is correct, the connexion will be found in the fact, that the conservation of himself in health and vigour would ensure his being able to deal ably and firmly with the cases which should come before him for decision. To guide him still further in this, the Apostle subjoins this remark, indicating two classes of characters with which he would have to deal in judging, whether favourably or unfavourably.—Of some men the sins (this

connects with “*the sins of others*,” ver. 22) **are evident** (openly manifest,—notorious by common report), **going before them** (so that the man’s bad report comes to the person appointed to judge, *before the man himself*) **to judgment** (i. e. so that when they come before thee to be judged of as candidates, their sins have arrived before them): **but some men again they** (their sins) **follow** (i. e. after-proof brings out the correctness or otherwise of the judgment. Their characters come before thee unanticipated by adverse rumour: but thou mayest by examination discover those flaws in their conduct which had been skilfully concealed—the sins which, so to speak, follow at their heels. Therefore be watchful, and do not let the mere non-existence of previous adverse rumour lead thee always to presume fitness for the sacred office).

25.] So also (in like manner on the other side of men’s conduct) **the good works (of some) are openly manifest; and those [works] which are otherwise situated** (which are not *openly manifest*) **cannot be hidden** (will come out, just as the sins in

ver. 24, on examination. The tendency of this verse is to warn him against hasty condemnation, as the former had done against hasty approval. Sometimes thou wilt find a man's good character go before him, and at once approve him to thee: but where this is not so, do not therefore be rash to condemn—thou mayest on examination soon discover, if there really be any good deeds accompanying him: for they are things which cannot be hidden—the good tree, like the bad, will be known by his fruits, and that speedily, on enquiry).

1 Timothy: Chapter 6

CH. VI.] *The Apostle's exhortations are continued, and pass from ecclesiastical to civil relations:* and first to the duties of Christian slaves. This chapter has been charged with want of coherence. But to a careful observer the thread of connexion is very plain. I have endeavoured to indicate it as we pass on.

1.] **Let as many as are bondmen under the yoke** (I have adopted the rendering of De Wette and Huther, attaching "bondmen" to the predicate, as the simpler construction. The other arrangement, which is that of A.V., 'as many bondmen as are under the yoke,' making under the yoke emphatic as distinguishing either 1) those *treated hardly*, or 2) those who were *under unbelieving masters*, has undoubtedly something to be said for it, but does not seem to me so likely, from the arrangement of the words. I take then "bondmen under the yoke" as the predicate) **hold their own** ("their own," as in Eph. v. 22, and many other places, to bring out and emphasize the relation; see note there) **masters worthy of all** (fitting) **honour, that the name of God and his doctrine** (compare Tit. ii. 10, where, writing on the same subject, he admonishes slaves, "that they adorn the doctrine of our Saviour, even God, in all things") **be not spoken evil of** (Chrysostom gives the sense well: "The unbeliever, if he see his slaves conducting themselves insolently because they are Christians, will generally revile the doctrine of Christ as causing insubordination: but when he sees them subordinate, he will be more likely to be persuaded, and will give more attention to what is said" [by those who preach Christ]. This verse obviously applies only to those slaves who had unbelieving masters. This is brought out by the reason given, and by the contrast in the next verse, not by any formal opposition in terms. The account to be given of the absence of such opposition is, that this verse contains the general exhortation, the ease of Christian slaves under *unbelieving masters* being by far the more common. The *exception* is treated in the next verse). 2.] **But** (see above) **let those who have believing masters not despise them, because** (this "because" belongs to the word "despise" only, containing the ground of their contempt,—not to the exhortation "*let them not despise them*," containing the reason why they are *not to be despised*) **they** (the masters, not the slaves) **are brethren; but all the more serve them** ("the slaves who were under heathen masters were *positively* to regard their masters as deserving of honour;—the slaves under Christian masters were, *negatively*, not to evince any want of respect. The former were not to regard their masters as their inferiors, and to be insubordinate; the latter were not to think them their equals, and to be disrespectful." Ellicott), **because those who receive** (mutually receive: the interchange of service between them in the Christian life being taken for granted, and this word purposely used to express it) **the benefit** (of their *more diligent service*) **a re faithful and beloved.**—Very various meanings and references have been assigned to these last words: see them discussed in my Greek Testament. The A.V., "because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit," is an impossible rendering of the original, as it violates the simplest rules of grammar. **These things** (viz. those immediately preceding, relating to slaves) **teach and exhort.**

8-5.] *Designation of those who oppose such wholesome teaching*—fervid indeed, and going further (see Introduction) than strict adherence to the limits of the context would require, but still suggested by, and returning to the context: compare ver. 5 end and note. **If any man is a teacher of other ways** (see on ch. i. 3: sets up as an adviser of different conduct from that which I have above recommended), **and does not accede to whole-some words** (refr.), (**namely**) **those of our Lord Jesus Christ** (either, precepts given by Him respecting this duty of subjection, such as that Matt. xxii, 21,—which however seems rather far-fetched: or words agreeing with His teaching and expressing His will, which is more probable), **and to the doctrine which is according to** (after the rules of) **godliness,—he is besotted with pride** (sec ch. iii. 6, note), **knowing** (being one who knows: not '*although he knows*') **nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes about words, from which cometh envy, strife, evil speakings** (the word in the original is "*blasphemia*." But the context of such passages as Col. iii. 8, shews that it is not *blasphemy*, properly so called, but mutual slander and reproach which is here meant), **wicked suspicions** (*not concerning God*, but of one another), **incessant quarrels of men depraved in mind, and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is gain** (literally, 'a gainful trade,' as Conybeare:—and therefore do not teach contentment and acquiescence in God's providence, as in ver. 6: but strive to make men discontented, and persuade them to use religion as a means of worldly bettering themselves).

6.] He then goes off, on the mention of this erroneous view, to shew how it really stands with the Christian as to the desire of riches: its danger, and the mischief it has occasioned. **But** (although they are in error in thus thinking, there *is* a sense in which such an idea is true, for) **godliness accompanied with contentment** (see above, and Phil. iv. 11) **is great** (means of) **gain** (alluding, not to the Christian's reward in the next world,—but the [means of] gain is in the very fact of possessing piety joined with contentment, and thus being able to dispense with those things which we cannot carry away with us).

7.] Reason-why this is so.—**For we brought nothing into the world, because neither can we carry anything out** (the meaning appears to be,—we were appointed by God to come naked into the world, to teach us to remember that we must go naked out of it).

8.] **But** (contrast to the avaricious, who forget this, or knowing it do not act on it) **having** (if we have) **food** (sufficient for our continually recurring wants,—the needful supply of nourishment) **and covering** (some take it of both clothing and dwelling: perhaps rightly), **with these we shall be sufficiently provided.**

9.] **But** (contrast to the last verse) **they who wish to be rich** (not simply ‘*they who are rich*’ compare Chrysostom: “He saith not merely ‘*they that are rich*,’ but ‘*they who wish it*:’ for a man may have wealth and may administer it rightly, and rise far above it”), **fall into temptation** (not merely ‘*are tempted*,’ but are involved in, cast into and. among temptations; in the term *fall into* is implied the power which the *temptation* exercises over them) **and a snare** (being entangled by the temptation of getting rich as by a net), **and many foolish and hurtful lusts** (foolish, because no reasonable account can be given of them: hurtful, as inflicting injury on all a man’s best interests), **such as sink men** (mankind) **into destruction and perdition** (temporal and eternal, but especially the latter).

10.] **For the root of all evils is the love of money** (not, is the only root whence all evils spring: but is the root whence all [manner of] evils may and as matter of fact do arise. So that the objections to the sentiment have no force: for neither does it follow [1] that the covetous man cannot possibly retain any virtuous disposition,—nor [2] that there may not be other roots of evil besides covetousness: neither of these matters being in the Apostle’s view), **after which** (*love of money*, see below) **some lusting** (the method of expression, if strictly judged, is somewhat. incorrect: for *love of money* is of itself a desire or *lust*, and men cannot be properly said to *lust* after it, but after its object, money. Such inaccuracies are, however, often found in language, and we have examples of them in St. Paul elsewhere: e.g. “*hope that is seen*,” Rom. viii. 24; see also Acts xxiv. 15), **wandered away from the faith** (ch. i. 19; iv. 1), **and pierced themselves through with many pains** (the pains being regarded as the weapons. “Lusts are thorns: and as among thorns, whenever one touches them, one’s hands are bloodied and wounds made; so he who falls among lusts shall suffer the same, and shall surround his soul with griefs.” Chrysostom).

11–16.] *Exhortation and conjuration to Timothy, arising out of these considerations.*

11.] **But** (contrast to “*some*” above) **thou** (emphatic), **O man of God** (the designation of prophets in the Old Test. Compare 1 Sam. ix. 6, 7, 8, 10, and hence perhaps used of ‘Timothy as dedicated to God’s service in the ministry: but also not without a solemn reference to that which it expresses, that God and not riches [see the contrast again ver. 17] is his object of desire), **flee these things** (*love of money* and its accompanying evils); **but** (the contrast is to the following these things, underlying the mention of them. We must say **and** in English) **follow after** (see 2 Tim. here, where both words occur again) **righteousness, godliness** (so Tit. ii. 12), **faith** (not mere rectitude in keeping trust, for all these words regard the Christian life), **love, patience** (under afflictions: steadfast endurance), **meek-spiritedness** (these two last qualities have reference to his behaviour towards the opponents of the Gospel).

12.] **Strive the good strife** (so literally: see ch. i. 18: 2 Tim. iv. 7: 1 Cor. ix. 24 ff.: Phil. iii. 12) **of the faith** (not ‘of faith’ abstract and subjective: but that noble conflict which the faith,—the profession of the soldier of Christ, entails on him), **lay hold upon** (as the aim and object of the life-long struggle; the prize to be gained: so that the second imperative is not the mere result of the first, but correlative with it and contemporaneous: ‘strive....and. while doing so, endeavour to attain’) **eternal life, to which thou wast called** (here apparently the image is dropped, and the realities of the Christian life are spoken of. Some have supposed an allusion to the athletes being summoned by a herald: but it seems far-fetched—and indeed inaccurate: for it was to the contest, not to the prize, that they were thus summoned), **and didst confess the good confession** (of faith in Christ: *the confession*, which every servant of Christ must make, on taking upon himself His service, or professing it when called upon so to do There is some uncertainty, to what occasion the Apostle here refers; whether’ to the baptism of Timothy: to his ordination as a minister: to his appointment over the church at Ephesus: or, to some confession made by him under persecution. Of these the first appears to me most probable, as giving the most general sense to “*the good confession*,” and applying best to the im-mediate consideration of *eternal life*, which is the common object of all Christians) **before many witnesses.**

13.] **I command thee** (ch. i. 3) **in the presence of God, who endueth all things with life** (there is most probably a reference to “*eternal life*” above: hardly, as Chrysostom and others think, to the *resurrection*, reminding him that death for Christ’s sake was not to be feared: for there is here no immediate allusion to danger, but only to the duty of personal firmness in the faith in his own religious life), **and of Christ Jesus, who testified** (the Lord testified the confession, sealed it with His sufferings and blood,—Timothy was to *confess* it) **before Pontius Pilate** (this may be rendered as in the Apostles’ Creed, “*under Pontius Pilate*” but the immediate reference here being to His *confession*, it seems more natural to take the meaning, ‘*in the presence of*, and so Chrysostom, who as a Greek, and familiar with the Creed, is a fair witness) **the good confession** (viz. that whole testimony to the verity of his own Person and to the Truth, which we find in John xviii, and which doubtless formed part of the oral apostolic teaching. Those who render the pre-position, ‘under,’ understand this *confession* of our Lord’s *sufferings*

and death—which at least is far-fetched.—There is no necessity to require a strict parallel between the circumstances of the confession of our Lord and that of Timothy, nor to infer in consequence of this verse that his confession must have been one before a heathen magistrate: it is the *fact* of a confession having been made in both cases that is put in the foreground—and that our Lord's was made in the midst of danger and with death before him, is a powerful argument to firmness for his servant in his own confession); **that thou keep** (preserve) **the commandment** (used not to designate any special command just given, but as a general compendium of the rule of the Gospel, after which our lives and thoughts must be regulated: see “*the command-ment*” in the same sense, ch. i. 5) **without**

spot and without reproach (both epithets belong to *the commandment*, not to *thee*, as most Commentators. The commandment, entrusted to thee as a deposit [ver. 20], must be kept by thee unstained and reproached), **until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ** (“that is,” says Chrysostom, “until thy death, until thy departure.” But surely both the usage of the word appearance (*epiphany*) and the next verse should have kept him from this mistake. Far better Bengel, explaining that the faithful then set before themselves the coming of the Lord: we, the hour of our death. We may fairly say that whatever impression is betrayed by the words that the coming of the Lord would be in Timothy's lifetime, is chastened and corrected by the words “*in His own seasons*” of the next verse. *That*, the certainty of the coming in God's own time, was a fixed truth respecting which the Apostle speaks with the authority of the Spirit: but the day and hour was hidden from him as from us: and from such passages as this we see that the apostolic age maintained that which ought to be the attitude of all ages, constant expectation of the Lord's return):

15.] which in His own seasons (“that is, in the fitting, proper seasons.” Chrysostom. Bengel remarks the plural, which seems to imply long spaces of time. See the same in Acts i. 7) **He shall manifest** (make visible, cause to appear; display), **(who is) the blessed** (blessed, of Himself) **and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords** (literally, **the King of them that reign and the Lord of them that rule**). This seems the place,—on account of this same designation occurring in Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 16, applied to our Lord,—to enquire whether these verses 15, 16 are said of the Father or of the Son. Chrysostom holds very strongly the latter view: but surely the term “*in His own seasons*,” compared with “*the seasons which the Father hath kept in His own power*,” Acts i. 7, determines for the former: so also does “*whom never man saw, &c.*” verse 16, which Chrysostom leaves untouched); **who only hath immortality** (Justin Martyr says, “God is said only to have immortality, because He hath it not by the will of another, as the rest who possess it, but of His own proper essence”), **dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no one of men [ever] saw, nor can see** (these words, as compared with John i. 18, seem to prove decisively that the whole description applies to the Father, not to the Son): **to whom be honour and eternal might. Amen** (see ch. i. 17, where a similar ascription occurs). Some of the Commentators think that verses 15, 16 are taken from an ecclesiastical hymn: and some have even arranged it metrically. See ch. iii. 16, 2 Tim. ii. 11 ff, notes.

17–19.] Precepts for the rich.—Not a supplement to the Epistle, as commonly regarded: the occurrence of a doxology is no sufficient ground for supposing that the Apostle intended to close with it: compare ch. i. 17. Rather, the subject is resumed from verses 6–10. We may perhaps make an inference as to the late date of the Epistle, from the existence of wealthy members in the Ephesian church.

17.] To those who are rich in this present world (Chrysostom tries to bring out a distinction between those that were rich in this world, and those that were rich in the next. But such a distinction would have been improbable, as drawing a line between the two characters, which it is the object of the exhortation to keep united in the same persons. See the distinction in Luke xii. 21), **command not to be highminded** (“this he enjoins, knowing that nothing so much engenders pride, and insolence, and assumption, as riches.” Chrysostom), **nor to set their hope** (i. e. to have hoped, and continue to be hoping: see on ch. iv. 10) **on the uncertainty of riches** (not the same as “on uncertain riches,” but far more forcible, hyperbolically representing the hope as reposed on the very quality in riches which least justifies it), **but in God, who affordeth us all things richly** (“riches” of a nobler and higher kind are included in His bounty: that *desire of riches* which is a bane and snare in its worldly sense, will be far better attained in the course of His abundant mercies to them who hope in Him. And even those who would be wealthy without Him are in fact only made rich by His bountiful hand) **for enjoyment** (for the purpose of enjoying):—**to do good** (‘to practise benevolence,’ as Conybeare), **to be rich in good works** (honourable deeds),—**to be free givers, ready contributors, [by this means] laying up for themselves as a treasure** (hoarding up, not uncertain treasure for the life here, but a substantial pledge of that real and endless life which shall be hereafter. So that there is no difficulty whatever in the conjunction of *laying up a foundation*. For the expression, see ch. iii. 13) **a good foundation** (see Luke vi. 48) **for the future, that** (in order that, as always: not the mere *result* of the preceding: ‘as it were,’ says De Wette, ‘setting foot on this foundation,’ or firm ground) **they may lay hold of** (ver. 12) **that which is really life** (not merely the goods of this life, but the possession and substance of that other, which, as full of joy and everlasting, is the only true life).

20, 21.] CONCLUDING EXHORTATION TO TIMOTHY. O Timothy (this personal address comes with great weight and solemnity: “he names him, as his son, with solemnity and love.” Bengel), **keep the deposit** (entrusted to thee: 2 Tim. i. 12, 14. “Take not aught from it: it is not thine: thou wert trusted with others' goods, deteriorate them not.” Chrysostom,—viz., the sound doctrine which thou art to teach in thy ministry in the Lord, compare Col. iv. 17, This is the most probable explanation. Some regard it as the commandment above, ver. 14: some as meaning the grace given to him for his office, or for his own

spiritual life: but ch. i. 18, compared with 2 Tim. ii. 2, seems ‘to fix the meaning as above) **turning away from** (compare 2 Tim. iii. 5) **the profane babblings** (empty discourses: so also 2 Tim. ii. 16) **and oppositions** (apparently, dialectic antitheses and niceties of the false teachers) **of that which is falsely named** (“for without being *faith*, it cannot be *knowledge*.” Chrysostom) **knowledge** (the true *Gnosis* [knowledge], being one of the greatest gifts of the Spirit to the Church, was soon counterfeited by various systems of hybrid theology, calling themselves by this honoured name. In the Apostle’s time, the misnomer was already current: but we are not therefore justified in assuming that it had received so definite an application, as afterwards it did to the various forms of Gnostic heresy. All that we can hence gather is, that the true spiritual *Gnosis* of the Christian was already being counterfeited by persons bearing the characteristics noticed in this Epistle. Whether these were the Gnostics themselves, or their precursors, we have examined in the Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles):

21.] which (the *falsely called knowledge*) **some professing** (ch. ii. 10) **missed the mark** (the word is used of one shooting and missing. The tense is the indefinite past, as marking merely the event, not the abiding of these men still in the Ephesian church) **concerning the faith.**

22.] CONCLUDING BENEDICTION: [The] **grace** (of God,—the grace for which we Christians look, and in which we stand) **be with thee.**—In the A.V. a subscription to the Epistle is found, “The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana.” A shorter notice, “from Laodicea,” is found in the Alexandrine MS. These owe their origin probably to the notion that this was the Epistle from Laodicea mentioned Col. iv. 16. The further addition in the A.V. betrays a date subsequent to the fourth century, when the province of Phrygia Pacatiana was first created.

2 TIMOTHY

Chapter 1

Chapter 3

Chapter 2

Chapter 4

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY

2 Timothy: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1.] See 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Eph. i. 1; Col. i. 1.**according to** (in pursuance of, with a view to the fulfilment of) **the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus** (all this is to be taken with the word *Apostle*, not as following the *will of God*. Theodoret explains it well, “So that I proclaim to men the eternal life which hath been promised.” Chrysostom. sees, in this mention of the promise of life in Christ, a consolation to Timothy under present troubles. And this idea seems to be borne out by the strain of the subsequent portion of the Epistle, which is throughout one of confirmation and encouragement).

2.] **my beloved child**] “Can it be accidental,” says Mack, “that instead of ‘my *true* child, as Timothy is called in the 1st Epistle, i. 2, and Titus i. 4,—here we have ‘my beloved child?’ Or may a reason for the change be found in this, that it now behoved Timothy to stir up afresh the faith and the grace in him, before he could again be worthy of the name *true* (genuine) in its full sense?” This may be too much pressed: but certainly there is throughout this Epistle an altered tone with regard to Timothy—more of mere love, and less of confidence, than in the former: and this would naturally shew itself even in passing words of address. To find in the word “*beloved*” *more* confidence, as some do, can hardly be correct: the expression of feeling is *different* in kind, not comparable in degree: suiting an Epistle of warm affection and somewhat saddened reminding, rather than one of rising hope and confidence. I regret to be, on this point, at issue throughout this second Epistle, with my friend Bishop Ellicott, who seems to me too anxious to rescue the character of Timothy from the slightest imputation of weakness: thereby marring the delicate texture of many of St. Paul’s characteristic periods, in which tender reproof, vigorous reassurance, and fervent affection are exquisitely intermingled.

3–5.] *Thankful declaration of love and anxiety to see him. I give thanks to God, whom I serve from my ancestors* (from my immediate progenitors: not, from my remote ancestors, Abraham, &c, The reason for the profession may perhaps be found in the following mention of the faith of the mother and grandmother of Timothy, which was already in the Apostle’s mind. We may observe that he does not, as some have supposed, place on the same ground the Jewish and Christian service of God: but simply asserts what he had before asserted, Acts xxiii. 1, xxiv. 14,—that his own service of God had been at all times conscientious and single-hearted, and that he had received it as such from his forefathers) **in pure conscience, how unceasing I make my mention** (or, **have remembrance**, which in English, joined with the fact of its being *in his prayers*, amounts to the same thing) **of thee in my prayers night and day; longing to see thee, remembering thy tears** (shed at our parting), **that I may be filled with joy** (the expressions in this verse are assurances of the most fervent personal love, strengthened by the proof of such love having been reciprocal. From these he gently and most skilfully passes to a tone of fatherly exhortation and reproof); **calling to remembrance the unfeigned faith [which was]** (Ellicott objects to ‘was,’ and would render ‘is;’ see note above on ver. 2. But I do not see how St. Paul could be said to *call to remembrance* a thing then present. Surely the remembrance is of the time when they parted, and the faith then existing. See more below) **in thee** (there is perhaps a slight reproach in this mention of the faith in as a matter of remembrance, as if it were a thing once certain as fact, and as a matter of memory, but now only, as below, resting on a *persuasion*: and in presence of such a possible inference, and of the word *remembrance*, I have ventured therefore to render, ‘which was in thee,’ viz. at the time of *the tears* being shed,—its present existence being only by and by introduced as a confident hope), **such as dwelt first** (before it dwelt in thee) **in thy grandmother Lois** (not elsewhere mentioned), and thy mother Eunice (“*Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but of a Greek father*,” Acts xvi. 1: see also ch. iii. 15. Both these were probably converts on St. Paul’s former visit to Lystra, Acts xiv. 6 ff); but (gives the meaning ‘notwithstanding appearances.’ It is entirely missed by Ellicott, and not fairly rendered in the A.V., ‘and;’ see note below) **I am persuaded that** (supply “*it dwelleth*”) also in thee (there is undoubtedly a want of entire confidence here expressed; and such a feeling will account, for the mention of the faith of his mother and grandmother, to which, if he wavered, he was proving untrue. This was felt by several of the ancient Commentators).

6–14.] *Exhortation to Timothy to be firm in the faith, and not to shrink from suffering: enforced (9–11) by the glorious character of the Gospel, and free mercy of God in it, and (11–13) by his own example. For which cause* (viz. because thou hast inherited, didst once possess, and I trust still dost possess, such unfeigned faith; “*being persuaded this of thee*”) **I put thee in mind to stir up** (literally, *to rekindle into a flame*: but the metaphorical use of the word was so common, that there is hardly need to recur to its literal sense) the gift of God (gift, singular, as combining the whole of the gifts necessary for the ministry in one aggregate: not ‘the gift of the Spirit imparted to all believers:’ see 1 Tim. iv. 14, note. Of those ministerial gifts, that of *boldness* would be most required in this case. Bengel says, “Timothy seems, in Paul’s long absence, to have somewhat declined: certainly he is now stimulated to greater efforts”), **which is in thee by means of the laying on of my hands** (these words, especially when compared with 1 Tim. iv. 14, mark the sense of the word gift to be as above, and not the

general gifts of the Spirit which followed the laying on of hands after baptism. Any apparent discrepancy with that passage, from the Apostle here speaking of the laying on of *his own hands alone*, may be removed by regarding the Apostle as chief in the ordination, and the presbytery as his assistants, as is the case with Bishops at the present day. As to the attributing the gift to the *laying on of hands* as its agent, we can only appeal, against the Roman-Catholic expositors, to the whole spirit of St. Paul's teaching, as declaring that by such an expression he does not mean that the inward spiritual grace is operated merely and barely by the outward visible sign,—but is only asserting, in a mode of speech common to us all, that the solemn dedication by him of Timothy to God's work, of which the laying on of his hands was the sign and seal, did bring with it gifts and grace for that work. In this sense, and in this alone, the gift came through the *laying on of hands*, that laying on being the concentrated and effective sign of the setting apart, and conveying in faith the answer, assumed by faith, to the prayers of the church. That the Apostle had *authority* thus to set apart, was necessary to the validity of the act, and thus to the reception of the grace:—but the authority did not *convey* the grace. I may just add that the ‘indelibility of orders’ which Mack infers from this passage, is simply and directly refuted by it. If the *gift*

which was in him required stirring up, if, as Chrysostom says, ‘it is in us to quench it, and to re-light it,’—then plainly it is not indelible).

7.] For (‘and there is reason for my thus exhorting thee, seeing that thou hast shewn a spirit inconsistent with the character of that *gift*.’ The particle is passed over by Ellicott) **God did not give** (when we were admitted to the ministry: not, ‘*hath not given*,’ as A.V., which loses the reference) us the spirit (not “*a spirit*:” see my Greek Test.) of cowardice (there is doubtless a touch of severity in the use of this word, putting before Timothy his timidity in such a light as to shame him); **but** (the spirit) **of power** (as opposed to the weakness implied in cowardice), **and love** (as opposed to that false compliance with men, which shrinks from bold rebuke:—that lofty self-abandonment of love for others, which will even sacrifice repute, and security, and all that belongs to self, in the noble struggle to do men good), **and correction** (the original meaning of the word ‘admonition of others that they may become **sound-minded**,—must be retained, as necessary both on account of usage, and on account of the context. It is this bearing bold testimony before others, from which Timothy appears to have shrunk: compare ver. 8. The word in after times became a common one for *discipline* or *ecclesiastical correction*. The making the word mean *a sound mind*, as A.V. and many Commentators, is surely not allowable, though Chrysostom puts it doubtfully as an alternative. The only way in which it can come virtually to that, is by supposing the *correction* to be exercised *by ourselves over ourselves*. But this does not seem to me to suit the context so well as the meaning given above).

8.] Be not then (seeing that God gave us such a Spirit, not the other) **ashamed of** (for construction see reff. The caution would not of necessity imply that Timothy had already shewn such a feeling: but it would be just in keeping with the delicate tact of the Apostle, to use such form of admonition, when in fact the blame had been already partly incurred. See note on ver. 1) **the testimony of our Lord** (i. e. the testimony which thou art to give concerning our Lord, genitive objective: not ‘*the testimony which He bore*,’ genitive subjective. The **our** in “*our Lord*” is inserted because being about to introduce *himself*, he binds by this word Timothy and himself together), **nor of me His prisoner**

(I would hardly say, with some Commentators, that this refers only to the services which the Apostle expected from Timothy in coming to him at Rome: such thought may have been in his mind, and may have mingled with his motive in making the exhortation; but I believe the main reference to be to his duty as upholding St. Paul and his teaching in the face of personal danger and persecution. It is impossible to deny that the above personal reference does enter again and but I cannot believe it to be more than secondary. On the expression “*His prisoner*,” see Eph. iii. 1 note: the genitive implies not possession, but the reason for which he was imprisoned, compare Philem. 13, “*the bonds of the Gospel*”): **but suffer hardship with me for the Gospel** (this extends the sphere of his fellow-suffering with the Apostle beyond his mere visiting Rome) **according to the power of God** (what power? that which God has manifested in our salvation, as described below [gen. subj.], or that which God imparts to us [gen. obj.],—*God's power, or the power which we get from God?* On all grounds, the former seems to me the juster and worthier sense: the former, as implying indeed the latter *a fortiori*—that God, who by His strong hand and mighty arm has done all this for us, will help us through all trouble incurred for Him); **who saved us** (all believers: there is no reason for limiting this **us** to Paul and Timothy. What follows is in the strictest coherence. ‘Be not cowardly nor ashamed of the Gospel, but join me in endurance on its behalf, according to God's power, who has given such proofs of that power and of its exercise towards us, in saving us,—calling us in Christ,—destroying death—&c., of which endurance I am an example [11–13]—which example do thou follow’ [13, 14]), **and called us** (this, as indeed the whole context, shews that it is the Father who is spoken of: see note on Gal. i. 6), **with an holy** (the word *calling* expressing the *state*, rather than merely the summon-ing into it [as does ‘*vocation*’ also], and **holy** is its quality) **calling** (see Eph. iv. 1; i, 18; Rom. viii. 23–30, and notes), **not according to** (after the measure of, in accordance with) **our works, but according to** (after the measure of, in pursuance of) **his own purpose** (i. e., “none compelling Him, none counselling with Him, but of His own purpose; moving from His own will, out of His goodness.” Chrysostom), **and** (according to) **the grace which was given to us** (this expression, which properly belongs only to an *actual imparting*, is used, because that which God determines in Eternity, is as good as already accomplished in time. No weakening of *given* into *predestined* must be thought of) **in Christ Jesus** (as its element and condition, see Eph. i. 4; iii. 11) **before eternal times** (“that is, from eternity.” Chrysostom, It is hardly possible in the presence of Scripture analogy to take this expression as meaning ‘*during* the Jewish dispensation.’ still less, that ‘the scheme

of redemption was arranged by God immediately after the fall, before any ages or dispensations.' Even Calvin's interpretation, "*the perpetual series of years since the foundation of the world*," fails in reaching the full meaning. In the parallel, Rom. xvi. 25, the mystery of redemption is described as having been "*kept silent during eternal times*"—which obviously includes ages previous to the *foundation of the world*, as well as after its—see Eph. iii. 11, compared with i. 4: 1 Cor. ii. 7), **but** (contrast to the concealment from eternity in the manifestation in time) **manifested now** (see Col. i. 26; Tit. i. 3) **by the appearing** (in the flesh. The original word, *epiphaneia*, is here only used thus: still it does not refer to the birth only, but to the whole manifestation) **of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who abolished** [indeed] **death** (compare especially 1 Cor. xv. 26. By the death of Christ, Death has lost his sting, and is henceforth of no more account: consequently the mere act of natural death is evermore treated by the Lord Himself and His Apostles as of no account: see John xi. 26; Rom. viii. 2, 38; 1 Cor. xv. 55; Heb. ii. 14: and its actual and total abolition foretold, Rev. xxi. 4. **Death** must be kept here to its literal sense, and its spiritual only so far understood, as involved in the other. The delivering from the *fear of death* is manifestly not to the purpose), **but** (contrast to the gloom involved in *death*) **brought to light** (threw light upon, and thus made visible what was before hidden) **life** (i. e. the new and glorious life of the Spirit, begun here below and enduring for ever: the only life worthy of being so called), a **nd incorruptibility** (immortality—of the new life, not merely of the risen body: that is not in question here, but is, though a glorious yet only a secondary consequence of this *incorruptibility*; see Rom. viii. 11) **hy means of the** (preaching of the) **Gospel** (which makes these glorious things known to men. These words are better taken as belonging only to "*brought life and incorruption to light*," not to "*abolished death*." For this former, the abolition of death, is an absolute act of Christ, the latter a manifestation to those who see it): **for which** (viz. the *Gospel*, the publication of this good news to men) **I was appointed an herald, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles** (see the same expression, and note, in 1 Tim. ii. 7. The connexion in which he here introduces himself is noticed above, on ver. 8. It is to bring in his own example and endurance in sufferings, and grounds of trust, for a pattern to Timothy): **on which account** (viz. because I *was appointed*, as above) **I also** (besides doing the active work of such a mission) **am suffering these things** (viz. the things implied in the term "*His prisoner*," ver. 8, and further specified by way of explanation and encouragement to Timothy below, ver. 15):**but I am not ashamed** (compare the command "*Be not ashamed*," ver. 8): **for I know whom I have trusted** (hardly to be formally expressed so strongly as De Wette, '*in whom I have put my trust*,' though the meaning, in the spiritual explanation, is virtually the same: the metaphor here is that of a pledge deposited, and the depositor *trusting* the depositary: and it is best to keep to the figure. The reference is to God, as Tit. iii. 8; Acts xxvii. 25?), **and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit** (so literally. But how are the words to be taken,—and what is meant by them? Does *my* import, the deposit which *He* has entrusted to *me*, or the deposit which *I* have entrusted to *Him*? Let us consider the latter first. What is there which the Apostle can be said to have entrusted to God? Some say, (a) his *eternal reward*, the crown laid up for him, ch. iv, 8: but then we should have this reward represented as a matter not of God's free grace, but of his own, delivered to God to keep: (b) his *soul*, as in 1 Pet. iv. 19: Luke xxiii, 46 [see this treated below]: (c) his *salvation* [see below]: (d) the believers who had been converted by his means, which hardly needs refutation, as altogether unsupported by the context. Then, under the *former* head, which would make *my* possessive,—that which *He* has committed to *me*, and which is *my* deposit to be guarded by *me*,—we have the following meanings assigned:—(e) the *Holy Spirit*. So Theodoret: (f) *the faith and its proclamation to the world*. So Chrysostom, as an alternative: (g) the *apostolic office* which the Apostle regarded as a thing entrusted to him, a stewardship, 1 Cor. ix. V7 (h) the *faithful* who had been converted by him in the view of their having been *committed to him by Christ*: (i) his *own soul*, as entrusted to him by God. On all these, and this view of the *deposit* generally, I may remark that we may fairly be guided by the same words "*the trust which was committed to thee, keep*" in ver. 14 as to their sense here. As, in ver. 14, these words are said of the subject of the sentence, viz. Timothy, keeping a deposit entrusted to him,—so here they must be said of the subject of the sentence, viz. God, keeping a deposit entrusted to Him. Otherwise, while keeping the mere word **deposit** to the same formal meaning in both places, we shall, most harshly and unnaturally, be requiring the phrase to bear, in two almost consecutive verses, two totally different meanings. The analogy therefore of ver. 14, makes the second group of meanings entirely against it, and in fact necessitates the adoption of the first alternative, viz. the objective genitive, —and the *deposit committed by the Apostle to God*. And when we enquire what this deposit was, we have the reply, I conceive, in the previous words **whom I have trusted**. He had entrusted HIMSELF, body, soul, and spirit, to the keeping of his heavenly Father, and lay safe in his hands, confident of His abiding and effectual care. A strong confirmation of this view is gained from 1 Thess. v. 23. In an English *version*, it is necessary to adopt one or other of the alternatives, for the sake of perspicuity. I have therefore retained the words of the A.V.) **against** (in a temporal sense: not simply '*until*') **that day** (viz. the day of Christ's appearing; see especially ch. iv. 8).

13.] The utmost care is required, in interpreting this verse, to ascertain the probable meaning of the words in reference to the context. On the right appreciation of this depends the question whether they are to be taken in their strict meaning, and simple grammatical sense, or to be forced to some possible but far-fetched rendering. The consideration depends very much on the collocation and meaning of the words in the original, and can hardly be represented to the English reader. I have argued in my Greek Testament that the ordinary rendering as in A.V., "*Hold fast the form of sound words*," is absolutely untenable. The verb does not mean "*hold fast*," but is simply "**have**," or "**take**," and it is not "*the form*," but '**a form**,' or '**a sample**.' This being so, we shall have the rendering so far,—**Have** (take) **an example of (the) sound words, which thou heardest of me in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.** Then two questions arise for us: to what (1) does **take an example** refer? I answer, —to the saying immediately preceding, "*I know whom I have trusted*," &c. This was one of those *faithful* or *wholesome sayings*, of which we hear so often in these Epistles; one which in his timidity, Timothy was perhaps in danger of forgetting,

and of which therefore the Apostle reminds him, and bids him take it as a specimen or pattern of those sound words which had been committed to him by his father in the faith. To what (2) do the words **in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus** refer? Certainly not to the words “*from me*,” meaning “those sound words which I spake to thee concerning, versed in, faith and love,” &c.: not, again, to the command “*here*,” or “*take*,” to which in our understanding of it, such a qualification would be altogether inapplicable: but to **thou heardest**, reminding Timothy of the readiness of belief, and warmth of affection, with which he had at first received the wholesome words from the mouth of the Apostle, and thus tacitly reproaching him for his present want of growth in that faith and love; as if it had been said, Let me in thus speaking, ‘I know whom I have believed, &c.,’ call to thy mind, by one example, those faithful sayings, those words of spiritual health, which thou once hearest with such receptivity and ardour as a Christian believer. Then, as following on this single example, the whole glorious deposit is solemnly committed to his care:—being a servant of One who will keep that. which we have entrusted to HIM, do thou in thy turn keep that which HE, by my means, has entrusted to *thee*:

14.] That goodly deposit keep through the Holy Spirit who dwelleth in us (not thee and me merely, but all believers: compare Acts xiii, 52).

15–18.] Notices of the defective adherence of certain brethren. These notices are intimately connected with what has preceded. He has held up to Timothy, as an example, his own boldness and constancy: and has given him a sample of the faithful sayings which ruled his own conduct, in ver. 12. He proceeds to speak of a few of the discouragements under which in this confidence he was bearing up: and, affectionate gratitude prompting him, and at the same time by way of an example of fidelity to Timothy, he dilates on the exception to the general dereliction of him which had been furnished by Onesiphorus.

—**Thou knowest this, that all who are in Asia** (it does not follow, as Chrysostom says, that “it was probable that there were then present in Rome many from divers parts of Asia;” but he uses the expression with reference to him to whom he was writing, who was in the proconsular Asia) **turned away from me** (not as A.V., ‘are turned away from me’ [perfect]: the act referred to took place at a stated time, and from what follows, that time appears to have been on occasion of a visit to Rome. They were ashamed of Paul the prisoner, and did not seek him out, see ch. iv. 16: “they avoided the society of the Apostle from fear of Nero,” Theodoret: but perhaps not so much from this motive, as from the one hinted at in the praise of Onesiphorus below. The **all** must of course apply to all of whom the Apostle *had had trial* [and not even those without exception, vv. 16–18]: the A.V. gives the idea, that a general apostasy of all in Asia from St. Paul had taken place. On Asia, i.e. the proconsular Asia, see note, Acts xvi. 6); **of whom are** (this is hardly to be pressed as indicating that at the present moment Phygelus and Hermogenes were in Rome and were shunning him: it merely includes them in the class just mentioned) **Phygelus and Hermogenes** (why their names are specially brought forward, does not appear. Suetonius mentions a certain Hermogenes of Tarsus, who was put to death by Domitian).

16.] May the Lord give mercy (an expression not found elsewhere in the New Test.) **to the house of Onesiphorus** (from this expression, here and in ch. iv. 19, and from what follows, ver. 18, it has been not improbably supposed, that Onesiphorus himself was no longer living at this time. Some indeed take it as merely an extension of the gratitude of the Apostle from Onesiphorus to his household: but ch. iv. 19 is against this. ‘Theodoret indeed and Chrysostom understand that Onesiphorus was *with him* at this time: but the words here [e. g., *when he came to Rome*] will hardly allow that), **because on many occasions he refreshed me** (any kind of refreshing, of body or mind, may be implied), **and was not ashamed of** (ver. 8) **my chain** (my condition of a prisoner): **but when he came to Rome, sought me out the more diligently** (he did not shrink from me because I was a prisoner, but made that very fact his reason for seeking me out more diligently), **and found me.**

18.] May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord (the account to be given of the double “*the Lord*”—“*the Lord*,” here is simply this—that “*may the Lord grant*” had become so completely a formula, that the recurrence was not noticed. This is far better than to suppose the second “*Lord*” merely to mean “*Himself*;” or to enter into theological distinctions between “*the Lord*” as the Father, and “*from the Lord*” as from the Son, the Judge) in **that day** (see on ver. 12): **and how many services he did** (to me: or, to the saints: the general expression will admit of either) **in Ephesus** (being probably an Ephesian, compare ch. ix. 19), **thou knowest better than I** (because Timothy was at Ephesus, and was more conversant with matters there).

2 Timothy: Chapter 2

Ch. II. 1–26.] Exhortations to Timo-thy, founded on the foregoing examples and warnings.

1.] Thou therefore (the command follows, primarily on his own example just propounded, and secondarily on that of Onesiphorus, in contrast to those who had been ashamed of and deserted him), **my child, be strengthened** (the original indicates an abiding state, not a mere insulated act, *go on gaining strength*) **in the grace which is in Christ Jesus** (more than “*by the grace of Christ Jesus*.” the grace which is laid up in Christ, the empowering influence in the Christian life, being necessary for its whole course and progress, is regarded as the *element* in which it is lived: to *grow*, 2 Pet. ult. **Grace** must not be taken, with some Commentators, for his *ministerial office*). **And the things which thou hearest from me with many**

witnesses (i. e. with the intervention or attestation of many witnesses. These witnesses are not, as Chrysostom and others hold, the congregations whom Timothy had heard the Apostle teaching, nor are they testimonies from the law and prophets: nor the other Apostles: much less the Christian martyrs: but *the presbyters and others present at his ordination*, compare 1 Tim. iv. 14; vi. 12; and ch. i. 6), **these deliver in trust** (see above ch. i. 14) to **faithful men** (i. e. not merely ‘believers,’ but ‘trustworthy men,’ men who will “*keep the goodly trust committed to them*”), **such as shall be** (not merely ‘are,’ but ‘shall be’—give every hope of turning out) **able to teach them to others also** (also carries the mind on to a further step of the same process—imply-ing ‘in their turn.’ These “*others*” would be *other trustworthy men* like themselves).—The connexion of this verse with the foregoing and the following has been questioned. I believe it to be this: ‘The true keeping of the deposit entrusted to thee will involve thy handing it on unimpaired to others, who may in their turn hand it on again. But in order to this, thou must be strong in grace—thou must be a fellow-sufferer with me in hardships—thou must strive lawfully—thou must not be entangled with this life’s matters.’ So that ver. 2 serves to prepare him to hear of the necessity of endurance and faithful adhesion to his duty as a Christian soldier, considering that he has his deposit not only to keep, but to deliver down unimpaired.—It is obviously a perversion of the sense to regard this verse as referring merely to his journey to Rome—that *during that time* he should, &c.: the future, *shall be able*, and the very contemplation of a similar step on the part of these men at a future time, are against such a supposition—Mack constructs 2 long argument out of this verse to shew that there are *two sources* of Christian instruction in the Church, written teaching and oral, and ends with affirming that those who neglect the latter for the former, have always shewn that they in reality set up their own opinion above all teaching. But he forgets that these two methods of teaching are in fact but one and the same. *Scripture* has been *God’s way of fixing tradition*, and rendering it trustworthy at any distance of time; of obviating the very danger which in this Epistle we see so imminent, viz. of one of those teachers, who were links in this chain of transmission, becoming inefficient and transmitting it inadequately. This very Epistle is therefore a warning to us not to trust oral tradition, seeing that it was so dependent on men, and to accept no way of conserving it but that which God’s providence has pointed out to us in the canonical books of Scripture.

3.] **Suffer hardship with me** (“*me*” is not expressed in the Greek. The word signifies, as Conybeare happily renders it, «Take thy *share* in suffering.’ The mention of the share binds it to what pre-cedes and follows, referring primarily to the Apostle himself, though doubtless having a wider reference to all who similarly suffer: see above, on the connexion of ver. 2) **as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.**

4.] **No soldier when on service is** (suffers himself to be: ‘is,’ as his normal state) **entangled in the businesses of life; that he may please him who called him to be a soldier** (who originally enrolled him as a soldier: the word signifies *to levy soldiers*, or *raise a troop*, and “*he who chose him to be a soldier*,” designates the commander of such troop).—The taking of these precepts according to the letter, to signify that no minister of Christ may have a secular occupation, is quite beside the purpose: for 1) it is not ministers, but all soldiers of Christ who are spoken of: 2) the position of the verb shews that it is not the fact of the *existence* of such occupation, but the being *entangled* in it, which is before the Apostle’s mind: 3) the Apostle’s own example sufficiently confutes such an idea. Only then does it become unlawful, when such occupation, from its engrossing the man, becomes a hindrance to the work of the ministry,—or from its nature is incompatible with it).

5.] The soldier must serve on condition of not dividing his service: now we have another instance of the same requirement: and in the conflicts of the arena there are certain laws, without the fulfilment of which no man can obtain the victory. **But** (the above is not the only example, but) **if any one also** (i. e. to give another instance) **strive in the games** (it is necessary to adopt a circumlocution for the verb used, “*be an athlete*.’ That of A.V., ‘*strive for masteries*, is not definite enough, omitting all mention of the games, and by consequence not even suggesting them to the ordinary reader), **he is not crowned** (even in case of his gain-ing the victory? or is the word inclusive of all efforts made to get the crown,—‘he has no chance of the crown?’ rather the former), **unless he have striven** (this seems to assume the getting of the vic-tory) *lawfully* (according to the prescribed conditions not merely of the contest, but of the preparation also).

6.] Another comparison shewing the necessity of active labour as an antecedent to reward. **The husbandman who is engaged in labour** (who is actually employed in gathering in the fruit) **ought first to partake of the fruits** (which he is gathering in: the whole result of his ministry, not here further specified. The saying is akin to that of not muzzling the ox while treading out the corn:—the right of first participation in the harvest belongs to him who is labouring in the field: do not, thou therefore, by relaxing this labour, forfeit that right. By this rendering, keeping strictly to the sense of the *present* participle, all difficulty as to the position of the word “*first*” is removed).

7.] **Understand what I say** (i. e. as I have adduced several examples, have an intelligent understanding of them); **for the Lord (Christ) shall give thee clear apprehension in all things** (i. e. thou art well able to penetrate the meaning and bearing of what I say: for thou art not lett to thyself, but hast the wisdom which is of Christ to guide thee. There is perhaps a slight intimation that he might apply to this fountain of wisdom more than he did:—‘the Lord, if thou seekest it from Him’)

8-13.] This statement and substantiation of two of the leading facts of the gospel, seems, especially as connected with the exhortations which follow on it vv. 14 ff., to be aimed at the false teachers by whose assumption Timothy was in danger of being daunted. The Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ were two truths especially imperiled, and indeed denied, by their

teaching. At the same time these very

truths, believed and persisted in, furnished him with the best grounds for steadfastness in his testimony to the Gospel, and attachment to the Apostle himself, suffering for his faithfulness to them: and on his adherence to these truths depended his share in that Saviour in whom they were manifested, and in union with whom, in His eternal and unchangeable truth, our share in blessedness depends. **Keep in remembrance Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, of the seed of David** (the abrupt, and otherwise unaccountable sequence of these clauses, has been supposed to spring from their being parts of a recognized and technical profession of faith), **according to my Gospel** (‘the Gospel entrusted to me to teach. Here the expression may seem to be used with reference to the false teachers,—but as in the other places it has no such reference, I should rather incline to regard it as a solemn way of speaking, identifying these truths with the preaching which had been the source of Timothy’s belief), **in which** (i. e. in the service of which; proclaiming which) **I suffer hardship** (see ver. 3), **even unto** (i. e. as far as to the endurance of) **chains** (see ch. i. 16) **as a malefactor; but the word of God is not bound** (my hands are bound, but not my tongue,” Chrysostom. But we shall better, though this reference to himself is not precluded [compare ch. iv. 17: Acts xxviii. 31], en-large the words to that wider acceptation, in which he rejoices, Phil. i. 18. As regarded himself, the word of God **might** be said to be bound, inasmuch as he was prevented from the free proclamation of it: his person was not free, though his tongue and pen were. This more general reference Chrysostom himself seems elsewhere to admit, for he says, “The teacher was bound, and the word flew abroad; he in- habited his prison, and the doctrine ran with wings all over the world.”—The purpose of adding this seems to be, to remind Timothy that *his* sufferings and imprisonment had in no way weakened the power of the Gospel, or loosened the ties by which he [Timothy] was bound to the service of it).

10.] For this reason (what reason? “Because while I am bound the Gospel runneth,” says Bengel, and with this others agree. But neither 1) is this sound logic, nor 2) is it in accordance with the Apostle’s usage of the expression “*for this cause that.*” 1) The fact, that the word of God is not bound, is clearly not the reason why he suffers these things for the elect: nor can we say with Huther, that the *consciousness* of this fact is that in which he endures all. De Wette takes the predominant idea to be, the dispersion and success of God’s word, in and by which the Apostle is encouraged to suffer. But this would render the connexion very loose. 2) In 1 Tim. i. 16, and Philem. 15, the reference of “*for this cause*” is evidently to *what follows*: compare also Rom. iv. 16, 2 Cor. xiii. 10. I would therefore refer the words to the following, and consider them, as in the above instances, as a marked way of indicating the reason presently to be given: ‘for this purpose,... that;’ so Chrysostom and others) **I endure all things** (not merely suffer [objective]: but readiness and persistence [subjective] are implied in the word, and the universal *all things* belongs to this subjective meaning—‘I am enduring, ready to bear, all things’) **for the sake of the elect** (see especially Tit. i. 1. The Apostle does not refer merely to those elect of God who are not yet converted, but generally to the whole category, both those who are already turned to him, and those who are yet to be turned: compare the parallel declaration in Col. i. 24), **that they also** (as well as ourselves with reference to what is to follow, the certainty that we, who suffer with Him, shall reign with Him) **may obtain the salvation which is in** (as its element and condition of ex-istence) **Christ Jesus with eternal glory** (salvation here, in its spiritual presence and power—“*by grace ye have been saved*,” Eph. ii. 6: and glory hereafter, the full development and expansion of salvation, Rom. viii. 21). **Faithful is the saying** (another of those current Christian sayings, probably the utterances originally of the Spirit by those who spoke *prophecies* in the Church—and, as in 1 Tim. iii. 16, bearing with it so much of balance and rhythmical arrangement, as to seem to be a portion of some hymn): **For** (Chrysostom and others regard this **for** as rendering a reason why the *saying is faithful*, understanding *faithful is the saying* of what has *gone before*, viz. the certainty that *he who obtains salvation shall also win eternal glory*. But this is most unnatural. The **for** is not merely explicative, but as in 1 Tim. iv. 9, renders a reason for the assertion that the *saying is faithful*,—in the declaration of the fact in well-known words: for the fact is so, that if&c.) **if we died with Him** (pointing to *some one definite event*: the reference must be to that participation in Christ’s death which takes place *at baptism* in all those who are His, and which those who follow Him in sufferings emphatically shew that they then did really take on them: see Rom. vi. 3, 4, 8: Col. ii. 12, Certainly if the past tense stood alone, it might be taken as *anticipatory*, looking back on life from that future day in which the *living with him* will be realized: but coupled as it is with the *present*, “*we endure*,” and the future, “*we shall deny*,” we can hardly take it otherwise than literally as to time, of an event already past, and if so, strictly as in the parallel Rom. vi. 8, where the reference is clear), **we shall also live with Him** (hereafter in glory): **if we endure** (with Him: see Rom. viii. 17), **we shall also reign with Him** (see Rom. v. 17; viii. 17. In the former pair, death and life are opposed: in this, subjection [implied in *endurance*] and dominion): **if we shall deny** (Him), **He also will deny us** (see Matt. x. 33): **if we disbelieve** (not, His Resurrection, nor His Divinity, but Him generally), **He remains faithful** (to His own word cited above): **for He cannot deny Himself** (i. e. if we desert faith in *Him*, *He* will not break faith with *us*; *He* having declared that whosoever denies *Him* shall be denied by *Him*, and we have pledged ourselves to confess *Him*,—we may become unbelieving, and break our pledge, but *He* will not break *His*: as *He* has said, it shall surely be. See Rom. iii. 3).

14–26.] Application of the above general exhortations to the teaching and conversation of Timothy, especially with reference to the false teachers.

14.] These things (those which have just preceded, vv. 8–13) **call to their minds** (the minds, viz. of those among whom thou art ministering, as the context shews: see a similar ellipsis in Tit. iii. 8), **adjuring them before the Lord not to contend about words** (see 1 Tim. vi. 4), **(a thing) useful for no purpose, (but practised) to the ruin** (the opposite of *edification*, or

building up: see 2 Cor. xiii. 10) **of them that hear.**

15.] The connexion is close:—by averting them from vain and unprofitable things, approve thine own work, so that it may stand in the day of the Lord.—**Strive to present thyself** (emphatic, as distinguished from those alluded to in the preceding verse) **to God approved** (tested by trial, and found to have stood the test), **a workman** (a general word, of any kind of labourer, used of *teachers* perhaps from the parable in Matt. xx.) **unshamed** (by his work being found unworthy: see Phil. i, 20, and 1 Cor. iv. 4. “One into whom thine own conscience strikes no shame,” Bengel), **rightly laying out** (the meaning of the word thus rendered has been much discussed. But it seems agreed that *to cut straight* [as a road, &c.] is its literal force; and hence ‘laying out aright’ is the figurative sense) **the word of the truth.**

16.] **But** (contrast not merely to the *laying out rightly*, but to the whole course of conduct recommended in the last verse) **profane babblings** (see ref. 1 Tim.) **avoid** (the meaning seems to come from a number of persons falling back from an object of fear or loathing, and standing at a distance round it. The word thus rendered is peculiar, its primary sense being “*stand round*”): **for they** (the false teachers) **will advance to a worse pitch of ungodliness. And their word will eat** (lit. “will find pasture,” as in John x. 9: and the word representing *pasture* is the medical term for the consuming progress of mortifying disease) **as a gangrene** (or cancer): **of whom is Hymenæus** (see note 1 Tim. i. 20) and **Philetus** (of him nothing further is known); **men who concerning the truth went astray** (compare 1 Tim. vi, 21), **saying that the resurrection has already taken place** (Tertullian tells us, that they did this by *spiritualizing* both death and the resurrection, making the one mean the state of sinful nature, the other that of grace. This error, which belonged to the Gnostics subsequently, may well have been already sown and springing up in the apostolic age. If the form of it was that described by Tertullian, it would be one of those instances of wresting the words of St. Paul himself [compare Col. ii. 12: Rom. vi. 4], of which St. Peter speaks 2 Pet. iii. 16); **and are overturning the faith of some.**

19.] *Firm endurance*, notwithstanding this overturning of the faith of some, of *the church of God: its signs and seals.* —**Nevertheless God's firm foundation standeth** (not, as A.V. ungrammatically, ‘**the foundation of God standeth sure.**’) But what is *God's firm foundation*? Very various interpretations have been given. Some explain it the *fundamental doctrine of the Resurrection*: others, *the promises of God*: others, the *immovable faith of God*: others, *Christ*, 1 Cor. iii. 11: some, *the Christian religion*: others, again, *God's election*. Rather is it the congregation of the faithful, considered as a foundation of a building placed by God,—the *house* spoken of in the next verse. Against the tottering faith of those just mentioned, he sets the *firm foundation* which *stands*. It cannot be moved: Heb. xii. 28), **having** (‘seeing it hath? with a very faint causal force, illustrating the previous declaration) **this seal** (probably in allusion to the practice of engraving inscriptions over doors [Deut. vi. 9; xi. 20] and on pillars and foundation stones [Rey. xxi. 14]. The seal [inscription] would indicate *ownership* and *destination*: both of which are pointed at in the two texts following) (1) **The Lord knoweth** (see 1 Cor. viii. 3, note) **them that are His:** and (2), **Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord** (viz. as his Lord: not exactly equivalent to ‘calleth on the name of the Lord’) **stand aloof from iniquity** (the passage in Isa. stands, “*Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch not the unclean thing: go out of the midst of her: be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.*” It is clearly no reason against this passage being here *alluded to*, that it is *expressly cited* 2 Cor. vi. 17. Ellicott remarks, that it is possibly in continued allusion to Num. xvi. 26, “*Separate yourselves from the tents of these wicked men*”).

20.] Those who are truly the Lord's are known to Him and depart from iniquity: but in the visible church there are many unworthy members. This is illustrated by the following similitude.—**But** (contrast to the preceding definition of the Lord's people) **in a great house** (Chrysostom and others understand by this *great house*, the world: but it is far better understood of the church, for the reason given by Calvin: “that the context here teaches *us to understand* it of the church: for Paul is not treating of those without, but of God's own family.”) The idea then is much the same as that in the parable of the dragnet, Matt. xiii. 47–49: not in the parable of the tares of the field: for there it is expressly said, “*The field is the world*”) there are not only vessels of gold and **silver**, **but also of wood and earthenware; and some for honour, some for dishonour** (viz. in the use of the vessels themselves: not, as some explain it, to bring honour or dishonour on the house or its inhabitants. Estius, anxious to avoid the idea of heretics being in the church, would understand the two classes in each sentence as those distinguished by gifts, and those not so distinguished: but this seems alien from the context: compare especially the next verse).

21.] Here the thing signified is mingled with the similitude: the voluntary act described belonging, not to the vessels, but to the members of the church who are designated by them. **If then (then deduces a consequence from the similitude: this similitude being taken for granted) any man** (member of the church) **s shall purify himself from among** (shall in the process of purifying himself depart from among) **these** (viz. the latter mentioned vessels in each parallel; but more especially the *vessels to dishonour*, from what follows), **he shall be a vessel for honour, sanctified** (this word rendered *sanctified* is a favourite word with our Apostle to describe the saints of God), **useful for the master (of the house), prepared for every good work.**

22.] Exhortations, taken up again from ver. 16, on the matter of which the intervening verses have been a digression.—**But** (contrast to the last-mentioned character, ver. 21) **youthful lusts fly from: but** (so literally: contrast to the hypothesis of the opposite course to that recommended above) **follow after righteousness** (moral rectitude, as contrasted with *iniquity*, ver. 19:

not, ‘the righteousness which is by faith;’ far better Calvin: ‘that is, right living. See the parallel, 1 Tim. vi. 11), **faith, love, peace with** (this **with** belongs to “*peace*,” not to “*follow after*.”) We are to cultivate being at peace with men that call on the Lord out of a pure heart) **those who call upon the Lord** (Christ, see 1 Cor. i. 2) **out of a pure heart** (these last words serve to designate the earnest and singleminded, as contrasted with the false teachers, who called on Him, but not out of a pure heart: compare ch. iii. 5, 8, and especially Tit. i. 15, 16).

23.] But (contrast again to the hypothesis of the contrary of the last exhortation) **foolish** (Titus iii. 9) **and undisciplined** (unrestrained by proper rules, out of the course of Christian discipline, and so, irregular) **questionings decline, being aware that they gender strifes.** **But** (contrast to the fact of *strife*) **the** (better than *a*. The meaning being much the same, the definite article in rendering gives the emphasis, and points out the individual servant, better than the indefinite) **servant of the Lord** (Jesus; see 1 Cor. vii. 22. It is evident from what follows, that the servant of the Lord here, in the Apostle’s view, is not so much every true Christian,—however applicable such a maxim may be to him also,—but the minister of Christ, as Timothy was: compare “*apt to teach, &c.*” below) **must not strive** (this maxim takes for granted, that the servant *must be like his Lord*, and argues from that); **but be gentle towards all, apt to teach** (so A.V. well: for, as Bengel, “the word signifies not only solidity and facility in teaching, but especially patience and assiduity.”) In fact these latter must be, on account of the contrast which the Apostle is bringing out, regarded as prominent here), **patient of wrong** (so Conybeare; and perhaps we can hardly find a better expression, though ‘*wrong*’ does not by any means cover the whole meaning), **in meekness correcting** (not, as A.V., ‘*instructing*’) **those who oppose themselves; if at any time** (literally, ‘*lest at any time*’) **God may give them repentance** (because their consciences were im-pure [see above on ver. 22] and lives evil) **in order to the knowledge of [the] truth** (see note, 1 Tim. ii. 4); **and they may return to soberness** (a similar word is used in 1 Cor. xv. 34: from their moral and spiritual intoxication) **out of the snare of the devil** (gen. subj., ‘the snare which the devil laid for them.’) There is properly no confusion of metaphor, the idea being that these persons have in a state of intoxication been entrapped, and are enabled, at their awaking sober, to escape), **having been** (during their spiritual intoxication) **taken captive by him in pursuance of God’s will** (the literal rendering is: “*having been taken captive by him towards the will of that other.*” And *that other* is God, who has already been mentioned in ver. 25. In the former editions of my Greek Test. I took another view, but have now changed my opinion. It is God who overrules the workings of God’s enemy, and who hath made all things for Himself—even the wicked for the day of evil. On the varieties of rendering, see the note in my Greek Test.).

2 Timothy: Chapter 3

CH. III. 1–9.] *Warning of bad times to come, in which men shall be ungodly and hypocritical:—nay, against such men as already present, and doing mischief.*

1.] **But** (the contrast is in the dark prophetic announcement, so different in character from the hope just expressed) **know this, that in the last days** (see 1 Tim. iv. 1, where the expression is somewhat different. The period referred to here is, from all New Test. analogy [compare 2 Pet. iii. 3; Jude 18], that immediately preceding the coming of the Lord. That day and hour being hidden from all men, and even from the Son Himself, Mark xiii. 32,—the Spirit of prophecy, which is the Spirit of the Son, did not reveal to the Apostles its place in the ages of time. They, like the subsequent generations of the Church, were kept waiting for it, and for the most part wrote and spoke of it as soon to appear; not however without many and sufficient hints furnished by the Spirit, of an interval, and that no short one, first to elapse. In this place, these last days are set before Timothy as being on their way, and indeed their premonitory symptoms already appearing. The discovery which the lapse of centuries and the ways of Providence have made to us,—“*my Lord delayeth His coming,*”—misleads none but unfaithful servants: while the only modification in the understanding of the premonitory symptoms, is, that *for us*, He with whom a thousand years are as one day has spread them, without changing their substance or their trath, over many consecutive ages. See 1 Jolin ii. 18, —where we have the still plainer assertion, “*It is the last time*”) **grievous times shall come** (literally, “*shall be instant*”).

2.] **For** (reason for the epithet “*grievous*”) **men shall be lovers of their own selves, lovers of money, empty boasters, haughty, evil speakers** (not

‘*blasphemous*,’ though the Greek word is “*blasphemoi*;” it has not the reference to things sacred unless the context necessarily leads to that meaning just at this point: the sins mentioned are more against men than against God), **disobedient to parents** (“the character of the times is much to be gathered from the manners of youth,” says Bengel), **ungrateful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable** (it does not appear that the word ever means “*truce-breakers*,” but rather, ‘*that will make*’ or ‘*admit no truce:*’ i.e. implacable), **slanderers, incontinent, inhuman** (or, *fierce*), **no lovers of good** (so literally), **traitors, headlong** (either in action, or in passion [temper], which would in fact amount to the same), **besotted by pride** (see note, 1 Tim. iii. 6), **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having a (or, the?) form** (outward embodiment: the same meaning as in Rom. ii. 26, but here confined, by the contrast following, to the mere outward semblance; whereas there, no contrast occurring, the outward embodiment is the real representation) **of godliness, but having denied** (not present, ‘denying, as A.V.,—‘*renouncing*,’ as Conybeare; their condemnation is, that they are living in the semblance of God’s fear, but *have repudiated* its reality) **the power of it** (its living and renewing in-fluence over the heart and life).—Compare

throughout this description, Rom. i. 30, 31. Huther remarks, “We can hardly trace any formal rule of arrangement through these predicates. Here and there, it is true, a few cognate ideas are grouped together: the two first are connected by the prefix, ‘*lovers of*? then follow three words betokening high-mindedness: ‘*dis-obedient to parents*’ is followed by ‘*unthankful*’ this word opens a long series of negative epithets, but interrupted by ‘*slanderers*:’ the following seem some of them to be connected in the original by likeness of sound: others by connexion of meaning, as ‘*headlong*,’ and ‘*besotted with pride*’ But this very interpenetration serves to depict more vividly the whole manifoldness of the manifestation of evil”): **from these also** (as well as from those things and persons of whom he was before warned, ch. ii. 16, 21, 28) turn away (compare 1 Tim. vi. 20. This command shews that the Apostle treats the symptoms of the last times as not future exclusively, but in some respects present: see note above, ver. 1).

6.] For (reason of the foregoing command, seeing that they are already among you) **among the number of these are they who creep** (“see how he points at the shamelessness of their conduct by this word,—their dishonorableness, their craft, their trickery.” Chrysostom) into [men’s] houses, and take captive (as it were prisoners; a word admirably describing the influence acquired by sneaking proselytizers over those presently described: attach to themselves entirely, so that they follow them as if dragged about by them) **silly women** (in the Greek, a diminutive of the word signifying women, denoting con-tempt) **laden with sins** (De Wette alone seems to have given the true reason of the insertion of this particular. The stress is on *laden*: they are burdened, their consciences oppressed, with sins, and in this morbid state they lie open to the insidious attacks of these proselytizers who promise them ease of conscience if they will follow them), **led about by lusts of all kinds** (I should rather imagine, from the context, that the reference here is not so much to ‘fleshy lusts’ properly so called,—though from what we know of such feminine spiritual attachments, ancient [see below] and modern, such must by no means be excluded,—as to the ever-shifting passion for change in doctrine and manner of teaching, which is the eminent characteristic of these captives to designing spiritual teachers,—the running after popular and fashionable men and popular and fashionable tenets, which draw them in flocks in the most opposite and inconsistent directions. Who has not seen this exemplified in the growth of Irvingism, Methodism, Evangelicalism, High-Church-ism, and all the other-isms?), **evermore**

learning (always with some new point absorbing them, which seems to them the most important, to the depreciation of what they held and seemed to know before), **and never yet** (with all their learning) **able to come to the thorough knowledge** (the decisive and stable apprehension, in which they might be grounded and settled against further novelties) **of the truth** (this again is referred by Chrysostom and others, to moral deadening of their apprehension by profligate lives. It may be so, in the deeper ground of the psychological reason for this their fickle and imperfect condition: but I should rather think that the Apostle here indicates their character as connected with the fact of their captivity to these teachers.—With regard to the fact itself, we have abundant testimony that the Gnostic heresy in its progress, as indeed all new and strange systems, laid hold chiefly of the female sex: see the instances quoted in my Greek Test. De Wette remarks, “This is an admirable characterization of zealous soul-hunters (who have been principally found, and are still found, among the Roman Catholics) and their victims. We must not however divide the different traits among different classes or individuals: it is their combination only which is characteristic.” “One would say,” says Calvin, “that Paul was here designedly painting the portraiture of the life of the cloister”).

8.] But (i. e. it is no wonder that there should be now such opponents to the truth, for their prototypes existed also in ancient times) **as Jannes and Jambres withheld Moses** (these are believed to be traditional names of the Egyptian magicians mentioned in Exod. vii. 11, 22. Origen says, “That which we read in St. Paul, ‘Jannes and Mambres withheld Moses,’ is not found in the public Scriptures, but in a secret book inscribed ‘Jannes and Mambres,’ but Theodore’s account is more probable, that St. Paul learnt their names, not out of the Holy Scriptures, but from the unwritten teaching of the Jews,” especially as the names are found in the Targum of Jonathan on Exod. vii. 11; xxii. 22. The traditional history of Jannes and Jambres, collected out of the rabbinical books, is as follows: They were the sons of Balaam—prophesied to Pharaoh the birth of Moses, in consequence of which he gave the order for the destruction of the Jewish children,—and thenceforward appear as the counsellors of much of the evil,—in Egypt, and in the desert, after the Exodus,—which happened to Israel. They were variously reported to have perished in the Red Sea, or to have been killed in the tumult consequent on the making the golden calf, which they had advised), **thus these also withstand the truth: being men corrupted in mind, worthless** (not abiding the test, reprobate) **concerning the faith** (in respect of the faith).

9.] Notwithstanding, they shall not advance further (im ch. ii. 16, it is said, “*they shall advance further in ungodliness*,” and it is in vain to deny that there is an apparent and literal inconsistency between the two assertions. But on looking further into them, it is manifest, that while there the Apostle is speaking of an immediate spread of error, here he is looking to its ultimate defeat, and extinction): **for their folly** (unintelligent and senseless method of proselytizing and upholding their opinions—and indeed folly of those opinions themselves) **shall be thoroughly manifested to all, as also that of those men was** (Exod. viii. 18: ix. 11: but most probably the allusion is to their traditional end).

10-17.] Contrast, by way of reminding and exhortation, of the education, knowledge, and life of Timothy, with the character just drawn of the opponents.—But thou followedst (‘followedst thy pattern?’ “it was my example in all these things which was set before thee as thy guide—thou wert: a follower of me, as I of Christ.’ The in-definite past tense is both less obvious

and more appropriate than the *perfect*: this was the example set before him, and the reminiscence joined to the exhortation of ver. 14, bears something of reproach with it, which is quite in accordance with what we have reason to infer from the general tone of the Epistle. Whereas the *perfect*, as in A.V., would imply that the example had been really ever before him, and followed up to the present moment: and so would weaken the necessity of the exhortation) **my teaching, conduct, purpose** (Ellicott remarks, that in all other passages in St. Paul's Epistles, this word **purpose** is used with reference to God), **faith, longsuffering** ("his bearing with the offences of the brethren," Theodoret: or perhaps, as Chrysostom,— "his patience in respect of the false teachers and the troubles of the time"), **love** ("which they had not," Chrysostom), **endurance** (or patience: "how generously I bear the attacks of my enemies," Theodoret), **persecutions** ("to these endurance furnished the note of transition," Huther), **sufferings** (not only was I persecuted, but the persecution issued in infliction of suffering), **such** (sufferings) **as befell mein Antioch (of Pisidia), in Iconium, in Lystra** (why should these be especially enumerated? Theodoret as-signs as a reason, "Omitting mention of other dangers, he speaks only of those which happened to him in Pisidia and Lycaonia. For he to whom he was writing was a Lycaonian, and these incidents were better known to him than the rest." And so Chrysostom, and many both ancient and modern, It may be so, doubtless: and this reason, though rejected by De Wette and others, seems much better to suit the context and probability, than the other, given by Huther, that these persecutions were the first which befell the Apostle in his missionary work among the heathen. It is objected to it, that during the former of these persecutions Timothy was not with St. Paul. But the answer to that is easy. At the time of his conversion, they were recent, and the talk of the churches in those parts: and thus, especially with our rendering, and the indefinite past sense of "*thou followest*," would be naturally mentioned, as being those sufferings of the Apostle which first excited the young convert's attention to make them his own pattern of what he too must suffer for the Gospel's sake. Baur and De Wette regard the *exact correspondence* with the Acts (xiii. 50; xiv. 5, 19; xvi. 3] as a suspicious circumstance. Wiesinger well asks, would they have regarded a *discrepancy* from the Acts as a mark of genuineness?); **what persecutions** (or, **such persecutions** as:—understand, 'thou sawest; in proposing to thyself a pattern thou hadst before thee.. 7) **I underwent: and out of all the Lord delivered me.**

12.] Yea, and (or, and moreover. 'They who will, &c., must make up their minds to this additional circumstance,' viz. persecution) **all who are minded** (purpose: 'whose will is to,' Ellicott: hardly so strong as '*who determine*,' Conybeare), **to live godly in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted.**

18.] But (on the other hand: a reason why persecutions must be expected, and even worse and more bitter as time goes on. The opposition certainly, as seems to me, is to the clause immediately preceding, not to ver. 10 f. There would thus be no real contrast: whereas on our view, it is forcibly represented that the breach between light and darkness, between *godliness* and *wickedness*, would not be healed, but rather widened, as time went on) **evil men** (in general,—over the world: particularized, as applying to the matter in hand, by the next words) **and impostors** (literally, *magicians*, in allusion probably to the Egyptian magicians mentioned above) **shall grow worse and worse** ('*advance in the direction of worse:*' see above, ver. 9. There the diffusion of evil was spoken of: here, its *intensity*), deceiving and being deceived.

14.] But do thou continue in the things which thou learnedst (see ch. ii. 2) **and wert convinced of, knowing** (as thou dost) **from what teachers** (viz. thy mother Lois and grandmother Eunice, ch. i. 5: compare '*from a child*,' below: not Paul and Barnabas, as Grotius, nor the *many witnesses* of ch. ii. 2. If the singular [as in A.V.] be read, then the Apostle must be meant) **thou learnedst them; and** (knowing) **that from a child** (more than this: **from an infant** is the literal reading) **thou knowest the holy scriptures** (of the Old Test. This expression [**the sacred writings**] for the Scriptures, not elsewhere found in the New Test., is common in Josephus), **which are able to make thee wise unto** (towards the attainment of) **salvation by means of** (the instrument whereby the *making wise* is to take place: not to be joined to "salvation," as some do) **faith, namely, that which is in** (which rests upon, is reposed in) **Christ Jesus.**

16.] The immense value to Timothy of this early instruction is shewn by a declaration of the profit of Scripture in furthering the spiritual life. There is considerable doubt about the construction of the first clause in this verse, the grounds of which it is hardly possible to bring before an English reader. Is it to be taken, (1) **every scripture** (subject) (is) **inspired by God** (predicate), **and profitable:** or (2) **every scripture inspired by God** (subject) **is also profitable** (predicate)? The former is followed by Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, Estius, Calvin, &c., and by the A.V. The latter by Origen, Theodoret, by Grotius, Erasmus, &c., and the ancient Syriac version, the Latin Vulgate, and Luther. In deciding between these two, the following considerations must be weighed by the English reader, exclusive of those which require a knowledge of the arrangement and requirement of the Greek: (a) the requirement of the context. The object of the present verse plainly is to set before Timothy the value of his early instruction, as a motive to his remaining faithful to it. It is then very possible, that the Apostle might, wish to exalt the dignity of the Scripture by asserting of it that it was *inspired by God*, and then out of this lofty predicate might unfold that it was *also profitable*, &c.;—its various uses in the spiritual life. On the other hand it may be urged, that, thus the two epithets do not hang naturally together, the first consisting of the one word *God-inspired*, and the other being expanded into a whole sentence: especially as in order at all to give symmetry to the whole, the end stated in ver. 17 must be understood as the purposed result of the *inspiration* as well as of the *profit* of the Scriptures, which is hardly natural: (b) the requirements of the grammatical construction: see in my Greek Test.—I own on the whole the balance seems to me to incline on the side of (2), unobjectionable as it is in construction, and of the two, better suited to the context. I

therefore follow it, hesitatingly, I confess, but feeling that: it is not to be lightly overthrown. **Every Scripture** (not ‘every writing.’ the word never occurs in the New Test. except in the sense of ‘Scripture.’ It may mean, perhaps, all Scripture: but, in the presence of such an expression as “another Scripture saith,” John xix. 37, it is safer to keep to the meaning, unobjectionable both grammatically and contextually, ‘every Scripture’—i. e., ‘every part of Scripture’) **given by inspiration of God** (this word *inspired*, like that in the Greek, is an expression and idea connected with *breath*, the power of the divine Spirit being conceived of as a breath of life: the word thus amounts to ‘breathed through,’ ‘full of the Spirit’ It (the idea) is common to Jews, Greeks, and Romans. Josephus speaks of the prophets as having learnt according to the *afflatus* (breathing into them) from God. Plato and Plutarch speak of *inspired wisdom and inspired dreams*; Cicero says, “No one ever was a great man without some divine afflatus.” “Inspired” is first found as a predicate of persons: compare Matt. xxii. 43; 2 Pet. i, 21: then it was also applied to things. On the meaning of the word as applied to the Scriptures, see Introd. to Vol. I. ‘On the inspiration of the Gospels.’ As applied to the prophets, the sense would not materially differ, except “that we ever regard one speaking *prophecy*, strictly so called, as more immediately and thoroughly the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, seeing that the future is wholly hidden from men, and God does not in this case use or inspire *human testimony to facts*, but suggests *the whole substance* of what is said, *direct from Himself*) **is also** (besides this its quality of inspiration: on the construction, see above) **profitable for** (towards) **teaching** (this, the *teaching of the person* reading the Scriptures, not the *making him a teacher*, is evidently the meaning. It is not Timothy’s ability as a teacher, but his stability as a Christian, which is here in question), **for conviction** (“for it convicts our sinful life,” Theodoret. The above remark applies here also), **for correction** (“for it exhorts wanderers to return into the right way,” Theodoret), **for discipline** (see Eph. vi. 4, and note) **which is in righteousness** (which is versed in, as its element and condition, righteousness, and so disciplines a man to be holy, just, and true): **that** (result of the profitableness of Scripture: reasons why God has, having Himself inspired it, endowed it with this profitableness) **the man of God** (1 Tim. vi. 11 and note) **may be complete** (perfect at every point), **thoroughly made ready to every good work** (rather to be generally understood than officially: the man of God is not only a teacher, but any spiritual man: and the whole of the present passage regards the universal spiritual life. In ch. iv. 1 ff. he returns to the official duties of Timothy: but here he is on that which is the common basis of all duty).

2 Timothy: Chapter 4

CH. IV. 1–8.] *Earnest exhortation to Timothy to fulfil his office; in the near prospect of defection from the truth, and of the Apostle’s own departure from life—I adjure thee* (literally, *I earnestly call thee to witness*) **before God, and Christ Jesus, who is about to** (or if this seems to imply too near a coming to judgment, who shall one day) **judge living and dead, and by** (i. e. ‘and I call thee to witness,’ as in Deut. iv. 26, the construction being changed from that in the first clause) **his appearing and his kingdom** (each has its place in the adjuration:—His coming, at which we shall stand before him;—His *kingdom*, in which we hope to reign with Him);

2.] **proclaim the word** (of God); **be urgent** (this is generally referred to the last clause—‘be diligent in preaching?’ but the commandment most probably refers, not to preaching only, but in the whole work of the ministry) **in season, out of season** (“have no defined season, let all time be thy season; not only in peace; not only in security; nor yet when sitting in the church only; even if thou be in perils, even if in prison, even if bound with a chain, even if being led out to die, at every such opportunity, convict, and shrink not from rebuking: for then it is that rebuke is in season, when the conviction goes forward, and the fact is demonstrated.” Chrysostom. I cannot forbear also transcribing a very beautiful passage from the same Father: “But if men continue in the same courses—even after our exhortation, not even then must we abstain from counselling them. For fountains flow, even if no one draw from them: and rivers run, though no one drinks. So too the preacher ought, even if no one attend to him, to fulfil all his own duty; for our rule, who have taken in hand the ministry of the word, is laid down by God the lover of men, that his part is never to slacken, nor to be silent, whether men hear, or pass by.” This latter passage gives the more correct reference,—not so much to *his* opportunities, as the former, but to theirs); **convict, rebuke, exhort; in** (not ‘with,’ it is not the *accompaniment* of the actions, but the clement, the temper in which they are to be performed) **all** (possible) **longsuffering and doctrine** (not subjective ‘*perseverance in teaching*,’ as Conybeare; but ‘*doctrine*’ itself: it [objective] is to be the clement in which these acts take place, as well as *longsuffering* {subjective}). The junction is harsh, but not therefore to be avoided).

3, 4.) *Reason why all these will be wanted.—For there shall be a time when they* (men, i.e. professing Christians, as the context shews) **will not endure** (not bear—as being offensive to them) **the healthy doctrine** (viz. of the Gospel); **but according to** (after the course of) **their own desires** (instead of, in subjection to God’s providence) **will to themselves** (emphatic) **heap up** (one upon another) **teachers, having itching ears** (i. e. seeking to hear for their own pleasure; wanting their vices and infirmities to be tickled); **and shall avert their ears from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**

5 ff] He enforces on Timothy the duty of worthily fulfilling his office, *in consideration of his own approaching end*. For this being introduced, various reasons have been given:—(1) he himself would be no longer able to make head against these adverse influences, and therefore must leave Timothy and others to replace him: (2) Timothy had had his assistance hitherto: but it is now time that he became his own master, and not be changed for the worse by losing St. Paul: so Calvin and Grotius:

(3) the death and blessedness of St. Paul is set before him as a motive to incite him to his duty: so Bengel; and Chrysostom, in a very beautiful passage, too long for transcription: (4) to stir up Timothy to imitation of him. There seems no reason why any one of these should be chosen to the exclusion of the rest: we may well combine (1) and (4), at the same time bearing (2) and (3) in mind:— ‘I am no longer here to withstand these things: be thou a worthy successor of me, no longer depending on, but carrying out for thyself my directions: follow my steps, inherit their result, and the honour of their end.’

5.] **But** (as contrasted with the description preceding) **do thou** (emphatic) **be sober** (or, **watch**: it is difficult to give the full meaning of the word in a version. The reference is especially to the clearness and wakefulness of attention and observance which attends on sobriety, as distinguished from the lack of these qualities in intoxication. ‘Keep thy coolness and presence of mind, that thou be not entrapped into forgetfulness, but discern and use every opportunity of speaking and acting for the truth’) **in all things, suffer hard-ship, do the work of an Evangelist** (here probably in a wide sense, including all that belongs to a preacher and teacher of the Gospel), **fill up the measure of** (fill up, in every point; leave nothing undone in) **thy ministry.**

6.] For the connexion, see above. **For I am already being poured out** (as a drink-offering: i.e. the process is begun, which shall shed my blood. ‘Ready to be offered’ [as A.V., &c.] misses the force of the present tense), **and the time of my departure is at hand.**

7.] **I have striven the good strife** (it is hardly correct to confine the verb or the substantive to the sense of ‘fight’ that it *may be*, but its reference is much wider, to *any contest*: and here probably to that which is specified in the next clause: see especially Heb. xii. 1), **I have finished my race** (see references: the image belongs peculiarly to St. Paul. In Phil. iii. 12 ff. he follows it out in detail. See also 1 Cor. ix. 24 ff.; Heb. xii. 1, 2), **I have kept the faith:**

8.] **henceforth there is laid up for me the** (not, ‘a,’ as A.V.) **crown** ‘compare Phil. iii. 14) **of righteousness** i.e. the bestowal of which is conditional on the substantiation and recognition of righteousness. There Is, as Calvin has shewn, no sort of inconsistency here with the doctrines of grace: “for the gratuitous justification which is conferred on us by grace does not militate against the *reward* of good works, nay, rather the two exactly agree, that man is justified gratis by Christ’s merit, and yet shall receive the reward of his works before God. For as soon as God receives us into grace, He is pleased with our works, so that He ac-counts them worthy of reward though undeserved”), **which the Lord** (Christ: compare the words “His appearing” be-low) **shall award** (more than ‘give: see’ Matt. vi. 4, 6, &c., xvi. 27: the idea of *requital* should be expressed) **me in that day, the righteous** (‘just;’ but the word ‘righteous’ should be kept as answering to ‘righteousness’ above) **judge** (see Acts x. 42. In this assertion of just judgment, there is nothing to controvert the doctrines of grace: see above);—**and** (but) **not only to me** (better than ‘not to me only,’ A.V., which though true, does not correctly re-present the sense), **but also to all who have loved** (who shall then be found to have loved and still to be loving: *loved*, i.e. looked forward with earnest joy to) **His appearing** (ver. 1).

9–22.] *Request to come to Rome. No-tices of his own state and that of others: greetings.*

9 ff] **Do thine endeavour** (so also Tit. iii. 12) **to come to me quickly** (this desire that Timothy should come to him, appears in ch. i. 4, 8: its reason is now specified): **for** (I am almost alone) **Demas** (mentioned Col. iv. 14 with Luke, as saluting the Colossians, and Philem. 24, also with Luke [feat others], as one of the Apostle’s *fellow-workmen*) **deserted me, loving** (i. e. ‘through love of’) **this pre-sent world** (“fond of ease, safety, and security, he chose rather to luxuriate at home, than to suffer hardship with me, and help me to bear my present perils.” Chrysostom), **and went to Thessalonica** (‘his birthplace’ says De Wette: so it would seem thought Chrysostom, above: but how ascertained? He may have gone there for the sake of traffic, which idea the mention of his *love of this world* would seem to support); **Crescens** (not named elsewhere. He is said traditionally to have preached the Gospel in Galatia, and more recently, to have founded the church at Vienne in Gaul: this latter interpretation of Galatia Theodoret also adopts. All this traditional fabric is probably raised by conjecture on this passage) **to Galatia** (see Introd. to Gal. §ii. 1), **Titus** (Introd. to Titus, §i.) **to Dalmatia** (part of the Roman province of Illyricum, on the coast of the Adriatic, south of Liburnia).—Theodoret: says, referring to the words “*loving this present world*,” “These last [Crescens and Titus] are free from this charge; for they were sent by him to preach.” But this hardly agrees with the necessity of supply-ing “departed” from the former sentence, which verb must be understood with both names: see also the contrast in ver. 12. They had certainly left the Apostle of their own accord: why, does not appear). **Luke** (see Introd. to Luke’s Gospel, §i.) **is alone with me** (De Wette’s question, ‘where then was Aristarchus [Acts xxvii. 2. Col. iv. 10. Philem. 24]?’ is one which we have no means of answering: but we may venture this remark: a forger, such as De Wette supposes the writer of this Epistle to be, would have taken good care to ac-count for him). **Mark** (Col. iy. 10, note: Philem. 24. John Mark, Acts xv. 38) **take up** (on thy way), **and bring with thee: for he is to me useful for the ministry** (for help to me in my apostolic labours). But (apparently a slight contrast is intended to those above, who departed of their own accord) **Tychicus** (see Eph. vi. 21 note) **I sent to Ephesus** (on the various attempts to give an account of this jourNEY, and its bearing on the question, whether Timothy was at Ephesus at this time, see Introd. to this Epistle, §i. 5).

18.] **The cloak** (some, as early as Chrysostom, who mentions the view, thought this word signified a bag, in which the books

were: so the Syriac Version renders it: but it is against this idea, as indeed Bengel remarks, that the books should be *afterwards mentioned*. It would be unnatural, in case a bag of books had been left behind, to ask a friend to bring the bag, *also the books, and especially the parchments*: ‘the bag of books and parchments which I left’ would be its most obvious designation) **which I left** (behind me: for what reason, is not clear: but in St. Paul’s life of perils, it may well be conceived that he may have been obliged to leave such things behind, against his intention) **in Troas** (respecting his having been at Troas lately, see Introd. to Pastoral Epistles,§ii. 16, 30, 31) with (‘chez’) **Carpus, when thou art coming** (setting out to come), **bring, and the books** (i. e. papyrus rolls. ‘What did he want with books,’ says Chrysostom, ‘when he was about to depart to God? He wanted them much, to give them to the faithful, that they might possess them instead of his teaching.’ This may have been so: but there is nothing inconsistent with his near prospect of death, in a desire to have his cloak and books during the approaching winter), **especially the parchments** (which as more costly, probably contained the more valuable writings: perhaps the sacred books themselves. On a possible allusion to these books, &c., which the Apostle had with him in his imprisonment at Casarea, see note, Acts xxvi. 24).

14.] **Alexander the smith** (not of necessity *coppersmith*. Perhaps the same with the Alexander of 1 Tim. i. 20, where see note. There is nothing here said inconsistent with his being an Ephesian resident. It has been indeed supposed that he was at Rome, and that the following caution refers to Timothy’s approaching visit: but the past tense here used seems to suit better the other hypothesis. It must ever remain uncertain, whether the Alexander whom we find put forward by the Jews in the Ephesian tumult, Acts xix. 33, 34, is this same person: nothing in that narrative is against it. The title “*the smith*” may be intended to mark *another* Alexander: but it may also be a mere cursory designation of the same person) **did to me much evil; the Lord shall requite him according to his works** (the wish expressed in the received text would make no real difficulty: it is not personal revenge, but zeal for the cause of the Gospel which the wish would express: compare ver. 16 below, where his own personal feelings were concerned): **whom do thou also beware of** (see above, on Alexander); **for he exceedingly withheld our** (better than ‘my,’ seeing that “*me*” occurs in the same sentence, and immediately follows. The plural may be used because the words were such as were common to all Christians—arguments for, or declarations of, our common faith) **words**.

16.] **In my first defence** (open self-defence, before a court of justice. For a discussion of this whole matter, see the Introduction. I will only remark here, that any other defence than one made at Rome, in the latter years of the Apostle’s life, is out of the question) **no one came forward with me** (as *patronus* or friend, to support him by his presence, or pleading), **but all men deserted me: may it not be laid to their charge** (by God: ‘it was not their malice but their cowardice which kept them away,’ says Theodoret). **But the Lord (Jesus) stood by me, and strengthened** (‘put strength in.’ a word especially used of and by our Apostle) **me; that by my means the proclamation** (of the Gospel) **might be delivered in full measure** (see on ver. 5), **and all the Gentiles might hear** (one is tempted, with Theodoret, to interpret this of his preservation for further missionary journeys [Theodoret thinks this defence happened *during* his journey to Spain]: but the spirit of the whole context seems to forbid this, and to compel us to confine this *delivering in full measure* to the effect of the single occasion referred to,—his acquittal before the crowd of people, in whose presence the trials took place: so Bengel—“one occasion is often of the greatest moment: the *Gentiles*—of whom Rome was the capital”): **and I was delivered from the mouth of the lion** (the Fathers mostly understood this of *Nero*. And Esth. [apocryphal] xiv. 13, A.V., is quoted, ‘where Esther says concerning Artaxerxes, Put a word into my mouth *before the lion*.’ Whityb.:—or, seeing that according to the chronology adopted by some, Nero was not in Rome at the time [see Introd. to Pastoral Epistles,§ii. 33], of his *locum tenens*, *Ælius Cæsareanus*,—or of the *Jewish accuser*. But these are hardly probable: nor again is it, that the Apostle was literally in danger of being thrown to wild beasts, and established his right as a Roman citizen to be exempted from that punishment: nor again is the idea, that the expression is figurative for *great danger*,—*the jaws of death*, or the like: for the Apostle *did not fear death*, but: looked forward to it as the end of his course, and certainly would not have spoken of it under this image. The *context* seems to me to demand another and very different interpretation. None stood with him—all forsook him: but the Lord stood by him and strengthened him: *for what?* that he might *witness a good confession*, and that the *preaching* might be expanded to the utmost. The result of this strengthening was, that he was delivered *from the mouth of the lion*: he was strengthened, *witnessed a good confession, in spite of desertion and discouragement*. Then let us pass on to his confidence for the future, the expression of which is bound on to this sentence by the same verb, **shall deliver me**, indicating the identity of God’s deliverance,—and **from every evil work**,” indicating the *generalization of the danger of which this was a particular case*. And how is the danger generally described? as “*every evil work*,” and it is implied that the falling into such danger would preclude him from enduring to Christ’s heavenly kingdom. It was then an *evil work* from which he was on this occasion delivered. What *evil work?* *The falling into the power of the tempter*; the giving way, in his own weakness and the desertion of all, and betraying the Gospel for which he was sent as a witness. The *lion* then is the *devil*; “who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” 1 Pet. v. 8).

18.] **The Lord (Jesus) shall deliver me from every evil work** (see above: from every danger of faint-heartedness, and apostasy. The meaning adopted by some, that the *evil works* are the *works of his adversaries* plotting against him, is totally beside the purpose: he had no such confidence (ver. 6), nor would his conservation to Christ’s heavenly kingdom depend in the least upon such deliverance. Besides which, the correspondence of this declaration of confidence to the concluding petition of the Lord’s Prayer cannot surely be fortuitous, and then *evil*, here joined to *work* as neuter, must be subjective, evil resulting from our *falling* into temptation, not evil happening to us from without), **and shall preserve me safe** (shall *save me*: but in its

not uncommon, pregnant sense of ‘bring safe’) **unto his kingdom in heaven** (though it may be conceded to De Wette that this expression is not otherwise found in St. Paul, it is one to which his existing expressions easily lead on: e.g. Phil. i. 23, compared with iii. 20): **to whom be the glory unto the ages of ages. Amen** (it is again objected, that in St. Paul we never find doxologies ascribing glory to Christ, but always to God. This however is not strictly true: compare Rom. ix. 5. And even if it were, the whole train of thought here leading naturally on to the ascription of such doxology, why should it not occur for the first and only time? It would seem to be an axiom with some critics, that a writer can never use an expression once only. If the expression be entirely out of keeping with his usual thoughts and diction, this may be a sound inference: but this is certainly not the case in the present instance. Besides, the petition of the Lord’s Prayer having been transferred to our Lord as its fulfiller [compare John xiv. 13, 14], the doxology, which seems to have come into liturgical use almost as soon as the prayer itself, would naturally suggest a corresponding doxology here).

19–21.] Salutations and notices. **Sa-Inte Prisca and Aquila** (see notes, Acts xviii. 2: Rom. xvi. 3), **and the house of Onesiphorus** (himself probably deceased. See on ch. i. 16). **Erastus** (Acts xix. 22, an Erastus was sent forward into Macedonia by the Apostle from Ephesus,—and Rom. xvi. 23, an Erastus sends greeting, who is described as the *treasurer of the city* [Corinth]. This latter would seem to be the person here mentioned) **abode in Corinth** (on the inferences to be drawn from this, see Introd. to Pastoral Epistles,§ii. 30 f.); **but Trophimus** (he accompanied the Apostle from Greece into Asia, Acts xx. 4, He was an Ephesian, id. xxi. 29, and was with the Apostle in Jerusalem on his last visit there) **I left in Miletus** (see again this discussed in Introd. to this Epistle,§i. 5. Various conjectures have been made to escape the difficulty here presented: in Melita, or in a Miletus in *Crete*) **sick. Endeavour to come before winter** (when the voyage would be impossible, and so the visit thrown over to another year. See also on ver. 13).—**Eubulus** (otherwise unknown) **greets thee, and Pudens** (see note at the end of the Introd. to this Epistle on Pudens and Claudia), **and Linus** (Ireneus says, “The Apostles committed the ministration of the bishopric [at Rome] to Linus. Of this Linus Paul makes mention in his Epistles to Timothy”), **and Claudia** (see note as before), and all the brethren.

22.] CONCLUDING BLESSING. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. (The) **Grace** (of God) **be with you** (the members of the church where Timothy was: see Introduction).

TITUS

Chapter 1

Chapter 3

Chapter 2

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

Titus: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1-4.] ADDRESS AND GREET-ING.

1.] The occurrence of *the servant of God*, not elsewhere found in the superscriptions of St. Paul's Epistles, is a mark of genuineness: a forger would have been sure to suit every expression of this kind to the well-known habits of the Apostle. **and** (literally, but): it further defines—a servant of God,—this is general:—*but* a more particular designation also belongs to the present matter. **for the faith**] This has been variously rendered: (1) ‘according to the faith, &c., 30 A.V.: (2) similarly Calvin, Beza, Aret., ‘to suit the faith, God's appointment of me and God's prescription of the faith agreeing’ (3) ‘so as to bring about faith in,’ &c. We may at once say that (1) and (2) are inadmissible, as setting up a standard which the Apostle would not have acknowledged for his Apostleship, and as not sniting the mention of the **knowledge** below, which also belongs to the preposition. Nor does (3) seem quite to be justified by usage. The best sense seems to be that which Huther gives,—that of *reference*, ‘with regard to,’ i.e. to bring about, cherish, and perfect. I would render then ‘*for*.’ **Paul, a servant of God, but [and] an Apostle of Christ Jesus, for the faith of the elect of God** (those whom God has chosen of the world: and *their* faith is the only true faith—the only faith which the apostolic office would subserve), **and the thorough knowledge** (to promote the knowledge) **of the truth which is according to** (belongs to,—is conversant in and coincident with: for, as Chrysostom says, “there is a truth of things which is not according to godliness, e.g. the knowledge of husbandry, or of arts, is a knowledge of truth: but this is truth according to godliness”) **godliness**;

2.] **in** (on condition of, in a state of) **hope of life eternal** (to what are these words to be referred? Not back to the word “*apostle*,” regarding them as a coordinate clause with “*for the faith*,” &c.:—not to the latter part of ver. 1, as subordinate to it—nor to the word “*godliness*,” nor to any one *portion* of the preceding sentence: for by such reference we develope an inferior member of the former sentence into what evidently is an expansion of the main current of thought, and thus give rise to a disproportion:—but to the whole, from “*for the faith*” down to “*godliness*,” as subordinate to that whole, and further conditioning or defining it: as if it were, that the elect of God may believe and thoroughly know the truth which-is according to piety, in hope of eternal life), **which** (eternal life: not the *truth*, nor the *hope*) **God, who cannot lie** (see Heb. vi. 18), **promised before eternal times** (the very dis-tinct use of this same expression in 2 Tim. i. 9, where the meaning ‘from ancient times’ is precluded, should have kept Commentators from endeavouring to fix that sense on the words here. The solution of the difficulty, that no promise was actually made till the race of man existed, must be found by regarding, as in the place in 2 Tim., the construction as a mixed one,—compounded of the actual promise made in time, and the divine purpose from which that promise sprung, fixed in eternity. Thus, as there God is said to have given us grace in Christ from eternal ages, meaning that the gift took place as the result of a divine purpose fixed from eternity, so here He is said to have promised eternal life before eternal times, meaning that the promise took place as the result of a purpose fixed from eternity);

3.] **but** (contrast to the eternal and hidden purpose, and to the promise, just mentioned) **made manifest in its own seasons** (not, ‘*His own seasons*:’—the times belonging to it,—fixed by Him for the manifestation) **His word** (we naturally expect the same object as before, viz. *eternal life*: but we have instead, *His word*,—i. e. the Gospel, see Rom. xvi. 25) **in** (as the element or vehicle of its manifesta-tion) **the proclamation** (see 2 Tim. iv. 17), **with which I was entrusted according to** (in pursuance of) **the command of our Saviour God**;

4.] **to Titus** (see Introd. §i.), my true (genuine, see on 1 Tim. i, 2) **child according to** (in respect of, or agreeably to, in conformity with the ap-pointed spread and spiritually generative power of that faith) **the common faith** (common to us both and to all the people of God: hardly as Grotius, ‘to Jews, such as Paul, and Greeks such as Titus for there is no hint of such a distinction being brought out in this Epistle): **Grace and peace from God the Father** (see on 1 Tim. i, 2) **and Christ Jesus our Saviour.**

5-9.] *Reason stated for Titus being left in Crete—to appoint elders in its cities. Directions what sort of persons to choose for this office.*

5.] **For this reason I left thee behind in Crete** (on the island, and the whole matter, see Introd.), **that thou mightest carry forward the correction** (already begun by me) **of those things which are defective, and** (and brings out, among the matters to be attended to in the further setting in order, especially that which follows) **mightest appoint city by city elders** (see 1 Tim. iv. 14: note on Acts xx. 17), **as I prescribed to thee** (the order of the Apostle referred as well to the *fact* of appointing elders, as to the *manner* of their appointment,—which last particular is now expanded in directions respecting the characters of those to be chosen):

6.] **if any man is under no imputation** (see 1 Tim. iii. 10. No intimation is conveyed by the words “*if any*,” as some suppose, that such persons would be rare in Crete), **husband of one wife** (see note on 1 Tim. iii. 2), **having believing children** (for he who cannot bring his own children to the faith, how shall he bring others?) **who are not under** (involved in) **accusation of profligacy** (see Eph. v. 18, note), **or insubordinate** (respecting the reason of these conditions affecting his household, see 1 Tim. iii. 4. I have treated in the Introd. §1., the argument which Baur and De Wette have drawn from these descriptions for dating our Epistles in the second century).

7 ff.) **For it behoves a bishop** (or, **overseer**: see note, 1 Tim. iii. 2; here most plainly identified with the *presbyter* spoken of before. So Theodoret: “Hence it is plain that they called the presbyters, bishops”) **to be under no accusation, as God's steward** (see 1 Tim. iii. 15, to which image, that of a responsible servant and dispensator [1 Pet. iv. 10] in the house of God, the allusion perhaps is, rather than to, that of 1 Cor. iv. 1. here is clearly no allusion to the *bishop's own household*, as some suppose. Mack well remarks, meaning perhaps however more than the words convey, “*God's steward*:—consequently spiritual superiors are not merely servants and commissioned agents of the Church. According to the Apostle's teaching, church government does not grow up out of the ground”), **not selfwilled** (“a bishop who would command the affections of those whom he governs, must not be self-willed, so as to act on his own opinion, and counsel and without the mind of those whom he rules. For that would be tyrannical.” Theophylact), **not soon provoked, not a brawler, not a striker** (for both these, see 1 Tim. iii. 3, notes), **not greedy of gain** (1 Tim. iii. 8, note); **but a lover of hospitality** (1 Tim. iii. 2, note, and 3 John 5), **a lover of good** (compare the opposite, 2 Tim. iii. 3. It is hardly likely to mean a lover of good men, coming so immediately after “*a lover of hospitality*”), **self-restrained** (or, sober-minded, see 1 Tim. ii. 9, note. I am not satisfied with these renderings, but adopt them for want of a better: **discreet** is perhaps preferable), **just, holy** (see on these, and their distinction, in notes on Eph. iv. 24: 1 Thess. ii. 10), **continent** (here, though that is the primary meaning, the sense need not be limited to: sexual continence, but may be spread over the whole range of the indulgences); **holding fast** (constantly keeping to, and not letting go).—Then how are we to take the following words? Is **the faithful word according to the teaching** equivalent to (1) *the word which is faithful according to the teaching*, or (2) *the faithful word which is according to the teaching*? (1) is taken by Wiesinger and Conybear [the words which are faithful to (?) our teaching]: (2) by Chrysostom, Theophylact, and almost all Commentators, and I believe rightly. For, to omit the reason derived from the arrangement of the original, the epithet **faithful**, absolute, is so commonly attached to a saying in these Epistles [1 Tim. i. 15; iii. 1; iv. 9: 2 Tim. ii. 11: ch. iii. 8] as to incline us, especially with the above reason, to take it absolutely here also. I therefore render accordingly) **the faithful** (true, trustworthy, see note on 1 Tim. i. 15) **word** (which is) **according to** (measured by, or in accordance with) **the instruction** [which he has received], **that he may be able both to exhort** (believers) **in** (the element of his exhortation) **the sound doctrine** (the teaching which is healthy), **and to rebuke** (see ver. 13 below) **the gainsayers**,

10–16.] By occasion of the last clause, the Apostle goes on to describe the nature of the adversaries to whom he alludes, especially with reference to Crete.

10.] **For** (explains “*the gainsayers*” of ver. 9) **there are many insubordinate vain talkers** (sec 1 Tim. i. 6, and ch. iii. 9) and **deceivers** (see Gal. vi. 3: deceivers of men's minds), **chiefly** (not only—there were some such of the Gentile converts) **they of the circumcision** (i. e. not Jews, but Jewish Christians: for he is speaking of seducers within the Church: compare ver. 11): **whose mouths it is necessary to stop** (by rebuking them sharply, see below), **such men as** (“*inasmuch as they*,” Ellicott: which perhaps is logically better) **overturn** (2 Tim. i. 18) **whole houses** (i. e. “pervert whole families.” Theophylact calls these perverters “the devil's crowbars, with which he pulls down the houses of God”), **teaching things which are not fitting for the sake of base gain** (see 1 Tim. vi. 5).

12.] **One of them** (not, of the “many” spoken of above,—nor of them of the circumcision: but of the inhabitants of Crete, to which both belonged), **their own prophet** (see below), **said**, “**The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies**” (Theophylact ascribes the saying to EPIMENIDES; and so also Chrysostom, Epiphanius, and Jerome. But. Theodoret ascribes the verse to Callimachus, in whose Hymn to Zeus, ver. 8, the words “the Cretans are always liars” are found. To this however Jerome [as also Epiphanius] answers, that Callimachus took the words from Epimenides.—EPIMENIDES was a native of Phæstus in Crete, and lived about 600 B.C. He was sent for to Athens to undertake the purification of the city from the pollution occasioned by Cylon (see articles ‘Epimenides’ and ‘Cylon,’ in the Dict. of Biography and Mythology), and is said to have lived to an extreme old age, and to have been buried at Lacedæmon. The appellation ‘prophet’ seems to have belonged to him in its literal sense: Cicero describes him as one of those who in an excitement of mind, or by its free motion, foretold future events: and Apuleius calls him an illustrious declarer of the fates, and a poet. And Diogenes Laertius tells us that the Cretans sacrificed to him as a god.—On the character here given of the Cretans, see Introd. to this Epistle, §ii. 9 ff. **lothful bellies** is said of those who by indulging their bodily appetites have become corpulent and indolent).

13.] **This testimony is true. Wherefore reprove them sharply** (“for,” says Chrysostom, “such people want strong and cutting words: mildness has no effect on them”), **that they may be healthy in the faith** (the *Cretans* indicated here, who are to be thus rebuked in order to their soundness in the faith, are manifestly not the false teachers, but the ordinary believers: compare ver. 14);

14.] **not giving attention to Jewish fables** (on the probable nature of these, see 1 Tim. i. 4 note: and on the whole subject, the Introd. to these Epistles, §i. 12 ff. They were probably the seeds of the gnostic mythologies, already scattered about and taking root) **and commandments** (compare 1 Tim. iv. 3: Col. ii. 16, 22; and our next verse, by which it appears that these commandments were on the subject of abstinence from meats and other things appointed by God for man's use) **of men turning away** (or the present: part. may express habitual character—whose description it is that they turn away) from the truth.

15.] *The Apostle's own answer to those who would enforce these commandments.* **All things** (absolutely—all things with which man can be concerned) **are pure to the pure** ("God created nothing impure: for nothing is impure except sin only: for this lays hold of the soul, and defiles it," Chrysostom. See Matt. xxiii, 26: Luke xi. 41. There is no ground whatever for supposing this to be a maxim of the false teachers, quoted by the Apostle, any more than the "*all things are lawful for me*" of 1 Cor. vi. 12, where see note. The maxim here is a truly Christian one of the noblest order.—As usual in these Epistles [see Introd. §i. 88], **purity** is inseparably connected with soundness in the faith, compare Acts xv. 9,—and 1 Tim. iv. 8, where our words, "*to the pure,*" are expanded into "*those who are faithful and know the truth*"): **but to the polluted and unbelieving** (see the preceding remarks) **nothing is pure; but both** (or 'even,' as A.V.:—but the other seems preferable, on account of the close correspondence of the two fauctics mentioned) **their mind** (their rational part, Eph. iv. 17, which presides over and leads all the determinate acts and thoughts of the man) **and their conscience is polluted** (and therefore, uncleanness tainting their rational acts and their reflective self-recognitions, nothing: can be pure to them: every occasion becomes to them an occasion of sin, every creature of God an instrument of sin; as Mack well observes, "The relation, in which the sinful subject stands to the objects of its possession or of its inclination, is a sinful one").

16.] *Expansion of the last clause, shewing their conscious life of falsehood.* **They make confession** (openly, in sight of men: but not so only—their confession is a true one so far, that they *have the knowledge*, and *believe* it: not 'they profess,' as A.V.) **that they know God; but in (or, by) their works they deny (Him)** (not 'it' see 2 Tim. ii, 12), **being abominable** (see Luke xvi. 15), **and disobedient, and for (or, unto: towards the accomplishing of) every good work worthless (or reprobate).**

Titus: Chapter 2

CH. II. 1—III. 11.] Directions to Titus, how to exhort the believers of various classes, and how to comport himself. For intermediate divisions, see below.

1.] **But** (contrast to the persons just described: 'on the other hand') **do thou speak** (not what they speak, ch. i, 11: but) **the things which befit the sound doctrine** (that doctrine which is sound and wholesome, not teaching things which ought not to be taught): viz. **that the aged men** (not *presbyters*, which implies eldership, and not old age only) **be sober** (see note on 1 Tim. iii. 2), **grave** (1 Tim. iii. 4, note), **discreet** (or, self-restrained), **sound in their faith, in their love, in their patience** (see 1 Tim. vi. 11, where the same three are joined together).

8.] **The aged women** (see 1 Tim. v. 2; but there is in this case here no official term to occasion confusion) **likewise** (after the same general pattern, to which the separate virtues above mentioned belong), **in deportment** (the word includes *gesture* and *habit*), **as becometh holiness, not slanderers** (see 1 Tim. iii. 1, and note), **not enslaved** (1 Tim. iii. 8) **to much wine** (this vice may be included in the character given of the Cretans above, ch. i. 12), **teachers of that which is good; that they school** (see on 2 Tim. i. 7. The verb here is that cognate to the substantive used there) **the young women to be lovers of their husbands, lovers of their children, discreet** (this term certainly applies better to women than *self-restrained*, which has been proposed as a rendering: there is in this latter, in their case, an implication of *effort*, which destroys the spontaneity, and brushes off, so to speak, the bloom of this best of female graces. See, however, note on 1 Tim. ii. 9. The word is one of our greatest difficulties), **chaste workers at home** (the word is not found elsewhere, and has perhaps on that account been changed to the more usual one, which signifies *staylers at home*), **good** ('Theophylact joins this with the last,—*good keepers at home*. So also the old Syriac version. But it seems better to preserve the series of single epithets, till broken in the next clause by the construction. As a single epithet, it seems to provide, that their keeping, or working, at home, should not degenerate into churlishness or niggardliness), **in subjection to their own** (inserted to bring out and impress the duties they owe to them—so in Eph. v. 22) **husbands, that the word of God** (the Gospel) **be not ill-spoken of** ("for their leaving their husbands under pretence of religion brought scandal on the preaching of the Gospel." Theodoret).

6 ff.] **The younger men in like manner exhort to be sober-minded** (see above, ver. 5, and 1 Tim. 9, note), **shewing thyself in (concerning) all matters an example of good works** (ref.): **in thy teaching, (shewing) incorruption** (it is difficult exactly to fix the reference of this word. It may be objective, of the *contents* of the teaching—that it should set forth purity as its character and aim: or subjective, that *he should be, in his teaching*, pure in motive, uncorrupted: so Wiesinger, comparing 2 Cor. xi. 3. Huther takes it of the *form* of the teaching, that it should be pure from all expressions foreign to the character of the Gospel. This is perhaps hardly satisfactory: and the first interpretation would bring it too near in meaning to *sound speech*, or

healthy discourse, which follows), **gravity, a discourse** (in its contents and import) **healthy, not to be condemned; that he of the opposite part** (the heathen or Jewish adversaries of the Gospel, among whom they dwelt) **may be ashamed, having nothing to say of us** (Christians: not ‘me and thee’) (that is) **evil** (in our acts: this peculiar word for *evil* is never used of words in the New Test., but always of *deeds*: ‘having no ‘evil thing to report of us’—no evil, whether seen in our demeanour, or arising from our teaching).

9.] (Exhort) **Slaves to be in subjection to their own masters, in all things to give satisfaction** (this, the servants’ own phrase among ourselves, expresses perhaps better than any other the meaning. ‘To be acceptable’ would seem to bring the slave too near to the position of a friend); **not contradicting** (in the wide sense, not merely in words. In John xix. 12, “speaketh against Caesar,” the same verb is used), **not purloining, but manifesting all** (possible) **good faith; that they may adorn in all things the doctrine of our Saviour, God** (see on 1 Tim. i. 1. Not Christ, but the Father is meant: in that place the distinction is clearly made, On this ‘adorning’ Calvin remarks, “This circumstance is to be noted, that God deigns to accept adornment from slaves, whose condition was so vile and abject that they were not commonly reckoned among men at all. For he does not mean servants, such as we now use, but bond-slaves, which were bought in the market like oxen and horses, And if *their* life is an ornament to the Christian name, much more let those who are in honour see that they defile it not by their turpitude”),

11–15.] *Ground of the above exhortations in the moral purpose of the Gospel respecting us (11–14): and consequent exhortation to Titus (15).*

11.] **For** (reasons for the above exhortations from ver. 1: not as Chrysostom and others, only for vv. 9, 10. The latter clause of ver. 10, it is true, gives occasion to this declaration; but the reference of these verses is far wider than merely to slaves) **the grace of God** (that divine favour to men, of which the whole process of Redemption was a proof: not to be limited to *Christ’s Incarnation*: though certainly this may be said for that interpretation, that *it may also* be regarded as a term inclusive of all the blessings of Redemption: but it does not follow, that of two such inclusive terms, the one may be substituted for the other) *was manifested bringing salvation to all men* (this “*to all men*” follows “*bringing salvation*,” not as in A. V., “*was manifested*.” Thus we have “the Saviour of all men,” 1 Tim. iv. 10: see also ib. ii. 4), **disciplining us** (see note on 1 Tim. i. 20. There is no need to depart from the universal New Testament sense of this word, and soften it into ‘teaching?’ the education which the Christian man receives from the grace of God, is a discipline, properly so called, of self-denial and training in godliness, accompanied therefore with much mortification and punitive treatment), **in order that** (by the ordinary rendering, “*teaching us, that,*” we make **that** introduce merely the *purport* of the teaching, whereas this is said of the *purpose*), **denying** (not, ‘having denied’) **ungodliness and the lusts of the world** (‘all worldly lusts.’ **Worldly**, belonging to that world which lieth in the wicked one, and is without, God: see 1 John ii. 15–17), **we might live soberly, and justly** (better than ‘righteously,—‘righteous,’ by its forensic objective sense in St. Paul, introducing a confusion, where the question is of moral rectitude), **and godly, in the present life** (as St. Bernard says, *soberly* respects *ourselves*,—*justly*, our neighbour,—*godly*, our God.—These three comprising our *discipline* in faith and love, he now comes to *hope*): **looking for the blessed hope** (here, as in Gal. v. 5, Col. i. 5 al., nearly objective,—the hope, as embodying the thing hoped for), **and manifestation** (*hope and manifestation* belong together) **of the glory** (Chrysostom says, ‘He speaks here of two manifestations; the former of grace, the latter of glory.’ Nothing could be more unfortunate than the rendering of the A.V., “*glorious appearing*,” by which the whole sense is obscured) **of the great God** (the Father: see below) **and of our Saviour Jesus Christ** (as regards the sense, an exact parallel is found in Matt. xvi. 27, “*The Son of man is about to come in the glory of His Father,*” compared with Matt. xxv. 31, “*When the Son of man shall come in His glory.*” See also 1 Pet. iv. 13. The glory which shall be revealed at the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ is *His own glory, and that of His Father* [John xvii, 3; 1 Thess. iii. 13]. This sense has been obscured by the foolish rendering of the A.V. see above. And we now come to consider the meaning of the words *the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. Two views have been taken of them: (1) that **the great God and our Saviour** are to be taken together as the description of **Jesus Christ**,—‘*of Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour*: (2) that, as given above, **the great God** describes the Father, and **our Saviour Jesus Christ** the Son. It is obvious that in dealing with (1), we shall be deciding with regard to (2) also. (1) has been the view of the Greek orthodox Fathers, and of most ancient and modern Commentators. That the former so interpreted the words, is obviously not [as it has been considered] decisive of the question, if they can be shewn to bear legitimately another meaning, and that meaning to be the one most likely to have been in the mind of the writer. The passage must be argued primarily on its own ground, not primarily on the consensus of the Greek Fathers. No one disputes that it *may* mean that which they have inter-preted it: and there were obvious reasons why they, having licence to do so, should choose this interpretation. But it is our object, not being swayed, in this or any other interpretation, by doctrinal considerations one way or the other, to enquire, not what the words *may* mean, but what they *do* mean, as far as we may be able to ascertain it.—I have in my Greek ‘Test. argued first from the construction of the sentence, and then from the Apostle’s usage of the expression “God our Saviour:” and from both of these considerations I have deduced that it is not probable he meant to apply the whole of this to our Lord, but the former portion to the Father, and the latter to the Son. The reasoning on the second point may be intelligible to the English reader. The expression “*God our Saviour*” occurs six times in these Epistles, once in Luke (i. 47], and once in the Epistle of Jude. If the writer *here* identifies this expression, ‘the great God and our Saviour,’ with the Lord Jesus Christ, calling Him*God and our Saviour,’ it will be at least probable that in other places where he speaks of “*God our Saviour*,” he also designates our Lord Jesus Christ. Now is that so? On the contrary, in I

Tim. i. 1, we have the command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope: where I suppose none will deny that the Father and the Son are most plainly distinguished from one another. The same is the case in 1 Tim. ii. 3–5, a passage bearing much [see below] on the interpretation of this one: and consequently in 1 Tim. iv. 10, where “*is the Saviour of all men*” corresponds to “*willeth all to be saved*” in the other. So also in Titus i. 8, where “*our Saviour God*,” by whose “*command*” the promise of eternal life was manifested, with the proclamation of which St. Paul was entrusted, is the same “*eternal God*,” by whose “*command*” the hidden mystery was manifested in Rom. xvi. 26, where the same distinction is made. The only place where there could be any doubt is in our ver. 10, which possible doubt however is removed by ver. 11, where the same assertion is made, of the revelation of the hidden grace of God [the Father]. Then we have our own ch. iii. 4–6, where we find “*our Saviour God*” in ver. 4, clearly defined as the Father, and “*through Jesus Christ our Saviour*” in ver. 6. In the one passage of St. Jude, the distinction is equally clear: for there we have “*to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord*.” It is plain then, that the usage of the words ‘*God our Saviour*’ does not make it probable that the whole expression here is to be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. And in estimating this probability, let us again recur to 1 Tim. ii. 3, 5, a passage which runs very parallel with the present one. We read there, “For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus, himself man, who gave Himself a ransom,” &c. Compare this with “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for us,” &c. Can there be a reasonable doubt, that the Apostle writing two sentences so closely corresponding, on a point of such high importance, would have in his view the same distinction in the second of them, which he so strongly lays down in the first?—Without then considering the question as closed, I would submit that (2) satisfies all the requirements of the sentence: that it is both structurally and contextually more probable, and mere agreeable to the Apostle’s way of writing: and I have therefore preferred it. Whichever way taken, the passage is just as important a testimony to the divinity of our Saviour: according to (1), by asserting His possession of Deity and right to the appellation of the Highest: according to (2), even more strikingly, asserting His equality in glory with the Father, in a way which would be blasphemy if predicated of any of the sons of men; **who** (our Saviour Jesus Christ) **gave Himself** (“the forcible ‘Himself, His whole self, the greatest gift ever given,’ must not be overlooked.” Ellicott) **for us** (‘on our behalf, not ‘*in our stead*’), **that He might** (by this assertion of the Redeemer’s purpose, we return to the moral aim of verses 11, 12, more plainly indicated as in close connexion with Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice) **redeem** (‘*buy off with a price.*’ See note, 1 Tim. ii. 6: and compare 1 Pet. i. 18, where the price is stated to have been the precious blood of Christ) **us from all iniquity** (lawlessness: see 1 John iii. 4, “*sin is lawlessness*”), **and might purify** (by this statement that the Redeemer’s object was to purify to Himself a peculiar people, and not “*us*” merely, His purpose is lifted off from our particular ease, and generally and objectively stated) **to Himself a people peculiarly His** (see note on Eph. i. 14; also 1 Pet. ii. 9), **zealous** (an ardent worker and promoter) **of good works.**

15.] gathers up all since ver. 1, where the general command last appeared, and en-forces it on Titus, In ch. iii. 1, the train of thought is again resumed.—**These things** (the foregoing: not, the following) **speak, and exhort** (in the case of those who believe and need stirring up), **and rebuke** (in the case of those who are rebellious) with **all imperativeness. Let no man despise thee** (‘so conduct thyself in thine exhortations, with such gravity, and such consistency, and such impartiality, that every word of thine may carry weight, and none may be able to cast slight on thee for flaws in any of these points’).

Titus: Chapter 3

III. 1, 2.] *Rules concerning behaviour to those without.*—**Put them in mind** (as of a duty previously and otherwise well known, but liable to be forgotten) **to be in subjection to governments, to authorities, to obey magistrates, to be ready towards every good work** (the connexion seems to be as in Rom. xiii. 3, where the rulers are said to be *not a terror to the good works, but to the evil*. Jerome and others suppose these exhortations to subjection to have found their occasion in the insubordination of the Jews on principle to foreign rule, and more especially of the Cretan Jews. In the presence of similar exhortations in the Epistle to the Romans and elsewhere, we can hardly perhaps say so much as this: but certainly the quotations given by Wetstein seem to establish the fact of Cretan turbulence in general), **to speak evil of no one** (these words set forth the *general* duty, but are perhaps introduced owing to what has preceded; compare 2 Pet. ii. 10; Jude 8), **to be not quarrelsome, forbearing** (note on Phil. iv. 5. “*The forbearing man* must have been, it is to be feared, a somewhat exceptional character in Crete, where an *innate covetousness*, exhibited in outward acts of aggression, *both privately and publicly*, is described by Polybius as one of the prevailing and dominant vices.” Ellicott), **manifesting all meekness towards all men** (from what follows, *all* men is evidently to be taken in the widest sense, and especially to be applied to the heathen without: see below).

3.] **For** (reason why we should shew all meekness, &c.: “Because we were once, as the thief said to his fellow, in the same condemnation.” Theophylact) **we** (Christians) **also** (as well as they) **were** (emphatically prefixed) **once without understanding** (of spiritual things; see Eph. iv. 18), **disobedient** (to God, ch. i. 16: he is no longer speaking of *authorities*, but has passed into a new train of thought), **led astray, slaves to divers lusts and pleasures, passing our lives in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.**

4.] **But when the goodness and love towards men** (literally, *philanthropy*). I prefer this plain rendering of the word to any of

the more usual ones) **of our Saviour God** (the Father: compare “*through Jesus Christ*” below, and see note on ch. ii. 13) **was manifested** (viz. in Redemption, by the Incarnation and Satisfaction of the Redeemer); **not by virtue of** (*out of*, as the ground out of which an act springs. Compare besides the frequent *of faith, of works*,—Matt. xii. 37 twice: Rom. i. 4: 2 Cor. xiii. 4) **works wrought in** (in righteousness, as the element and condition in which they were wrought) **righteousness which we** (emphatic) did (not, ‘*have done*,’ as A.V., nor ‘*had done*,’—which in fact obscures the meaning: for God’s act here spoken of was a definite act in time—and its application to us, also a definite act in time [see below]: and if we take this verb as pluperfect, we confine the Apostle’s repudiation of our works, as moving causes of those acts of God, to the *time previous to those acts*. For aught that this pluperfect would assert, our salvation might be prompted on God’s part by future works of righteousness which He foresaw we should do. Whereas the simple past tense throws the whole into the same time.—“His goodness, &c. was manifested... not for works which we did.—He saved us,”—and renders the repudiation of human merit universal), but according to (after the measure of, in pursuance of, after the promptings of) **His compassion He saved us** (this saved us must be referred back to the definite objective act of God in Redemption, which has been above mentioned. On the part of God, that act is one—in the application of it to individuals, it is composed of many and successive acts. But this being contemporaneous with the verb appeared above, cannot apply to our individual salvation alone. At the same time, standing as it does in a transitional position, between God’s objective act and the subjective individual application of it, it no doubt looks forward as well as backward—to individual realization of salvation, as well as to the divine completion of it once for all in Christ.—The “*us*” here is not *all mankind*, which would be inconsistent with what follows,—nor *all Christians*, however true that would be,—but the same as are indicated by “*and we*” above,—the particular Christians in the Apostle’s view us he was writing—Titus and his Cretan converts, and himself), **by means of the laver** (not ‘*washing*,’ as A.V., which the word cannot mean by any possibility: but always a vessel, or pool in which washing takes place. Here, the baptismal font: see on Eph. v. 26) **of regeneration** (first, let us treat of this word. It occurs only in Matt. xix. 28, and there in an objective sense, whereas here it is evidently subjective. There it is the great second birth of heaven and earth in the latter days: here the second birth of the individual man. Though not occurring elsewhere in this sense, it has its cognate expressions. Then, of the *genitive*, of regeneration. ‘The font is the ‘laver of regeneration,’ because it is the vessel consecrated to the use of that Sacrament whereby, in its *completeness* as a Sacrament [see below], the new life unto God is conveyed. And inasmuch as it is in that font, and when we are in it, that the first breath of that life is drawn, it is the font of,—belonging to, pertaining to, setting forth, —regeneration.—Observe, there is here no figure: the words are literal: Baptism is taken as in all its completion,—the outward visible sign accompanied by the inward spiritual grace; and as thus complete, it not only represents, but is, the new birth. The font then, the laver of regeneration, representing the external portion of the Sacrament, and pledging the internal,—that *inward and spiritual grace*, necessary to the completion of the Sacrament and its regenerating power, is not, as too often, left to follow as a matter of course, and thus baptismal regeneration rendered a mere formal and unmeaning thing, ‘*ex opere operato*,’—but is distinctly stated in the following words), **and** (understand through again: so Theodoret and Bengel, who says, “Two things are spoken of: the laver of regeneration, which is a way of expressing baptism into Christ, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” On the other hand, most Commentators [see Ellicott here] take *renewing* as a second genitive after *font* (of regeneration and of the renewing, &c.) the renewal (the word is used of the gradual renewal of heart and life in the image of God, following upon the new birth, and without which the birth is a mere abortion, not leading on to vitality and action. It is here treated as potentially involved in God’s act of saving us. We must not, for the sake of making it contemporaneous with the laver of baptism, give it another and untenable meaning, that of mere incipient spiritual life) **of** (brought about by; genitive of the efficient cause) **the Holy Spirit** (who alone can renew unto life in progressive sanctification. So that, as in 1 Pet. iii. 21, it is not the

s mere outward act or fact of baptism to which we attach such high and glorious epithets, but that complete baptism by water and the Holy Ghost, whereof the first cleansing by water is indeed the ordinary sign and seal, but whereof the glorious indwelling Spirit of God is the only efficient cause and continuous agent. ‘**BAPTISMAL REGENERATION**’ is the *distinguishing doctrine of the new covenant* (Matt. iii. 11]: but let us take care that we know and bear in mind what ‘*baptism*’ means: not the mere ecclesiastical act, not the mere fact of reception by that act among God’s professing people; but that, completed by the divine act, manifested by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the heart and through the life. It should be a caution to those persons who revile this doctrine, entirely mistaking its purport and tendency, that they have the most direct and emphatic testimony of Holy Scripture against them);

6.] **which** (or, rather, **whom**; the Holy Spirit, not *the water*) **He poured out on us richly** (again, it is mere waste of time to debate whether this pouring out be the one general one at Pentecost, or that in the heart of each individual believer: the one was God’s objective act once for all, in which all its subjective exemplifications and applications were potentially enwrapped) **through** (as its channel and medium, He having purchased it for us, and made the pouring out: possible, in and by His own blessed Sacrifice in our nature) **Jesus Christ our Saviour** (which title was used of the Father above: of Him,—ultimately: of our Lord,—immediately);

7.] **in order that** (the sentence *may* express the aim either of His *saving us* [Bengel, De Wette, Huther, Ellicott], or of His *pouring out the Spirit on us*: more naturally, I believe, of the latter. Theologically, this statement of purpose is exact: the effusion of the Spirit has for its purpose the conviction of sin and manifestation of the righteousness of Christ, out of which two spring justifying faith) **having been justified by His** (this *His*, referring to the more remote subject, must be used here not

of our Lord, who has just been mentioned, but of the Father: and so usually, *the grace of God* [Acts xi. 23; 24, 32: Rom. v. 15: 1 Cor. i. 4, &c.] is the efficient cause of our justification in Christ) **grace, we might become heirs** (see especially Gal. iii. 20) **according to** (in pursuance of, consistently with, so that the inheritance does not disappoint, but fully accomplishes and satisfies the hope) **the hope of eternal life** (some Commentators would arrange this, heirs—according to the (our) hope—of eternal life. The objection brought against joining *hope of eternal life* together, is, that thus *heirs* would stand alone. But it *does* thus stand alone in every place where St. Paul uses it in the spiritual sense; viz. Rom. iv. 14; viii. 17 twice [“*of God*” does not belong to it in this sense]: Gal. iii. 29; iv. 1, 9: and therefore why not here?).

8–11.] General rules for Titus.

8.] Faithful is the saying (reff.: viz. the saying which has just been uttered, “*when the kindness*,” &c. This sentence alone, of those which have gone before, has the solemn and somewhat rhythmical character belonging for the most part to the “faithful sayings” of the apostolic church quoted in these Epistles), **and concerning these things** (the things which have just been dwelt on: see above) **I would have thee positively affirm** (with persistence and thoroughness), **in order that** (not, ‘that,’ implying the *purport* of that which he is to affirm, nor is what follows *the faithful saying*, as would appear in the A.V.: what follows is to be the result of thorough affirmation of vv. 4–7) **they who have believed** (have been brought to belief and endure in it: the present would perhaps express the sense, but the perfect is to be preferred, inasmuch as the present is often used of the hour and act of commencing belief: see Acts xix. 2: Rom. xiii. 11) **God** (trusted God, learned to credit what God says: not to be confounded with *believers on*, and its various forms. There appears no reason for supposing that these words describe merely the Gentile Christians) **may take care to practise** (literally, preside over: a workman presides over, is master and conductor of, his work: and thus the transition from presiding over to conducting and practising a business was very easy) **good works. These things** (viz. same as before, the great truths of vv. 4–7, see 1 Tim. ii. 3) **are good and profitable for men.**

9.] Connexion:—maintain these great truths: **But foolish questionings, and genealogies** (see ch. i. 14, note), **and strifes** (the result of the genealogies, as in 1 Tim. i. 4), **and contentions about the law** (see again 1 Tim. i. 7. The subject of contention would be the justification, or not, of certain commandments of men, out of the law: or perhaps the mystical meaning of the various portions of the law, as affecting these genealogies) **avoid** (stand aloof from, see 2 Tim. ii. 16 note); **for they are unprofitable and vain.**

10.] An heretical man (one who founds or belongs to an heresy—a self-chosen and divergent form of religious belief or practice. When St. Paul wrote 1 Cor., these forms had already begun to assume consistency and to threaten danger: see 1 Cor. xi. 19. We meet with them also in Gal. v. 20, both times as “*heresies*,” divisions gathering round forms of individual self-will. But by this time, they had become so definite and established, as to have their acknowledged adherents, their “*heretics*.” See also 2 Pet. ii. 1. “It should be observed,” says Conybeare, “that these early heretics united moral depravity with erroneous teaching: their works bore witness against their doctrine”), **after one and a second admonition, decline** (intercourse with: there is no precept concerning excommunication: this was to be a subjective act); **knowing that such an one is thoroughly perverted, and is a sinner** (is living in sin: the expression gives the force of habit), **being** (at the same time) **self-condemned** (compare 1 Tim. iv. 2, note,—with his own conscience branded with the foul mark of depravity).

12–14.] VARIOUS DIRECTIONS.

12.] Whenever I shall have sent Artemas (not elsewhere named: tradition makes him afterwards bishop of Lystra) **to thee, or Tychicus** (see Eph. vi. 21, note: Col. iv. 7), **hasten** (make it thine earnest care) **to come to me to Nicopolis** (on the question which of the three cities of this name is here meant, see Introd. to Pastoral Epistles, §ii. 80 note): **for there I have determined to spend the winter. Forward on their journey** ([see below] the word here has the sense of ‘enable to proceed forward,’ viz. by furnishing with necessaries for the journey: so in ref. 3 John) **with zeal Zenas the Lawyer** (Zenas is the same name as Zenodorus. Probably a Jewish scribe or jurist [Matt. xxii. 35, note] who had been converted, and to whom the name of his former occupation still adhered, as in the case of “*Matthew the publican*.” Hippolytus and Dorotheus number him among the seventy disciples, and make him to have been subsequently bishop of Dios-polis. There is an apocryphal ‘Acts of ‘Titus’ bearing his name) **and Apollos** (see on Acts xviii. 24: 1 Cor. i. 12; xvi. 12), **that nothing may be wanting to them.**

14.] Moreover, let also our people (our fellow-believers who are with thee) **learn to practise** (see note ver. 8) **good works, contributions to** (for the supply of) **the necessary wants which arise** (such is the force of **which**: such wants as from time to time are presented before Christians, requiring relief in the course of their Father’s work in life), **that they may not be unfruitful** (implying, that in the supply by us

of such *necessary wants* our ordinary opportunities are to be found of bearing fruit to God’s praise).

15.] SALUTATIONS: GREETINGS: APOSTOLIC BENEDICTIONS. All that are with me salute thee. Salute those that love us in the faith (not ‘*in faith*:’ see note, 1 Tim. i. 2. This form of salutation, so different from any occurring in St. Paul’s

other Epistles, is again [see on ch. i. i] strong corroboration of genuineness. An apocryphal imitator would not have missed the Apostle's regular formulæ of salutation). [**God's**] **grace be with all of you** (of the Cretan churches. It does not follow from this that the letter was to be imparted to them: but in the course of things it naturally would be thus imparted by Titus)—On the subscription in the A.V., making our Epistle date from Nicopolis, see in Introd. §ii. 30 ff.

PHILEMON

Chapter 1

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

Philemon: Chapter 1

I. Vv. 1–3.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1.] **prisoner of Christ Jesus**, i.e. one whom He (or His cause) has placed in bonds: compare “*the bonds of the Gospel*,” ver. 13, He does not designate himself as *an apostle*, or the like, as writing familiarly, and not authoritatively.

Timothy] See Introd. to 1 Tim. §i. 10.

fellow-labourer] We cannot say when or how, but may well infer that it was at Colosse, in building up the church there, while the Apostle was at Ephesus: see Introd. to Col. §ii. 7.

2.] **Apphia** is the Latin name Appia. She appears to have been the wife of Philemon; certainly, as well as Archippus, she must have belonged to his family, or they would hardly be thus specially addressed in a private letter concerning a family matter. **Archippus**] see Col. iv. 17. **fellow-soldier**] see reff. and 2 Tim. ii. 3. He was perhaps Philemon’s son: or a family friend: or the minister of the family: the former hypothesis being perhaps the most probable, as the letter concerns a family matter; but see on next clause. To what grade in the ministry he belonged, it is idle to enquire: nor does Col. iv. 17 furnish us with any data. **the church in thy house**] This appears to have consisted not merely of the family itself, but of a certain assembly of Christians who met in the house of Philemon: see the same expression in Col. iv. 15, of Nympha: and in Rom. xvi. 3–5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19, of Aquila and Priscilla. Meyer remarks the *tact* of the Apostle, in associating with Philemon those connected with his *house*, but not going *beyond* the limits of the house.

4–7.] RECOGNITION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND USEFULNESS OF PHILEMON,

4.] See Rom. i. 8: 1 Cor. i. 4. **always** belongs to “*I thank my God*” (Eph. i. 16), not, as in A.V., to ‘*making mention*.’ The first participle, *making mention*, expands “I thank,”—the second, **hearing**, gives the ground of the *thank*—**for that I hear....**

5.) **thy love—to the saints: the faith—toward the Lord Jesus.** The order is inverted: but it is necessary for perspicuity thus to distribute.

6.] **that** belongs, as usually constructed, to ver. 4. ‘The mixing of prayer and thanksgiving in that clause does not exclude the idea of intercessory prayer. To join “*that the communication*,” &c., with ver. 5, is flat in the extreme, and perfectly inconceivable as a piece of St. Paul’s writing. **In order that the communication of thy faith** (with others) **may become effectual in** (as the element in which it works) **the thorough knowledge** (entire appreciation and experimental recognition by us) **of every good thing** (good gifts and graces, compare Rom. vii. 18, the negation of this in the carnal man) **which is in us to** (the glory of; connect with “*may become effectual*”) **Christ [Jesus]**.

7.] The **for** gives a reason for the prayer of ver. 6, not for the thanksgiving of ver. 4: see above. **because, &c.**] further specification of “*thy love*,” whose work consisted in ministering to the various wants and afflictions of the saints at Colosse. The endearing address, **brother**, is skilfully placed last, as introducing the request which follows.

8–21.] PETITION FOR THE FAVOURABLE RECEPTION OF ONESIMUS.

8.] **Wherefore** relates to **for love’s sake**, below, and refers back to the last verse.

in Christ, as usual, the element in which the *boldness* found place. **that which is fitting**, a delicate hint, that the reception of Onesimus was to be classed under this category.

9.] **for love’s sake**] is not to be restricted to ‘*this thy love*’ (of ver. 7), or ‘*our mutual love*,’ but is quite general—‘that Christian love, of which thou shewest so bright an example:’ ver. 7. **Being such...]** reason for the **rather**—‘I prefer this way, as the more efficacious, being such an one, &c,’ Meyer is right in maintaining that “*such an one*” cannot be taken as preparatory to “*as*,” “*such an one, as...*,” as in A.V., and commonly. I have therefore punctuated accordingly, as has Ellie. The rendering will be: **B eing such an one** (as declared in the preferring beseeching for love’s sake to commanding)—**as (1) Paul the aged, and (2) now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus** (the fact of his calling himself **Paul the aged** is interesting, as connected with the date of this Epistle and those to Eph. and Col.: see Introd. to Eph. §iv.), **I beseech thee, &c.**

11.] ‘The English reader must be informed that the name **Onesimus** signifies *profitable*. And here, as beyond doubt in ver. 20, there certainly appears to be a play on the name, although for the words *profitable* and *unprofitable* he does not here use the same root as occurs in *Onesimus* (in ver. 20 he *does*). He had been unprofitable in having run away, and apparently (ver. 18) defrauded his master as well. But the *profit* must not be limited to the sense of outward profit, but extended to a spiritual meaning as well—profitable to me, as the fruit of my ministry,—to thee as a servant, and also as a Christian brother (ver. 16).

12.] **mine own** (literally) **bowels**] There does not appear to be any allusion to the fact of sonship in this figure, as Chrysostom and Theodoret think: for thus the spiritual similitude would be confused, being here introduced materially. But the expression more probably means, **mine own heart**—‘as dear to me as mine own heart.’ As to the construction (see var. readd.), it is an anacolouthon: the Apostle goes off into the relative clause, and loses sight, as so often, of the construction with which he began: taking it up again at ver. 17.

13.] **I**, emphatic, **I, for my part. in thy stead**] For, wert thou here, thou wouldest minister to me: I was minded therefore to retain him in thy place. **in the bonds of the gospel**] Explained well by Theodoret, “Thou owest me service as a disciple to a master, and a master who preaches divine things:” not without allusion also to the fetters which the Gospel had laid on himself.

14.] **but without thy decision** (consent) **I was willing to do nothing** (general expression, but meant to apply only to the particular thing in hand; ‘nothing in the matter’); **that thy good** (service towards me: but not in this particular only: the expression is general—the particular case would serve as an *example* of it) **might be not as** (appearing as if it were) **of** (after the fashion of, according to) **necessity, but of free will.**

15.] **perhaps** is delicately said, to conciliate Philemon. **departed**] “He uses a mild word in calling his flight a departure, to avoid irritating his master.” Theophylact. The reference seems to be to Gen. xlvi. 5, where Joseph suggests the purpose which God’s providence had in sending him down into Egypt. **for a season**] Much has been built upon this, as indicating that the Epistle was written not so far from Colossæ as Rome: but without ground: the contrast is between “*for a season*” and “*eternally*,” which is to be interpreted “not in this life only, but in that which is to come.” **receive him**] It is the same word as that used in Matt. vi. 2—**mayest have him for thine own—possess him fully, entirely.**

16.] And that, in a different relation from the one before subsisting. But **no longer as a servant** does not imply his manumission; rather the contrary:—‘no longer *as* a slave (though he be one), but *above* a slave.’ specially] ‘Of all other men,’ of all those without thy house, with whom he has been connected: but how much more “*to thee*,” with whom he stands in so near and lasting a relation.

17.] takes up again the “sentiment (and the construction) broken off at the end of ver. 12. The *partnership* referred to is that shewn by the *love* of him, common to both, mentioned in the last verse: but extending far wider than it, even to the community of faith, and hope, and love between them as Christian men.

18.] **But**, in contrast to the favourable reception bespoken for him in the last verse. “Onesimus had confessed to Paul what he had done.” Bengel. “He says not, if he hath stolen aught; but, if he hath wronged thee in aught. Here is the sin at the same time confessed, and not as the sin of a slave, but as of a friend against a friend, using rather the name of a *wrong* than of a *theft*.” Chrysostom:—**that reckon, or impute to me:** hardly perhaps, notwithstanding the engagement of the next verse, with a view to actual repayment, but rather to inducing Philemon to forego exacting it.

19.] The inference from this is, that the whole Epistle was autographic: for it would be unnatural to suppose the Apostle to break off his amanuensis here, and write this engagement with his own hand. **that I say not**] “This is a kind of reticence, when we say that we wish to omit that very thing which we wish most to say,” Grotius. Ellicott paraphrases, ‘repay: yes I say this, not doubting thee, but not wishing to press on thee all the claim that I might justly urge.’ And this may well be the right view. **thine own self**] Not thy goods merely. This shews that Philemon had been converted by St. Paul in person.

20.] Yea, as so often when we make requests, asserts our assent with the subject of the request: so Phil. iv. 3, and elsewhere, **Me and thee** are both emphatic—and the verb **have profit** (*onaimén*: see above on ver. 11) is an evident allusion to the name Onesimus. The sentiment itself is a reference to what had just been said, “*Thou owest thine own self to me*”—this being so, let me have profit of thee: yet not in worldly gain, but in the Lord—in thine increase and richness in the graces of His Spirit. **refresh** (viz, by acceding to my request) **my heart** (as above—the seat of the affections) **in Christ** (as “*in the Lord*” above).

21.] serves to put Philemon in mind of the apostolic authority with which he writes: and hints delicately (perhaps: but this may be doubtful) at the manumission of Onesimus, which he has not yet requested.

22.] **But at the same time** (as thou fulfillest my request) **also....** We may, perhaps, take this direction as serving to secure the

favourable reception of Onesimus: for the Apostle would himself come and see how his request had fared. “For great would be the favour and honour shewn by Paul’s visit, Paul after his accession of years, Paul after his bonds,” Chrysostom. Or it may be, as Ellicott, that Philemon was not to consider the Epistle as a mere petition for Onesimus, but as containing special messages on other matters to himself. **Your** and **you** refer to those named in vv. 1, 2.

23–25.] CONCLUSION. See on Col. iy. 10, 12, 14, where the same persons send greeting. *Jesus called Justus* (Col. iv. 11) does not appear here.

25.] On all matters regarding the date and circumstances of writing the Epistle, see the Introduction.

HEBREWS

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THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Hebrews: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1-II. 18.] AFTER MANIFOLD REVELATIONS IN FORMER TIMES, GOD HAS NOW REVEALED HIMSELF TO US IN HIS SON (i, 1–4), WHO IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS, THE DISPENSERS OF THE LAW (i, 4–14; inference, ii, 1–4), THOUGH FOR A TIME HE WAS MADE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS, AND SUBJECTED TO SUFFERINGS, IN ORDER TO BE, AS OUR HIGH PRIEST, OUR RECONCILER TO GOD (ii. 5–18). And herein (i. 1–4), *introduction and statement of position.*

We may notice, 1. The opening of this Epistle without any address, or mention of the Author. Various reasons have been assigned for this, and inferences drawn from it (see Introduction). Some have said that the matter to be treated was so weighty, that the Writer merged altogether his own personality, and trusted to the weight of his subject to gain him a hearing. But this would not account for entire omission of the name of the man and his standing. Some have therefore imagined that another shorter letter of a more private nature must have accompanied this. But we may reply, that this idea derives no countenance from the phenomena of the Epistle itself, containing as it does at the end private notices which might well have been dispensed with, if such a commendatory Epistle had accompanied it. We must therefore deal with this circumstance without any such hypothesis to help us. On the supposition of the authorship by St. Paul, some account may be given of it,—viz. that the name of the Apostle was concealed, from the nature of the relations between himself, and those to whom he was writing (see this hypothesis examined in the Introduction). And on the idea of *superintendence* by St. Paul, it would obviously admit of the same solution. 2. The carefully balanced and rhetorical style in which the Epistle begins, characteristic indeed of its whole diction, but especially marking this first period (vv. 1–4), The clauses are joined by close grammatical and rhetorical dependence: there is no breaking off, and no carelessness of construction, but all is most carefully and skilfully disposed.

1.] In many portions (or ‘parts,’ manifoldly as regards the *distribution*. “For not *all* things, nor *the same* things, were revealed to all the prophets, but the parts of great mysteries were distributed among them. E.g., Isaiah was inspired to foretell Christ’s birth from a virgin, and His Passion: Daniel, the time of His Advent: Jonah, His burial: Malachi, the coming of His Forerunner. And again some had more, others less, revealed to them.” Estius, ‘*At sundry times*’ (A. V.) is not an accurate rendering, nor can it be said to *express* the meaning: *time* is a historical condition of the sequence of parts,—*persons to whom*, an anthropological condition,—but it does not follow that ‘*at sundry times*’ or ‘*to sundry persons*,’ gives the force of ‘*in divers parts*:’ because it might be the same thing which was revealed again and again. This revelation in portions, by fragments, in and by various persons, was necessarily an imperfect revelation, to which the one final manifestation in and by One Person is properly and logically opposed) **and in divers manners** (“in one way was He seen by Abraham, in another by Moses, in another by Elijah, in another by Michaiah. Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel saw differing forms of vision.” Theodoret. Bleek remarks, that in Numb. xii. 6–8, the diversity of manner of revelation is recognized: dreams and visions being set beneath that open speaking, mouth to mouth, which the Lord used towards His servant Moses. It will be seen, that I cannot agree with Chrysostom and many others in regarding the two adverbs as a mere rhetorical redundancy,—meaning merely, “differently.” Both set forth the imperfection of the Old Test. revelations. They were various in nature and in form: fragments of the whole truth, presented in manifold forms, in shifting hues of separated colour: Christ is the full revelation of God, Himself the pure light, uniting in His one Person the whole spectrum: see below on ver. 3) **in time past** (generally interpreted of the Old Test. period, ending with Malachi. But there is no need for cutting off the period there. In the interim between Malachi and the Writer’s time, though the Old Test. canon was closed, we cannot say that God’s manifold revelations of Himself had absolutely ceased. Nay, strictly speaking, the Baptist himself belonged to the former, though he pointed on to the latter period. No doubt he was not here in the Writer’s view, and the period of former revelations is here regarded as distinct from the final Christian one: but for all that, we must not put an artificial terminus where he puts none) **God having spoken to the fathers** (so in reff. The term “*the fathers*” is absolutely used in John vii. 22; Acts xiii. 32; Rom. ix. 5; xi. 28; xv. 8; 2 Pet. iii. 4. It is evident from this term being common to the Writer and his readers, where no reference is made to Jews in the context [as in Rom. ix. 5], that he was writing as 4 Jew and to Jews) **in** (not equivalent to “*by*,” though it includes it. The **in** designates the *element in which* the *speaking* takes place, and holds therefore its own proper force. God spoke *in* the prophets, being resident in them. Bengel draws a distinction,—a human king speaks by his ambassadors, but not in them) **the prophets** (to be taken here apparently in the wider sense,—as including not only those whose inspired writings form the Old Test. canon, but all who were vehicles of the divine self-manifestation to the Fathers. Thus Enoch in Jude 14 is said to have *prophesied*. Moses is of course included, and indeed would on any view be the *chief* of those here spoken of, seeing that by him the greater part of God’s revelation of Himself to the fathers was made).

2.] at the end of these days (in order to understand this expression, it will be well to call to mind certain Jewish modes of speaking of time. The Rabbis divided the whole of time into “*this age*,” and “*the age to come*.” The days of the Messiah were

regarded as a period of transition from the former to the latter,—His appearance, as the ushering in of the termination of “*these days*,” the beginning of the end,—and His second coming in glory as the accomplishment of “*these days*” or “*this age*.” And with this, New Test. usage agrees,—see 1 Pet. i. 20; James v. 3; Jude 18; 2 Pet. iii. 3. Thus **at the end of these days** would mean, ‘at the end of *this age*,’ in the technical sense of these words as signifying the whole world-period, the latter boundary of which is the Resurrection. And thus is the manifestation of Christ in the flesh ever spoken of, and especially in this Epistle; compare ch. ix. 26; and notes on ch. ii. 5; vi. 5. Stuart has mistaken the meaning, in rendering ‘*during the last dispensation*,’ and making “*these*” to import that the period had already *begun*. It is not of a beginning, but of an *expiring* period, the Writer is speaking. The ancient expositors principally use these words as ground of *consolation*: those who were in conflict would be consoled on hearing that it was soon to end) **spake** (not ‘*hath spoken*:’ the **end** just spoken of is looked back on as a definite point, at which the divine revelation took place. The attention of the readers is thus directed not so much to the present state in which they are, as to the act of God towards them) **unto us** (i. e. all who have heard that voice, or to whom it is to be announced. There is no distinction between those who received God’s revelation immediately from the Son, and those who received immediately through others.

To this latter number belonged the Writer himself, compare ch. ii. 3) **in** (see above) His Son (literally, or rather, nearer the strict sense of the original, **in Him who was Son of God**. We now pass off into a description of the dignity, and person, and work, of this Son of God: which description ends in asserting and proving Him to be higher than angels, the loftiest of created beings) **whom He constituted** (not, “*hath constituted*,” or “*appointed*:” referring, as also does **made**, which follows, to the time, “*in the beginning*,”—the date of the eternal counsel of God) **heir** (“appropriately, after the mention of *Sonship*, comes *inheritance*.” Bengel. **That heir** is not equivalent to “*lord*” simply, is plain: the same expression could not have been used of the Father. It is in virtue of the Sonship of our Lord that the Father constituted Him heir of all things, before the worlds began. “In Him also,” says Delitzsch, “culminates the fulfilment of the promise given to the seed of Abraham, that he should be heir of the world.” See below. See for St. Paul’s use of the word and image, Gal. iv. 7) **of all things** (“that is, of the whole world.” Chrysostom. And we cannot give this a more limited sense, nor restrict it to this world; especially as the subsequent portion of the chapter distinctly includes the angels in it. It is much disputed whether this heirship of Christ is to be conceived as belonging to Him essentially in his divine nature, or as accruing to Him from his work of redemption in the human nature. The Fathers, and the majority of the moderns, decide for the latter alternative. “The Lord Christ is the heir of all things,” says Theodoret, “not as God, but as man.” And so the Socinian and quasi-Socinian interpreters, arriving at the same view by another way, not believing the *præ-existence* of Christ. But it is plain that such an interpretation will not suit the requirements of the passage. For this humiliation of His, with its effects, first comes in at the end of ver. 3. All this, now adduced, is referable to his essential Being as Son of God; not merely in the Godhead before his Incarnation, but also in the Manhood after it, which no less formed a part of His “constitution” by the Father, than His Godhead itself, So that the word “*constituted*” or “*appointed*,” as observed above, must be taken not as an appoint-ment in prospect of the Incarnation, but as an absolute appointment, coincident with the “*this day have I begotten Thee*,” belonging to the eternal Sonship of the Lord, though wrought out in full by his mediatorial work), **by whom** (by means of whom, as His acting Power and personal instrument: so Theophylact: “Since the Father is the cause of the Son, He is also of the things which were made by Him. The Father, who begat the Son their maker, seems to make them Himself”) **He also made** (*created*. The word brought into emphasis by **also** is not *the world*, but **made**. “He not only appointed the Son heir of all things, before the Creation; but He also *made* the worlds by Him.” Bengel) **the ages** (so literally; but the meaning of the term has been much disputed. ‘The main classes of interpreters are two. (1) Those who see in the word its ordinary meaning of ‘*an age of time*:’ (2) those who do not recognize such meaning, but suppose it to have been merged in that of “*the world*,” or “*the worlds*.” To (1) belong the Greek Fathers; and. some: others. On the other hand, (2) is the view of the majority of Commentators. It is explained and defended at length by Bleek, none of whose examples however seem to me to be void of the same ambiguity which characterizes the expression here. The Jews, it appears, came at length to designate by their phrase, “the present age,” not only the present age, but all things in and belonging to it—and so of the “future age” likewise. He therefore would regard **the ages** as strictly parallel with “*all things*” above, and would in-terpret, ‘Whom He has constituted lord, possessor and ruler over all, over the whole world, even as by Him He has made all, the universe,’ And nearly so Delitzsch, Ebrard, and Lünemann: these two latter adding however somewhat, inasmuch as they take it of all this state of things constituted in time and space. And this last view I should be disposed to adopt, going however somewhat further still: for whereas Ebrard includes in the expression God’s revelation of Himself in a sphere whose conditions are Time and Space, and so would understand by it all things existing under these conditions, I would include in it also *these conditions themselves*,—which exist not independently of the Creator, but are His work—*His* appointed conditions of all created existence. So that the universe, as well in its great primæval conditions,—the reaches of Space, and the ages of Time, as in all material objects and all successive events, which furnish out and people Space and Time, God made by Christ. It will be plain that what has been here said will apply equally to ch. xi. 3, which is commonly quoted as decisive for the *material* sense here. Some have endeavoured to refer **the ages** (3) to the new or spiritual world, or the ages of the Messiah, or of the Christian Church: principally in the interests of Socinianism: or (4), to the various dispensations of God’s revelation of Himself: or even (5), as Fabricius, to the Gnostic sons, or emanations from the divine Essence, and so to the higher spiritual order of beings, the angels. Against all these, besides other considerations, ch. xi. 3 is a decisive testimony). It will be seen by consulting the note on John i. 1, how very near the teaching of Philo approached to this creation of the universe by the Son.

3.] "The Son of God now becomes Himself the subject. The verb belonging to the relative **who** is not found till 'sat down' at the end of the verse. But the intermediate participial clauses do not stand in the same relation to the main sentence. The first members, 'being, &c.,' still set forth those attributes of the Son of God which are of a permanent character, and belonging to Him before the Incarnation: whereas the following member, the last participial clause, stands in nearer relation to the main sentence, expressing as it does the purification of mankind from sin, wrought by the incarnate Son of God, as one individual historical event,—as the antecedent of that exaltation of Him to the right hand of God, which the main sentence enounces." Bleck.

Who (this represents, it will be evident, rather the præ-existent than the incarnate Word. But it is perhaps a mistake to let this distinction be too prominent, and would lead to the idea of a change having taken place in the eternal relation of the Son to the Father, when He subjected himself to the conditions of space and time. Even then He could say of Himself, "The Son of Man which *is* in heaven") **being** (see Phil. ii. 6, which is also said of His præ-existent and essential being) **the brightness** (*"reflexion,"* not *"effulgence."*) This latter would be legitimate, but does not seem to have been the ordinary usage. See Wisd. vii, 26, where wisdom is called "the brightness of the everlasting light." And this (which, as Delitzsch remarks, is represented by the "light of light" of the Nicene Creed) seems to have been universally the sense among the ancients: no trace whatever being found of the meaning *'reflexion.'* Nor would the idea he apposite here: the Son of God is, in this his essential majesty, the expression, and the sole expression, of the divine Light,—not, as in his Incarnation, its reflexion) **of His glory** (not simply *His light*; nor need the expression be confined to such literal sense. His glory, in its widest and amplest reference), **and express image** (or, **impress**: 'figure, Wiclif's and Rheims versions: 'very image,' Tyndal and Cranmer: 'engraved forme,' Geneva version.) The word appears always to be taken for the impression stamped by a die. Hence it is taken generally for any fixed and sharply marked lineaments, material or spiritual, by which a person or an object: may be recognized and distinguished) **of His substance** (substantial or essential being: 'substance,' Wicl. Tynd. Cranm. Rheims: 'person,' Geneva, and A.V. Etymologically, the original word (*hypostasis*) imports the lying or being placed underneath: and this is put in common usage for 1) **substratum** or **foundation**—*fundamentum*. Nearly connected with this 2) establishment, or the state of being established: hence—a) **firmness**,—to which idea the word approaches in the last citation: but especially in reference to firmness of spirit, confidence; see more on ch. iii, 14,—b) **substantial existence, reality**, in contradistinction to that which exists only in appearance or idea. Hence—c) generally, **consistence** or **existence**,—A) it imports the *especial manner of being*,—the *peculiar essence* of an object. And this last seems to be the best meaning: in our place: His *essential being*, His *substance*. For in regarding the history of the word, we find that the well-known theological meaning 'person,' was not by any means generally received during the first four centuries. The Nicene Council itself uses "*hypostasis*" and "*essence*" in the same sense, and condemns the deriving the Son from another hypostasis or essence from the Father: and so usually Athanasius. The fact was, that the Easterns most commonly used the term to designate the three separate Persons: whereas the Westerns continued to regard it as equivalent to *essence*, and assumed but one *hypostasis*: and the Western bishops, assembled with Athanasius at the council of Sardica in 347, distinctly pronounced the assumption of three *hypostases* heretical, i.e. Arian. Subsequently, however, to this, in the Synod assembled at Alexandria in 362, at which Athanasius, and bishops of Italy, Arabia, Egypt, and Libya were present, the Easterns and Westerns agreed, on examination of one another's meaning, to acknowledge one another as orthodox, and to allow indifferently of the use of *three hypostases*, signifying 'Persons,' and *one hypostasis*, signifying substance, essence. On all grounds it will be safer here to hold to the primitive meaning of the word, and not to introduce into the language of the apostolic age a terminology which was long subsequent to it), **and upholding** (bearing up. The Rabbinical writings speak of God as *carrying all the worlds by His strength*) **the universe** (the meaning attempted to be given by some Socinian expositors, "the whole kingdom of grace," is wholly beside the purpose: see Col. i. 17; Job. viii. 3; Rev. iv. 11)

by the word (*expressed command*: compare ch. xi. 3) **of his** (Whose? His own, or the Fathers? 'The latter is held by Cyril of Alexandria. And so Grotius and others. But Chrysostom and the great body of Commentators understand **his** to refer to the Son. The strict parallelism of the clauses would seem to require, that **his** here should designate the same person, as it does before in this same verse. But such parallelism and consistency of reference of demonstrative pronouns is by no means observed in the New Test., e.g. Eph. i 20, 22, "And placed Him at His right hand (of the Father),.... and put all things under His feet" (of the Son). In every such ease the reference must be determined by the circumstances, and the things spoken of. And applying that test here, we find that in our former clause it is quite out of the question that **his** should be reflective, referring, as it clearly does, to another than the subject of the sentence. But when we proceed to our second clause, we find no such bar to the ordinary reflective sense of **his**, but every reason to adopt it as the most obvious. For we have here an action performed by the Son, who *upholds the universe*. Whereby? **By the word of His power:** where we may certainly say 1) that had another than the subject of the sentence been intended, such intention would have been expressed; and 2) that the assertion would be after all a strange and unexampled one, that the Son. upholds all things by the word of the Father's power, So that, on all accounts, this second **his** seems better to be referred to the Son) **power** (not to be weakened into the comparatively unmeaning "his powerful word." His Power is an inherent attribute, whether uttered or not: the **word** is that utterance, which He has been pleased to give of it. It is a "powerful word," but much more is here stated—that it is the word of, proceeding from, giving utterance to, His power), **having** (or, **when He had**) **made** (the vulgate, "*making,*" is an unfortunate mistranslation, tending to obscure the truth of the completion of the one Sacrifice of the Lord. The words "*by Himself*" can hardly be retained in the text, in the face of their omission in the most ancient MSS., joined to their internal

character as an explanatory gloss. Meanwhile, the gloss is a good and true one. It was by *Himself*, in the fullest sense) **purification of sins** (as Bleck observes, there is no occasion to suppose the genitive here equivalent to “*from sins*,” seeing that we may say, “*the sins of a man are purified*,” as we read, Matt. viii. 3, “*his leprosy was cleansed*.”) Sin was the great uncleanness, of which He has effected the purgation: the disease of which He has wrought the cure. This *purification* must be understood by the subsequent argument in the Epistle: for that which the Writer had it in his mind to expand in the course of his treatise, he must be supposed to have meant when he used without explanation a concise term, like this. And that we know to have been, the purifications and sacrifices of the Levitical law, by which man’s natural uncleanness in God’s sight was typically removed, and access to God laid open to him. Ebrard’s note here is so important that, though long, I cannot forbear inserting it. “The term **purification** answers to the Hebrew, and its ideal explanation must be sought in the meaning which suits the Levitical cleansing in the Old Test. worship. Consequently, they are entirely wrong, who understand this *purification* of moral amelioration, and would so take the ‘*making purification*’ in this place, as if the author wished to set forth Christ here as a moral teacher, who by precept and example incited men to amendment, And we pronounce those in error, who go so far indeed as to explain the *purification* of the propitiatory removal of the guilt of sin, but only on account of later passages in our Epistle, as if the idea of scriptural *purification* were not already sufficiently clear to establish this, the only true meaning. The whole law of purification, as given by God to Moses, rested on the assumption that our nature, as sinful and guilt-laden, is not capable of coming into immediate contact with our holy God and Judge. The mediation between man and God present in the most holy place, and in that most holy place separated from the people, was revealed in three forms; (*a*) in sacrifices, (*b*) in the Priesthood; and (*c*) in the Levitical laws of purity. Sacrifices were [typical] acts or means of propitiation for guilt; Priests were the agents for accomplishing these acts, but were not themselves accounted purer than the rest of the people, having consequently to bring offerings for their own sins before they offered for those of the people. Lastly, Levitical purity was the condition which was attained, positively by sacrifice and worship, negatively by avoidance of Levitical pollution,—the condition in which the people was enabled, by means of the priests, to come into relation with God ‘without dying’ [Deut. v. 26]; the result of the cultus which was past, and the postulate for that which was to come. So that that which purified, was sacrifice: and the purification was, the removal of guilt. This is most clearly seen in the ordinance concerning the great day of atonement, Lev. xvi. There we find those three leading features in the closest distinctive relation. First, the sacrifice must be prepared [vv. 1–10]: then, the High Priest is to offer for his own sins [vv. 11–14]: lastly, he is to kill the sin-offering for the people [ver. 15], and with its blood to sprinkle the mercy-seat and all the holy place, and cleanse it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel [ver. 19]; and then he is symbolically to lay the sins of the people on the head of a second victim, and send forth this animal, laden with the curse, into the wilderness. For [ver. 30] ‘on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.’ In the atonement, in the gracious *covering* of the guilt of sin, consists *purification* in the scriptural sense. [And so also were those who had become levitically unclean, e.g., lepers, Levit. xiv., cleansed by atoning sacrifices.] So that an Israelitish reader, a Christian Jew, would never, on reading the words **made purification**, think on what we commonly call ‘moral amelioration,’ which, if not springing out of the living ground of a heart reconciled to God, is mere self deceit, and only external avoidance of evident transgression: but the **purification** which Christ brought in would, in the sense of our author and his readers, only be understood of that gracious atonement for all guilt of sin of all mankind, which Christ our Lord and Saviour has completed for us by His sinless sufferings and death: and out of which flows forth to us, as from a fountain, all power to love in return, all love to Him, our heavenly Pattern, and all hatred of sin, which caused His death. To speak these words of Scripture with the mouth is easy: but he only can say Yea and Amen to them with the heart who, in simple truthfulness of the knowledge of himself, has looked down even to the darkest depths of his ruined state, natural to him, and intensified by innumerable sins of act,—and, despairing of all help in himself, reaches forth his hand after the good tidings of heavenly deliverance.” It is truly refreshing, in the midst of so much disbelief, and misapprehension of the sense of Scripture, in the German commentators, to meet with such a clear and full testimony to the truth and efficacy of the Lord’s great Sacrifice, And I am bound to that the other great Germans recognize this just as fully), **sat down on the right hand** (literally, ‘*in the right hand*,’ viz., *portion* or *side*). The expression comes doubtless originally from Ps. cx. 1, cited below. Bleek, in the course of a long and thorough discussion of its meaning as applied to our Lord, shews that it is never used of his *priæ-existent* coequality with the Father, but always with reference to His exaltation in his humanity after his course of suffering and triumph. It is ever connected, not with the idea of His equality with the Father and share in the majesty of the Godhead, but with His state of waiting, in the immediate presence of the Father, and thus highly exalted by Him, till the purposes of his mediatorial office are accomplished. This his lofty state is, however, not one of quiescence; for (Acts ii. 33) He shed down the gift of the Spirit,—and (Rom. viii. 34) He maketh intercession for us: and below (ch. viii. 1 ff.) He is, for all purposes belonging to that office, our High Priest in Heaven. This “*sitting at the right hand of God*” is described as lasting until all enemies shall have been subdued unto Him, i.e. until the end of this state of time, and his own second coming: after which, properly and strictly speaking, the state of exaltation described by these words shall come to an end, and that mysterious completion of the supreme glory of the Son of God shall take place, which St. Paul describes, 1 Cor. xv. 28) **of Majesty** (this word **majesty** is often found in the Septuagint, and principally as referring to the divine greatness) **on high** (*in high places*, i.e. *in heaven*. Compare Ps. xciii. 4, cxiii. 5; Isa. xxxii. 15, xxxiii. 5; Jer. xxv. 30. In the same sense we have “*in the highest*,” Luke ii. 14; xix. 38; Job xvi. 20; Eccl. xxvi. 16; Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 10, Ebrard says: “HEAVEN, in Holy Scripture, signifies never unbounded space, nor omnipresence, but always either the starry firmament, or, more usually, that sphere of the created world of space and time, where the union of God with the personal creature is not severed by sin,—where no Death reigns, where the glorification of the body is not a mere hope of the future. Into that sphere has the Firstling of risen and glorified manhood

entered, as into a place, with visible glorified Body, visibly to return again from thence." The omission of the article "*the*" here gives majesty and solemnity—its insertion would seem to hint at other *majesties* in the background), **having become** (distinct from "*being*," ver. 3: that, importing His essential, this, His superinduced state. For we are now, in the course of the enunciation,—which has advanced to the main subject of the argument, the proving of the superiority of the New Covenant,—treating of the post-incarnate majesty of the Son of God. HE WAS all that has been detailed in ver. 3: He made purification of sins, and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, and thus BECAME this which is now spoken of. This is denied by Chrysostom, but recognized by 'Theodore', in a form however not strictly exact: for he applied it *only to the Humanity* of our Lord. To this Bleck very properly objects, that the making this exaltation belong only to Christ's human nature, and supposing Him to have while on earth possessed still the fulness of the majesty of his Godhead, is not according to the usage of our Writer, nor of the New Test. generally, and in fact induces something like a double personality in the Son of God. The Scriptures teach us that He who was with God before the creation, from love to men put on flesh, and took the form of a servant, not all the while having on Him the whole fulness of his divine nature and divine glory, but having really and actually emptied himself of this fulness and glory, so that there was not only a hiding, but an absolute *inanition*, a putting off, of it. Therefore His subsequent exaltation must be conceived of as belonging, not to his Humanity only, but to the entire undivided Person of Christ, now resuming the fulness and glory of the Godhead (John xvii. 5), and in addition to this having taken into the Godhead the Manhood, now glorified by his obedience, atonement, and victory. See Eph. i. 20–22; Phil. ii. 6–9; Acts ii. 36; 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22. The Son of God before his Incarnation was *over* Creation: but after his work in the flesh he had become also Head *of* Creation,

inasmuch as his glorified Body, in which He triumphs sitting at God's right hand, is itself created, and is the sum and the centre of creation) **so much better than** (the usual word of general and indefinite comparison in our Epistle, whether of Christian with Jewish [ch. vii. 19, 22; viii. 6; ix. 23], heavenly with earthly [x. 34; xi. 16; xii. 24], eternal with temporal [xi. 35]: see also vi. 9; vii. 7; xi. 40. It is used only three times by St. Paul, and never [unless 1 Cor. xii. 31, in the received text, be counted] in this sense: but thirteen times in this Epistle) **the angels** (of God; the heavenly created beings; afterwards, ver. 14, called "*ministering spirits*." All attempts to evade this plain meaning are futile; and proceed on ignorance of the argument of our Epistle, and of the Jewish theology. But *why* should the angels be here brought in? and why should the superiority of the Incarnate Son of God to them be so insisted on and elaborated? Bleck gives a very insufficient reason, when he says that the mention of God's throne brought to the Writer's mind the angels who are the attendants there. The reason, as Ebrard remarks, lies far deeper. The whole Old Test. dispensation is related to the New Test. dispensation, as the angels to the Son. In the former, mankind, and Israel also, stands separated from God by sin: and angels, divine messengers [as in the expression "the angel of the covenant"], stand as mediators between man and God. And of these there is, so to speak, a chain of two links: viz., Moses, and the angel of the Lord. The first link is a mere man, who is raised above his fellow-men by his calling, by his office, the commission given to him,—and brought nearer to God; but he is a sinner as they are, and is in reality no more a partaker of the divine nature than they are. The second link is the angelic form in which God revealed Himself to his people, coming down to their capacity, like to man, without being man. So that Godhead and Manhood approximated to one another: a man was com-missioned and enabled to hear God's word: God appeared in a form in which men might see Him: but the two found no point of contact; no real union of the Godhead and the Manhood took place. Whereas in the Son, God and the Manhood not only approximated, but became personally one. God no longer accommodates Himself to the capacities of men in an angelophany or theophany, but has revealed the fulness of his divine nature in the man Jesus,—in that He, who was the *brightness* of his glory, became man. The argument of the Writer necessarily then leads him to shew how both Mediators, the angel of the Old Test. covenant, and Moses, found their higher unity in Christ. First, he shews this of the angel or angels [for it was not always one individual angelic being, but various] by whom the first covenant was given: then of Moses, ch. iii. iv. This first portion is divided into two: vv. 4–14, in which he shews that the Son, as the eternal Son of God, is higher than the angels [see the connexion of this with the main argument below]: then, after an exhortation [ii. 1–4] founded on this, tending also to impress on us the superior holiness of the New Test. revelation, the second part [ii. 5–18] in which he shews that in the Son, the manhood also is exalted above the angels), **in proportion as he hath inherited** (as his own: the word being perhaps chosen in reference to the Old Test. prophecies, which promised it to Him: see below. The *perfect* is important, as denoting something belonging to His present and abiding state, not an event wholly past, as "*sat down*" above, indicating the first "setting himself down," though that word might also be used of a permanent state of session) **a more distinguished** (or, **more excellent**) **name** (to be taken in its proper sense, not understood to mean precedence or dignity as ver. 5 shews: whence also we get an easy answer to the enquiry, *what name* is intended: viz. that of **Son**, in the peculiar and individual sense of the citation there. 'The angels themselves are called "*sons of God*," Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7: Dan. iii. 25, and Gen. vi. 2 [see Jude 6 note, and Introd. to Jude, §v. 11]: but the argument here is that the title "**SON OF GOD**" is bestowed on him individually, in a sense in which it never was conferred upon an angel. See as a parallel, Phil. ii. 9 ff. It must be remembered, as Delitzsch beautifully remarks, that the fulness of glory of the peculiar name of the Son of God is unattainable by human speech or thought: it is, Rev. xix. 12, "*a name which none knoweth but Himself*." And all the citations and appellations here are but fragmentary indications of portions of its glory; are but beams of light, which are united in it as in a central sun. *Since*

when has Christ in this sense inherited this name? The answer must not be hastily made, as by some Commentators, that the term **inherited** implies the glorification of the humanity of Christ to that Sonship which He before had in virtue of his Deity. Evidently so partial a reference cannot be considered as exhausting the sense of the Writer. Nor again can we say that it was

at the time of His incarnation, though the words of the angel in Luke i. 35, “*That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,*” seem to favour such a reference: for it was especially at His incarnation, that He was made *a little lower than the angels*, ch. ii. 9. Rather would the sense seem to be, that the especial name of SON, belonging to Him not by ascription nor adoption, but by His very Being itself, has been ever, and is now, His: *inherited* by Him, “in that He is the very Son of God,” as Chrysostom says: the Old Test. declarations being as it were portions of the instrument by which this inheritance is assured to Him, and by the citation of which it is proved. Observe that the *having become better than the angels* is not *identical with the inheriting*, but *in proportion to* it: the triumphant issue of his Mediation is consonant to the glorious Name, which is His by inheritance: but which, in the fulness of its present inconceivable glory [see above], has been put on and taken up by Him in the historical process of his mediatorial humiliation and triumph) than they.

5-18.] Proof from Scripture of this last declaration.

5.] For (substantiation of His having inherited a more exalted name than the angels) **to whom of (among) the angels did He** (God, the subject of vv. 1, 2; as the subsequent citation shews) **ever say** (this citation from Ps. ii. has brought up in recent German Commentators the whole question of the original reference of that Psalm, and of Old Test. citations in the New Test. altogether. These discussions will be found in Bleek, De Wette, and Ebrard. The latter is by far the deepest and most satisfactory: seeing, as he does, the furthest into the truth of the peculiar standing of the Hebrew people, and the Messianic import of the theocracy. Those who entirely or partially deny this latter, seem to me to be without adequate means of discussing the question. Ebrard's view is, that the Psalm belongs to the reign of David. The objection that ver. 6 will not apply to David's anointing, inasmuch as that took place at Bethlehem in his boyhood, he answers, by regarding that anointing as connected with his establishment on Mount Zion, not as having locally taken place there, but as the first of that series of divine mercies of which that other was the completion. He further ascribes the Psalm to that portion of David's reign when (2 Sam. viii.) Hadadezer, and many neighbouring nations, were smitten by him: which victories he looked on as the fulfilment to him of Nathan's prophecy, 2 Sam. vii, 8-17. In that prophecy the offspring of David is mentioned in the very words quoted below in this verse, and in terms which, he contends, will not apply to Solomon, but must be referred to the great promised Seed of David. He regards this triumphant occasion as having been treated by the royal Psalmist as a type and foretaste of the ultimate ideal dominion of the “Son of David” over the kings of the earth), **Thou** (the seed of David, anointed in God's counsels as king on his holy hill of Sion: see above) **art my Son** (according; to the promise presently to be quoted, finding its partial fulfilment in Solomon, but its only entire one in the Son of David who is also the Son of God), **I** (emphatic: “I and no other:” expressed also in the Hebrew) **this day have begotten thee** (first, what are we to understand by this term, **have begotten**? Bleck says, “As Sonship, in the proper sense, is dependent on the act of begetting, so may, especially by the Hebrews, ‘to beget’ be figuratively used to express the idea of ‘making any one a son,’ in which derived and figurative reference this also may be meant. And we get an additional confirmation of this meaning from Jer ii. 27, where it is said of the foolish idolatrous Israelites, ‘They say to a stock, Thou art my father, and to a ‘stone, Thou hast begotten me’ (so the Septuagint). Accordingly, the meaning here is,—’ I have made Thee my Son’ [so Ps. lxxxix. 20, 26, 27: ‘I have found David my servants with my holy oil have I anointed him:.... He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father.... Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth’]:—namely, by setting Thee on the throne of my people: and the term **this day** will most naturally be referred to the time of the anointing of the King on Zion, as the act whereby he was manifested as Son of God in this sense.” And so Calvin. The above remarks seem pertinent and unobjectionable, as long as we regard them as explaining the supposed immediate reference to David and present circumstances: but it is plain that, according to the above view of Ps. ii., and indeed to the usage of the New Test., in applying this passage to our Lord, we want another and a higher sense in which both the words, **I have begotten**, and **this day**, may be applicable to Him: a sense in which I should be disposed to say that the words must in their fulness of meaning be taken, to the neglect and almost the obliteration of that their supposed lower reference. For, granting the application of such sayings to our Lord, then must the terms of them, suggested by the Holy Spirit of prophecy, which is His testimony, bear adequate interpretations as regards His person and office. It has not therefore been without reason that the Fathers, and so many modern divines, have found in this term **I have begotten** the doctrine of the generation of the Son of God, and have endeavoured, in accordance with such reference, to assign a fitting sense to **this day**. As the subject is exceedingly important, and has been generally passed over slightly by our English expositors, I shall need no apology for gathering from Bleck and Snuicer the opinions and testimonies concerning it. 1) One view refers **this day** to the eternal generation of the Son, and regards it as an expression of the everlasting *present* of eternity. Thus Origen very grandly says, “This is said to Him by God, with whom ‘to-day’ ever is present: for with God, as I think, is no evening, because neither is there morning, but the time which reaches, so to speak, over His unbegotten and eternal life, is an everlasting ‘to-day,’ in which the Son is begotten: no beginning of His being begotten being found, as neither of this ‘to-day.’” And so Athanasius, Augustine, and other Fathers and moderns. 2) A second, to the generation, *in time*, of the Incarnate Son of Man, when Jesus assumed the divine nature on the side of his *Manhood also*: so Chrysostom, Theodoret, Eusebius, Cyril Alex., and others. 3) A third, to the period when Jesus was manifested to men as the Son of God, i.e. by most, to the time of the Resurrection, with reference to Acts xiii. 33, where St. Paul alleges this citation as thus applying [so, recently, Delitzsch]: by some, to that of the Ascension, when He was set at the right hand of God and entered on His heavenly High Priesthood [ch. v. 5]: so Hilary, Ambrose, Calvin, Grotius, and the Socinians. Owen also takes the same view [“the eternal generation of Christ, on which His filiation or sonship, both name and thing, doth depend, is to be taken only declaratively, and that declaration to be made in His resurrection, and exaltation over all, that ensued thereon”]. Of these interpretations, I

agree with Bleck that the *first* is that which best agrees with the context. The former verses represent to us the Son of God as standing in this relation to the Father before the worlds: and ver. 6, which plainly forms a contrast to this ver. 5 as to time, treats distinctly of the period of the Incarnation. It is natural then to suppose that this verse is to be referred to a time prior to that event? **And again** (how is the ellipsis here to be supplied? Probably, **and** [*to whom of the angels ever said He*] **again**: or perhaps, **again** [see below on ver. 6] merely serves to introduce a fresh citation), **I will be to Him as (for) a father, and he shall be to me as (for) a son** (the citation is from the Septuagint, as usual. It occurs in the prophecy of Nathan to David respecting David's offspring who should come after him. The import of it has been above considered, and its connexion with Ps. ii. shown to be probable. The direct primary reference of the words to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxii. 7–10, does not in any way preclude the view which I have there taken of their finding their higher and only worthy fulfilment in the greater Son of David, who should build the only Temple in which God would really dwell)?

6.] But (because a further proof, and a more decisive one as regards the angels, is about to be adduced) **when He again** (or, “*when again He?*”) Does **again** introduce a new citation, or does it belong to the verb, and denote a new and second introduction? This latter view is taken by many, principally the ancient expositors, and lately by Tholuck, De Wette, Lüemann, and Delitzsch,—interpreting the ‘second introduction’ diversely: some, as His incarnation, contrasted with His everlasting generation, or His creating of the world, which they treat as His first introduction: others, as His resurrection, contrasted with His incarnation: others, to His second coming, as contrasted with His first. The other view supposes a transposition of the adverb *again*, which in the original stands between *when* and the verb. I have shewn in my Gr. Test. that such a transposition is without examples. In this Epistle, when “*again*” is joined to a verb, it always has the sense of ‘*a second time.*’ e.g. ch. iv. 7; v. 12; vi. 1, 6. This being the case, I must agree with those who join **again** with **hath introduced**. And of the meanings which they assign to the phrase “*bringing in again,*” I conceive the only allowable one to be, the second coming of our Lord to judgment. See more below) **hath** (‘shall have’ It appears from all usage that the *present* rendering, “*bringeth in,*” is quite inadmissible) **hath introduced** (in what sense? See some of the interpretations above. But even those who hold the transposition of the word **again** are not, agreed as to the *introduction* here referred to. Some hold one of the above-mentioned meanings, some another. I have discussed the meaning fully below, and gathered that the word can only refer to the great entering of the Messiah on His kingdom. At present, the usage of the verb here used must be considered. It is the accustomed word in the Pentateuch for the ‘introducing’ the children of Israel into the land of promise, the putting them into possession of their promised inheritance: see also Ps. lxxviii. 54. We have it again in Neh. i. 9, of the second introduction, or restoration of Israel to the promised land. The prophets again use it of the ultimate restoration of Israel: compare Isa. xiv. 2; lvi. 7; Jer. iii. 14; Ezek. xxxiv. 13; xxxvi. 24; xxxvii. 21; Zech. viii. 8. This fact, connected with the circumstances to be noted below, makes it probable that the word here also has this solemn sense of ‘putting in possession of,’ as of an inheritance. The sense ordinarily given, of ‘*bringing into the world,*’ the act of the Father corresponding to the “*coming into the world*” [ch. x. 5] of the Son appears to be unexampled) **the firstborn** (only here is the Son of God so called absolutely. It is His title by *præ-existence*, “*the firstborn of all creation,*” Col. i. 15 [where see the word itself discussed]:—by prophecy, Ps, lxxxix. 27, “*I will make Him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth:*”—by birth, Luke ii. 7, see also Matt. i, 18–25:—by victory over death, Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5:—and here, where He is absolutely **the Firstborn**, it will be reasonable to regard all these references as being accumulated—Him, who is *the Firstborn*,—of the universe, of the new manhood, of the risen dead. And thus the inducing Him in glory into His inheritance is clothed with even more solemnity. All angels, all men, are but the younger sons of God, compared to HIM, THE FIRSTBORN) **into the world** (not the same word as that so rendered, ch. x. 5: but signifying the ‘*inhabited earth:*’ and very frequently used by the Septuagint in prophetic passages, where the future judgments of God on mankind are spoken of. The usage would not indeed be decisive against referring the words to Christ’s entrance into the human nature, but is much more naturally satisfied by the other interpretation), **He** (i. e. God, the subject of ver. 5) **saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him** (there are two places from which these words might come; and the comparison of the two will be very instructive as to the connexion and citation of prophecy. 1) The words themselves, including the **and**, which has no independent meaning here, come from Deut. xxxii. 43, where they conclude the dying song of Moses with a triumphant description of the victory of God over His enemies, and the avenging of His people. It will cause the intelligent student of Scripture no surprise to find such words cited directly of Christ, into whose hand all judgment is committed: however such Commentators as Stuart and De Wette may reject the idea of the citation being from thence, because no trace of a Messianic reference is there found. One would have imagined that the words “*nor is there any that shall pluck them out of my hand,*” occurring just before, ver. 39 [compare John x. 28], would have prevented such an assertion. But those who see not Christ every where in the Old Testament, see Him nowhere. The fact of the usual literal citation of the Septuagint by our Writer, decides the point as far as the place is concerned from which the words are immediately taken. But here a difficulty arises. The words in the Septuagint, Deut. xxxii. 43, “*Rejoice ye heavens, with Him, and let all the angels of God worship Him,*” do not exist in our present Hebrew text. It is hardly however probable, that they are an insertion of the Septuagint, found as they are [with one variation presently to be noticed] in nearly all the MSS. The translators probably found them in their Hebrew text, which, especially in the Pentateuch, appears to have been an older and purer recension than that which we now possess. 2) The other passage from which they might come is Ps. xvi. 7, where however they do not occur verbatim, but we read, “*worship Him, all ye angels of God.*” This, especially the omission of the **and**, which clearly belongs to the citation, is against the supposition of their being taken from thence: but it does not therefore follow that the Psalm was not in the Sacred Writer’s mind, or does not apply to the same glorious period of Messiah’s triumph in its ultimate reference. Indeed the similarity of the two expressions of triumph is remarkable).

7.] And (with reference) indeed to the angels He (God) saith, Who maketh his angels winds (see below), and his ministers a flame of fire (the citation is after the Septuagint according to the Alexandrine MS., which indeed commonly agrees with the citations in this Epistle. And as the words stand in the Greek, the arrangement and rendering of them is unquestionably as above. But here comes in no small difficulty as to the sense of the original Hebrew. It is usually contended that its words can only mean, from the context, "who maketh the winds his messengers, and flames of fire his servants." But I have maintained in my Greek Test. that the sense is, "who maketh his messengers winds, his servants flames of fire," whatever these words may be intended to import. And this latter enquiry will I imagine be not very difficult to answer. He makes his messengers winds, i.e. He causes his messengers to act in or by means of the winds; his servants flames of fire, i.e. commissions them to assume the agency or form of flames for His purposes. Tt seems to me that this, the plain sense of the Hebrew as it stands, is quite as agreeable to the context as the other. And thus the Rabbis took it. The only accommodation of the original passage made by the Writer, is the very slight one of applying the general terms "His messengers" and "His servants" to the angels, which indeed can be their only meaning. The sense of the words I have endeavoured to give in some measure above. It is evident that the word represented in the A.V. by *spirits*, must be rendered **winds**, not 'spirits.' from both the context in the Psalm and the correspondence of the two clauses, and also from the nature of the subject. "They all are spirits," as asserted below, ver. 14: therefore it could not with any meaning be said, that He *maketh them* spirits). **But unto the Son,—Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: and the rod** (i. e. sceptre: see especially Esth. iv. 11; Amos i. 5, where the same Hebrew word occurs) **of thy kingdom is the rod of straightness** (i. e. righteousness, justice). **Thou lovedst** (the Writer refers the words to the whole life of our Lord on earth, as a past period) **righteousness, and hatedst iniquity; for this cause** (because of His love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, shewn by his blameless life and perfect obedience on earth) **God** (some render this first, "*O God,*" but apparently without necessity), **thy God, anointed thee** (*how?* and *when?* We must distinguish this anointing from what is said in Acts x. 38, "*God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, and with power,*" and the *anointing* of Isa. lxi. 1. For it is a consequent upon the righteous course of the Son of God in his Humanity, and therefore belongs to his triumph, in which He is exalted above his fellows [see below]. Again, the "oil of gladness" below seems rather to point to a festive and triumphant, than to an inaugurate unction. We should therefore rather take the allusion to be, as in Ps. xxiii. 5; xcii. 10, to the custom of anointing guests at feasts: so that, as the King in the Psalm is anointed with the oil of rejoicing above his fellows, because of his having loved righteousness and hated iniquity, so Christ, in the jubilant celebration of His finished course at his exaltation in heaven, is anointed with the festive oil *above His fellows* [see below]. There is of course an allusion also in the word **anointed** (*echrīsen*) to the honoured and triumphant Name *Christ*) **with oil of rejoicing** (see above: oil indicative of joy, as it is of superabundance: compare Isa. lxi. 3) **beyond thy fellows** (i. e. in the Psalm, "other kings:" hardly 'brothers by kin' [other sons of David], as Grotius and others. But to whom does the Writer apply the words? Chrysostom says, "Who are the *fellows*, except *men*? And the meaning is, Christ received not the Holy Spirit by measure." Theodoret on the Psalm, Calvin, Beza, and others, think of believers, the adopted into God's family: others, of the High Priests, prophets, and kings, in the Old Test., anointed as types of Christ: others, of *all creatures*: others, as in the Psalm, of *other kings*. Camero says, "Christ had in His office no fellows; in His human nature, all men; in grace, all the faithful." Still we may answer to all these, that they do not in any way satisfy the requirements of the context. Were it the intent of the Writer to shew Christ's superiority over his human brethren of *every kind*, we might accept one or other of these meanings: but as this is not his design, but to shew His superiority to the angels, we must I think take the word **fellows** as representing other heavenly beings, partakers in the same glorious and sinless state with Himself, though not in the strict sense, His "fellows." De Wette objects to this sense, that the Writer places the angels far beneath Christ: Delitzsch, that the angels are not *anointed*, whereas there is no necessity in the text for understanding that these *fellows* are also anointed: the comparison may consist in the very fact of the anointing itself:—and Ebrard, speaking as usual strongly, says that "neither the Psalmist, nor our author if in his senses, could have applied the word to the angels." But this need not frighten us: and we may well answer with Lünemann, 1) "that the general comparison here being that of Christ with the angels, the fresh introduction of this point of comparison in ver. 9 cannot of itself appear inappropriate. 2) Granted, that just before, in ver. 7, the angels are placed far beneath Christ,—we have this very inferiority here marked distinctly by the terms of this comparison. 3) The angels are *next* to Christ in rank, by the whole course of this argument: to whom then would the Writer more naturally apply the term *fellows*, than to them?" I may add, 4) that the comparison here is but analogous to that in ver. 4, of which indeed it is an expansion: and 5) that thus only can the figure of anointing at a triumphant festival be carried out consistently: that triumph having taken place on the exaltation of the Redeemer to the Father's right hand and throne [ver. 8], when, the whole of the heavenly company, His *fellows* in glory and joy, being anointed with the oil of gladness, His share and dignity was so much greater than theirs. It remains that we should consider the general import, and application here, of Ps. xlvi. From what is elsewhere found in this commentary, it will not be for a moment supposed that I can give in to the view of such writers as De Wette and Hupfeld, who maintain that it was simply an ode to some king, uncertain whom, and has no further reference whatever. Granting that in its first meaning it was addressed to Solomon (for to him the circumstances introduced seem best to apply, e.g. the palace of ivory, ver. 9, compare 1 Kings x. 18: the gold from Ophir, ver. 10, compare 1 Kings ix. 28: the daughter of Tyre with her gift, ver. 18, compare 2 Chron. ii. 3–16),—or even, with Delitzsch, to Joram, on his marriage with the Tyrian Athaliah,—we must yet apply to it that manifest principle, without which every Hebrew ode is both unintelligible and preposterous, that the theocratic idea filled the mind of the Writer and prompted his pen: and that the Spirit of God used him as the means of testifying to that King, who stood veritably at the head of the theocracy in the divine counsels. Thus considered, such applications as this lose all their difficulty; and we cease to feel ourselves obliged in every case to enquire to whom and on

what occasion the Psalm was probably first addressed. And even descending to the low and mere rationalistic ground taken by De Wette and Hupfeld, we are at least safer than they are, holding as we do a meaning in which both Jews and Christians have so long concurred, as against the infinite diversity of occasion and reference which divides their opinions of the Psalm).

10.] And (*He saith to the Son*: see a similar *And* introducing a new citation in Acts i. 20. The comma and capital letter, as in text, should be retained after this **And**), **Thou, in the beginning, Lord** (this has no word to represent it in the Hebrew. But it is taken up from “*O my God*” in ver. 24; and indeed from the whole strain of address, in which *Jehovah* has been thrice expressed; in vv. 1, 12, 15. On the bearing and interpretation of the Psalm, see below), **foundedst the earth; and the heavens are works of thine hands** (see Ps. viii. 3):

11.] they (seems most naturally to refer to *the heavens* immediately preceding. There is no reason in the Psalm why the pronoun should not represent both antecedents, the heavens and the earth. Here, however, the subsequent context seems to determine the application to be only to the heavens: for to them only can be referred the following image, “*as a vesture shalt thou fold thein up*”) **shall perish** (as far as concerns their present state. Compare the parallel expression, “*shall be changed*,” below); **but thou remainest** (Bleck prefers the future, on the ground of the verbs being all future in the Hebrew text. But perhaps the consideration alleged by Lüemann, that the Writer, using only the Septuagint, seems to place “*but thou remainest*” and “*but thou art the same*,” as parallel clauses, is of more weight than the other. De Wette, on the Psalm, renders the Hebrew verbs *present*. The verb in the original is a compound one, giving the sense of endurance through all changes); **and they all shall wax old as a garment** (see Isa. li. 6, “*The earth shall wax old like a garment:*” also Isa. I. 9; and Eccles. xiv. 17); **and as a mantle** (the word signifies any enveloping, enwrapping garment) **shalt thou fold them up** (the Hebrew here, and apparently some copies of the Septuagint, have the same verb as below: “*thou shalt change them,*”—“*thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed.*” But the Alexandrine MS. reads as our text: and there can be little doubt that the Writer of this Epistle followed that text as usual), **and they shall be changed** (viz. as a mantle is folded up to be put away when a fresh one is about to be put on): **but thou art the same** (Hebrew, “*and Thou art He:*” viz., He, which thou hast ever been: compare Isa. xlvi. 4), **and thy years shall not fail** (Hebrew, “*Thy years end not,*” are never completed. The account to be given of Psalm cii. seems to be as follows: according to its title it is “*a prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.*” It was probably written during the Babylonian exile (compare vv. 14, 15) by one who “*waited for the consolation of Israel.*” That consolation was to be found only in Israel’s covenant God, and the Messiah Israel’s deliverer. And the trust of Israel in this her Deliverer was ever directed to the comfort of her sons under the immediate trouble of the time, be that what it might. As generations went on, more and more was revealed of the Messiah’s office and work, and the hearts of God’s people entered deeper and deeper into the consolation to be derived from the hope of His coming. Here then we have this sorrowing one casting himself on the mercy of the great Deliverer, and extolling his faithfulness and firmness over, and as distinguished from, all the works of His hands. To apply then these words to the Redeemer, is to use them in their sense of strictest propriety).

13.] But (the contrast is again taken up from ver. 8) **to whom of the angels hath He** (God, as before) **ever said, Sit thou on my right hand until I place thine enemies** (as) **a footstool** (the allusion is to the custom of putting the feet on the necks of conquered enemies, see Josh. x. 24f.) **of thy feet?** Hardly any Psalm is so often quoted in the New Test. with reference to Christ, as Ps. cx. And no Psalm more clearly finds its ultimate reference and completion only in Christ, as even those confess, who question its being immediately addressed to Him at first: and regard the argument of our Lord to the Pharisees founded on this place, as merely one grounded on concession on both sides. On the theocratic principle of interpretation, there is not the slightest difficulty in the application of the words directly to Him who is (and was ever regarded, even in David’s time) Israel’s King, the Head and Chief of the theocracy.

And see this further carried out in the note on ch. v. 6.

14.] Are they not all (all the angels) **ministering** (in reference probably to the word “*ministers*” in ver. 7. The word, signifying “*pertaining to the ministry*,” is used in the Septuagint of any thing pertaining to the *ministers* or their service; the instruments, vessels, garments, or offerings for the ministry: here, of those devoted to or belonging to the ministry of God) **spirits** (unembodied beings, even as God Himself, but distinguished by the epithet *presiding*. The idea of “*angels of service*” or “*of the ministry*,” is familiar to the rabbis), **sent forth** (it is the *present participle*, so also in Rev. v. 6: he does not mean that angels have before now, in insulated cases, been sent forth, but that they are ever thus being sent forth,—it is their normal work and regular duty through all the ages of time) **for ministry** (in order to the ministration which is their work. The A.V., “*sent forth to minister for them*,” gives a wrong idea of the meaning. The *ministry* is not a *waiting upon men*, but a fulfilment of their office as *ministers of God*. See Rom. xiii. 4. Compare with this expression Col. i. 7, “*a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf*”) **on behalf of those who are about to inherit salvation** (in the highest sense—eternal salvation: not, as Kuinoel and others, “*deliverance from dangers*”: in so solemn a reference, that meaning would be quite beside the purpose. Those spoken of are the elect of God, they who love Him, and for whom all things work together for good, even the principalities and powers in heavenly places. And if it be said, that the ministration of angels has often been used for other immediate purposes than the behoof of the elect, we may answer, that all those things may well come under the *ministry*, on account of *them who shall be heirs of salvation*: for all things are theirs; and for them, in and as united to Christ, all events are ordered)?

Thus the Son of God is proved superior to the angels—i. e. to the highest. of created beings: who, so far from being equal with Him, worship Him, and serve His purposes.

Hebrews: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1-4.] Practical inference from the proved superiority of the Son of God to the angels.

1] On this account (viz. because Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, is far above all the angels who were the mediators of the former Covenant) **it behoves us** (*"being aware of this difference,"* Theodoret: it is a moral necessity, arising from the previous premises: so Matt. xviii. 33; xxv. 27; 2 Tim. ii. 6. There is no stress on us) **to give heed more abundantly** (we must not understand after the comparative, **more abundantly**, “than we did to the law,” as Chrysostom and others; or the aim of the Writer to be, to shew the superiority of the Gospel over the law, as Theodoret: but the comparative intimates how much our attention ought to be increased and intensified by our apprehension of the dignity of Him whose record the gospel is, and who is its Mediator) **to the things heard [by us], lest haply we be diverted** (Aristotle uses the same passive form of this Greek verb to indicate that which we familiarly call food *going the wrong way* in course of swallowing. Plutarch uses it of a ring *falling off from the finger*. See other illustrations in my Greek Test. The meaning of the verb seems then to be clear—to flow past, or away, or aside, to fall off, deflect from a course. We, going onward in time, living our lives in one or another direction, are exhorted ‘to adhere to the things we have heard’ [see above], and that, *‘that we do not at any time float past them,’* be not carried away beside them, led astray from the course on which they would take us. Two mistakes respecting the word are to be avoided: a) that of A.V., *‘lest at any time we should let them slip.’* From what has been above said of the tense and voice, it will be clear that such cannot be the meaning. b) Still worse is that of those who have thought of a comparison with a sieve, or a leaking vessel. So Calvin, Owen, and others: and I find it reproduced in Tait’s commentary on the He-brews: *“lest.... we should run out as leaking vessels.”* The meaning is as untenable, as the simile is irrelevant. The Greek expositors, whose authority in matters of Greek verbal usage is considerable, all explain it as above. So also all the more accurate of the moderns) **from them** (such is the most natural object to supply after the verb: turned aside from and floated away from the course on which the *adhering* to them would have carried us).

2.] For (introduces an argument [vv. 2-4] *from the less to the greater*. The law was introduced by the mere subordinate messengers of God, but was enforced with strict precision: how much more shall they be punished who reject that Gospel, which was brought in by the Son of God Himself, and continues to be confirmed to us by God’s present power) **if the word which was spoken by means of angels** (i. e. the law of Moses. The cooperation of angels in the giving of the law at Sinai was not merely a rabbinical notion, but is implied in both the Old and New Testaments. There can consequently be little doubt that the Writer, in mentioning **the word spoken by angels**, had reference to the law of Moses, and not, as some think, to the scattered messages which were, at different times in Old Test. history, delivered by angels. It has been sometimes supposed that the **angels** spoken of here are not angels, but merely human messengers. Chrysostom says, “Some think that Moses is pointed at: but not with justice: for the writer speaks of many *angels*.” Bleek remarks that the Writer would hardly have used this argument of depreciating contrast, had he regarded the Law as given either to Moses or to the people by the direct ministry of the Son of God Himself) **was made** (*“became,”* on being thus spoken by angels) **binding** (*firm, ratified: “stedfast,”* as A.V.: as applied to commands,—*imperative*,—not to be violated with impunity), **and every transgression** (overstepping of its ordinances, or more properly walking alongside of, and therefore not in, the path which it marked out) **and disobedience** (the relation of these two words to one another in point of sense seems accordingly to be, that **transgression** denotes the outward act of transgression of the Law, the practical withholding of its precepts, while **disobedience** occurs when we fulfil not, and have no mind to fulfil, the precepts of the Law: the former expresses, viewed *from without*, more something positive, the latter something negative, while at the same time it regards more the disposition of the man. Still, the distinction, as regards the moral region here treated of, is not of such a kind that each *transgression* may not also be treated as a *disobedience*, and each *disobedience* include or induce a *transgression*. Bleek) **received just recompence of reward** (this term is used only in this Epistle, and every where else in a good sense. To what does the Writer refer? To the single instances of punishment which overtook the offenders against the law, or, as Grotius suggests, to the general punishment of the whole people’s unbelief, as in ch. iii. 8; iv. 11; xii. 21, and see 1 Cor. x. 6 ff.? I should be disposed to think, to the former: such penalties as are denounced in Deut. xxxii. 35, and indeed attached to very many of the Mosaic enactments: as Owen: “The law was so established, that the transgression of it, so as to disannul the terms and conditions of it, had by divine constitution the punishment of death temporal, or excision, appointed unto it”);

3.] how shall we (emphatic: including Christians in general, all who have received the message of salvation in the manner specified below) **escape, if we have neglected so great** (*“that* was a giving of laws only, but the other brought the grace of the Spirit, and the taking away of sins, and the announcement of the kingdom of heaven, and the promise of immortality: so that he had some reason to say **so great**.” Theodore of Mopsuestia) **salvation** (as in ch. i. 14); **the which** (equivalent to *‘seeing that it’*), **having begun to be spoken by means of** (he was the instrument in this case, as the angels in the other; but both, law and gospel, came at first hand not from the mediators, but from God) **the Lord (by the Lord** is to be joined with the whole, **having began to be spoken**, not with **spoken** only. **The Lord**, as Bleek remarks, has here an especial emphasis setting forth

the majesty and sovereignty of Christ: "He Himself, the Master of angels, first brought to us the doctrine of salvation," Theodoret), **was confirmed** (see Mark xvi. 19, where the word is used exactly in the same sense and reference. It seems to be used to correspond to *became binding* (or firm, the cognate adjective to this verb *confirmed*) above, signifying a ratification of the Gospel somewhat correspondent to that there predicated of the law: as also **spoken** here answers to *spoken* there) **unto us by those who heard** (*it?* or *Him?* In the sense, the difference will be but little: in either ease, those pointed at will be, as Theodoret, "those who were parakers of the apostolic grace;" the "eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word" of Luke i. 2. From the usage, however, of the Writer himself, I prefer understanding "it:" compare ch. iii. 16; iv. 2; xii. 19) **it** (on the evidence furnished by this verse as to the Writer of the Epistle, see Introduction, §i. parr. 130 ff.); **God also bearing witness to it** (Chrysostom remarks: "How then was it confirmed? What if those who heard it, themselves feigned it? To remove the shame of this, and to shew that the grace came not from men, he adds that God also bore witness. For had they been the inventors, God would not have borne witness to them: but now they are witnesses, and God is witness besides. We have not simply believed them, but have been helped by signs and wonders: so that we have not believed them, but God Himself"), **with signs and wonders** (Bleck remarks: "As regards the relation of the two expressions to each other in their combination here, as divine confirmations of human testimony, it is this: a **sign** is a more general and wider idea than a **wonder**. Every **sign**, religiously considered, is also a **wonder**, but not always vice versa. A **wonder** always includes the idea of something marvellous, something extraordinary in itself, betokens something which by its very occurrence raises astonishment, and cannot be explained from the known laws of nature. On the other hand, a **sign** is each and every thing whereby a person, or a saying and assertion, is witnessed to as true, and made manifest: and thus it *may* be something, which, considered in and of itself, would appear an ordinary matter, causing no astonishment, but which gets its character of striking and supernatural from the connexion into which it is brought with something else, e.g. from a heavenly messenger having previously referred to some event which he could not have foreseen by mere natural knowledge. But it may also be a **wonder**, properly so called. Still, it is natural to suppose that the biblical writers, using so often as they do the words together, did not on every occasion bear in mind the distinction, but under the former word thought also of events which of themselves would be extraordinary and marvellous appearances"), **and various miraculous powers, and distributions** (this substantive is that derived from the verb used in Rom. xii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 17; 2 Cor. x. 13) **of the Holy Spirit** (is this genitive descriptive of the *object distributed*, or of the *subject distributing*? It does not follow that this will be ruled by the reference of the possessive pronoun **His** below. It seems much more natural to refer this pronoun to God, the primary subject of the sentence, than to the Holy, who is merely introduced in the course of it. And if it be once granted that **His** refers to God, we should have, on the supposition of the *subjective* genitive an awkwardly complicated sense, hardly consistent with the assertion of absolute sovereignty so prominently made in the following clause. I take then the genitive, with most commentators, as *objective*, and the Holy Spirit as that which is *distributed*, according to God's will, to each man according to his measure and kind. The declaration in John iii. 34, of Him whom God sent, "*He giveth not the Spirit by measure,*" speaks of the same *giving*, but of its unmeasured fulness, as imparted to our glorious Head, not of its fragmentary distribution to us, the imperfect and limited members), **according to His** (God's: see above) **will** (it is best to refer this clause, not to the whole sentence preceding, nor to the two clauses, *various miraculous powers and distributions of the Holy Spirit*, as Bleek and Lünemann, but to the last of these only, agreeably to 1 Cor. xii. 11, and to the free and sovereign agency implied in the word *distributions*. See on the whole sense, Acts v. 32)?

5-18.] *The dogmatic argument now proceeds. The new world is subjected, by the testimony of the Scriptures, not to angels, but to Christ: who however, though Lord of all, was made inferior to the angels, that He might die for, and suffer with, being made like, the children of men.*

5.] The proposition stated. **For** (the connexion is with the sentence immediately preceding, i.e. with vv. 2-4. That former *word* was spoken by angels: it carried its punishment for neglect of it: much more shall this *salvation*, spoken by.... &c., confirmed by.... &c. **FOR** this whole state of things, induced by the proclamation of that salvation, is not subjected to angels, but to Christ, the Son of God. Then the fact that it is to MAN, and to Him AS MAN, that it is subjected, is brought in, and a new subject thus grafted on the old one of His superiority to the angels) **not to angels** ("angels" stands in the place of emphasis, as contrasted with "man" below) **did he subject** (viz., at the date of the same. The subjection of this present natural world to the holy angels, as its administrators, is in several places attested in Scripture, and was a very general matter of belief among the Jews. In Deut. xxxii. 8, we read in the Septuagint, "*When the Highest distributed nations, as He dispersed the sons of men, He set the boundaries of nations according to the number of the angels of God.*" There, it is true, the Hebrew text has, as A.V., "according to the number of the children [more properly, *the sons*, in the stricter sense] of Israel." Origen (or his translator) says, "According to the number of His angels, or, as we read in other copies, according to the number of the sons of Israel." But the *doctrine* rests on passages about which there can be no such doubt. See Dan. x. 13, 20, 21; xii. 1, for this committal of kingdoms to the superintendence of angels: Rev. ix. 11; xvi. 5, for the same as regards

the natural elements: Matt. xviii. 10, as regards the guardianship of individuals: Rev. i. 20&c., for that of churches [for so, and not of chief bishops, is the name to be understood: see note there]. See also Dan. iv. 13. In the apocryphal and rabbinical writings we find the same idea asserted, and indeed carried out into minute details. So in Eccl. xvii. 17, "*In the division of the nations of the whole earth he set a ruler over every people: but Israel is the Lord's portion.*" The rabbinical authorities may be found in Bleek and Eisenmenger. See also a very elaborate article—"Engel"—by Böhme, in Herzog's Encyclöpadie:

and testimonies to the view of the early church from Eusebius, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria, in Whitby's note. The idea then of subjection of the world to angels was one with which the readers of this Epistle were familiar) **the world**

to come (the reference of this expression has been variously given by expositors. 1) Many imagine it to refer to the world which is, strictly speaking, *to come*, as distinguished from this present world. This meaning will hardly tally with the context here. Though it might be said that the future life, being the *completion* of the state of salvation by Christ, might very well here be spoken of as the subject of the present discourse. 2) Some have supposed a direct allusion to ch. i. 6. But certainly in this case the verb would have been past: "of which we *spoke*;" and besides, the addition of the epithet *to come* sufficiently distinguishes it from the mere inhabited world, in the other place. 3) Others again have thought of *heaven*, which is to us future, because we are not yet admitted to its joys. But this again would not agree with the context. 4) The most probable account to be given is that the phrase represents the Hebrew expression, "*the age to come*" [see note on ch. i. 1], and imports the whole new order of things brought in by Christ,—taking its rise in His life on earth, and having its completion in His reign in glory. This last-mentioned view is by far the best, agreeing as it does with the connexion, for he has been speaking of the gospel above, with the ordinary way of speaking, and with the whole subject of the Epistle. All reference to the future need not be excluded: we Christians are so eminently "prisoners of hope," that the very mention of such a designation would naturally awaken a thought of the glories to come: but this reference must not be pressed as having any prominence), **of which we are speaking** (which forms the subject of our present argument: viz. that urged in vv. 1–4, The sense is strictly *present*; not past, nor future. Bleek has here some excellent remarks: "As regards the whole thought, the non-subjection of the new order of the world to angels, it respects partly what is already present, partly what we have yet to wait for. Certainly, here and there in the New Test. history angels are mentioned: but they come in only as transitory appearances, to announce or to execute some matter which is specially entrusted to them: they never appear as essential agents in the introduction of the kingdom of God, either in general, or in particular: they do not descend on earth as preaching repentance, or preparing men to be received into God's kingdom. This is done by *men*, first and chiefly by Him who is Son of Man *par excellence*, and after Him by the disciples whom He prepared for the work. Even the miraculous conversion of Paul is brought about, not by angels, but by the appearing of the Lord Himself. Our author has indeed, in ch. i. 14, designated the angels as fellow-workers in the salvation of men: but only in a serving capacity, never as working or imparting salvation by independent agency, as does the Son of Man in the first place, and then in a certain degree His disciples also. So that we cannot speak with any truth of a subjection of this new order of things to the angels, Rather, even by what we see at present, does it appear to be subjected to the Redeemer Himself. And this will ever more and more be the ease; for,—according to the prophetic declaration of the Psalm, the whole world shall be put under His feet [ver 8]. Thus, by reminding them of the will of God declared in the holy Scriptures, does the Writer meet at the same time the objections of those of his readers and countrymen, to whom perhaps withdrawal of the agency of the angels with the introduction and growing realization of the new order of things might appear an important defect").

6.] But (introduces a contrast to a preceding negative sentence frequently in our Epistle: compare ch. iv, 13. 15; ix. 12; x. 27; xii. 13. An ellipsis follows it, to be supplied in the thought, "it is far otherwise, for"....) **one somewhere** (no inference can be drawn from this indefinite manner of citation, either that the writer was quoting from memory, as some think, or that he did not know who was the author of the Psalm, as others. Rather may we say that it shews he was writing for readers familiar with the Scriptures, and from whom it might well be expected that they would recognize the citation without further specification. He certainly is not quoting from memory, seeing that the words agree exactly with the Septuagint: and Ps. viii. both in the Hebrew and Septuagint has a superscription indicating that it was written by David. We can hardly infer with some that the Writer meant to express his feeling that the Old Test. books had no human authors, but God Himself: for in this case the personal designation *some one* would hardly have been used, but a passive construction, "*it is written*," or the like, adopted instead) **testified, saying** (this seems the proper place for a few remarks on the sense of the citation which follows, and on the connexion of thought in the rest of the chapter. The general import of the *eighth Psalm* may be described as being, to praise Jehovah for His glory and majesty, and His merciful dealing with and exaltation of mankind. All exposition which loses sight of this general import, and attempts to force the Psalm into a direct and exclusive prophecy of the personal Messiah, goes to conceal its true prophetic sense, and to obscure the force and beauty of its reference to Him. This has been done by Bleek and others, who have made "the Son of Man" a direct title here of Christ. It is MAN who in the Psalm is spoken of, in the common and most general sense: the care taken by God of *Him*, the lordship given to *him*, the subjection of God's works to him. This high dignity he lost, but this high dignity he has regained, and possesses potentially in all its fulness and glory, restored, and for ever secured to him: How? and by whom? By one of his own race, the MAN Christ Jesus. Whatever high and glorious things can be said of man, belong of *proper right* to Him only, *in proper person* to Him only, but derivatively to us His brethren and members. And this is the great key to the interpretation of all such sayings as these: whatever belongs to man by the constitution of his nature, belongs superlatively to that MAN, who is the constituted HEAD of man's nature, the second Adam, who has more than recovered all that the first Adam lost. To those who clearly apprehend and firmly hold this fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the interpretation of ancient prophecy, and the New Test. application of Old Test. sayings to Christ, become a far simpler matter than they ever can be to others. And so here, it is to MAN, not to angels, that the "world to come" is subjected. This is the argument: and, as far as the end of ver. 8, it is carried on with reference to *man*, properly so called. There is *here* as yet no personal reference to our Lord, who is first introduced, and

that in His lower personal human Name, at ver. 9. This has been missed, and thus confusion introduced into the argument, by the majority of Commentators. To hold that our Lord is from the first intended by “*man*” and “*the son of man*” here, is to disturb altogether the logical sequence, which runs thus: “It is *not to angels* that He has subjected the latter dispensation, but to *man*. Still we do not see man in possession of this sovereignty. No; but we do see Jesus, whose humiliation fulfilled the conditions of manhood, crowned with glory and honour, and thus constituted the Head of our race, so that His death and sufferings were our deliverance and our perfecting. And for this to be so, the sanctifier and the sanctified must be all of one race.” And the rest of the chapter is spent in laying forth with inimitable beauty and tenderness the necessity and effect of Jesus being thus made like us. The whole process of this second chapter stands without parallel for tender persuasiveness amidst the strictest logical coherence. And yet both of these are concealed and spoiled, unless we take these words of the Psalm, and the argument founded on them, of man generally, and then, and not till then, of Jesus, as man like ourselves), **What is man** (some have understood this to mean, “How great, how noble, is man; who even amongst the immensity of all these heavenly works of God, yet is remembered and visited of Him;” but against this are the two words here used in the Hebrew, both betokening man on his lower side, of weakness and inferiority. There can be little doubt that the ordinary view is right—not *how great*, but *how little*, is man. This agrees far better also with the wonder expressed at God’s thinking of and visiting him, below), **that thou art mindful of him** (i. e. objectively,—as shewn by Thy care of him)? or (in the Hebrew “*and*” is here doubtless substituted for **or** by the Septuagint, to indicate that the second member of the parallelism does not point to another subject additional to the first) **the son of man** (proceeding on the same view as that given above, it would be irrelevant here to enter on an enquiry as to the application of this title to our Lord, by others, and by Himself,—inasmuch as it is not here appropriated to Him, but used of any and every son of Adam. It is true, our thoughts at once recur to Him on reading the words—but, if we are following the train of thought, only as their ulterior, not as their immediate, reference), **that Thou visitest him?**

7.] Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels (literally, in the Hebrew, “Thou lettest him be little inferior to God.” The best Hebrew scholars seem to agree that the word “God” here represents not the personal God, but the abstract qualities of Godhead, in which all that is divine, or immediately connected with the Deity, is included. If so, then the rendering of the Septuagint and our text is, though not exhaustive of the original, yet by no means an inaccurate one. The angelic nature, being the lowest of that which is divine and heavenly, marks well the terminus just beneath which man is set. And it must be remarked that the stress of the argument here is not on this mention of the angels, but on the assertion of the sovereignty of man. I may remark, that the marginal rendering of our A.V., “*a little while inferior to*,” though doubtless also warranted by the usage of the Greek, seems quite unnecessary in the context, where not the question of *time*, but that of place, is before us); **thou crownedst him with glory and honour** (I must remind the reader of what has been said before; that the quotation is adduced *here* not of the Messiah, but of *man*, and that on this the whole subsequent argument depends. With this view vanish the difficulties which have been raised about the original and here-intended meaning of this clause. It is, in fact, a further setting forth of the preceding one. Man, who was left not far behind the divine attributes themselves, was also invested with kingly majesty on earth, put into the place of God Himself in sovereignty over the world. That this has only been realized in the man Christ Jesus, is not brought out till below, and forms the central point of the argument. Hupfeld remarks that the Hebrew term here rendered **glory and honour**, is a common expression for the divine majesty, and thence for the kingly, as a reflexion of the divine: and the crowning represents the kingly majesty, with which man is adorned as with a kingly crown):

8.] thou didst put all things under his feet (universal dominion is bestowed on man by his constitution as he came from God. That that bestowal has never yet been realized, is the next step of the argument: the Redeemer being at present kept out of sight, but by and by to be introduced as the real fulfiller of this high destiny of man, and on that account, incarnate in man’s nature). **For** (this **for** grounds, or rather begins to ground that already asserted in ver. 5) **in that he** (viz. God: not, the writer of the Psalm: unless indeed we are to understand “*put in subjection*” to mean *saying that such is the case*, as St. Paul expresses it, 1 Cor. xv. 27: but the other is much simpler, more analogous to usage, and more in the sense of the Psalm, which is a direct address to God) **put all things** (*the universe*: in the original, not *merely* all things as before, but *the sum of all*) **under him** (Man, again: not, Christ: see above, and remarks at the end of the verse), **He left nothing** (“he seems to except neither celestial nor terrestrial,” Primasius. Possibly: and in the application itself, certainly: but we can hardly say that such was his thought *here*. The idea that angels are especially here intended, has arisen from that misconception of the connexion, which I have been, throughout endeavouring to meet) **unsubjected to him**. **But** (contrast: bringing out the exception) **now** (in the present condition of things: not strictly temporal, but as “*now*” ch. xi. 16, and ch. ix. 26) **we see not yet** (compare on the whole, 1 Cor. xv. 24–27) **all things** (*the universe again*) **put under him** (the word **him** in all three places referring to MAN: *man* has not yet attained his sovereign. That the summing up of manhood in Christ is in the Writer’s mind, is evident throughout, and that he wishes it to be before his readers’ minds also; but the gradual introduction of the humiliation exaltation of Christ in His humanity is marred by making all this apply personally to Him. Manhood, as such, is exalted to glory and honour, and waiting for its primæval prerogative to be fully assured, but it is IN CHRIST, and in Him alone, that this is true: and in Him it is true, inasmuch as He, being of our flesh and blood, and having been Himself made perfect by suffering, and calling us His brethren, can lead us up through sufferings into glory, freed from guilt by His sacrifice for our sins).

9.] We do not see man, &c. But (strong contrast again: “*but rather*”—see on ver. 6) **him who is made** (better than ‘*was*,’ or

'hath been, made;' His humanity in its abstract position being in view) **a little** (not necessarily, here either, of time [a little while]: nor are we at liberty to assume such a rendering: though of course it is difficult to say, when the same phrase has two analogous meanings both applicable, as this, how far the one may have accompanied the other in the Writer's mind) **lower than (the) angels, we behold** (notice the difference between the half-involuntary words "*we see*" above, the impression which our eyes receive from things around us,—and the direction and intention of the contemplating eye [here, of faith: ch. iii. 19; x. 25] in this word, **we behold**), (**namely**) **Jesus, on account of his suffering of death** (it has been much doubted whether these words belong (I.) to the foregoing clause, "*made a little lower than the angels,*" or, (II.) to the following, "*crowned with glory and honour.*" The former connexion is assumed without remark by the ancient Commentators, and by several moderns. And these interpret the words two ways: 1) **on account of the suffering of death** [i. e. because *He has suffered death*],—thus making "*a little (while)*" refer to the time of His sufferings and death, or, Chrysostom and others, to the three days of His being in the grave: 2) **for the sake of the suffering of death**,—so that *He might suffer death*. So Augustine and most of the ancients. But (II.) the latter connexion, with the following clause, is adopted by Theophylact, Luther, Calvin, and many others. The arrangement of the words, and the requirements of the context, **on account of the suffering of death**, both seem to require the latter, not the former connexion. The words are emphatic; they are taken up again in the next sentence by '*made perfect by sufferings*' [which words themselves are a witness that suffering and exaltation, not suffering and degradation, are here connected]. But emphatic they could not be in the *former* connexion, coming as they would only as an explicatory clause, after "*made a little lower than the angels.*" Again, the latter connexion entirely satisfies the context, the sufferings of Christ being treated of as necessary to His being our perfect Redeemer. And this connexion will be made even clearer by what will be said on the next clause), **crowned with glory and honour** (viz. at His exaltation, when God exalted Him to His right Hand: not, as some, at His incarnation, or His establishment as Saviour of the world: see above, ver. 7); **in order that** (how is this logically constructed? It depends on the last clause, which clause it will be best to take in its entirety, "*on account of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honour.*" The full connexion we cannot enter into, till the three other questions arising out of our clause are disposed of: **by the grace of God,—for every man,—and, that He should taste death by the grace of God** (how is this to be understood? At all events we have strong Scripture analogy for such an expression. In Gal. ii. 21, the Apostle's confession of faith in the Son of God, he says, "*I do not make void the grace of God; for if righteousness be by the law, then Christ died without cause.*" And in Rom. v. 8, we read, "*God giveth proof of His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" And in Titus ii. 11, "*The grace of God was manifested, bringing salvation to all men.*" So that, in point of meaning, no difficulty need be found in the words. It was by the love and grace, the *kindness* and *love towards men* of the Father, that all Redemption was effected, and above all that One Sacrifice which was the crowning act of Redemption. The remarkable various reading (see margin) is discussed at length in the notes to my Greek Testament. I have there concluded, that it does not seem possible to assign to the words "*except God,*" or, "*without God,*" a meaning in accordance with the demands of the context, and the analogy of Scripture. This indeed would be no argument against a reading universally and unobjectionably attested by external authorities; but where no such attestation exists, may well be brought in to guide us to a decision) **He might for** ('on behalf of,' 'for the benefit of:' where this ordinary meaning of the preposition suffices, that of vicariousness must not be introduced. Sometimes, as e.g., 2 Cor. v. 15, it is necessary. But here clearly not, the whole argument proceeding not on the vicariousness of Christ's sacrifice, but on the benefits which we derive from His personal suffering for us in humanity; not on His substitution for us, but on His community with us) **every man** (in the original the word may be neuter or masculine; *every thing*, or *every man*. If the latter, to what is it to be referred? Origen and others take it as neuter, and apply it either to all nature, or to all reasonable beings. The latter see discussed below. The former can hardly be here meant: for of such a doctrine, however true, there is no hint. Then taking the adjective masculine, are we to understand it "*for every one, angels included?*" So Ebrard: but where do we find any such usage of "*all,*" or "*every,*" absolutely as here? And where in this chapter again is any room for the position, that Christ suffered death for angels? In the logical course of the argument, we have done with them, and are now treating of man, and of Him who was made man to be our High Priest and advocate. And therefore of none other than man can this word "*every one*" be here meant, in accordance indeed with its universal usage elsewhere. If it be asked, why *every man* rather than *all men*, we may safely say, that the singular brings out, far more strongly than the plural would, the applicability of Christ's death to *each individual man*: and we may say that this again testifies to the sense "*every man,*" as there would be no such reason for individualizing other rational beings, as there is for showing that the whole nature of man, to which this promise of sovereignty is given, is penetrated by the efficacy of Christ's death) **taste of death** (some have seen in the phrase an allusion to the shortness and transitoriness of the Lord's death: so Chrysostom, "He properly said *should taste death*, and not, *should die*. For as if really only *tasting* it, He made so little stay in it, and immediately arose:" then, comparing Christ to a physician who first tastes his medicines to encourage the sick man to take them, adds, "So also Christ, since all men had ever been afraid of death, to persuade them to be bold against it, Himself tasted it, having no benefit so to do." So also many other Commentators, among whom Beza and Bengel find also the *verity* of His Death indicated in the words. But it is well answered, that in none of the places where the phrase appears, either in the New Test. or in the rabbinical writings, does any such meaning appear to be conveyed. Nor again can we, as Bleek, understand the implication to be that Christ underwent all the *bitterness* of death. But the phrase falls into exact accord with the general argument of the passage, that it became Christ, in order to be the great and merciful High Priest of humanity, to be perfected through human sufferings: and it forms in fact the first mention of this idea, and prepares the way for **for** which follows. I would say, that the word **taste** must be regarded as slightly emphatic, and as implying the personal undergoing of death and entering into its suffering. And I doubt much, whether it will not be found that in the other passages where the phrase occurs, this personal suffering of death, though not

boldly prominent, is yet within view, and agreeable to the context.

And now, having considered the three points, **by the grace of God,—for every man,—and taste of death**,—we return again to the question of the connexion of **in order that**, with which this clause begins. We before stated that we find it dependent on the former clause, *on account of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honour*. This exaltation, being the *perfecting* [see ver. 10] of Christ, was arrived at *through sufferings*, and *on account of His suffering of death*,—both by means of, and on account of, His suffering of death. And this exaltation has made Him the divine Head of our humanity—the channel of grace, and the Captain of our salvation. Without His exaltation, his death would not have been effectual. Unless he had been crowned with glory and honour, received to the right hand of the Father, and set in expectation of all things being put under his feet, His death could not have been, for every man, the expiation to him of his own individual sin. On the *triumphant issue* of his sufferings, their efficacy depends. And this I believe is what the Sacred Writer meant to express. His glory was the consequence of his suffering of death;—arrived at through His suffering: but the applicability of His death to every man is the consequence of His constitution in Heaven as the great High Priest, in virtue of his blood carried into the holy place,—and the triumphant Head of our common humanity: which common humanity of Him and ourselves now becomes the subject of further elucidation).

10.] For (the connexion with the foregoing, see above. The **for** renders a reason why the result just introduced should have been one which the *grace of God* contemplated) **it became** (as matter not only of decorum, but of sequence from the data;—‘*was suitable to*,’ not as matter of absolute necessity, which was not the question here. The expression here glances at those who found in a suffering and crucified Messiah something unsuitable to the Godhead; and expresses not merely a negative, that it was not unsuitable, not unworthy of God,—but at the same time the positive, that it was altogether correspondent to and worthy of His Being and His Wisdom and His Love, to take this course: that it is so shaped, that he who knows the being and attributes of God, might have expected it. And thus it is indirectly implied, that it was also the most suitable, and that any other way would have been less correspondent to the being and purpose of God. Bleek has some excellent remarks on the lingering of the offence of the cross among these Jewish Christians, who, although their ideas of the glory and kingly triumph of the Messiah been in a measure satisfied by the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and their hopes awakened by the promise of future glory at His second coming,—yet, in the procrastination of this great event, felt their souls languishing, and the old stumbling-block of Christ’s sufferings recurring to their minds. To set forth then the way of suffering and the cross as one worthy of God’s high purpose, would be a natural course for the argument of the Writer to take) **Him, for whom are all things** (not only, ‘all those things which contribute to man’s salvation,’ but ‘the sum total of things,’ ‘the universe,’ as in the parallel passages. All created things are for God [see below], for His purpose and for His glory), **and by whom** (by whose will, and fiat, and agency) **are all things** (*who is intended?* From the sequel of the sentence there can be no doubt that it is God the Father. For the subject of this clause is there said to perfect Christ: and this could be predicated of none but the Father Himself. That these expressions are found frequently used of the Son, need be no objection: whatever is thus said of Him as the End, and the Worker, in creation may *à fortiori* be said of the Father who sent Him and of whose will He is the expression. As to the reason of this lengthened appellation here, Calvin well says: “He might have designated God in one word: but he wished to remind them that that was to be accounted *best*, which He decreed whose will and glory is the real end of all things.” And not only this: in introducing the “*becomingness*” of Christ’s sufferings by such a description of God, he reminds his readers that those sufferings also were **for Him**—contributing to His end and His glory—and **by Him** brought about and carried through by His agency and superintendence), **bringing** (the application of the clause is to God the Father, the subject of the preceding. See the idea which refers it to *Christ* treated in my Greek Test. Some take the participle as past, “*having brought*,” referring the expression chiefly, or entirely, to the Old Test. saints. These however can hardly be meant; for they cannot be said in any adequate sense to have been led to glory, or to have had Christ for the Captain of their salvation. And surely it would be most unnatural to refer the participle to those saints only who had entered into glory since the completion of Christ’s work, but before this Epistle was written. The peculiar form of the participle here used has in all cases reference to the completion of the action. In Christ’s being *perfected*, the bringing many sons to glory is *completed*. Had it been a *present*, we must have rendered, as indeed the A.V. has erroneously rendered now, ‘*in bringing*:’ so that the Father’s *perfecting* of Christ would be *only a step in the process* of leading many sons to glory. But now it is *the whole process*. We cannot give in idiomatic English this delicate shade of meaning correctly: the nearest representation of it is, as in the text, perhaps—‘it became Him.... bringing, as He did, many sons to glory, to’ &c.) **many** (not in contrast to *all*, but in contrast to *few*, and in relation to one) **sons** (probably in the closer sense: not merely sons by creation, but sons by adoption. This seems necessitated by the next verse) **to glory** (the expression is not common in this meaning in our Epistle: and is perhaps chosen on account of the word occurring in ver. 9. It is, that supreme bliss and majesty which rightly belongs to God only—of which His divine Son is [ch. i. 3] the brightness or shining forth, and of which believers in Christ are here in their degree partakers, and shall be fully so hereafter. It is the crowning positive result of the negative word *salvation*), **to make perfect** (this word is used often in our Epistle, and in various references. It is said of the Redeemer Himself, here, and in ch. v. 9; vii. 28,—of His people, who are *made perfect* through Him, ix. 9; xi. 14, 40; xii. 23; and indeed xii. 2;—with a general reference, vii. 11, 19: see also *perfect* ch. v. 14; ix. 11,—and *perfection*, ch. vi. 1. From all this it is evident, that some meaning must be looked for wide enough to include all these senses of the word itself and its cognates. And such a sense is found in the ordinary rendering of the word,—to “*accomplish*,” or “*make complete*,” or “*perfect*.” This accomplishment, completion or perfecting of Christ was, the bringing Him to that glory which was His proposed and destined end: and it answers to the “*crowning with glory and*

honour" of ver. 9: and to the "*glorifying*" of St. John: and fits exactly the requirements of the other passages in our Epistle where our Lord is spoken of. Nor is such meaning at all misplaced in those passages where we are spoken of: seeing that it is a relative term, and our *being made perfect* is the being brought, each one of us, to the full height of our measure of perfection, in union with and participation of Christ's glory. Some have imagined that the meaning here and elsewhere in our Epistle, of the word rendered "*to make perfect*," is "*to consecrate*:" and understand the word of the setting apart or consecration of Christ to the high-priestly office. So Calvin [the first, as Bleek thinks, who propounded the view], Beza, and others. But Bleek replies well, that such a meaning will not suit the other passages in our Epistle, and besides, no such meaning is really ever found for the Greek word **the Author** (*Captain*, in the A.V., introduces an idea foreign to the meaning of the title here used for our Lord. It is often found in the sense of *a leader* in the Septuagint: in that of the *progenitor of a race*: of one who *precedes others by his example*, they following him. Compare particularly ch. xii. 2, where the idea of *author* and *completer* is so closely allied to that in our verse, that the word *author* should have been kept here also. The idea of *origination* for the word frequently occurs in Greek writers, especially later ones, of the person from whom any thing, whether good or bad, first proceeds, in which others have a share. Hence the usage here, and in Acts iii. 15, where Christ is called "*the Prince of Life*," is easily explained: on Him our salvation depends; He was its originator) **of their salvation through sufferings** (i. e. His sufferings were the appointed access to, and the appointed elements of, His glory: see more particularly below, on ch. v. 8, 9. Chrysostom gives a beautiful general application: "shewing us that he who suffers for another, does not benefit him alone, but also himself becomes more illustrious and nearer perfection").

11–13.] The connexion with the foregoing cannot be made plain, till we have discussed the meaning of **of one** below. It may suffice to say, that the assertion, and the quotations are subordinate to the words "*many sons*" in ver. 10.

11.] For both the Sanctifier and (notice both—and, which bind closely together in one category) the sanctified (sanctification is not here the same as "*salvation*," but as every where, when used in allusion to Christ's work on His people, involves that transforming and consecrating process, of which His Spirit is the actual agent. Hence, believers are ordinarily not described by the past participle, "*having been sanctified*," but as here by the present, "*being sanctified*." The word **to sanctify** signifies in the Septuagint and New Test. usually, *to select out*: and where their present state is spoken of, the participle is present: where God's purpose respecting them, and Christ's finished work, the perfect. Sanctification is glory working in embryo: glory is sanctification come to the birth and manifested.

It is disputed whether the reference of these words is to be considered as general, applying to every case of sanctifier and sanctified, as, e.g. the priest and the people under the old law, the firstfruits and the remaining harvest: or is to be restricted to Christ and His people alone. Certainly the latter seems to be required by the context, and most of all by the assumption of the subject in the next clause tacitly as contained in *he that sanctifieth*. The ground on which Christ is only Sanctifier has also been variously alleged. Grotius leaves the connexion very loose, when he says, "Christ makes us holy by His teaching and example. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and we by the Holy Spirit get a new nature: thus we both have a common origin." But this obviously does not reach the depth of the following argument, see especially ver. 17: and we must believe that there is a reference to the expiatory death of Christ: see also ch. x. 10, 14, and more in the note there) **[are] of one (one,** as will be seen by the reference in my Greek Test., must be taken as *masculine*. And if masculine, what are we to supply? Some say, *Adam*: others, *Abraham*. But it seems far better and simpler here, on account of the expression **many sons**, above, and as satisfying fully the force of **of**, or **out of**, to understand *God* to be meant. It is not here the mere physical unity of all men with Christ which is treated, but the further and higher spiritual unity of the *Sanctifier* and the *sanctified*, as evinced by his speaking of them. The same is plain from ver. 14 below: see there. So that it is the higher Sonship of God, common to the Lord and those whom the Father by Him is leading to glory which must be understood. See John viii. 47; 1 John iii. 10; iv. 6; v. 19; 3 John 11.

Note, that the point brought out here is not that the holiness of our Lord's human nature, and our holiness, are both of one, viz. the Father [John x. 36]: which, however true, would be introducing a matter not belonging to the argument *here*), **all [of them]: on which account** (viz. because they are all of one) **He** (Christ: see above) **is not ashamed** (His consent in this relationship springs, as Chrysostom says, not from the nature of the case merely, but from His extreme love and condescension) **to call them** (that are sanctified) **brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing of thee** (it will be sufficient to refer, respecting the general sense and prophetic import of Ps. xxii., to what has been before said, on Ps. viii. [above ver. 6], and on similar citations elsewhere. The Psalm was originally the expression of a suffering saint, in all probability David, communing with his God: laying forth to Him his anguish and finally triumphing in confidence of His gracious help and deliverance. But by the mouth of such servants of God did the prophetic Spirit speak forth His intimations respecting the Redeemer to come. No word prompted by the Holy Ghost had reference to the utterer only. All Israel was a type: all spiritual Israel set forth the second Man, the quickening spirit: all the groanings of God's suffering people prefigured, and found their fullest meaning in, His groans, who was the chief in suffering. The maxim cannot be too firmly held, nor too widely applied, that all the Old Test. utterances of the Spirit anticipate Christ, just as all His New Test. utterances set forth and expand Christ: that Christ is everywhere involved in the Old Test., as He is every where evolved in the New Test. And this Psalm holds an illustrious place among those which thus point onward to Christ. Its opening cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was uttered by the Lord Himself in His last agony. The most

minute particulars detailed in it are by the Evangelists adduced as exemplified in the history of His Passion; see e.g. John xix. 24 And, as Bleek well observes, the particulars chosen out of that history by St. Matthew seem to have been selected with an especial view to the illustration and fulfilment of this Psalm. Ebrard, in his note here, insists on the authorship of the Psalm by David, and on its date, as belonging to the time of his persecution by Saul, Then he maintains the exact parallelism of the circumstances with those of the second and greater David, and refers the “brethren” here to the countrymen of David, who were hereafter to be his subjects. I have no positive objection to this view. Subordinately to the deeper and wider one, it might be applicable in individual instances: but that other seems to me both safer and nearer the truth. The particular verse here chosen, the 22nd, forms the transition-point from the suffering to the triumphant portion of the Psalm: and consequently the resolution expressed in it by the Messiah has reference to His triumphant state, in which he is still not ashamed to call his people brethren. It is characteristic of the object of this Epistle with reference to intended readers, that whereas the Writer might have cited two instances as matters of fact, in which our Lord did call His disciples brethren after His resurrection [see John xx. 17; Matt. xxviii. 10], yet he has not done so, but has preferred to establish his point by the Old Test. citations).

13.] And again, I will put my trust in Him (there is considerable dispute as to the original place from which this citation comes. Most Commentators, and recently Bleek and Delitzsch, have believed it to be taken from Isa. viii. 17, where the words occur in the Septuagint, immediately preceding the next citation. The only objection to this view is, that it would be hardly likely in this case that the words “and again” would have occurred, but the two citations would have proceeded as one. And hence the words have sought in other places: e.g. in Ps. xviii. 3, Isa. xlvi. 1, where however, besides the Septuagint being different, the words are spoken in a totally different reference. The same words are found in the Septuagint in 2 Sam. xxii.

3, and Isa. xii. 2. There is no objection to the first of these passages being the *origin* of our citation; and the alleged non-Messianic character of the Psalm will weigh very light with those who view the Psalms as above set forth. Still, regarding the above-stated objection as of no weight,—owing to the diversity of the two cited clauses, the one expressive of personal trust in God, the other declaratory respecting a relation to others [compare also ch. x. 30, which is a nearly though not exactly similar case],—I prefer, is the more natural, the opinion which derives both texts from the same place of Isaiah. On the sense then, see below). **And again, Behold I and the children which God gave me** (Isa. viii. 18. Considerable difficulty has been made by the Commentators in applying these citations to Christ. I own that the question seems to me to be admirably stated by Theodoret on Ps. xxii., “More credit is to be given to the Holy Apostles and to our Saviour Himself when He uses plainly the opening of the Psalm, than to those who attempt to interpret it.” But: this does not preclude our entering on an attempt in each case to give a distinct account of the rationale of the application. In the passage of Isaiah [vv. 11–18], the Prophet is especially blaming the people of Judah under Ahaz, for having called in the help of the Assyrian king against Pekah king of Israel, and Rezin king of Syria. And in these verses [17 f.] the Prophet expresses his own determination, in spite of the reliance of the people on the confederacy, to wait for the Lord, and to remain, he and the children whom God had given him, for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth in Zion. Then from Isa. viii. 18 to ix. 7, is set forth the prospect of future deliverance to Judah coming from their God, ending with the glorious anticipation of the great future Deliverer. This confident speech of the Prophet our Writer adopts at once as the words of the greatest of all Prophets—thereby assuming the prophetic office of Christ. Thus the matter illustrated [for there is no demonstration here; this verse is a consequence of the last] is, that as the prophet Isaiah withheld the human dependence of his age, and stood forth, he and the children whom God had given him, and who were begotten in pursuance of the divine command as a sign to Israel,—so the great Prophet himself fulfilled the same office, and had the same hopes, and bore the same relation to those among who He prophesied, praising God with them, leading them in confidence on God, and speaking of them as one family and stock with Himself. So that our passage forms a notable instance of the prophetic office of Christ being taken as the antitype of the official words and acts of all the Prophets, just as His kingly office fulfills and takes up all that is said and done by the theocratic Kings, and His priestly office accomplishes all the types and ordinances of the Old Test. Priesthood).

14.] The connexion and line of argument is this: in ver. 5 it was shewn, that *not to angels, but to MAN*, is the new order of things subjected: in vv. 6–8, that this domination was predicated of man in the Old Test.: in ver. 9, that the only case of its fulfilment has been that of Jesus, who has been crowned with glory and honour on account of His suffering death. Then, vv. 10, 11 a, it is shewn that the becoming way for the Redeemer to this crown of glory, the purpose of winning which was to bring many sons of God to it, was, being perfected through sufferings, seeing that He must share with those whom He is to sanctify, in dependence on a common Father. Then vv. 11 b, 12, 13 have furnished illustrations confirmatory of this, from His own sayings in the Scripture. And now we are come to the proof, that He who was thus to be the Leader of the salvation of these many sons, by trusting like them, and suffering like them, must Himself BECOME MAN like them, in order that for His death to have any efficacy towards His purpose. Since then (by since an inference is drawn from the words immediately preceding: by then, the thought is cast back to the argument of which the citations had been an interruption: as if it had been said, “and by this very expression in our last citation, the children, we may substantiate that which our argument is seeking to prove”) **the children** (before mentioned) **are partakers of** (literally ‘have been constituted partakers of,’—in the order established in nature, and enduring still. The participation is not with their elders, as Valeknaer, but with *one another*) **blood and flesh** (“this expression betokens,” says Bleek, “the whole sensuous corporeal nature of man, which he has in common with the brutes, and whereby he is the object of sensuous perception and corporeal impressions: whereby also he is subjected to the laws of the infirmity, decay, and transitoriness of material things, in contrast to purely spiritual and incorporeal beings.”)

Delitzsch remarks on the order, that it differs from “*flesh and blood*,” in setting forth first the inner and more important element, the blood, as the more immediate and principal vehicle of the soul..... before the more visible and palpable element, the flesh: doubtless with reference to the shedding of Blood, with a view to which the Saviour entered into community with our corporeal life), **He Himself also in like manner** (*similarly*. The word expresses a general similitude, a likeness in the main; and so is not to be pressed here, to extend to *entire identity*, nor on the other hand to imply, of purpose, *partial diversity*; but to be taken in its wide and open sense—that He Himself also partook, in the main, in like manner with us, of our nature. The ancient expositors dwell justly on the word as against the Docetae, who held that our Lord’s was only an apparent body) **participated in** (the A.V., “*took part*,” is good, but it should be followed by ‘*in*,’ not ‘*of*,’ which makes it ambiguous. Notice the past tense, referring to the one act of the Incarnation) **the same things** (viz. *blood and flesh*: not, as Bengel, “the same things which happen to his brethren, not even death excepted”); **that by means of his death** (a paradox. “Death itself, as Death, is that which Jesus used as the instrument of annihilating the prince of Death;” Hoffmann. There is an old Latin Epigram, which may be thus given in English: “Had not the death of death|by death done death to death,|that key were lost, which Life|Eternal openeth”) **He might destroy** (bring to nought. The word is found, besides here, once in St. Luke [xiii. 7], and twenty-five times in St. Paul) **him that hath the power of death** (the present participle is better taken of the office, ‘the holder of the power,’—than of past time, ‘*him that had the power*,’ as A.V. The reason why this clause comes first, and not “*the devil*,” is probably, as Chrysostom suggests, to exhibit the paradox mentioned above), **that is, the devil** (compare Wisdom ii. 24, “By the envy of the devil death came into the world;” and see Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2. So in the Rabbinical writings, Samuel, the chief of the evil spirits, was called the angel of death: and it is said, “Samuel was the cause of death to all the world.”

The Death of Christ brought to nought the agency of the devil in death, because, that Death of His being not the penalty of His own sin, but the atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world, all those who by faith are united to Him can now look on death no longer as the penalty of sin, but only as the passage for them, as it was for Him, to a new and glorious life of triumph and blessedness. But for those who are not united to Him, death, retaining its character of a punishment for sin, retains also therewith all its manifold terrors); **and might deliver those who** (as many as. This does not in such a case imply the existence of *others who do not* fulfil the thing predicated, but rather takes, so to speak, the full measure of those indicated, being almost equivalent to “*who, every one of them....*” These persons whom Christ died to free, were all subject to this bondage induced by the fear of death. And these in fact were, all mankind; to whom the potential benefit of Christ’s death extends) **by fear of death were through all their lifetime subjects of** (not merely ‘subject to,’ so that they might or might not be involved in it, but their actual implication is inferred) **bondage** (Calvin’s note is well worth transcribing: “This place admirably expresses how wretched is their life who dread death; as all must dread it who view it out of Christ; for then there appears in it nothing but a curse. For whence comes death except from the wrath of God against sin? Hence this bondage through life, i.e. perpetual anxiety, constraining their unhappy souls. For conscience of sin ever implies dread of divine judgment. From this fear Christ has liberated us, taken away our curse by submitting to it, which was the thing formidable in death”).

16.] Explanatory of ver. 15, by pointing out a fact well Known to us all, that it was to help a race subject to death, that Christ came. **For, as we well know, it is not angels that He helpeth, but it is the seed of Abraham that He helpeth** (I have rendered thus, to preserve the emphasis on the two contrasted words, **angels**, and **the seed of Abraham**. The word rendered **helpeth** signifies “*takes by the hand*,” in order to assist and lead. This help is not by Him rendered to *angels*: He is not the Captain of their salvation, And herein there is no contradiction to Col. i. 20: for the reconciliation which Christ has effected even for the things in the heavens, is not delivering them from fear of death, or bringing them through sufferings to glory, whatever mystery it may involve beyond our power of conception.

the seed of Abraham next comes under consideration. And we must here as ever, render, and understand, according to the simple sense of the words used, regarding the circumstances under which they were used. Accordingly, we must not here understand **mankind**, as some have done: nor again with others, can we suppose the *spiritual* seed of Abraham to be meant [Gal. iii. 7, 29; Rom. iv. 11f., 16],—because, as Bleek well remarks, the present context speaks not of that *into which* Christ has *made* those redeemed by Him, but of that *out of which* He has *helped* them. *The seed of Abraham* then means, *the Jewish race*, among whom Christ was born in the flesh, and whom He did come primarily to help: and the peculiarity of the expression must be explained, Estius,— “This whole epistle prudently dissimulates the calling of the Gentiles, either because the mention of them would be displeasing to the Hebrews, or because that mention was not necessary to its design.” I must not omit to mention, that the above manner of interpreting this verse, now generally acquiesced in, was not that of the ancient expositors. By them it was generally supposed that the verb referred to our Lord’s taking upon Him of our nature: and they for the most part make it into a past tense, and render as A.V.,— “*He took not upon Him the nature of angels, but He took upon Him the seed of Abraham.*” But independently of other reasons against this, arising from the usage of the word, the formula ‘to take on him the seed of Abraham, or the angels,’ would be a most unnatural way of expressing ‘*to take the nature* of either of these.’ And the ancients themselves seem to have felt, that this formula of itself could not bear such a meaning. They assume accordingly that the writer represents man and his nature, through sinfulness, alienated and flying from God and the divine nature, and the Son of God pursuing, overtaking, and drawing it into union with Himself. It needs little to shew how far-fetched and forced this interpretation of the words is, if it is intended to give the sense of *assuming the nature of man*. See more remarks on the meaning in my Greek Test.).

17.] Because then He had this work to do for the seed of Abraham (sons of men, in the wider reference),—viz. to deliver them from *fear* of death, He must be made like them in all things, that He may be a merciful and faithful High Priest. Then ver. 18 gives the reason of this necessity. **Whence it behoved Him** (not implying the eternal purpose of God [Luke xxiv. 26:—but a moral necessity in the carrying out of His mediatorial work) **in all things** (i. e. all things wherewith the present argument is concerned: all things which constitute real humanity, and introduce to its sufferings and temptations and sympathies. The exception, *without sin*, brought out in ch. iv. 15, is not in view here) **to be like** (not, '*made like*.' The original expresses that this resemblance was brought about by a definite act, other than his former state: an important distinction, which however we must rather lose in the English than introduce an irrelevant idea by the word 'made') **unto his brethren** (the children of Israel, as above: but obviously also, his brethren in the flesh—all mankind), **that he might become (become**, not simply *be*, because the High Priesthood of Christ in all its fulness, and especially in its work of mercy and compassion and succour, was not inaugurated, till He entered into the heavenly place: see ch. v. 9, vi. 19, 20, vii. 26, viii. 1, 4. His being in all things like his brethren, sufferings and death included, was *necessary* for Him, in order to his becoming, through those sufferings and death, our High Priest. It was not the death [though that was of previous necessity, and therefore is often spoken of as involving the whole], but the bringing the blood into the holy place, in which the work of sacerdotal expiation consisted: see Levit. iv. 13–20: and below, on the end of the verse) **a merciful** (the original might also be rendered, "*merciful, and a faithful High Priest.*" but against adopting this here, see in my Greek Test.) **and faithful** (true to His office, not only as regards God [ch. iii. 5], but as regards men also; to be trusted without fail) **High Priest** (this is the first mention of the sacerdotal office of Christ, of which so much is afterwards said in the Epistle, and which recurs again so soon, ch. iii. 1) **in matters relating to God** (the words must not be referred to *faithful*, but to **High Priest**; or rather to the whole idea, "*a merciful and faithful High Priest*"), **to expiate the sins** (the word used here means to *be propitiated*, and properly used passively of the person to be rendered propitious. The expression is not a strict one: but is thus to be accounted for: God is rendered propitious to the sinner, who has forfeited His favour and incurred His wrath. But we never find in Scripture, Old Test. or New Test., any such expression as "*the Father was propitiated concerning our sins by the death of His Son;*" or as this, "*Christ propitiated God* (or, '*the wrath of God*') *by His blood.*' never, "*God was reconciled to us.*" "As the Old Test. nowhere says, that sacrifice propitiated God's wrath, lest it should be thought that sacrifice was an act, by which, as such, man influenced God to shew him grace,—so also the New Test. never says that the sacrifice of Christ propitiated God's wrath, lest it may be thought that it was an act anticipatory of God's gracious purpose,—which obtained, and so to speak, forced from God previously reluctant, without His own concurrence, grace instead of wrath." Delitzsch. To understand this rightly, is all-important to any right holding of the doctrine of the Atonement. This then is not said: but the sinner is [improperly, as far as the *use of the word* is concerned] said on his part, to be *propitiated*, to be brought into God's favour; and if the sinner, then that on account of which he is a sinner, viz. his sin. The word here is used of Him who, by His *propitiation*, brings the sinner into God's favour, i.e. makes propitiation for, expiates, the sin. The Death of Christ being the necessary opening and condition of this propitiation,—the propitiation being once for all consummated by the sacrifice of His death, and all sin by that sacrifice expiated, we must of necessity determine [against the Socinian view of Christ's High Priesthood, which again and again come before us in this commentary] that His High Priesthood was, strictly speaking, begun, as its one chief work in substance was accomplished, here below, during His time of suffering. That it is still continued in heaven, and indeed finds its highest and noblest employ there, is no reason against this view. The accomplished his sacrifice, before he went within the veil to sprinkle the blood: though it was that sprinkling of the blood by which the atonement was actually made, as it is by the Spirit's application of Christ's atoning blood to the heart of each individual sinner that he is brought into reconciliation with God) of the people (again, the Jewish people, compare Matt. i. 21: Luke i. 68, 77; ii. 10. "Why did not he say, the sins of *the world*, but, of *the people?* because then the relation of the Lord was to the Jews only, and He came especially on their account, that their salvation might precede the salvation of the rest: notwithstanding that the converse really happened." Theophylact).

18.] Explanation, how the **being like His brethren in all things** has answered the end. *that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest. For He Himself having been tempted in that which He hath suffered, He is able to succour them that are (now) tempted* (the construction is much doubted. The sentence is open to several logical arrangements and consequent renderings. 1) "for He is able to help those who are tried by the same temptations in which His own sufferings have consisted:" 2) "for having been Himself tempted in that which He hath suffered, &c.:" 3) "for in that which He hath suffered when He himself was tempted, He is able to succour those who are tempted [in the same]::" 4) "for in that in which He himself was tempted and hath suffered He is able, &c." Of these I much prefer 2); because (a) it keeps together the prominent members of the logical comparison, between Him being tempted and us being tempted, giving "*in that which He hath suffered*" as a qualification of *being tempted*, and thus explaining wherein His temptation consisted. Nor (b) is it at all open to Lünemann's objection, that it limits the power of Christ to help, to those things merely in which He himself has suffered and been tempted: stating as it does generally the fact *being tempted*, and then specifying in what, viz. *in that which He hath suffered*. It also (c) corresponds exactly in construction with the similar sentence ch. v. 8,— "*He learned, from the things which He suffered, obedience,*" in supplying an object after *suffered*. And (a) it seems more natural that an object should be required after the perfect, than that it should be used absolutely. After 'He hath suffered,' we enquire, 'What?'—after 'He suffered,'—'When?' Christ's whole sufferings were a *temptation* in the sense here intended: see ch. iv. 15; James i. 2. The rendering given in the A.V., making "*in that*" a conjunction of inference, meaning "*because*," seems to be quite unauthorized. The ability **to succour** here is not to be understood of the power to which the Lord has been exalted through

death and suffering to be a Prince and a Saviour,—which is not here in question: but of the power of sympathy which he has acquired by personal experience of our sufferings. As God, He knows what is in us: but as man, He feels it also. And by this, wonderful as it may seem, He has acquired a fresh power, that of sympathy with us, and, in consequence, of helping us. See my sermon on this text, in Quebec Chapel Sermons, vol iii. p. 84. And this is the general view of expositors, both ancient and modern).

Hebrews: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1–IV. 16.] THE SON OF GOD GREATER ALSO THAN MOSES: AND INFERENCES THEREFROM. The Writer has arrived, through the reasonings of ch. i. ii., at the mention of the High Priesthood of Jesus. He might at once have passed thence to the superiority of His High Priesthood to that of the imperfect priests on earth. But one point yet remains, without which the Gospel would not have its entire comparison with the law. The law was given by angels in the hand of a mediator. Moses was that mediator. Moses was above all others the prophet by whom God had spoken to the Fathers in times past. Christ therefore must be compared with Moses, and shewn to be greater than he. This being done, he returns again to his central idea, the High Priesthood of Christ (ch. iv. 14); and from thenceforward treats of and unfolds it. Ebrard gives the detailed connexion well: “The angel of the covenant came in the name of God before the people of Israel; Moses in the name of Israel before God: the High Priest came in the name of God before Israel (with the name ‘Jehovah’ on his forehead), and in the name of Israel (with the names of the twelve tribes on his breast) before God (Exod. xxviii. 9–29 and 36–68). Now the New Test. Messiah is above the angels, according to ch. i. ii. a) because in Himself as Son of God He is higher than they, and b) because in Him all humanity is exalted above the angels to lordship in the ‘*world to come*,’ and that by this means, because the Messiah is not only Angel, but also High Priest,—not only messenger of God to men, but also the propitiatory sacerdotal

representative of men before God. Now exactly parallel with this runs our second part. The fundamental thesis, ch. iii. 3, ‘*For this person hath been counted worthy of more honour than Moses,*’ is plainly analogous in form with the fundamental thesis of the first part, i. 4, ‘*becoming so much better than the angels*’ The New Test. Messiah is above Moses, because He a) of Himself, as *Son* of the house (iii. 6), is above him who was only the *servant* of the house (compare with iii. 5,–i. 14), and b) because the work, of bringing Israel into rest, which was not finished by Moses, is now finished by Him (iv. 1 ff.). And this work Christ has finished, by being not, as Moses, a mere leader and lawgiver, but at the same time a propitiatory representative, an *High Priest* (ch. v. 11 ff.). So far does the parallelism of the two portions reach even into details, that as the two divisions of the former part are separated by a hortatory passage, so are those of this part also:—

I. The Son and the angels.

a) The Son of God of Himself higher than the *ministering spirits* of God, i. 5–14.

(Hortatory passage, ii. 14.)

b) In Him man-hood is exalted above the angels, ii. 5–16.

For He was also High Priest, ii. 17, 18.

II. The Son and Moses.

a) The Son of the house of Israel higher than the *servant* of the house, iii. 1–6.

(Hortatory passage, iii. 7–19.)

b) In Him Israel has entered into rest, iv. 1–13,

Thus He also our High Priest, iv. 14–16.”

Ebrard has perhaps not enough noticed the prevalence of the hortatory mood not only in the interposed passage, iii. 7–19, but all through the section: compare iv. 1, 11, 14, 16.

1.] Whence (i. e. seeing that we have such a helper: it is connected with the result of ch. ii. The fact just announced in ii. 18, is a reason for *our considering*, &c.: see below), **holy brethren** (both these words are used in reference to the *brethren*, ch. ii. 11, 12. Not that the *brethren* here are *Christ’s* brethren: but that the use of the word reminds them of that brotherhood in and because of Christ, of which he has before spoken. Whether the idea of common nationality is here to be introduced, is at least

doubtful. I should rather regard it as swallowed up in the great brotherhood in Christ: and Bleek has well remarked, that, had the Writer been addressing believing Jews and Gentiles, or even believing Gentiles only, he would have used the same term of address, and without any conscious difference of meaning), **partakers of an heavenly calling** (the invitation, or summons, of God, calling men to His glory in Christ—and hence the state which is entered by them in pursuance of that calling: compare especially Phil. iii. 14. Then also **heavenly** means—a calling made from heaven, see ch. xii. 25. Or it may mean, the calling which proposes a heavenly reward,—whose inheritance is in heaven. By far the best way is, to join the two meanings together: *heavenly* in its purport and *heavenward* in its result), **contemplate** (survey, with a view to more closely considering, not, “pay attention to, be obedient to”) **the Apostle and High Priest** (both words belong to the genitive, which follows) **of our profession, Jesus (apostle,** as superior to the angels, being Himself the angel of the covenant, God’s greatest messenger: the word “*angel*” being avoided, on account of its technical use before, to prevent Christ being confused with the angels in nature. He is the “*sent from the Father:*” see John xx. 21. [I may remark, that the circumstance of the Writer using the term “*apostle*” without scruple, as designating our Lord, shew that the apostles, as a class, were not so distinctly marked as they have since been: a view supported also by some expressions of St. Paul: e.g. 2 Cor. viii. 23.]

of our [Christian] confession,—i. e. of our faith.

2.] First, a point of *likeness* between our Lord and Moses is brought out, and that by a reference to an Old Test. declaration respecting the latter); **that he is** (not ‘*was*.’) The present sense must be retained here. Then a question arises: are we to understand it strictly of present time, of Christ now in heaven,—or as in the case cited, of general designation? Clearly, I think, of the latter: Jesus, whose character it is, that He is *faithful*. For the strict present would, to say nothing of other objections, not apply to the portion of the Lord’s office, designated by the word “*apostle*,” but only to that comprised under “*High Priest.*” It characterizes faithfulness as His inherent attribute) **faithful** (it is questioned, whether or not this word refers back to the “*faithful High Priest*” of ch. ii. 18. The sense is certainly not the same: the faithfulness there being the fidelity wherewith He, being like His brethren, would, so to speak, reproduce their wants before God;—that here spoken of being His faithfulness to God, over whose house He is set, ver. 6. Still I cannot help thinking that the *word itself* is led to by, and takes up that other. That regarded more the sacerdotal, this regards the *apostolic* office of Christ) **to him that made him** (so we must render: not, ‘*that appointed him*.’) See this defended, and citations of the expression in both senses in the Fathers, in my Greek Test. The word thus taken, is of course to be understood of that constitution of our Lord as our Apostle and High Priest in which He, being human, was made by the Father: not of Him as the eternal Word, which would be irrelevant here, besides being against all Scripture precedent), **as also (also—to take another instance of faithfulness: thus, with every circumstance of honour, is Moses introduced, before any disparagement of him is entered upon)** **[was] Moses in all his house** (cited from Numbers in the references, “*My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.*”) 1) It may be well to remark, that the substitution of his for “*my*” at once indicates to whom “*His*” is to be referred: viz. to God, *who made him*: see also below on ver. 6. And so most ancient and modern Commentators. 2) The circumstance of the quotation makes it far more natural to refer “*in all His house*” to Moses directly, and not to Christ, as some do, putting a comma at *Moses*. 3) The ellipsis is to be filled up by “*was faithful*” after “*Moses*,” as in the place cited, and as in A.V. 4) The signification of “*His house*” is well illustrated by 1 Tim. iii. 15,— “*the house of God, which is the church of the living God.*” It imports the Church of God: and is one and the same here and in ver. 6; not two different houses, but the same, in the case of Moses taken at one time only,—in that of Christ, in its whole existence and development).

3.] For (the **for** is best connected, as commonly, with the “*consider*” above: as containing the reason why our attention should be thus fixed on Jesus: *for*, though He has the quality of faithfulness in God’s house in common with Moses, yet is He far more exalted and glorious than he) **this person** (better than “*this man*” of the A.V., which brings in an element not present here) **hath been held worthy** (the word includes, with the idea of ‘*accounting worthy*,’ that also of the *actual* bestowal of the dignity. It refers to the honour and glory wherewith God hath crowned Christ, in His exaltation to His right Hand; which is taken for granted without further explanation, as a fact well known to the readers) **of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he hath more honour than the house, who established it** (so literally. The *establishing* here meant refers beyond doubt primarily to the erection of an actual house. The word is so used, of the preparation of a building,—a house, or temple, or ship, or town, &c.—In almost all the places where it occurs (see my Greek Test.) the verb may be so taken as to include not only the erection of the building, ship, &c., but also the fitting up, providing with proper furniture. And here also we may say, that it means more than the building of the house, and includes, besides the building of the house, the fitting it up and providing it with all requisites. So that to this *establishment* of the house belong servants, male and female; and so here we may say that the servants of the house are included. The sense then is this: just as he who has built and furnished a house,—for himself namely, as master of the house,—stands higher in honour than the house itself and the individual *servants*, so does Christ higher than Moses: and Christ is thus represented as he who has prepared the house of God [and therefore as its lord], to whom Moses also belongs as an individual *servant*).

4.] For (expansion and justification of the last verse) **every house is established by some one** (i. e. it belongs to the idea of a house that some one should have built and fitted it up: arrangement implies an arranger, design a designer); **but** (contrast as passing from the individual to the general) **He which established all things is God** (before treating of the misunderstanding of this verse by the fathers, and by many of the moderns, let us endeavour to grasp its true meaning. The last verse brings

before us Christ as the *establisher* of the house of God. And this He is, in whatever sense the word “*house*” be taken: whether in the narrower sense which best suits this present comparison, or in the wider sense implied by the faithful centurion in Matt. viii. 9, in which all natural powers are his *servants*. But he is this, not by independent will or agency. “*By whom also He made the worlds,*” is our Writer’s own language of the creation by Christ: and it is in accord with that of St. John, where he says “*all things were made by Him.*” He, as the Son, is He that established the house of God—the church, or the world, or the universe; but, apparently [compare ver. 6], the former of these: but it is as one with—by virtue of his Sonship—Him who is the *Establisher of all things*, viz. God. And thus the **his**, twice repeated in vv. 5, 6, falls into its own place as belonging both times to God: Moses is His servant, part and portion of His household: Christ is His Son, over His household. And by this reference to God as the *first Establisher*, is the expression above, “*him that made him,*” illustrated and justified. So that this verse is not parenthetic, as almost all the recent expositors make it,—but distinctly part of the argument.

The ancient expositors, almost without exception, take “*God*” as predicate, and “*He that established all things*” as a designation of Christ—“*now He that founded all things, is [must be] God:*” thus making the passage a proof of the deity of Christ. But, apart from the extreme harshness and forcing of the construction to bring out this meaning, the sentiment itself is entirely irrelevant here. If the Writer was proving Christ to be greater than Moses inasmuch as He is God, the founder of all things, then clearly the mere assertion of this fact would have sufficed for the proof, without entering on another consideration after such an assertion, all minor considerations would have been not only superfluous, but preposterous. He does however, after this, distinctly go into the consideration of Christ being faithful not as a servant but as a son: so that he cannot be here speaking of His Deity as a ground of superiority).

5.] The argument proceeds, resuming the common ground of ver. 2. **And Moses indeed** (inasmuch as **but** following has the effect of bringing out, and thus emphasizing, *Christ*, this **indeed**, or **verily**, may almost be treated as a particle of disparagement) [**was**] **faithful in all His God’s**, compare above the words of the citation, on ver. 2. It is necessary in the English to mark this reference, which otherwise would be missed) **house, as a servant** (compare as above; the word **servant** is often applied in the Old Test. to Moses: see Exod. iv. 10, xiv. 31: Numb. xii. 7, 8; Josh. i. 2, &c. The Greek word used here for **servant** is not that which signifies *slave*, but a more honourable one, designating all who minister to one another on any account), **for testimony of the things which were to be** [afterwards] **spoken** (these words are not to be joined with “**servant**,” nor with “**faithful**,” but with the whole preceding sentence: the purpose of the faithful service of Moses in God’s house was, *for testimony*, &c. **The things which were to be spoken after** can only mean *the Gospel* (see the various insufficient meanings which have been given and discussed in my Greek Test. Owen observes, “This as well the order of the words as the import of them doth require. In his ministry he was a testimony, or, by what he did in the service of the house he gave testimony: whereunto? to the things that were afterwards to be spoken, viz. in the fulness of time, the appointed season, by the Messiah: i.e. the things of the gospel. And this indeed was the proper end of all that Moses did or ordered in the house of God”); **but Christ** (understand, *is faithful*). Then, supplying this, are we to join it with “*over his house*,” or to insert it before the words “*as a Son*,” and take it absolutely? Certainly the latter, as shewn by the order of the words in the previous sentence; the ellipsis here being, to judge by that order, between “*but Christ*” and “*as*,” not between “*Son*” and “*over*”) **as a Son over His house** (his here again of *God*,—not primarily, though of course by inference, of Christ. The house is *God’s* throughout: but Christ is of primary authority and glory in it, inasmuch as He is the Son in the house, and actually established the house. This, which I am persuaded is required by the context, is shewn decisively by ch. x. 21, “Having.... a great High Priest over the **house of God**.” Most Commentators refer it to *Christ*: and some, as A.V., understand “*his*” to mean “*his own*.” But thus the parallelism is destroyed, and in fact the identity of the house in the two cases, on which depends the strictness of the comparison between Moses and Christ. Ebrard has maintained that *two houses are intended*: “in the one house serves Moses. for a testimony of the future revelations of God, the *house* itself being part of the *testimony*: the other *house*, the *house* of Christ, are *we*: it is a living house, built of living stones.” But this introduces a complicated comparison, and to my mind infinitely weakens the argument. There is but one house throughout, and that one, the Church of God, in which both are faithful; one as a servant, the other as a son: this house was Israel, this house are we, if we are found faithful in the covenant); **whose** (not [except by inference] *Christ’s*. Besides the considerations urged above as affecting the question, we have the strong argument from Scripture analogy, compare 1 Tim. iii. 15; 1 Pet. iv. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 22; ch. x. 21, xii. 22; Rev. iii. 12: which alone, especially ch. x. 21, would go very far with me to decide the question) **house are we** (the Writer and his Hebrew readers: of whose house we are, even as Moses **if we hold fast the confidence and the matter of boasting of our hope** (see Rom. v. 2).

7-19.] See the summary at the beginning of the chapter. *Exhortation*, founded on the warning given by the Spirit in Ps. xciv., *not to allow an evil heart of unbelief to separate them from this their participation in the house of God.*

7.] **Wherefore** (i. e. seeing that they are the house of Christ, if they hold fast their confidence and boast. of hope. It has been disputed, what following verb is to be connected with *wherefore*. Some join it immediately with “*harden not*,” and regard with Writer as making the Spirit’s words his own: but this labours under the great difficulty that in ver. 9 the speaker is God Himself, and so an unnatural break is made at the end of ver. 8. Others believe that the construction begun with **wherefore** is dropped, and never finished, as in Rom. xv. 3, 21; 1 Cor. i. 31, ii. 9: **supplying** after **wherefore**, “*harden not your hearts*,”—or understanding **wherefore** more freely,” wherefore let it be so with you, as&c.” But by far the best way is, to take the whole

citation, including the formula of citation, as a parenthesis, and join **wherefore** with **take heed**, ver. 12. The length of such parenthesis is no objection to this view: see ch. vii. 20–22; xii. 18–24, where the Writer, after similar parentheses, returns back into the previous construction. Nor again is it any objection, that in the midst of the citation, another “*wherefore*” occurs, ver. 10: for that “*wherefore*” belongs strictly to the citation, and finds both its preparation and its resulting clause within its limits), —even as the Holy Spirit saith (in Ps. xc., Hebrew and English. This Psalm in the Hebrew has no writer’s name: in the Septuagint it is headed, “*a psalm of praise of (or, to) David.*” And it is ascribed to David in ch. iv. 7 below. The passage is cited as the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit, speaking through David), **To-day if ye hear his voice** (in “the Psalm, according to the Hebrew, the words corresponding to these, the second half of the 7th verse, form an independent sentence, to be taken as a powerful exhortation expressed in the form of a wish. The sense from ver. 6 is,— ‘Come let us fall down and bow ourselves, kneel before Jehovah our Creator. For He is our God, and we the people of his pasture and the flock of his hand.’ Then this sentence follows: ‘O that ye might this day hearken to His voice!’ ‘*This day*’ stands first, with strong emphasis, in contrast to the whole past time, during which they had shewn themselves disobedient and rebellious against the divine voice, as e.g. during the journey through the wilderness, alluded to in the following verses: ‘to-day’ therefore means ‘now,’ ‘now at length.’ Then in the following verses, to the end of the Psalm, is introduced, that which the divine voice, which they are to hear, addresses to them. **To-day** will thus refer to the day in which the Psalm was used in public worship, whenever that might be. See below), **harden not your hearts** (Hebrew, *heart*. Bleek remarks, that this is the only place where this expression ‘*to harden the heart,*’ is [in the original Hebrew text: the A.V. is inaccurate in Exod. viii. 15, 32, 1 Sam. vi. 6, where the expression is, literally rendered, *to make heavy or dull*] used of *man’s own act*: elsewhere it is always of God’s act, compare Exod. iv. 21; vii. 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 4, 17; Isa. lxiii. 17; and with “*spirit,*” Deut. ii. 30; whereas when the hardening is described us the work of man, the formula “*to stiffen the neck*” is used, Deut. x. 16; Neh. ix. 17, 29; 2 Chron. xxx. 8; xxxvi. 13; Jer. vii. 26; 2 Kings xvii. 14. For New Test. usage see Acts xix. 9; Rom. ix. 18), as in the provocation (the Hebrew has, ‘as [at] Meribah.’ In Exod. xvii. 1–7 we read that the place where the children of Israel murmured against the Lord for want of water was called Massah and Meribah. But the subsequent account of Numb. xx. 1–13, makes it plain that the two names refer to two different events and places: and this is further confirmed by Deut. xxxiii. 8,— “Thy holy One whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah.” In the Psalm these two are mentioned together, and the Septuagint as usual *translate* the names. In giving, for the proper names, their meaning and occasion, they have in fact cast light upon the sacred text; though it is rather comment than strict translation), in the time of (in the Hebrew this second clause is distinct from the first, and introduces a fresh instance: see below) **the day of the temptation in the wilderness** (Hebrew, “*as in the day of Massah in the wilderness:*” viz. that of the second murmuring against Moses and Aaron for want of water: see Numb. xx, 1–13. The place was in the wilderness of Sin, near Kadesh: ib. ver. 1): **where your fathers tempted, by way of trial** (‘tempted [me] in trying,’ or ‘proving [me]’), and saw my works (Hebrew, “*moreover they saw my work*”—i. e. my penal judgments; for these penal judgments lasted during the forty years, and it is they which are described in the next sentence. The meaning given by most expositors, “*although they saw my works [miracles of deliverance, &c.] for forty years,*” is not so likely, seeing that these provocations happened at the beginning of the forty years. But see below) **forty years** (these words in the Hebrew most probably belong, as rendered in our A.V., to what follows: “*I was grieved with this generation forty years:*” an arrangement rendered impossible here, on account of *wherefore* intervening.—But that such arrangement, was not unknown to our Writer is plain, from his presently saying, ver. 17, “*With whom was he grieved forty years?*” It is therefore likely that he did not choose this arrangement without reason. And if we ask what that reason was, we find an answer in the probability that the forty years’ space is taken as representing to the Hebrews their space for repentance; their “*to-day*” between the opening of the preaching of the gospel [compare ch. ii. 2], and their impending destruction. This idea was recognized by the Jews themselves in their books: “How long endure the years of the Messiah? Rabbi Eliezer said, forty years, in like manner as the children of Israel were this number of years in the wilderness.” “And if,” says Bleek, “this idea of the days of the Messiah was prevalent, that they were the immediate precursors of the ‘*age to come*,’ as the time of the great Sabbath-rest and the completed glory of the people of God,—this is something very analogous to the acceptance of the period of the forty years which seems to underlie what is said of them in our Epistle.” If so, it is possible that the meaning may be, that they saw My wonderful works and took no heed to them, and thereby increased their guilt).

10.] Wherefore (see above: it is inserted, to mark more strongly the reference of the *forty years* to the preceding. It is impossible, with this particle of inference, to join those words to this sentence. Instead of being anxious, as some Commentators are, at the expense of the meaning of words, to put our citations straight to the letter, it is far better to recognize at once the truth, for such it is, which Calvin here so boldly states: “We know that the Apostles, in citing testimonies, are more attentive to the main subject, than anxious about words”) **I was offended with this generation** (the Septuagint has “*that generation,*” as the received text here: there is no demonstrative in the original Hebrew,—*the generation.* The change seems to be made by our Writer for a set purpose, viz., to extend the saying, by making “*generation*” thus import the whole Jewish people,—the then living race, as well as that which provoked God in the wilderness. Compare Matt. xxiv. 34, and note), **and said, They do alway err in their heart** (Hebrew, “*They are a people of wanderers in heart*”); **but they** (in Hebrew, merely “*and they*”) **knew not** (*never knew*: their ignorance preceded their wandering, and is treated as the antecedent fact to it. The *not knowing*, where matters of practical religion are concerned, implies the not following) **my ways** (i. e., the ways which I would have them to walk in: so Gen. vi 12; Exod. xviii. 20). **As according** (“in conformity with the fact, that:” such conformity not necessarily implying that the excluding oath was *prior* to the disobedience, but only that the oath and the disobedience were strict correlatives of one another. As the one, so was the other) **I swear** (see Numb. xiv. 21 ff.;

xxxii. 10 ff.; Deut. i. 34 ff.) **in my wrath**, **If they shall enter** (so literally: this elliptical form of an oath stands for a strong negative: it is sometimes, when *man* is the speaker, filled up by “The Lord do so to me and more also, if...” Compare reference Mark; 2 Sam. iii. 35, and other places. It is interpreted below, ver. 18: “*to whom sware he that they should not enter,*” &c.) **into my rest** (in the Psalm, and in the places referred to above, the *rest* is, primarily, the promised land of Canaan. In Deut. xii. 9, 10, the words “*rest*” and “*giving you rest*” are used of the promised inheritance of Canaan. But it has been well noticed, that after Joshua had led the people into the land, they never in reality enjoyed entirely the rest which had been promised;—and in consequence, the meaning of that threat of God opened out before them, and it became plain that more was denounced upon the *generation* than one generation merely could exhaust, more also than the mere not entering into Canaan. Hence the prophetic pregnancy of the oath became evident, and its meaning was carried on in this exhortation by the Psalmist, and is here carried on by the sacred Writer of this Epistle, to a further rest which then remained for Israel, and now still remains for the people of God).

12.] Take heed (on the connexion of this with “*wherefore*” above, ver. 7, see note there), **brethren, lest there shall be in any one of you** (not the same as “*among you*.” It is more searching, in meaning not the whole flock only, but every individual member of it. “The good shepherd ought so to watch for the whole flock, as not to neglect a single sheep.” Calvin) **an evil heart of unbelief** (the genitive is possessive; an evil heart belonging to, characteristic of, unbelief. This is plain, from the consideration that *unbelief* is throughout the leading idea, compare ver. 19, and ch. iv. 3,—and not the *evil heart*. **Unbelief** must be kept to its simple primary meaning, not rendered *disobedience*; it was not this, but disbelief in the strictest sense, which excluded them, and against which the Hebrews are warned. That it led on to *disobedience*, we all know, but this is not before us here), **in** (the element in which the existence of such an evil heart of unbelief would be shewn) **departing** (apostatizing, falling from the faith: see below) **from the living God** (by using this solemn title of God, he not only warns them from Whom, and at what risk, they would depart, but also identifies the God whom they would leave, with Him who had so often called Himself by this name as the distinctive God of Israel, and as contrasted with the dumb and

impotent idols of other nations. And this he shows them that Israel, and the privileges and responsibilities of Israel, were now transferred to the Christian church, from which if they fell away they would be guilty of apostasy from the God of Israel. Compare the three other places [reff.] where the term occurs in our Epistle, and the notes there).

13.] But exhort yourselves (so, in a literal rendering, should the word be given, and not “*one another*,” though English idiom may require this latter in a version intended for use. This is especially meant, that in the church one should exhort another: yet not excluding the implication, that each one should himself be exhorted by his exhortation of the church. In Col. iii. 16, we have the same relation expressed) **day by day, as long as the [word] “To-day” is named** (i. e., as long as that period endures, which can be called by the name “*to-day*” as used in the Psalm, That period would be here, *the day of grace*: the short time [see ch. x. 25, 37] before the coming of the Lord); **that from among you** (emphatic, as contradistinguished from “*your fathers*” ver. 9) **no one be hardened** (as they, ver. 8) **by deceit of** (arising out of, belonging to) his sin (compare Rom. vii. 11, “*For sin... deceived me and slew me.*” See also Eph. iv. 22. In ch. xi. 25, xii. 4 “*sin*” is similarly used for defection from God).

14.] A reason given for *taking heed*, &c., enforcing the caution; since it is only by endurance that we can become partakers of Christ. **For we have become** (Bleek remarks, “Our Writer loves the use of this term, ‘*have become*,’ where he designates a state to which any one has attained, even where it would have been sufficient to have expressed simply the being in that state.” See text. and notes, ch. v. 11, 12; vii. 16, 20, 22, 23; xii. 8. But here it is rather perhaps anticipatory, looking on to the fulfilment of the condition to be stated) **partakers of Christ** (some take these words to signify *fellow-partakers with Christ*;’ but improperly), **if, that is, we hold fast** (see on ver. 6) **the beginning of our confidence** (some render this, “*the beginning of the subsistence of Christ in us.*” But there can be little doubt that the text is right).

It is, however, somewhat doubtful, whether by the expression is to be understood our incipient confidence, which has not yet reached its perfection,—or, “our *former* confidence,” see 1 Tim. v. 12; Rev. ii. 4, 5. This latter is taken by very many; but the other is far better, inasmuch as it keeps the contrast between *beginning* and *end*: “if we hold fast this *beginning* of our confidence firm until the *end*.” Otherwise, by making the *beginning* of merely mean *the former*, the contrast vanishes) **firm unto the end** (the *end* thought of is, not the death of each individual, but the coming of the Lord, which is constantly called by this name).

15.] The whole connexion and construction of this verse is very difficult. I have discussed them in full in my Greek Test.; and have concluded that the words are to be taken as a proof that we must hold fast &c, in order to be *partakers of Christ*. I would render then, “*since it is said*,” or in more idiomatic English, **for it is said, To-day if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.** Thus the context goes on smoothly, and the purpose of the whole is to shew, as is summed up in ver. 12, that (ver. 12) it is the wicked heart of *unbelief* which they have above all things to avoid. This argument is now carried forward by taking up the word *provocation*, and asking, in a double question, who they were that provoked, and with whom it was that He was offended.

16.] The A.V. renders, as indeed the original will very well bear, “*For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses:*”—the exceptions being, Caleb and Joshua, and all under twenty years old, and the women and Levites. But if we come to examine, (a) what contextual sense such a sentence can bear, or even (b) how our Writer would probably have expressed such a meaning, we shall find reason at once to reject the interpretation. For (a), the purpose here is clearly not to bring out the *exceptions* to those who were included in this saying, a process which would have quite defeated the purpose of the exhortation, seeing that the rebellious would be designated merely by *some*, and the exceptions would appear to be by far the greater number: and so every reader might shelter himself under the reflection that he was one of the faithful many, not one of the rebellions *“some.”* Nor again (b) would this, as mere matter of fact, have been thus expressed by the Writer. For it obviously was not so. The *“some”* were the faithful few, not the rebellious many: *“but with the greater part of them God was not well pleased,”* 1 Cor. x. 5. As regards the context, the course of thought is in fact just contrary to what this construction would require. The faithful exceptions are overlooked, and the whole of Israel is included in the *provocation*, to make the exhortation fall more forcibly on the readers.

For (“you need indeed to be careful against unbelief:—*for* on account of this very unbelief all our fathers were excluded”) WHO, **when they had heard** (in immediate reference to *“if ye hear,”* ver. 7), **provoked** (viz. God)? **Nay, was it not all who** (as above noticed, the exceptions are put out of sight, and that which was true of *almost all*, asserted generally) **came out from Egypt by means of Moses? And** (literally, **but;** it simply brings out the very slight contrast of a second and new particular, and therefore must in English be expressed by **and**). It is ‘*but*’ in the A.V.: but that is because take ver. 16 in the manner above rejected, as an *assertion*) **with WHOM was He offended forty years** (see on vv. 9, 10, and the consonance, in the connexion of **forty years** with the verb, with that in the Psalm, which was there departed from)? **was it not with those who sinned, whose carcases** (literally, members of the body, but especially the legs: taken also for the legs and arms, i.e. limbs: probably with the meaning that their bodies should fall and perish limb from limb in the wilderness: so Beza: “By this word is signified not so much that they died by the ordinary means, or by any plague, as that they fell in the desert by their bodies gradually wasting away”) **fell in the wilderness** (see 1 Cor. x. 5. The words here are exactly those of Numb. xiv. 29. Again, we must remember, in explaining these words, that the Writer is not bearing in mind at this moment the exceptions, but speaking generally)? **And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, except to those who disobeyed** (not, as A.V., *“believed not.”* this was a fact, and was indeed the root of their *disobedience*)?

19.] And [thus] we see that they were not able to enter in (however much they desired it: they were incapacitated by not fulfilling the condition of inheriting all God’s promises, belief and resulting obedience) **on account of unbelief** (see above on ver. 12. This verse forms a kind of ‘quod erat demonstrandum’ [as Ebrard], clenching the argument which has been proceeding since ver. 12. The Writer now proceeds to make another use of the example on which he has been so long dwelling).

Hebrews: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1–13.] In the Son; Israel enters into the true rest of God. On the mingling of the hortatory form with the progress of the argument, see the summary at ch. iii.

1.] Let us fear therefore (this form of expressing the caution seems purposely chosen to express the fear and trembling, Phil. ii. 12, with which every servant of God, however free from slavish terror anxiety, ought to work out his salvation), **lest, a promise being still left us** (notice the *present*—not *“having been left us.”* On the force of this present, very much of the argument rests) **of entering into His rest** (it is to be observed, that in the argument in this chapter, the Writer departs from the primary sense of the words *“my rest”* in the Psalm, and lays stress on *His*, making it *God’s* rest, the rest into which God has entered; see below on ver. 10. And this is very important as to the nature of the rest in question, as importing, not the land of Canaan, but the heavenly home which that earthly rest mystically foreshadowed. Of course all references of the rest spoken of to the period after the destruction of Jerusalem, as Hammond, or to the cessation of Levitical ordinances, as Michaelis, are inadequate and out of the question), **any one of you** (although the communicative form has been used before in *“let us fear,”* the second person is here returned to; and of purpose. A similar change is found in ch. x. 24, 25: and in Rom. xiv. 13) **appear** (see below) **to have fallen short of it** (i. e. be found, when the great trial of all shall take place, to have failed of, = to have no part in,—the promise. So that **appear** is, as so many both of ancients and moderns have taken it, a mild term, conveying indeed a sterner intimation behind it).

2.] The former half of this verse substantiates the expression *“being still left”* of the last verse. The stress is not, “we, as well as *they:*” but lies on **have good tidings been preached**, which includes both us and them.

For good tidings have been also announced to us, as likewise to them (they were not the same good tidings in the two cases: but the Writer treats them as the same. To them indeed it was primarily the inheritance of the land of promise: but even then, as proved below, the term **my rest** had a farther meaning, which meaning reaches even down to us): **nevertheless the word of [their] hearing** (*of hearing*, genitive of apposition; the word and the *hearing* being commensurate: *“the word of*

[consisting in] *that which they heard*") **did not profit them, unmixed as they were in faith with its hearers.**

The passage is almost a desperate one. I have discussed it, in its various readings and meanings, in my Greek Test., and, deeming it necessary to adopt the reading followed in the text, have found this meaning,— "And so these men received no benefit from 'the word of hearing,' because they were not one in faith with its hearers; did not correspond, in their method of receiving it, with faithful hearers, whom it does profit." I have stated that this interpretation *does not satisfy me*: but it seems the only escape from violation either of the rules of criticism or of those of grammar: and therefore I am constrained to accept it until some better is suggested.

3.] For (taking up again the word "*faith*" in ver. 2) **we do enter** (are to enter. Some Commentators have seen a communicative and conciliatory tone in the first person here. But Bleek and Lünemann well remark that it is not so; for the fact of *believing* brings out a class distinct from the rest, as in ch. vi. 18, xii. 25) **into the** (aforesaid) **rest** (not only, as A.V., "*into rest*," abstract), **we who believed** (the past tense is anticipatory, the standing-point being, the day of entering into the rest. It was unbelief which excluded them: the promise still remains unfulfilled, see below: they who at the time of its fulfilment shall be found to have believed, shall enter into it), **even as He hath said** (this citation evidently does not refer to the whole of what has just been said, but only to the fact, that the rest has not yet been entered into in the sense of the promise. The condition, *believing*, is not yet: brought into treatment, but follows below in ver. 11 in hortatory form, having in fact been demonstrated already in ch. iii. 12–19), **As I swear in my wrath, if** (see above on ch. iii. 11) **they shall enter into my rest: although** (the context is much disputed. I believe it will be best taken thus: the Writer is leading on to the inference, that the entering into *God's rest* is a thing YET FUTURE for God's people. And this he thus brings about. "*My rest*" is not a thing future for God:—He has already entered therein,—ver. 4. Still [ver. 5] we have again, after God had thus entered in, the oath, They shall not, &c. Consequently, since [ver. 6] it remains that *some* must enter in, and they to whom it was first promised did not, on account of unbelief,—for that they *did not* [i. e. none of them did], is plain by His repeating in David, after the lapse of so many centuries, the same warning again [ver. 7], which He would not have done if Joshua had led Israel into that rest [ver. 8]:—since this is so, the sabbatism of God's people is YET FUTURE [ver. 9], and reserved for that time when they shall rest from their labours, as God from His [ver. 10]. Then follows a concluding exhortation, vv. 11–16. Thus all is clear, and according to the progress of the argument, Sev other proposed meanings discussed in my Gr. Test.) **the works** (viz. of God: an expression borrowed from the citation which follows) **were constituted** (i. e. finished) **from the foundation of the world** (i. e. as substantiated in next verse, though God Himself had not that rest *to enter into*, and did not mean this by **my rest**, but had entered into the rest of which He speaks: the key-verse to this being ver. 10).

4.] Substantiation of the last assertion. For he (God, not Moses, nor *the scripture*: see ch. xiii. 5) **hath spoken somewhere** (see above on ch. ii. 6) **concerning the seventh day on this wise, And God rested** (the rest here spoken of must not be understood only as that of one day after the completion of creation; but as an enduring rest, commencing then and still going on,—into which God's people shall hereafter enter. Still less must we find here any discrepancy with such passages as John v. 17; Isa. xl. 28: God's rest is not a rest necessitated by fatigue, nor conditioned by idleness: but it is, in fact, the very continuance in that upholding and governing, of which the Creation was the beginning) **on the seventh day from all His works.**

5.] And in this (place: our present passage) **again** (i. e. *on the other hand*: a citation which shall qualify and explain that other, making it impossible that men should have already entered into it), **If they shall enter into my rest** (these words are to be taken exactly as before, in a strong negative sense. The point raised is, that in the days of Moses, nay, long after, of David, men had not yet, in the full sense at least, entered into that rest, because it was spoken of as yet *future*: it being of no import to the present argument, whether that, future is of an affirmative or negative proposition: the negative denunciation in fact implying in itself the fact, that *some would* enter therein).

6.] Since then it yet remains (this is the sense in all places where the word is used: *remains over*, not having been previously exhausted. The time indicated by the *present* here is that following on the threat above) **that some enter into it** (viz. by the very expectation implied in the terms of the exclusion—"These shall not:" therefore there are that shall: because, the *entering in* of some being a portion of God's purposes, the failure of these persons will not change nor set aside that purpose. This latter consideration however does not logically come into treatment, but is understood;—"since what God once purposed, He always purposes"), **and those who were formerly** (as contrasted with David's time, and with the present) **the subjects of its announcement** (viz. the Israelites in the wilderness) **did not enter in on account of disobedience** (not, 'unbelief.' see on ch. iii. 18. The first clause, *Seeing therefore*, &c., was a deduction from the terms of the divine denunciation, as to God's general purpose; and now this second clause is a particular concrete instance in which that general purpose was not carried out. Since *some must*, and *they did not*, the implied promise is again found recurring many centuries after): again (emphatic: *anew*), **He limiteth** (*has fixed*, specifies, assigns the time) **a certain day, saying "To-day" in David** ("in," as we say, "*in Isaiah*," meaning, "*in the book of Isaiah*"), **after** (the lapse of) **so long a time** (viz. the time between Joshua and David); **as it hath been said before** (viz. ch. iii. 7, 15: there can hardly be a question that the reference of the words is backward, to what has been already cited, not forwards to the words which follow), **To-day if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts.**

8.] Confirmation of the above, as against an exception that might be taken, that notwithstanding the exclusion of many by unbelief, those who entered the promised land with Joshua *did enter* into that rest of God. **For if Joshua** (it does not appear that any parallel between the typical and the great final Deliverer is intended: but it could hardly fail to be suggested to the readers. Our translators, in retaining “Jesus” (the Greek form of *Joshua*) here, have introduced into the mind of the ordinary English reader utter confusion. It was done in violation of their instructions, which prescribed that all proper names should be rendered as they were commonly used) **had given them rest** (led them into this rest of which we are treating), **He** (God: the subject of “*limiteth*” and “*saying*” above) **would not speak** (not ‘*have spoken*,’ as A.V.) **after this of another day.**

9.] Consequence from the proposition in ver. 6. *Some* must enter therein: some, that is, analogous to, inheriting the condition of and promises made to, those first, who did not enter in because of disobedience. These are now specified as “*the people of God*,” doubtless with a reference to the true spiritual character of Israclites indeed, represented under their external name: and their rest is no longer a “*rest*” merely, but (see below) is called by a higher and nobler name. **Therefore** (see above) **there is yet reserved** (see on ver. 6: remains as yet unexhausted, occupied, unrealized) **a keeping of sabbath** (the term is used here to correspond to “*my rest*,” specified and explained in ver. 4. God’s rest was a *keeping of sabbath*: so also will ours be. The idea of the rest hereafter being the antitype of the Sabbath-rest, was familiar to the Jews. They spoke of the “*age to come*” as the “day which is all sabbath.” It is hardly probable that the sacred Writer had in his mind the object which Calvin mention: “I doubt not that the Apostle purposely alludes to the Sabbath, to dissuade the Jews from its outward observance: for thus only can its abrogation be understood, by the understanding its spiritual end.” Still more alien from the sense and context is it to use this verse, as some have absurdly done, as carrying weight one way or the other in the controversy respecting the obligation of a sabbath under the Christian dispensation. The only indication it furnishes is negative: viz. that no such term as “*keeping of sabbath*” could then have been, in the minds of Christians, associated with the keeping of the Lord’s day: otherwise, being already present, it could not be said that **it is yet reserved**) **for the people of God** (the well-known designation of Israel the covenant people. It occurs again, ch. xi. 25. Here it is used of that veritable Israel, who inherit God’s promises by faith Christ: compare Gal. vi. 16).

10.] is taken in two ways: 1. as a general axiom, justifying the use of the words “*keeping of sabbath*” above: **For he that entered into his** (God’s) **rest, himself also rested from his (own) works, like as God rested from his own.** This has been the usual explanation, Theophylact says, “He is explaining, in what sense he called such a rest a *sabbatism*: because, he says we also rest from our works, as also God, when He rested from His works in creating the world, named the day the Sabbath.” This explanation labours under two difficulties (a) the past tense, ‘**entered**’ into his which thus is made into a perfect or a present: (b) the double reference of **his**, first to God, and then to the man in question, especially when God’s works are taken up by the strong term **his own**, 2. The other interpretation has been that of Owen, and others, and recently Ebrard, who refer **he that entered** to Christ: **For He that entered into his** (own or God’s) **rest, Himself also rested from His works like as God rested from His own:** and therefore, from our Forerunner having entered into this sabbatism, it is reserved for us, the people of God, to enter into it with and because of Him. Thus, as Ehrard says, Jesus is placed in the liveliest contrast to Joshua, who had not brought God’s people to their rest; and is designated as “That one, who entered into God’s rest.” And to this view I own I am strongly inclined, notwithstanding the protest raised against it by Bleck, Lünenmann, and Delitzsch. My reasons are, in addition to those implied above, a) the *form* of the assertion, as regards Joshua here and Jesus in ver. 14. That a contrast is intended between the Jesus who did not give them rest, and the “Great High Priest who is gone through the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**,” seems very plain. And if so, it would be easily accounted for, that Christ should be here introduced merely under the designation of **He that entered into his rest**. b) the introduction of the words **he himself also**, lifting out and dignifying the subject of this clause as compared with **God**, in a way which would hardly be done, had the assertion been merely of any man generally. c) Scripture analogy. This rest, into which the Lord Jesus entered, is spoken of Isa. xi, 10, “*And His rest shall be glorious:*” and this work of His, in Isa. xl. 10, “*His work is before Him:*” and by Christ Himself, John ix. 4, “*I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day.*” d) The expression **that rest** below, which stands harshly insulated, unless it refers to the **rest** in this verse. e) The whole context: see summary at ch. iii. 1. Render then: **For He that entered into His** (either, “God’s;” or more probably merely “his,” reflective, as in Isa. xi. 10 above) **rest, He Himself also** (on this, see above) **rested from his works** (see above) **as God from his own** (His own, not with any distinction of kind, but used only to mark distinction of possession).

11–13.] Exhortation, so frequently interspersed in the midst of the argument: see on ch. iii. 1. **Let us therefore** (consequence from vv. 3–7; seeing that the promise is held out to us, as it was to them, and that they failed of it through disobedience) **earnestly strive to enter into that rest** (viz that mentioned in ver. 10, into which Christ has entered before: compare ver. 14, ch. vi. 20), **lest any one fall into** (not, as A.V. and others, “*fall after*”) **the same example of disobedience** (not, *unbelief*: see on ch. iii. 18. It was *they that disobeyed* who failed to enter in).

12, 13.] Apart from the difficulties of some terms used, we may give the connexion thus: Such an endeavour is well worth all our *earnestness*—for we have One to do with, who can discern and will punish every even the most secret disobedience. **For the word of God** (in what sense? 1) The Personal Word has been understood by many, e.g., the Fathers in general, and not a few moderns. To this the first obvious objection is, that this mode of expression is confined to St. John among the New Test.

writers. This however, though clearly not to be met by alleging such passages as Luke i. 2; Act xx. 32, is not decisive. For our Epistle, though perhaps anterior to all the writings of St. John, is yet so intimately allied to the Alexandrine terminology, that it would be no matter of surprise to find its Writer using a term so nearly ripe for his purpose as we find "*the Word*" in Philo [see below]. The real objections to the Personal *Word* being simply and directly here meant, lie in the Epistle, and indeed in the passage itself *In the Epistle*: for we have nowhere in it this term used with any definiteness of our Lord, nor indeed any approach to it; not even where we might have expected it most, in the description of His relation to the Father, ch. i. init. Every where He is the SON of God, not His Word, And in ch. vi. 5, xi. 3, where he says the worlds were made by the Word of God, he uses not the Greek word *logos*, by which the Personal Word is always designated, but another word (*rhemata*), by which He never is. *And in the passage itself*: for such adjectives as he here joins to "*the Word of God*," as matter of emphatic predication, would hardly be used of the Personal Word: and, which to my mind is stronger evidence still, had these words applied to our Lord, we should not have had Him introduced immediately after, ver. 14, as "*Jesus the Son of God*." But 2) some of the ancient, and the great mass of modern Commentators, have understood by the term, *the revealed word of God*, in the law and in the gospel: or in the gospel alone, as contrasted with the former dispensation. And so even some of those who elsewhere in their writings have understood it of Christ. But neither does this interpretation seem to meet the requirements of the passage. The qualities here predicated of the "*Word*" do not appear to fit the mere written word: nor does the introduction of the written word suit the context. I should be rather disposed with Bleek to understand 3) *the spoken word of God*, the utterance of His power, by which, as in ch. xi. 3, He made the worlds,—by which His Son, as in ch. i. 3, upholds all things. This spoken word it was, which they of old were to hear and not harden their hearts: "To-day if ye hear his voice....." this spoken word, which interdicted them from entering into His rest— "**I swear in my wrath**, If they shall enter into my rest." It seems then much more agreeable to the context, to understand this *utterance* of God, so nearly connected with God Himself, the *breath of his mouth*: and I would not at the same time shrink from the idea, that the Alexandrine form of expression respecting the *Word*, that semi-personification of it without absolutely giving it personal existence, was before the mind of the Writer Indeed, I do not see how it is possible to escape this inference) **is living** (not, *in contrast with the dead works of the law* [Ebrard], of which there is no question here: nor, *nourishing*, and able to preserve life: nor, *enduring*: but, as A.V., *quick*, i.e. having living power, in the same sense in which God Himself is so often called "*the living God*," e.g. ch. x. 31), **and active** (this *activity* is the very first quality and attribute of *life*: so that the predicates form a climax: *not only living, but energizing: not only energizing, but sharper, &c.: and not only that, but piercing, &c.: nor that only, but reaching even to the spirit, a discerner of the thoughts and ideas of the heart*), **and sharper than every two edged sword** (literally, two-mouthed: meaning, sharpened on both sides, both edge and back. The comparison of the word of God or of men to a sword is common in Scripture: see Ps. lvii. 4, lix. 7, lxiv. 3; Wisd. xviii. 15, 16; Rev. i. 16; and above all, Eph. vi. 17. It has been questioned, whether the office here ascribed to the word of God is *punitive*, or merely *searching*: whether it regards the foes, or the servants of God. There seems no reason why we should separate the two. The same WORD, to which evidently by the succeeding clause is attributed the searching power, is powerful also to punish. The *knife* [the word commonly used for *sword* in the New Test. signified both] belongs to the surgeon, and to the judge: has its probing, as well as its smiting office), **and reaching through, even to dividing of soul and spirit, both joints and marrow** (there has been considerable diversity in the taking of these genitives. I have regarded them as follows: **soul** and **spirit** denote two separate departments of man's being, each subordinate to the process indicated by dividing. The *Word* pierces to the dividing, not of the *soul from the spirit*, but of the *soul* itself and of the *spirit* itself: the former being the lower portion of man's invisible part, which he has in common with the brutes; the latter the higher portion, receptive of the Spirit of God; *both which* are pierced and divided by the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Then passing on to **both joints and marrow**, I do not regard these terms as co-ordinate with the former, "*soul and spirit*," but as subordinate to them, and as used in a spiritual sense, not a corporeal: implying that both the *joints* and the *marrow* of the *soul* and of the *spirit* are pierced and divided by the *Word*. This I conceive is necessitated both by the wording of the original, and by the sense, which otherwise would degenerate into an anti-climax, if **joints and marrow** were to be understood of the body. The other views are, 1) That which regards the *dividing* as being a division of the *soul from the spirit, the joints from the marrow*. The objections to this are both psychological and contextual. It has been rightly urged [see especially Ebrard's note here] that the soul and spirit cannot be said to be separated in any such sense as this [Ecumenins understands the taking away of the Holy Spirit from man's soul to be meant]: and on the other hand the *joints and marrow* could not be thus said to be separated, having never been in contact with one another. 2) Many Commentators, who hold the division of soul from spirit, are not prepared to apply the same interpretation to the "*joints and marrow*."

3) Many understand *the dividing* to mean, not the act of division, but the *place where the division occurs*: where soul divides from spirit, and joints from marrow: i.e. to the innermost recesses of soul and body. The objection to this arises from its not satisfying the requirements of grammar in the original), **and a judger** (or, discerner) **of (the) thoughts and ideas** (this seems the nearest term to the Greek: not "*intents*," as A.V.) **of the heart** (the inner and thinking and feeling part of man).

13.] And there is not a creature (the term embraces all created things, visible and invisible, compare Col. i. 16) **unseen in His presence** (first as to the possessive pronoun: to what does it refer? to *the word of God*, or to *God* Himself? The idea of its referring to *Christ* falls with the untenability of the personal meaning of the *Word*: although some, abandoning that, yet hold it. Then of the two other, it seems much the more obvious to refer it to *God*, especially in the presence of "*the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*" below. Nor is there any harshness in this; from speaking of the uttered word of God, whose powers are not its own but His, the transition to Himself, with whom that word is so nearly identified, is simple and obvious):

but (nay, rather... i.e. so far from this, that...) **all things are naked and lying open** (the Greek word thus rendered is a very unusual and difficult one. Its intention seems to be to convey the idea of entire prostration and subjugation under the eye of God: so that the things of which this is said are not only naked, stripped of all covering and concealment,—but also laid prostrate in their exposure, before His eye. See the whole matter discussed in my Greek Test. It is one which can hardly be made intelligible to the mere English reader) **to His eyes** (for His eyes to see) **with whom we have to do** (there could not be a happier rendering than this of the A.V., expressing our whole concern and relation with God, One who is not to be trifled with, considering that His word is so powerful, and His eye so discerning. The ancients, without exception, confined this relation to one solemn particular of it, and rendered, “*to whom our account must be given.*” And many of the moderns also take this view. Others suppose it to mean, “concerning whom is our discourse”).

14–16.] *Hortatory conclusion of this second course of comparison* (see summary at ch. iii. 1); taking up again by anticipation that which is now to be followed out in detail, viz. *the High Priesthood of Jesus*. This point is regarded by many as the opening of the new portion of the Epistle: but on account of its hortatory and collective character, I prefer regarding it, with Ebrard, as the conclusion of the preceding: being of course at the same time transitional, as the close connexion of ch. v. 1 with our ver. 15 shews. It is much in the manner of the Writer, to *anticipate*, by frequently dropped hints, and by *asserting* that, which he intends very soon to *demonstrate*.

14.] Having therefore a great High Priest (the fact of this being Christ’s office is as yet *assumed*: see above, ch. ii. 17, iii. 1:—but now with more points of contact with what has been already said; e.g. ver. 10, where the *entering into His rest* has close connexion with the High Priest entering within the veil. **Great**, as in ch. xiii. 20, “*the great Shepherd of the sheep:*”—answering very much to the use of *true*, in St. John,—“*I am the true vine,*”—“*this was the true light:*”—one archetypal High Priest,—one above all), **passed through** (not ‘*into*,’ as A.V.: see below) **the heavens** (as the earthly High Priest passed through the veil into the holiest place, so the great High Priest through the heavens to God’s throne: see ch. ix. 11: with reference also to ver. 10, the entering of Jesus into His rest. In this fact, His greatness is substantiated. On the **heavens**, plural, see on ch. i. 10. “By the heavens are understood all those heavens which are interposed between us and God: viz., both the whole region of the atmosphere, which is also called heaven in Scripture, and the heavens wherein are the sun, moon, and stars, and lights of the world, than all of which Christ is become greater: see ch. vii. 26. Eph. iv. 10. After these is that heaven where God dwells, the habitation of immortality, which our High Priest entered, and did not pass through.” Schlichting. Thus, as Theophylact remarks, our Lord became greater than Moses, who neither entered himself into the land of promise, nor led the people into it), **Jesus the Son of God** (certainly not so named in this connexion without allusion to the *Jesus*, or *Joshua*, above mentioned. We cannot conceive that even a careful ordinary writer would have used the *same name* of two *different persons*, so designating the second of them, without intention. At the same time, there is no reason for supposing that such an allusion exhausts the sense of the weighty addition. It brings out the majesty of our High Priest, and justifies at the same time the preceding clause, leading the mind to supply “*to God, whose Son He is.*” Besides which, it adds infinite weight to the exhortation which follows), **let us hold fast the confession** (viz. of our Christian faith: not merely of Christ’s ascension, nor merely of Christ as our High Priest: compare ch. iii. 1 and note, and ch. x. 23, which gives more the subjective side, here necessarily to be understood also. See also ch. iii. 6).

Cornelius-a-Lapide gives a beautiful paraphrase: “Come, ye Hebrews, persist in the faith of Christ, press on to your rest in the heavens: though they seem far above us, we shall easily climb and pass them with Christ for our Leader, who passed through them and opened them to us,—if only we firmly retain the confession,—the profession,—i. e. of our faith and our hope”).

15.] For (how connected? certainly not as grounding the facts just stated; but as furnishing a motive for *holding fast our confession*. The effort is not hopeless, notwithstanding the majesty of our High Priest, and the power of the Word of our God: *for* we are sympathized with and helped by Him. As Schlichting, “He anticipates an objection. Any one might say, How shall this great High Priest, help me,—who in proportion as He is greater and more remote from us, will probably be insensible to care for us?” To suppose, as some have done, that a contrast to the Jewish High Priests is intended, is to contradict directly ch. v. 2. Rather is our great High Priest in this respect expressly identified with them) **we have not an high priest unable to sympathize with our infirmities** (primarily, our inner and innate weaknesses,—be they *physical*, and thereby lending to exposure to suffering and disease, which itself is sometimes called by this name,—or *spiritual* and moral,—whereby misery arises, and sin finds entrance. as in ch. v. 2, vii. 8. Both these, indeed *all* human infirmities, are there included. With all does the Son of God sympathize, and for the reason now to be given) **nay, rather, (one) tempted in all things** (see on ch. ii. 17) **according to (our) similitude** (there is no word in the original to answer to “*our*,” or, “*as we are,*” us A.V.: but it is obviously intended that such should be supplied from the context), **apart from sin** (so that throughout these temptations, in their origin, in their process, in their result,—sin had nothing in Him: He was free and separate from it).

16.] Exhortation to confidence, even in our guilt and need, grounded on this sympathy of our great High Priest. Let us therefore approach (this idea, of *approach*, or *coming*, or *drawing near*, to God [all expressed by the same word in the Greek], is a favourite one in this Epistle, see ch. vii. 25; x. 1, 22; xi. 6; xii. 18, 22, and generally in the same sense as here, either, as under the Old Test., by sacrifices, or, as under the New Test., by the one sacrifice of Christ. The same idea is expressed Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12, by the word “*access*”) **with confidence** (ch. iii. 16, and note there) **to the throne of grace** (i. e.

not, Christ Himself,—nor the throne of Christ, but, by the analogy of this Epistle, the *throne* of God, at the right hand of which, ch. viii. 1, xii. 2, Jesus our Forerunner is seated. That it is here called the *throne of grace*, is owing to the complexion of the passage, in which the grace and mercy of our reconciled God are described as ensured to us by the sympathy and power of our great High Priest), **that we may receive compassion** (corresponding to that *sympathy* of our High Priest above spoken of: but extending further than our *infirmities*, to the forgiveness of our sins by God's mercy in Christ), **and may find grace** (both, the receiving *mercy* and *find-ing grace*, apply to the next clause) **for help in time** (i. e. *to-day*, while it is yet open to us. This is decidedly the right interpretation, and not as many Commentators and the A.V. "*in time of need*," "*as often as we want it*," which would be both flat, and hardly justified by usage).

Hebrews: Chapter 5

CHAP. V. 1-X. 18.] THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST: and this in several points of view. That which has before been twice by anticipation hinted at, ch. ii. 17; iii. 1; iv. 14, 15, is now taken up and thoroughly discussed. First of all, v. 1–10, two necessary qualifications of a High Priest are stated, and Christ is proved to have fulfilled both: a) vv. 1–3, *he must be taken from among men, capable, in respect of infirmity, of feeling for men*, and b) vv. 4–10, *he must not have taken the dignity upon himself, but have been appointed by God*.

1.] For (takes up again ch. iv. 15, with a view to substantiate it: see remarks below) **every high priest** (in the sense, Levitical High Priest; the only class here in question. Delitzsch is however right in maintaining, that it is not right to limit the words to this sense, or to see in them this condition, which indeed is not brought forward, but only exists in the nature of the case, no other High Priests being in view), **being taken from among men** (this participial clause belongs to the predicative portion of the sentence, and indeed carries the chief weight of it, having a slight causal force; "inasmuch as he is taken from among men." Some take it as belonging to the *subject*, as does the A.V., "Every high priest taken from among men," and see in it a contrast, as in ch. vii. 28, between human High Priests, and the Son of God. But such contrast here is not only not in, but inconsistent with, the context: which does not bring out as yet any difference between Christ, and the Jewish High Priests, but rather [see below] treats of the attributes of a High Priest from their example) **is appointed for (on behalf of,** for the benefit of: vicariousness must not be introduced where the context, as here, does not require it: see note on ch. ii. 9) **men** (the stress is both times on this noun and its preposition, "*being taken from among men, is ap-pointed for men*," the former justifying the latter. This is a powerful additional reason for taking "*taken from among men*" predicatively: for, if it be taken as attached to the subject, "every High Priest taken from among "men," with a necessary stress in such case on "men" the same stress must be laid on "men," in the clause "*is appointed for men*," with an implication that Christ, with whom on this hypothesis the human High Priest is contrasted, was *not appointed for men*) **in matters relating to God** (see note on ch. ii. 17), **that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins** (*gifts and sacrifices* are both to be taken with **for sins**: not, *gifts* alone, and *sacrifices for sin* together.

for, or on behalf of, i.e. *to atone for*, ch. ii. 17. No satisfactory distinction can be set up between **gifts** and **sacrifices**: properly speaking, the former would be *any manner of offerings*, the latter *slain beasts* only: but this usage is not observed in Scripture):

2.] being (one who is) **able** (this clause is closely bound to the last, and belongs to it, not to the whole sentence) **to be compassionate towards the ignorant and erring** (the former mild word though frequently used of sinners elsewhere without, as well as with, the implication of ignorance, seems to be here placed, as well as **erring**, itself at all events a milder term than *sinning* as suitable to the tone of the sentence, in which the feeling of a sinner towards his fellow-sinners is expressed. The sense might be filled up, 'towards those who [possibly after all] are ignorant and deluded.' And thus the propriety of the next clause is rendered still greater; both these, *ignorance* and *error*, being the results of *weakness*, with which he himself is encompassed. There is in these designations exclusion on the one side of "sinners with a high hand," and an inclusion in them, as above, of much more than sins, strictly speaking, of ignorance), **seeing that he himself is also compassed about with infirmity (infirmity**, as in ch. vii. 28, that moral weakness which makes men capable of sin. It is never predicated of Christ in this sense: nay, by the terms of vii. 28, He is excluded from it. That *infirmity* of the flesh which He bore on Him, and thereby was capable of suffering and of death, was entirely distinct from this).

3.] And on account of it (the infirmity wherewith he himself is encompassed) **he must** (not meaning, it is his appointed duty according to the law: but, it is necessary for him, a priori, on higher ground than, and before, the ordinance of the law. See on ch. ii. 17), **even as for the people, so also for himself, offer** (here only used *absolutely* in New Test.: see Num. vii. 18) **for** (see on ch. x. 6) **sins** (and accordingly, such was the ordinance of the law: see Levit. iv. 3, ix. 7, xvi. 6.

Much has been said as to the applicability or otherwise of these considerations to Christ. Some have considered all that has hitherto been said as spoken of human High Priests in contradistinction to Him: but it is better to understand it all as spoken of High Priests in general: and then, as Ebrard well says, leave it to the Writer himself, ver. 5 ff., to determine how far these es are satisfied in Christ. The progress of the argument itself will shew us,—ver. 8 f., and farther on, ch. vii. 27,—in how far

Christ is unlike the Old Test. High Priest).

4-10.] Second requisite: *divine appointment.*

4.] And (couples to ver. 1, of which the subsequent verses have been explanatory) **none taketh the office to himself** (carrying the stress of the sentence); **but (only when) called by God, as indeed was Aaron** (see Exod. xxviii. 1, xxix. 4; Levit. viii. 1; Num. iii. 10; but especially Num. xvi.-xviii) Schöttgen quotes from the Rabbinical book "Moses said to Korah and his fellows, If Aaron my brother had *taken to himself* the priesthood, ye did rightly in rising against him: but now God has given it to him."

This divine ordinance of Aaron and his sons to be High Priests endured long in the Jewish polity: but long before this time the rule had been disturbed: Josephus relates how Herod, when put into the kingdom by the Romans, no longer took the high priests from the Asamonean family, but gave the office to any obscure persons, except in the one case of Aristobulus).

5.] Thus Christ also (as well as those others) **did not glorify HIMSELF to be made High Priest** (i. e. did not raise *Himself* to the office of High Priest. The word **glorify** is here used in its most general sense, of all those steps of elevation by which the dignity might be attained: see especially John viii. 54, which is exceedingly useful to the right understanding here); **but He** (i. e. the Father) **who spake to Him, Thou art my Son, I have this day begotten thee** (see ch. i. 5, where this same saying is similarly adduced as spoken by the Heavenly Father to the Son. It must be carefully observed, that the Writer does not adduce this text as containing a direct proof of Christ's divine appointment to the High Priesthood: that follows in the next verse: nor again, does it merely assert, without any close connexion, that the same divine Person appointed Him High Priest, who said to Him, "Thon art my Son;" but it asserts, that such divine appointment was wrapped up and already involved in that eternal generation to the Sonship which was declared in these words. Then again, we must beware of imagining that **he that spake unto him,&c.** is mere periphrasis of *the Father*, as some have done. The true account seems to be this: the word **glorified** contains in it the whole process of exaltation [through suffering] by which the Lord Jesus has attained the heavenly High Priesthood. This whole process was not *his own work*, but the Father's, John viii. 54. And in saying this, we involve every step of it, from the very beginning. Of these, unquestionably the first was, His eternal generation by the Father. He did not constitute himself the Son of God, in virtue ultimately of which sonship He *became High Priest*. And therefore in proving this, the sacred Writer adduces first the declaration of the Father which sets forth this His generation as Son of God, on which all His process of glorification depended, and then, when He was completed by sufferings, vv. 7-10, the direct declaration of his High Priesthood, also by the Father). **Even as also he saith in another (place: see on ch. iv. 5), Thou art priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec** (on the relation of this Psalm to Christ, see generally on ch. i. 13. I may add to what was there said, that it is thus declared, that He, in whom all the theocratic promises find their fulfilment, in whom the true Kingdom of God comes and is summed up, was to be, as in Zech. vi. 12 ff., "a priest upon His throne," and such a priest [i. e. necessarily High Priest, if a King; as indeed the word is given in ver. 10 and ch. vi. 20], as should be after the order of Melchisedec. In examining this last prediction, we find that **after the order**, according to the ordinary meaning of the word, imports, *according to the office or the rank*, which Melchisedec held).

7 ff.] The *sufferings* of Christ are adduced, as a portion of his *being glorified* to be made High Priest. They were all in subjection to the will of the Father: they were all parts of his *being made perfect*, by virtue of which he is now, in the fullest and most glorious sense, our High Priest. So that these verses are no digression, but stand directly in the course of the argument, as proving the proposition, "*he glorified not himself to be made High Priest.*"

It will be best to mark at once what I believe to be the connexion of this much-disputed sentence, and then to examine each portion in detail afterwards. **Who in the days of his flesh, in that he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard by reason of his reverent submission; though He was a Son, learned, from the things which he suffered, his obedience; and being made perfect, became the cause of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, being addressed by God as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.** That is, being paraphrased—"who had a course of glorifying for the High Priest's office to go through, not of his own choice, but appointed for Him by the Father, as is shewn by that sharp lesson of obedience (not as contrasted with disobedience, but as indicating a glorious degree of perfect obedience, **his obedience**), familiar to us all, which He, though God's own Son, learned during the days of his flesh: when He cried to God with tears for deliverance from death, and was heard on account: of His resignation to the Father's will ['not my will but Thine be done'], &c." Then as to details: **in the days of his flesh I** understand as a general wide date for the incident which bout to be brought in, as contrasted with His present days of glorification in the Spirit.

with tears is not distinctly asserted in the sacred narrative: but is a most obvious inference from what is there: see Matt. xxvi. 37. There seems no reason for understanding the **strong crying and tears** of any other time than the agony at Gethsemane, as some have done. This is adduced as the most illustrious instance of that learning obedience from suffering. Epiphanius reports, that this *weeping* of the Lord in His agony was once related in some texts of St. Luke: see note on Luke xxii. 43, 44.

to save him from death is by some understood to mean, not as generally, of rescue from the death which He was about to suffer, but of His happy deliverance from that death by the Resurrection. So also recently Ebrard. But this is not only against the usage of the phrase here used, but still more decidedly against the truth of the sacred narrative: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" for we must of course assume, that in such a designation of the Father, the contents of the prayer made to him are also indicated. The clause which follows is rendered in three different ways. 1) "*He was heard on account of His pious resignation.*" 2) "*He was heard, and so delivered, from that which He feared.*" 3) "*He was heard by Him who was His fear.*" Gen. xxxi. 42, 43). I have discussed all these in my Greek Test., and have rejected 3), as far-fetched, and inconsistent with the usage of the Greek word here used: 2), as also inconsistent with the usage of that word, which signifies not terror,—His own fear, or the thing which caused that fear,—but the fear of caution, or modesty, or reverence: besides that He was not delivered from death, as this meaning would assert. So that 1) must be accepted; and it fulfils the requirements both of usage and of fact. The religious sense of this cautious fear suits remarkably well in our passage. No term could more exactly express the reverent submission to his Heavenly Father's will which is shewn in those words, "Not my will but thine be done:" none the constant humbling of himself in comparison with the Father, and exalting him in word and deed, of which our Saviour's life is full. I have no hesitation therefore in adopting this rendering, and feeling entirely satisfied with it. Besides the fulfilling the requisites of philology and of fact, it admirably suits the context here, where the appointment of Christ by the Father to his, High Priesthood and the various steps by which that High Priesthood was perfected, are in question.

The matter of^r fact represented by the assertion that *He was heard* may require some explanation. *He was heard*, not in the sense of the cup passing away from Him, which indeed was not the prayer of his *cautious fear*,—but in strength being ministered to Him to do and to suffer that will of his Father, to fulfil which *was* the prayer of that *cautious fear*— "not my will but thine be done." And I have little doubt that the ord immediately refers to the "angel in Heaven strengthening Him," of Luke xxii. 43.

though he was a Son] This clause is to be taken by itself, not with what follows. Thus much is certain from usage: the next question is, to what these words are to be applied. We may take them with the clause immediately preceding: He was heard, although He was a Son, and thus had no need of being heard:—though He was a Son, yet not this, but his *reverent fear*, was the ground is being heard: which gives an undoubted good sense. Not much dissimilar will be the sense given by the other and more general way: viz. to take the words with the following clause: although He was a Son, He learned his obedience, not from this relation, but from his sufferings. So Chrysostom, and almost all the moderns. And there can be little doubt that this yields the better sense, and points to the deeper truth, Christ was a Son: as a Son, He was ever obedient, and ever in union with His Father's will: but *His special obedience*, that course of submission by which He became perfected as our High Priest, was gone through in *Time*, and matter of *acquirement* for Him, and *practice*, by suffering. The ancients found this assertion startling, attributing too narrow a sense to our Lord's *sufferings*. So Chrysostom: "He who before this had been obedient even unto death, how can He said afterwards to have learned obedience?" This indeed would be a difficulty, were the Writer speaking of the Passion only, in its stricter sense; but he is speaking, I take it, of that continuous course of new obedience entered on by new suffering, of which the prayer in Gethsemane furnishes indeed the most notable instance, but of which also almost every act of His life on earth was an example. Theophylact is so scandalized by the whole passage as applied to Christ that he says, "See how for the benefit of his reader Paul condescends, even to the appearance of uttering absurdities."

Two mistakes must be avoided: 1) though he was *the Son*, which I find in Craik's new translation of the Epistle: and 2) that of Whitby, that the Greek verb here means "*taught (us).*" [I have even heard the same maintained of the English verb here, "*learned;*" see an example in Ps. xxv. 4, Prayer-book version.] If such a meaning ever could be admitted, least of all could it, from the context, here, where the subject treated is entirely Christ Himself, in his completion as our High Priest, and not till this is finished does that which He became to others come into question. **being made perfect**, see note on ch. ii, 10; completed, brought to his goal of learning and suffering, through death: the time to which the word would apply is that of the Resurrection, when his triumph began: so our Lord Himself on the way to Emmaus,— "*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and [being made perfect would come in here] to enter into His glory?*" He was made, by means of that course which ended in His *perfection*. In the words, **all them that obey Him**, there is probably an allusion to "*His obedience*" above. As he obeyed the Father, so must we obey Him, if we would be brought to that "*eternal salvation*" into which he has led the way. The expression is strictly parallel with "*we that have believed,*" ch. iv. 3, and "*they that come into God by Him,*" ch. vii. 25. Some have thought that in the word **all**, the Writer hints to his Jewish readers, that such salvation was not confined to them alone. But it hardly seems likely that such a by-purpose should lie in the word. The next clause, **being addressed, &c.**, depends closely upon "*being made perfect, &c.*" above, and belongs to the time of Christ's exaltation, indicated by that *perfection*: and therefore must not be divided by a semicolon, as in A.V., from the foregoing, nor supposed to refer to the whole from ver. 7. The reference is to the passage of Psalm above, and is made to confirm just been said. **Being addressed**, in this connexion, has a force of solemnity and formal appellation, implying His previous appointment and inauguration, and is hardly expressed by the slighter and more familiar "*called*" of the A.V.

11–VI. 20.] *Digression*, before entering on the comparison of Christ with Melchisedec, *complaining of the low state of spiritual attainment of the readers (11–14): warning them of the necessity of progress and the peril of falling back (vi. 1–8): but at the suime time encouraging them by God's faithfulness in bearing in mind their previous labour of love, and in His*

promises generally, to persevere in faith and patience to the end (vi. 9–20).

11.] Concerning whom (i. e. *Melchisedec*: not as some, *Christ*, of whom such an expression as this would hardly here be used, seeing that the whole Epistle hitherto has been concerning Him: the Writer *returns to Melchisedec*, ch. vii. 1) **what we have to say** (the plural pronoun, not with any definite reference to Timothy or other companions of the Writer, nor intended to include the readers, which is here impossible: but, as in some other places of the Epistle, merely indicating the Writer himself, as so frequently also in the Epistles of St. Paul) **is much, and difficult of interpretation** [for us] **to speak** (this is somewhat difficult. Who is the *interpreter*? the Writer, so that it should be difficult *for him* to explain what he has to say to his readers, or the *readers*, so that it should be difficult, *for them* to understand it for themselves? This latter alternative is taken by some: but it is hardly justified by the original: see my Greek Test. We are driven then to the other alternative, of making the Writer the subject to be supplied: so Chrysostom: “For when one has an audience who do not follow one, nor understand what is said, one cannot interpret well to them:” and many others; and the verb, *to speak*, which follow, will be constructed much as in our phrase “beautiful to look upon,” “hard to work upon,” &c.), **since** (probably renders a reason only for the *difficulty of interpretation*, not belonging also to the fact that the discourse would be *abundant*) **ye are become** (not ‘*are*’ as A.V. Chrysostom says well, “This shews that at one time they were well and strong, fervent in zeal and afterwards thus degenerated”) **dull** (‘*difficult to move*,’ ‘*torpid*’) **in your hearing.**

12.] For though (or, ‘*when*:’ but, in the presence of the words “*for the time*,” which give the temporal reference, it is perhaps better not to repeat it) **ye ought** (see on ver. 8, and ch. ii. 17) **on account of the time** (i. e. the length of time during which you have been believers: thus he shews that they had for some time been converted. On the evidence given by expressions of this kind as to the time of writing the Epistle, and the persons to whom it is addressed, see Introduction) **to be teachers, ye again have need that some one teach you** (in the original it is doubtful whether the sense is, “that some one teach you the first principles,” or, “that [one] teach you what are, which be, the first principles.” The latter has been taken by our A.V., after considerable authorities. But the other rendering has also ancient authority for it: and indeed is the only one which will fit either the context, or the construction strictly considered. The context: for it was not loss of power in them to distinguish between first elements and other portions of Christian doctrine, of which he complains, but ignorance altogether, and slowness of ear to receive divine knowledge: and they wanted *some one* to begin again with them and learn them the very first elements. And so far from “*some one*” being, as Delitzsch most absurdly says, *flat and unmeaning*, it carries with it the fine keen edge of reproach: as if it were said, “to teach you what all know and any can teach”) **the rudiments** (or, ‘elements,’ or, ‘first principles’: see Gal. iv. 3 and note; the simple parts out of which a body is compounded) **of the beginning** (the genitive specifies the elements, that they are not only such, but also belong to the *very beginning* of divine knowledge) **of the oracles** (that Christian doctrine [ch. vi. 1] which rests entirely on revelations from God) **of God; and ye have become** (‘not only, ‘*ye have need*,’ **but ye have become such as have need**: indicating that it was of their own will, that they had brought themselves into this state of need.” Chrysostom) (**persons**) **having need of milk, and not of solid food** (see 1 Cor. iii. 2. The similitude is very common with Philo. What is the milk in the Writer’s meaning, is plain from ch. vi. 1, where he enumerates several portions of Christian doctrine as parts of the discourse concerning the beginning of Christ).

13.] renders a reason for vv. 11, 12, and especially for the assertion that the discourse would be difficulty of interpretation. Having before stated that what he had to say would be hard for him to explain to them, and then that they were become persons needing milk and not solid food, he now proceeds to join these two positions together: **For every one who partakes of** (in the sense of *has for his share*, in ordinary feeding: not, partakes of in common with other things, for that adults do: see 1 Cor. x. 21) **milk is unskilled in** (not, *unskilful* in, which would be so, but is a different thing) **the word of righteousness: for he is an infant** (that is, for every partaker of milk, in the metaphorical sense in which I just now used the word, i.e. every one who requires yet to be taught the first principles&c., is devoid of understanding in the word of righteousness, in, that is, the positions and arguments which treat of God’s salvation by Christ: for he is an infant: takes the same rank in spiritual understanding, that an infant does in worldly”) Thus taken, I can see no difficulty in the contextual connexion. There is of course a mingling of the figure and the thing represented, which however is easy enough to any reader to whom both figure and thing are already familiar. But it is necessary to fix more satisfactorily the meaning of the somewhat obscure expression, **the word of righteousness**. Chrysostom interprets it of the doctrine of a pure and holy life: others, of that relating to Christ, the Author of righteousness: others again, of the higher doctrines: others, of the doctrine of justification by faith: others, of the doctrine of perfection, of which he by and by speaks: some, of the doctrine respecting Melchisedec, who is *King of Righteousness*. I incline more to Lünemann’s view of the meaning, based as it is on the requirements of the passage, in which the stress is not on “*the word of righteousness*,” but on “*unskilled*,” and “*the word of righteousness*” follows as something of course and generally understood. Feeling this, he interprets it of the gospel in general: that *word* of which the central point is, the righteousness which is of God. And he refers to 2 Cor. iii. 9, “*the ministration of righteousness*,” and xi. 15, “*ministers of righteousness*.” This acceptation would not altogether preclude “*the king of righteousness*” falling under the same general head, and thus would bring the two expressions into union, though without any distinct reference from one to another).

14.] But (continuation of and contrast to ver. 13) **solid food belongs to** (is the portion of) **the grown up, to those who by virtue of their (long) habit have their organs of sense** (not, *their senses* themselves, but their eyes, ears, tongue, by which the senses act. Here again there manifestly is a mixture of the figure and the thing signified: on account of what follows, we

must necessarily understand these **organs of sense** of the inner organs of the soul) **exercised with a view to distinction of good and evil** (this puts us in mind, as Bleek remarks, of the common Old Test. expression in describing childhood; e.g. Deut. i. 39; Isa. vii. 16. The reference here of good and evil is manifestly not to *moral* qualities, but to excellence and inferiority, wholesomeness and corruptness in doctrine).

Hebrews: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. 1.] Therefore (on the connexion, see below) **leaving** (as behind, and done with; in order to go on to another thing: not, *forgetting*, any more than the foundation is forgotten when we rear the house upon it) **the word of the beginning of Christ** (compare above, ch. vv. 12: that word, or discourse, which has respect to the fundamental and elementary things mentioned below), **let us press on to maturity** (a question of some difficulty has divided the Commentators here: whether this sentence be meant as expressing the resolution of the Writer, as we say, “let us now proceed” to this or that,—or as conveying an exhortation to the readers.

Each view has a formidable array of supporters. Owen tries [and so Delitzsch] to comprehend both meanings: giving, however, the alternative very lucidly: “The Apostle either assumes the Hebrews unto himself, as to his work, or joins himself with them as to their duty. For if the words be taken the first way, they declare his resolution in teaching; if in the latter, their duty in learning.” Between these two, both equally legitimate, the context must decide. And in seeking for elements of decision, I own that the alternative seems to me to have been put too exclusively. What I mean will be plain, when we consider on the one hand that “*laying the foundation*” can hardly be properly said of any but a *teacher*: and on the other, that vv. 4 ff. must necessarily have a general reference of warning to the hearers. It seems to me that the fact may be best stated thus: The whole is a “*condescension*” of the Writer to his readers: he with his work of teaching comes down to their level of learning, and regards that teaching and learning as all one work, going on together: himself and them as bound up in one progress. Thus best may we explain the expressions, which seem to oscillate alternately between writer and readers. And thus will *therefore* retain all its proper meaning, which on the first hypothesis was obliged to be wrested. It will mean, ‘Wherefore, seeing that we [you and I, by communication] are in so low a state babes, instead of grown men, let us, &c.’); **not again laying the foundation** (the *subjects* to be supplied to the participle **laying** are the readers, with whom the Writer unites himself, as above explained) **of** (the genitives here indicate the materials of which the foundation consists. They are all matters belonging to the “*discourse concerning the beginning of Christ*:” extending indeed in their influence over the whole Christian life, just as the shape of the foundation is that of the building: but to be laid down once for all and not afterwards repeated) **repentance from dead works, and faith on God** (so in the opening of the Gospel, Mark i. 15: and in its progress, Acts xx. 21. These were the common conditions on which all mankind were invited to embrace the Gospel. And as the readers here were Jews, so would these words especially remind them of the form in which they were first invited by Christ’s messengers. But we have to notice the qualifications which here follow each term—**repentance from dead works, faith on God**. The **dead** works are taken by all the patristic expositors to mean *sinful* works. And so the great majority of Commentators also. And the justification of such an expression as *dead words for sins* is variously given: as *cansing death eternal: as polluting, like the touch of a dead body* [so Chrysostom]. But neither of these meanings is borne out: the former being contrary to usage, the latter far-fetched and unlikely. It is much better to take the epithet in its common and obvious meaning: *dead, devoid of life* and power: compare “*dead faith*,” James ii. 17, 26, and “*dead sin*,” Rom. vii. 8; and in the references, St. Paul speaks, Eph. v. 11, in nearly the same sense: “*the unfruitful works of darkness*.” But such dead or lifeless works again may be variously understood: either of the works of the flesh in the unconverted man, or of the Jewish works of the law which could not give life. Considering the readers and object of the Epistle, it is much more likely that the latter are here meant; those works by which they sought to set up a righteousness of their own, before they submitted themselves to God’s righteousness. The best explanation of **faith on God** is found in St. Paul’s language, Rom. iv. 5. And by this, our expression is defined to mean, *full trust, rested on God, that He has fulfilled his promises in Christ*. We may observe, that the things mentioned arrange themselves in groups of pairs, of which this is the first), **of the doctrine of washings** (not *baptisms*: this is a different form of the word from that generally used in the New Test. for both Christian baptism and that of John. In Mark vii. 4 ch. ix. 10, Col. ii. 12, the word is used, as here, of washing, or lustration with water. On the meaning, see below. On the construction, see in my Greek Test. As regards the plural, **washings**, it has been very variously taken for the singular: but none of the accounts of it seems to reach the point so well as that given above, which includes in the idea those various washings which were under the law, the baptism of John and even Christian baptism also perhaps included, the nature of which, and their distinctions from one another, would naturally be one of the fundamental and primary objects of teaching to Hebrew converts. When it is objected to the view [as e.g. by Stuart] that the doctrine of Jewish washings would have had nothing to do with the elements of Christian teaching, we may fairly say that such objection is brought in mere thoughtlessness. The converts being Jews, their first and most obviously elementary instruction would be, the teaching them the typical significance of their own ceremonial law in its Christian fulfilment) **and of laying on of hands** (the doctrine of laying on of hands, like that of washings, not being confined to any one special rite, will mean, the reference and import of all that imposition of hands which was practiced under the law, and found in some cases its continuance under the Gospel. By laying on of hands, the sick were healed, Mark xvi. 18; Acts ix. 12, 17; xxviii. 8; compare 2 Kings v. 11; Matt. ix. 18, &c.; officers and teachers of the Church were admitted to their calling, Acts vi. 6; xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14; v. 22; Num. viii. 10; xxvii.

18, 23; Deut. xxxiv. 9; converts were fully admitted into the Christian Church after baptism, Acts viii. 17; xix. 6; 2 Tim. i. 6. And there can be little doubt that it is mainly to this last that the attention of the readers is here called, as the Writer is speaking of the beginning of Christian teaching), and [of] **resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment** (these words, as well as the foregoing clause, depend on **doctrine**. These also were points of Jewish doctrine, confirmed and brought into clearer light by the Gospel. Some have supposed the **resurrection of the dead** to refer only to the righteous, as in John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54,—**eternal judgment** only to the wicked. But it is more probable, in a passage of such very general reference, that the Writer speaks generally, without any such distinction here in view, of the two doctrines: of the “*resurrection of life*” and the “*resurrection of judgment*” of John v. 29. And it is probable that he uses **judgment** in the same indefinite meaning: see Act xxiv. 25.

eternal, probably as part of the proceedings of eternity, and thus bearing ing the character and stamp of eternal: or perhaps, as Theophylact, the judgment which decides men’s eternal fate).

3.] And this we will do (this has been variously interpreted. Grotins, and several others, who suppose [see above] that “*let us go on*,” in ver. 1, expresses the determination of the Writer, take it as referring to the participial clause, “*not laying again the foundation*,” and as meaning, “*even [also] this [viz., laying again the foundation] we will do*.” But besides that the words will not bear it, no convenient sense would be yielded by such a reference. For having asserted on this hypothesis that even the relaying of the foundation should be done, if God will, he goes on to say, “For it is impossible,” &c., which would in no way [see below] fit in to the context. This being so, others, still regarding “*let us go on*” as the first, refer the future, **we will do**, to the *thus going on*. So Theophylact, “**This will we do**: what? go on to perfection.” And doubtless so a very good sense is given. In favour of the reading **let us do**, it may be said, that it corresponds better with the hortatory tone of “*let us go on*” above, and though the less obvious reading, is more in accordance with the style of the Epistle) if, that is (the effect of the word here used, in hypothetical sentences like the present, is to assume the hypothesis as altogether requisite to the previous position), **God permit** (it may here again be said, that the addition after the hortatory **let us do** is as delicate and beautiful, as it is frigid in the common acceptation after the indicative “*we will do*.” For it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13. And it leads the way beautifully to what follows: “If,” I say, “God permit: for when men have once fallen away, it is a thing impossible,” &c.).

4.] For (depends on the whole foregoing sentence, including the reference to the divine permission. The connexion is: we **must go on**: for if we go back, it will be to perdition—a thing which [ver. 9] we do not think of you and therefore expect your advance) **it is impossible, in the case of** (these words I insert, not as belonging to the Greek construction, but as necessary in English, to prevent the entire inversion of the Greek order of the sentence) **those who have been** (or, **were**: but here it is quite necessary to take our English perfect: for our indefinite past, “who were enlightened and tasted... and were made... and tasted...” would convey to the mere English reader the idea that all this took place at one and the same time, viz. baptism,—whereas the participles clearly indicate progressive steps of the spiritual life) **once** (for all: indicating that the process needs not, or admits not, repetition) **enlightened** (*taught by the preaching of the word of God*. An historic interest belongs to the occurrence of this word here, as having in all probability given rise to a meaning of *enlightened* and *enlightenment*, as denoting *baptism*, which was current throughout the church down to the Reformation. And so all the ancient Commentators here understand the word, and some of the moderns. Erasmus seems the first who interpreted the word aright [who have once left the darkness of their former life, being illuminated by the doctrine of the Gospel"], and almost all since have followed him), **and have tasted** (personally and consciously partaken of: see 1 Pet. ii. 3, and Ps. xxxiv. 8: and on the general expression, note on ch. ii. 9) **of the heavenly gift** (what is more especially meant? It is very variously given: *remission of sins*, either general or in baptism: *peace of mind*, arising from such remission: *joy and peace in believing*; *the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper*; *the Holy Spirit and His gifts*; *Christ Hin-self*: *the religion of Christ*,—*the Gospel Faith*: *regeneration* in general, as distinguished from the special gifts of the Spirit in Baptism. Bleek and Tholuck, on account of the close coupling by *the* to what has preceded, understand by it the *light* itself conveyed in the previous word *enlightened*. But I would rather take the **gift** to have a perfectly general reference,—‘that which was bestowed on them thereby.’ This heavenly gift the persons supposed have *tasted for themselves*), **and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit** (outwardly, the agency would be the laying on of hands after baptism: but obviously the emphatic word is *partakers*—have become *real sharers*: so that the proper agent is He who only can bestow this participation, viz. God),

5.] and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come (what is *the good word of God*? The epithet is frequently applied to the word of God: see 1 Kings viii. 56; 2 Kings xx. 19; Neh. ix. 13; Jer. xxix. 10; Zech. i. 13; Rom. vii. 12; and usually with reference to its quickening, comforting, strengthening power, as sent or spoken by God to men. And in consequence if has been taken here to signify the comforting portion of the gospel, its promises. But it is better to take it more generally, as the wholesome and soul-preserving utterance of God in the gospel).

Then it is a far more debated question, what is meant by **the powers of the world** (literally, **age**) **to come**. Some have said, those *powerful foretastes of glory* which belong indeed to the future state in their fulness, but are vouchsafed to believers here. But most Commentators, and rightly, **take the age to come** as equivalent to “*the world to come*,” ch. ii. 5 [where see note], and as designating the Christian times, agreeably to that name of Christ in Isa. ix. 6, in the Septuagint, “*the Father of the age*

to come." Then the *powers* of this "world to come" be the spiritual gifts, given by the Spirit in measure to all who believed, "distributing severally to every man as He will." We need not necessarily limit these to external miraculous powers, or even *prophecy* and the like: but surely may include in them spiritual powers bestowed in virtue of the indwelling Spirit to arm the Christian for his conflict with sin, the world, and the devil), **and have fallen away** (this expression is used here, as "*sinning willingly,*" ch. x. 26, and "*departing from the living God,*" ch. iii. 12,—see also ch. x. 29, and ch. ii. 1,—as pointing out the sin of apostasy from Christ: similar to that of the Galatians, Gal. v. 4; and iii. 3. The fear was [see Introd. §iv. 1] lest these Hebrew converts should cast away their confidence in Christ, and take up again that system of types and shadows which He came to fulfil and abrogate: and nearly connected with this peril was their small progress in the doctrine of Christ. While speaking therefore of that, and exhorting them to be advancing towards maturity, he puts in this solemn caution against the fearful result to which their backwardness might lead),—**to renew** [them] **again unto repentance** (there is no superfluity, as Grotius thought, in **to renew again**. For the **renewing** would be the regenerating in any case, and the **again renewing** the renewal of it. Even in the first case, man is *renewed*: in the second case is **again renewed**. "Instead of **unto repentance**, one would expect *in repentance*, or *by repentance*, inasmuch as *renewal* in full measure can only be brought about by *repentance*, and must therefore be preceded by it. But on the other side, *repentance* itself, the change of disposition, may be considered as the result of the renewal of the man having taken place; and so is it here: to renew to *repentance*, i.e. so to form anew, that entire change of disposition precedes." Bleck. There was a very general ancient reference of this to *renewal of baptism*; of which view I have given examples in my Greek Test.); **crucifying as they do** ("*seeing they crucify,*" as A.V. well) **afresh** (some have questioned the possibility of the word here meaning to crucify **afresh**, and would render it simply "*crucify.*" But it seems hardly doubtful that the meaning, as here given, is contained in it) **to themselves** (Christ was their possession by faith: this their possession they took, and recrucified to themselves: deprived themselves of all benefit from Him, just as did the unbelieving Jews who nailed Him to the tree. He who should have been their gain was made their loss) **the Son of God** (for solemnity, to shew the magnitude of the offence), **and putting (Him) to open shame** (they crucify Him anew, and as at his former crucifixion, put Him to shame before all: as Bleck strikingly says, they tear Him out of the recesses of their hearts where He had fixed his abode, and exhibit Him to the open scoffs and reproach of the world, as something powerless and common: compare ch. x. 29. It would be quite beyond the limits of mere annotation, to give any satisfactory analysis of the history of interpretation of this passage, and of the conflicts which have sprung up around it. Such accounts will be found admirably given in several of the Commentators, among whom I would especially mention; and for the English reader, Owen, who treats it at great length and very perspicuously. I will only mention the most notable points, and set down a few landmarks of the exposition. 1) The passage was used by the Montanists and the Novatians, in ancient times, to justify the irrevocable exclusion from the church of those who had lapsed. But 2) in the Catholic church, this view was ever resisted, and the Fathers found in the passage simply a prohibition against the repetition of baptism. And so all the ancients who have noticed the passage, and some of the moderns. 3) In later times the great combat over our passage has been between the Calvinistic and the Arminian expositors. To favour their peculiar views of indefectibility, the former have endeavoured to weaken the force of the participial clauses as implying any real participation in the spiritual. So Calvin himself, and Beza: so Owen ["the persons here intended are not true and sincere believers.... for 1) in their full and large description there is no mention of faith or believing," &c.], and recently Tait, Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But all is clearly wrong, and contrary to the plainest sense of the terms here used. The Writer even heaps clause upon clause, to show that no such shallow tasting is intended: and the whole contextual argument is against the view, for it is the very fact of these precious having veritably entered the spiritual life, which makes it impossible to renew them afresh if they fall away. If they have never entered if, if they are unregenerate, what possible logic is it, or even common sense at all, to say, that their shallow taste and partial apprehension makes it impossible to renew them? what again to say, that it is impossible to *renew again* persons in whose case no *renewal* has ever taken place? If they never have believed, never been regenerated, how can it be more difficult to renew them to *repentance*, than the heathen, or any unconverted persons? One landmark of exposition then must be, to hold fast the simple plain sense of the passage, and recognize the fact that the persons are truly the partakers of the spiritual life—regenerate by the Holy Spirit. *Elect* of course they are not, or they could not fall away, by the very force of the term: but this is one among many passages where in the Scripture, as ever from the teaching of the Church, we learn that "*elect*" and "*regenerate*" are not convertible terms. All *elect* are regenerate: but all regenerate are not *elect*. The regenerate may fall away, the *elect* never can. 4) Again the word **impossible** has been weakened down to "*difficult.*" The readers of this commentary will not need reminding, that no such sense can be for a moment tolerated. And this is our second landmark of explanation: this word **impossible stands immovable**. But let us see where, and how, it stands. It is the strongest possible ease which the Writer is putting. First there is *considerable advance in the spiritual life*, carefully and specifically indicated. Then there is *deliberate apostasy*: an enmity to Him whom they before loved, a going over to the ranks of His bitter enemies and revilers, and an exposing Him to shame in the sight of the world. Of such persons, such apostates from being such saints, the Winter simply says that it is impossible to bestow on them a fresh renewal to *repentance*. There remaineth *no more sacrifice* for sin than that One which they have gone through and rejected: they are in the state of crucifying the Son of God: the putting Him to shame is their enduring condition.

How is it possible then to renew them to *repentance*? It is simply impossible, from the very nature of the ease. 'The question is not, it seems to me, whether man's ministry or God's power is to be supplied as the agent, nor even whether the verb is active or passive ["to renew them," or, "that they should be renewed"]: the impossibility merely within the limits of the hypothesis itself. Whether God, of His infinite mercy and almighty power, will ever, by judgments or the strong work of His Spirit

reclaim the obdurate sinner, so that even *he* may look on Him whom he has pierced, is, thank Him, a question which neither this, nor any other passage of Scripture, precludes us from entertaining. There is no barring here of God's grace, but just as I have observed above, an axiomatic preclusion by the very hypothesis itself, of a renewal to repentance of those who have passed through, and rejected for themselves, God's appointed means of renewal. 5) Another dispute over our passage has been, whether the *sin against the Holy Ghost* is in any way brought in here. Certainly we may say that the fall here spoken of cannot be identical with that sin: for as Bleek has well remarked, that sin may be predicated of persons altogether outside the Christian Church, as were those with reference to whom our Lord uttered His awful saying on it. It is true, the language used in the parallel place, ch. x. 29, does approach that sin, where he says, "*have done despite to the Spirit of grace:*" but it is also clear that the impossibility here spoken of cannot depend on the fact of such sin having been committed, by the construction of the sentence, which itself renders the reason for that impossibility).

7, 8.] Illustration of the last position, by a contrast between profitable and unprofitable land. **For land which hath drunk in the rain frequently coming on it** (so far, is the *subject* of both sides of the hypothesis: and not the word "*land*" only. The A.V., "But that which beareth thorns, &c," is mistranslated. Besides which, the A.V. has neglected the past participle here, in rendering, "*the earth which drinketh in.*" The drinking in the rain is an act prior to both the hypotheses. The term **hath drunk in** implies not only that the earth has *received* the rain, Int that it has *taken it in*, sucked it in, "being no impenetrable rocky soil, from which the rain runs off without sinking in. And thus it is an appropriate figure for men who have really taken into themselves the word of God, and experienced its power," and so furnishes an explanation of vv. 4, 5, as well as being explained by them. In the interpretation, **rain** must not be too strictly confined to "teaching," but taken widely, as importing all spiritual influences whatever), **and bringeth forth plants** (properly fodder, provender, for man or beast: the word is generally used for grass, or corn, or any kind of green herb) **fit (meet) for those on whose account** (the A.V. renders ungrammatically, "*by whom.*" On the sense below) **also** (this **also** is common in cases where some special reference of an already patent fact is adduced) **it is tilled (who are these persons, in the interpretation?** Theophylact mentions two references: 1) to the men themselves, who bearing Christian graces as fruit, will themselves reap the advantage: 2) to their teachers, who participate in their disciples' excellences. But both these fall short of the mark: and there can be no doubt that if, as is probable, the features of the parable are to be traced in the interpretation, we must understand GOD as the owner of the land which is tilled, and the tillers are the teachers and preachers of the Gospel. So 1 Cor. iii. 9), **partaketh of** (the verb is often used without any necessary reference to *others also* being sharers) **blessing from God: but if it bear thorns and thistles is accounted worthless** (*'reprobate,'* tried and found wanting. Being thus rejected, it gets no share of God's blessing), **and nigh unto cursing** (there appears here to be an allusion to Gen. iii. 17, 18, "Cursed be the ground for thy sake: thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee." Chrysostom has noticed that in the expression "*nigh unto cursing,*" there is a softening of the severity of the declaration); **of which the end is unto burning.** There is considerable doubt both as to the connexion, and as to the interpretation of the sense when obtained. To what does **of what, or whose**, belong? to "*land,*" or to "*cursing?*" The latter is taken by some: the end, result, of which course is that it tends to burning. But it does not seem to me that this would have been thus expressed. I would therefore, with Chrysostom, and most Commentators, refer "*whose*" to "*land.*" But then, with what view will this ultimate burning take place? Some have said, with a salutary end, to purge out the evil. Strange to say, this meaning is adopted, not by Roman-Catholic Commentators, but by Protestants: most of them not seeing that the inevitable conclusion from such an acceptance would be, the existence of purgatorial fire. The reference clearly is, as the whole context, and the finality of the expression "*whose end is unto*" shew, not to purifying, but to consuming fire: as in ch. x. 26, 27, where the same ultimate fear is described as issuing in *fire which shall consume the adversaries.* So in Deut. xxix. 22, 23, the curse of the apostate land is described as consisting in "brimstone, and salt, and burning; that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah&c." And this destruction by burning is quite according to New Test. analogy: e.g. John xv. 6; Matt. iii. 10, 12; vii. 19; xiii. 30. 40 ff.

Vv. 9–20.] Encouragement to perseverance: and first (9–12), *from God's faithfulness*: see summary at ch. v. 11. "Having now reproved them sufficiently, and terrified and smitten them, he heals them again, so as not to cast them down further, and prostrate them: for he that beats a sluggard only renders him more sluggish. He does not then altogether flatter them, to avoid uplifting them, nor altogether smite them, for fear he should lay them more prostrate: but mingles a little blame with much added praise, so as to bring them right as he wishes." Chrysostom.

9.] But we are persuaded (the original word gives the result of actual conviction by proof) **concerning you, beloved** ("this appellation is most appositely inserted, that they may not think him their foe and hater, but might know that he is ardent with Christian love towards them: which love causes us always to think better things of those whom we love, and even though we say any thing severely, to say it with a mind anxious to correct, not to injure." Schlichting), **the things which are better** (the better course as regards your moral state: or, the better fate, as regards your ultimate end. The latter is most probably the reference, seeing that what follows rests on God's ultimate faithfulness and justice in the day of retribution. The former is of course involved in it, as conditioning it), **and (things) akin to salvation, if even we do thus speak** (are in the habit of thus speaking).

10.] For God is not unjust, (so as) **to forget** (there are many places in the Old Test. where forgetfulness on the part of God is thus denied: Ps. ix. 12, 18; x. 12; Amos viii. 7: or deprecated, 1 Sam. i 11; Ps. xiii. 1; xlvi. 9; xlvi. 24; lxxiv. 19, 23; Isa. xl ix.

14 ff.; Lam. v. 20) **your work** (i. e. your whole Christian life of active obedience: so **work** is used absolutely in the passage 1 Cor. iii. 13–15; so in Gal. iv. 4, “*Let every one prove his own work.*” See this **work** somewhat specified ch. x. 32–34. It is a general term, including the labours of love mentioned below) **and your love** (the expressions nearly resemble those in 1 Thess. i. 3), **which ye shewed toward His name** (the **saints** were those who were called by God’s name, so that beneficence towards them was in fact shown towards His name. His refers to God, as the antecedent expressed above: not to Christ, as some explain it), **in having ministered** (probably, sec Rom. xv. 4; 2 Cor. viii. 4, 19, 20; ix. 1; Acts xi. 29, if not exclusively, yet principally, in eleemosynary bestowals.” It may hence perhaps be surmised that these Hebrews did not live in Judæa: see Introd. §ii. 15) **to the saints, and still ministering** (there is a fine touch here of that delicate compliment, which is also characteristic of St. Paul. “This pious care has not ceased in you, though it may perhaps have declined,” as Schlichting: but the Writer leaves the defect to be understood, and states the excellency at its utmost).

11.] But (carries a slight reproof, contrasting your need of exhortation to constancy with your past and partially remaining present practice) **we earnestly desire** (a fervent heartfelt expression) **that every one of you** (“he cares alike for great and small, knowing all, and passing over none.” Chrysostom) **do shew the same diligence** (not, as some explain, the same which *some have already shewn*: nor, the same as *ye have already shewn*, as Chrysostom and others, which would imply that the Writer was satisfied with their state hitherto, and only desired its continuance: an inference at variance with the facts of the Epistle: but, the same, with a view to *the full assurance of hope unto the end*, as they had already shewn with regard to the necessities of the saints) **with regard to** (the employment which this diligence is to find: the object with reference to which it is to energize) **the full assurance** (not, as some, *the full formation*, objective,—which is against the New Test. usage of the word rendered) **of your hope until the end** (see ch. iii. 14. The words **until the end** belong to the whole sentence, not to the verb, nor to “*the full assurance of hope*” only. “The end” is the coming of the Lord, looked for as close at hand; see note as above): **that ye become not** (“*be not*” misses the fine delicacy of the Writer, implying that the dulness which he deprecates was indeed commenced, but might be broken off. Compare ch. v. 11, where they are said to have become *dull of hearing*—the same adjective in the Greek. It is true that there is no contradiction between the two verses—the one being of sluggishness in hearing, the other in Christian practice), **sluggish, but** (this again brings in a strong contrast—“nay, but rather:” passing to another subject altogether, as it were. See on ch. ii. 6) **imitators of them who through faith and endurance** (see Col. i. 11, also ver. 15; James v. 7, 8. That constant and patient waiting is implied, without which faith would be made void: of which it is said, “It is good that a man should both hope and wait for the salvation of the Lord”) **inherit the promises** (what is meant by this, and who are indicated by the expression? The two questions are very closely connected together. First observe that the verb is not past, *who... inherited*, but present: said not of any one act by which these persons entered on the inheritance of the promise, but of (1) a state now going on, “*who are inheriting*,” or (2) in mere predication, “*who are inheritors of*.” That the first cannot be meant, is clear: for in ch. xi. where he enumerates the examples of faith and patience, he says, “*These all... received not the promise.*” The same consideration would prevent the reference very commonly here supposed, to Abraham and the patriarchs. Taking then (2), we may regard the designation as used without reference to time, but as indicative of office, or standing, or privilege. Thus the reference of the words will be perfectly general: not, *who have inherited*, nor *who shall inherit*, nor *who are inheriting*, but “*who are inheritors of*,” *who inherit*, in all times and under all circumstances. Of these, Abraham is chosen as the most illustrious example).

13–20.] The encouragement to perseverance is further confirmed by *God’s express oath made to Abraham, the first inheritor of the promise.*

13.] For “in these words he does not render a reason why we should imitate those just mentioned, but a reason, why he mentions them. A man might ask whether there are any such, and who they are? So in these words he introduces Abraham, the father of all the faithful, who was most enduring in his faith, and reaped most fruit from it.” Schlichting) **God when He promised** (Bleek well remarks, that **promised** is to be taken not only as “made a promise,” but in the Messianic sense, “*gave the promise*,” as “*the promises*” above, and vv. 15, 17, ch. vii. 6; Rom. ix. 4; Gal. iii. 16) **to Abraham, since He could swear by none (no person) greater, swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless** (at first the participle, on, seems to have had a certain emphasis: but afterwards this was lost, and the expression became a mere formula) **thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And thus** (i. e. *when he had received this promise*,—being in this state of dependence on the divine promise), **having endured with patience** (viz. in his waiting so long for God’s promise to be fulfilled—in having, when it was partially fulfilled, again shewn noble endurance in the will of God by offering up Isaac), **he obtained the promise** (i. e. not as Bleek, he had made to him the promise above related: this would merely stultify the sentence, which proceeds on the faithfulness of God, confirming his promise with an oath by Himself, and the faith and endurance of Abraham, waiting for that promise to be fulfilled: but as Lünenmann, he *obtained, got fulfilled to him*, the promise, the thing promised, to wit, the birth of Isaac, as the commencement of the fulfilment—as much of it as he could see. And thus Abraham became inheritor of the promises. That there is here no inconsistency with ch. xi. 39, see shewn there).

16–20.] Security of this promise, as being part of God’s great promise, which He has fulfilled in Christ. These verses are transitional, and lead us to the consideration of the Melchisedec Priesthood of our Lord in the next chapter.

16.] For [indeed] men (emphatic) swear by the greater [one] (undoubtedly masculine: it could not be predicated of any

thing neuter, that it was *greater than the men* who swear, And by the expression here, generally taken, must be meant God Himself: that greater One, who is above all men): **and an oath is to them an end** (see reff. and more examples in Bleek) **of all gainsaying** (A. V. with very many other versions, “*strife*,” which is a legitimate meaning, but not borne out here by the context, seeing that there is no allusion, in the application of the example, to any instance in which *God* and *men* were at strife. And besides, in the only places where the word occurs in the New Test. it has the meaning “*gainsaying*:” e.g. ch. vii. 7, without possibility of *gainsaying*. So that it is best to take this meaning here, and understand that an oath puts an end to all gainsaying by confirming the matter *one way*, in which all parties consent) **for confirmation** (the A.V. ungrammatically joins these words with *an oath*,— “*an oath for confirmation*. ” They can only be joined, and that closely, with *an end*. Calvin’s remark on this verse is pertinent: “This passage teaches us that there is among Christians a lawful use of an oath, and this is to be noticed as against fanatics, who of their own fancy want to abrogate the rule of reverent swearing which God has prescribed in His law. For the Apostle beyond doubt here treats of the manner of swearing as of a pious practice and one sanctioned by God: inasmuch much as he does not speak of it as having formerly been in use, but as yet subsisting”).

17.] In which behalf (nearly equivalent to “wherefore.” This seems the best rendering, and not, with the A.V., to take it as signifying *wherein or in which*) **God, willing to shew more abundantly** (than he would have done without an oath) **to the heirs of the promise** (from ch. xi. 9, Isaac and Jacob were “*co-heirs of the same promise*” with Abraham. But there is no need to confine the title to them: it may well be extended down to us, who are “the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise,” Gal. iii. 29) **the unchangeableness of His counsel, interposed** (became mediator: so Josephus says in one place, “They said these things with an oath, and constituted God the Mediator of their promises.” And thus when He Himself swears, having no greater to swear by, He swears by Himself, so making Himself as it were a third person between the parties to the oath) **with an oath** (the instrument: it was by means of the oath that He exercised the office of interposer or *Mediator*): **that by means of two** (“what two?” says Chrysostom: and replies, “the saying and promising, the adding an oath to His promise.”) The Writer is impressing on us the strength of that *method of assurance* which God has been pleased to give us, in that He has not only promised [in both cases in question], but also confirmed it by an oath) **unchangeable things, in which** (as the material of the lie, if it were possible) **it is impossible for God ever** (this force is given by the original construction, which distributes the proposition into separate incidents) **to lie** (in each and either of them, it is out of all question that falsehood should be suspected in Him), **we may have strong encouragement** (or, *exhortation*, which amounts to the same better than *consolation*: see ch. xii. 5, xiii. 22, where the same Greek word occurs), **who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope** (taken here objectively, or very nearly so: hope as embodying the thing hoped for) **set before us** (proposed to us as a prize in a contest): **which** (viz. the hope: in its subjective resting on objective grounds now to be set forth) **we have** (not, “we hold fast,” as some) **as an anchor of our soul** (the similitude is a very common one in Greek and Roman writers; and on coins and medals, where hope is represented by an anchor. A saying is attributed to Socrates, “A ship is not to be held by one anchor, nor life by one hope”), **safe and firm** (the adjectives belong to *anchor*, not to “which [hope].”) An anchor may be unsafe and unsteady, as well as safe and firm), **and entering into the part within the veil** (first, to what is *entering in* to be referred? to the *anchor*, or to the *hope*? The former is the more obvious construction: and has been accepted by many, thus explaining it: “As a ship’s anchor does not fasten in the water, but enters the earth beneath the water, and there fixes: so our hope, the anchor of the soul, thinks it not enough to enter the vestibule, i.e. is not content with earthly and visible blessings, but penetrates even to those things which are within the veil, even into the very Holy of Holies: i.e. lays hold of God Himself, and heavenly blessings, and fixes on them.” Estius. This is said by Bleek to be too artificial, and he, with some others, takes *hope* as that which enters within the veil, simply, the figure being dropped. But I must say that I prefer the other, being as it seems to me the simpler view. “Two figures are here not so much mixed, as wonderfully combined. The Writer might have compared the world to a sea, the soul to a ship, the future yet hidden glory to the concealed bottom of the deep, the far off terra firma, stretching away under the water and covered by it. Or, he might have compared the present earthly life with the forecast, and the future blessedness with the heavenly sanctuary which is concealed from us as by a veil. But he has combined both these, ‘The Soul clings, as one in fear of shipwreck, to an anchor, and sees not whether the cable of the anchor runs,—where it is fastened: but she knows, that it is fastened behind the veil which hides the future glory, and that she, if she only holds on to the anchor, shall in her time be drawn in where it is, into the holiest place, by the hand of the Deliverer.’” Ebrard. This is very beautiful, and in the main, simple and natural: only going off into fancy at the end,—which is not required for the interpretation. The word here used was the name for the second veil or curtain [ch. ix. 3], which shut in the Holy of Holies; the first or outer one being called by another name), **where as forerunner** (not “*the forerunner*,” as A.V.) **on our behalf** (as representing, and introducing, us, who are to come after. It is a figure analogous, in its propriety, to that where our Lord is described as *firstfruits of them that slept, firstborn of the dead*, in theirs. And it is one full of comfort to us: for, as Theophylact says, “A forerunner must be so with reference to some that follow, and there is not generally any entire difference between the forerunner and his followers, as neither was there between John and Christ. Be not then faint-hearted: we shall very soon enter where our forerunner has entered”) **entered Jesus, having be-come** (see on ch. ii. 17) **a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec** (the stress is on these last words. And this is so, because it is this particular point to which the Writer wishes to return in what follows. He assumes for the present the eternal priesthood as conceded, and takes up the mysterious point which he left at ch. v. 10, for elucidation. And thus ends the digression which began there).

Hebrews: Chapter 7

CHAP. VII. 1–X. 18.] THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC, SET FORTH IN ITS DISTINCTION FROM THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD:—THE NEW COVENANT BROUGHT IN BY CHRIST, IN ITS DISTINCTION FROM THE OLD:—AND THE FULL PROPITIATION WROUGHT BY HIM IN DISTINCTION FROM THE PROPITATORY SACRIFICES FORMERLY OFFERED. And herein,

VII. 1–10.] *The priesthood of Melchisedec: its nature, as eternal (1–3; as superior to the Levitical (4–10).*

1–3.] For this Melchisedec, king of Salem (Gen. xiv. 18. It is doubtful whether this *Salem* is a short form of *Jerusalem*, or some other place. Those who hold the latter opinion contend that Jerusalem cannot be meant, because Jebus, and not Salem, was its old name, and Salem for Jerusalem occurs only in Ps. lxxvi. 2, a song of late date,—and there as a poetical form, for the rhythm's sake. A prose writer of the primitive date of Genesis would not be likely to use such a form. They therefore suppose that this Salem was that mentioned John iii. 23 as near to Ænon, where John baptized: probably also in Gen. xxxiii. 18, where the Septuagint, Vulgate, and A.V. all recognize *Salem* as the name of a place, though the Targumists, Josephus, &c., regard it as an adjective. The same place seems to be mentioned in Judith iv. 4, *the valley of Salem*. And for this view, there very ancient and weighty authority. Jerome says that he had heard from the most learned Jews, "that Salem is not, as Josephus and all our people suppose, a name of Jerusalem, but a town near Scythopolis, which is called Salem to this day." And he goes on to say, that the palace of Melchisedec was shewn there, betokening by the magnitude of the ruins that of the ancient fabric. And Bleek, from whom this notice is mainly taken, argues with some probability that the Writer of our Epistle can hardly have thought of Jerusalem as indicated by Salem, or he would have pressed, not merely the etymology of the name, but all those sacerdotal associations which belonged to the holy city. As to the further question, whether *Salem* is here, or by Philo, meant *as the name of a place at all*, see on ver. 2), **priest of God the most high** (so in Genesis. The appellation, here and in the Old Test., belongs to the true and only God: see Gen. xiv. 19, 22, where in this same history both Melchisedec and Abraham speak of "the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." The union of the kingly and priestly offices in one belonged to the simplicity of patriarchal times, and is found in Abraham himself, who offers sacrifice; see Gen. xv. and xxii. Remember the prophetic announcement Zech. vi. 13, so familiar to every Christian. Our beloved Saviour, as the "*Father of the age to come*" (so the Septuagint, Isa. ix. 6, where we have "*the Everlasting Father*"), restores again that first blessed family relation, which sin had disturbed), **who met Abraham** (it was, as the narrative in Gen. literally stands, the king of Sodom, who *came out to meet* Abraham: but Melchisedec is mentioned in the same sentence as having brought forth bread and wine, and must be included in the category of those who came out to meet him also) **returning from the defeat of the kings, and blessed him** (Gen. ver. 19: see the argument below, vv. 6, 7); **to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth of all** ("of all," viz. the booty which he had taken from the kings: see ver. 4 below. In the narrative, the whole has the solemnity of a formal act; of sacerdotal blessing on the part of Melchisedec, and recognition of him as High Priest of God on the part of Abraham. The custom of setting apart the tenth to divine uses, was heathen as well as Jewish.

So far (see the summary above) is purely historical: now follow the inductions from the history; from the mystical office and name of the Person concerned); **first indeed being interpreted** (i. e. "*being by interpretation*:" his name bearing this meaning when translated into Greek) **King of righteousness** (or **righteous king**, as Josephus gives it. But the other form here is no doubt purposely chosen, inasmuch as Melchisedec is a prophetic symbol of Him who is not only righteous, but the fount and ground of all righteousness before God. Zech. ix. 9; Isa. ix. 7; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Dan. ix. 21; Mal. iv. 2; 1 Cor. i. 30), **and next also** ("*being*," not "*being interpreted*," must be supplied. This is plain from "*King of Salem*" representing a matter of fact, and the interpretation *following*) **King of Salem, which is, King of peace** (it has been much disputed, whether *Salem* is regarded by the Writer as the name of a town *at all*, and is not rather a portion of the personal appellation of Melchisedec. This latter has been held by Bleek, mainly from the consideration that no distinction here is made between the two expressions, "King of righteousness," and "King of peace." But, as Bleek himself confesses, we may well imagine that the Writer may wish to point out as a remarkable fact, that the city over which Melchisedec reigned, as well as his own name, was of typical significance; and in that case does not the expression **and after that also** draw sufficient distinction between his personal appellation and that of his city? As regards the word itself, *peace* is here used in that pregnant and blessed sense in which Christ is said to be "Prince of peace," Isa. ix. 6; see also Rom. v. 1; Eph. ii. 14, 15, 17; Col. i. 20. It is peace as the fruit of righteousness, compare Isa. xxxii, 17: notice the order here, **first... of righteousness**, and after that also of **peace**.

"Righteousness and peace," says Delitzsch, "form in Old Test. prophecy, the characteristic of the times of the Messiah"); **without father, with-out mother, without genealogy** (it is very difficult to assign the true meaning to these predicates. The latter of them seems indeed to represent a simple matter of fact: viz. that Melchisedec *has not in Genesis any genealogy recorded*, by which his descent is shewn [see below]. But as to the two former, it cannot well be denied that, while they also may bear a similar sense, viz., that no father and mother of his are recorded in the sacred narrative, it is very possible on the other hand to feel that the Writer would hardly have introduced them so solemnly, hardly have followed them up by such a clause as "*having neither beginning of days nor end of life*," we he had coupled with them far higher ideas than the former supposition implies. I confess this feeling to be present in my own mind:—indeed I feel that such solemn words seem to me to decide against that other supposition. So far I think all is clear: but when we come to inquire *what* high and mysterious eminence is here allotted to Melchisedec, I own I have no data whereon to decide: nor, I think, is a decision required of us. The Writer assigns to him this mysterious and insulated position, simply as a type of Christ: and this type he is merely by virtue of negations, as far as these epithets are concerned: in what he was *not*, he surpasses earthly priests, and represents

Christ: what he *was*, is not in the record. I would regard the epithets then as designedly used in this mysterious way, and meant to represent to us, that Melchisedec was a person suffering from common men. It remains to give a summary of the opinions respecting the circumstance that Melchisedec is here stated to be **likened unto the Son of God**, has led many of the older expositors to regard these epithets as belonging to Melchisedec only in so far as he is a type of the Son of God, and as properly true of Him alone, not of Melchisedec, or only in an improper sense, and a subordinate manner. Accordingly, they understand **without father** of Christ in reference to his Humanity; **without mother**, in reference to his Divinity; and so also **without genealogy**. But, however the term "*without father*" might perhaps be conceded to be not unnaturally applied to Christ in virtue of his Humanity, the words "*without mother*" and "*without genealogy*" lie so far off any obvious application to his Divinity, that we may safely say this view could not well have been in the Writer's mind. See further reasons, on the words "*likened to the Son of God*" below, for applying these epithets to Melchisedec, and not to Christ. But when they are so applied, we are met by two widely divergent streams of opinion, partly hinted at in the explanation of the rendering given above. The one of these regards Melchisedec as a superhuman being: the other finds nothing in this description which need point him out as any thing beyond a man. Jerome had received from Evagrius an anonymous work, in which the "most famous question respecting the Priest Melchisedec" was treated, and the writer tried to prove him "to have been of divine nature, not to be thought of as a man: and to have at the end presumed, to say that the Holy Spirit met Abraham, and was the person who appeared to him as a man." This strange opinion moved Jerome "to examine the books of the ancients to see what their opinions were." And he found that Origen, in his first Homily on Genesis [now lost], maintained him to have been *an angel*, as did Didymus, the follower of Origen. Then he examined Hippolytus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Eusebius of Emesa, Apollinaris, Eustathius of Antioch, and found that all these held him to have been *a man* of Canaan, King of Jerusalem, and endeavoured to prove it in different ways. He then mentions the opinion of the Jews, that Melchisedec was *Shem*, the eldest son of Noah; and gives their calculation that this may well have been, for Shem survived Abraham forty years. On this he pronounces no opinion. The view, that Melchisedec was the Holy Ghost, was also entertained by Hieraeas the Egyptian, and by a branch of the Theodotian heretics, founded by the younger Theodotus, and called Melchisedecites: and Marcus Eremita [about 400], who wrote a treatise: on Melchisedec, mentions heretics who believed him to be "God the Word, before He took flesh, or was born of Mary." This opinion Epiphanius mentions as held by some within the church: and Ambrose, from his remarks, vol. i.p. 288, seems to have held this: though, as above, he expressly states him to have been merely a holy man, a type of Christ. This last view was ever the prevalent one in the church Cyril of Alexandria combats the two opinions that Melchisedec was a vision of the Holy Spirit, and that he was a great angel.

In later times the idea that he was the Son of God has been revived. The theory that he was *Shem* has found many advocates: among others, Luther [on Gen. xv.] and Melanchthon. Jurieu believes him to have been *Ham*; Hulse and Calmet to have been *Enoch* reappearing on earth), **having neither beginning of days, nor end of life** (these words are again taken by most Commentators to mean, that of Melchisedec, neither beginning of days nor end of life are related in Scripture. Some take **beginning** for that of his sacredotal life: other take **end** also for that of his priestly life: "for that no one preceded him in the priesthood to which he succeeded, and no one is related to have succeeded him in his priesthood, in which thing he was a type of Christ." Camero. But however the **end** of his life may be legitimately thus referred, seeing that his priesthood and his life would expire together, his **beginning of days** can hardly be understood of any thing but his *natural life*, especially as following his being without father or mother, and in the presence of the general biblical usage of the **days** of any one as a man's lifetime. Accordingly most expositors take the words in this their natural sense and interpret them as above, Again however, no one, I think, can help feeling that such an interpretation is in fact no worthy acceptation of these solemn words of the sacred Writer. The expressions become incomparably more natural, as Bleek says, if the Writer really mean that Melchisedec had not, as mortal men, a definite beginning and end of his life. It really would seem to me almost childish, to say thus solemnly of any whose acts were related in the Old Test., but whose birth and death were not related, that *they had neither beginning of days nor end of life*. Suppose e.g. such a thing were said of Hobab, father-in-law of Moses. Here again Delitzsch, who takes strongly the other view, quotes from Philo an expression respecting Cain which he supposes analogous: Cain, the symbol of evil, shall not die, because evil must always live among the mortal race of men." But surely it is hardly legitimate to conclude that, because Philo means only thus much, the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews means no more); **but** (yea, rather) **likened to the Son of God** (this clause stands alone and pendent, like the preceding, and must not be taken with "*abideth a priest for ever*." To this there are three objections: 1) it would be extremely unnatural to say that from a text where it is said that the Son of God is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, Melchisedec himself derives the character of remaining priest for ever: 2) it would be but a poor way of proving the eternal priesthood of Christ, to shew that He is a priest after the order of one who only appeared to have, but really had not, such eternal priesthood: and 3) it is clearly not in respect of *priesthood* that the *being made like* is here meant, but in respect of the foregoing predicates: for it is as to these only that the Son of God would be an archetype for Melchisedec, seeing that, in respect of priesthood, Melchisedec, was chronologically prior to our Lord, The sense is then that Melchisedec, in being "*without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*," personally, not typically, resembles the Son of God—in his personal attributes, as the Son of God subsequently in His incarnation, resembled *him* in His priesthood); **remaineth priest for ever** (the expression is one which must be interpreted in each case by the context in which it occurs. There is no reason why here, where an eternal priesthood is in question, it should mean *for life*: indeed such meaning would be absurd, seeing that all were priests for life. All kinds of ways have been devised to escape the plain assertion of these words. Most Commentators have had recourse to the same as before, viz, that *no end of his priesthood is related to us in Scripture*: so

Ecumenius, Theophylact, Cyril of Alexandria, Epiphanius, and many moderns. Schlichting takes it, that as our Lord's High Priesthood, which: is said to be eternal, will endure to that time when the high-priestly office will cease, so Melchisedec's priesthood is said to endure for ever, "because it endured as long as the nature of the case would admit. So" he adds, "David said he would praise the Lord for ever," &c. Stier says, "He stands in Scripture as a type of an eternal priest." but the question here is not of *type*, but of *fact*. Tholuck, "He remains, in so far as the type remains in the antitype, in so far as his priesthood remains in Christ." But thus type and antitype are hopelessly confounded. Christ is to be proved to be a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Can we conceive then that the Writer, in setting forth what the order and attributes of Melchisedec are, should go back to Christ to find them? Again, to shew to what shifts interpreters have been reduced here, others actually understand "who" before "abideth," and construe, "*made like to the Son of God, who, abideth, &c.*"

Every thing shews that which has been maintained all through this difficult passage, that the assertions are made, and this chief one is above all made, simply of Melchisedec, and they are, as matters of fact, inferred and laid down by the sacred Writer from the historic notices of him. What further inference lies from such dignity being here put on Melchisedec, is not, as I before said, for us to enquire: certainly, none which can in any way interfere with Christ's eternal and sole priesthood, can be correct. It is one of those things in which we must not be wise above that which is written, but must take simply and trustingly the plain sense of our Bibles on a deep and mysterious subject, and leave it for the day when all shall be clear, to give us full revelation on the matter).

4-10.] See summary at ver. 1. *The Melchisedec priesthood greater than the Levitical, shewn by the fact that Melchisedec received tithes of Abraham and blessed him (4-8), and potentially, in Abraham, Levi (9, 10).*

4.] But observe how great (of what dignity and personal excellence) **this man [was]** (let it be noticed that the argument still puts forward the personal dignity of Melchisedec, in a way quite inconsistent with the commonly received interpretation of the predicates above), **to whom Abraham, paid tithes also** (went so far as to pay tithes), **from the best [of the spoil]** (literally, that which comes from the top of an heap, and so the firstfruits. And in consequence, some have pressed here the proper meaning, and understood, that Abraham gave to Melchisedec the tenth of that portion of the spoil which was already set apart for God. But, considering that these words merely take up **the tenth part of all**, ver. 2, and of Genesis, it is more natural to understand *the spoils* in a wider and less proper sense, of the booty itself, as indeed all booty brought away might be considered as the firstfruits, the choice part, in contradistinction to the more worthless portion which was left behind), **the patriarch** (added at the end of the sentence to emphasize the title: *and he, the illustrious patriarch*).

5.] Continuation of ver. 4, setting forth the reason of this greatness, **And indeed** (the A.V. "and verily," is rather too strong) **they of the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood** (or, and perhaps more properly, "*they of the sons of Levi, when they receive the priesthood:*" in either case meaning the family of Aaron, not the whole tribe of Levi, which indeed was appointed by God to receive tithes, see Numb. xviii. 20: the words **they of the sons of Levi** will not admit of this interpretation. The Writer speaks of the custom, whereby not all the Levites, but the priests only, received tithes), **have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law** (the commandment referred to, on the ordinary construction of the first words of the verse, would be Numb. xviii. 20-32. But it seems more natural to understand those first words as I have given them in the alternative there, and then **according to the law falls** into its place easily "Those of the sons of Levi, when they are invested with the priesthood, receive commandment to tithe the people according to the law"), **that is, of their brethren, though [they be] come out of the loins of Abraham** (the meaning is very difficult to assign. I take this to be intended: by the first clause, **that is, of their brethren**, that the Levitical tithe right was all within the limits of one race, a privilege enjoyed by sons of Abraham over sons of Abraham, and therefore less to be wondered at, and involving less difference between man and man, than the tithe right of Melchisedec over Abraham, one of different race, and indeed over all his progeny with him. Then the second clause, **though they be come out of the loins of Abraham**, is inserted to shew the deep subjection of the ordinary Abrahamic to the Melchisedec priesthood, seeing that, notwithstanding his privilege of descent, he was subjected to his own priest, his brother, who in turn paid tithes in Abraham to Melchisedec).

6.] But (answers to "indeed," ver. 5) **he whose pedigree is never** (see below) **reckoned from them** (the sons of Levi, not, from *the sons of Israel*, nor, from *Levi and Abraham*: and it means "from them," i.e. their line of descent) **hath taken tithes of Abraham** (not, *received*, as A.V. The sentence is cast into this form, because of the *enduring nature* of the office and priesthood of Melchisedec, which is given by the perfect tense), **and hath blessed the possessor of the promises** (some would urge the present sense,— "*him who now possesses the promises;*" but there seems to be no necessity for this. I should rather take the words for a quasi-official designation of Abraham [see on ch. vi. 12], as the *possessor of the promises*). **And without all controversy the less is blessed by the better** (it is obvious that the axiom here laid down only holds good where the blessing is a solemn and official one, as of a father, or a priest: as was the case here. In such cases the blesser stands in the place of God, and as so standing is of superior dignity).

8.] Second item of superiority, in that Melchisedec's is an *enduring*, the Levitical a *transitory* priesthood. **And here indeed** (the Levitical priesthood being still in existence in the Writer's time) **men who die** (there is a secondary emphasis on **men**: *men, who die*) **receive tithes** (different sorts of tenths taken of different things); **but there** (i. e. in this matter concerning

Melchisedec) **one, of whom it is testified** (**one**, no longer “*a man of whom.*” This is not again expressed, nor is it to be supplied. The mysterious character of Melchisedec is still before the Writer. The testimony meant is certainly that of *Scripture*; probably, that in Ps. cx. 4, where an eternal priesthood, and therefore duration, is predicated of Melchisedec. It cannot well be, as Calvin and others hold, the mere negative fact of his death not being recorded, which would not amount to a testimony that he lives: and it is improbable that in so express a statement as this the Writer should, as some imagine, intend to combine both the positive testimony and the inference from the omission) **that he liveth** (this clearly cannot be interpreted of the *priesthood* of Melchisedec enduring: for what is here said is eminently personal, and that Melchisedec himself is meant, is shewn by the historical reference to the fact of his receiving tithes of Abraham. As Bleek well remarks, if the *dying* applies personally to the sons of Levi, the *living* must also apply personally to Melchisedec).

9.] The Jew might reply, that it was nothing to him, if Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec; for Abraham was no priest, and therefore paid tithes naturally to a priest: the Writer therefore proceeds to a *third proof*, shewing that *in Abraham even Levi himself*, the patriarch of the Jewish priesthood, *paid tithes*. **And so to speak** (the phrase is used when any thing is about to be said that is unexpected, or somewhat strained, not likely to be universally recognized, at least in the general way in which it is asserted. It may be here regarded as introducing and softening a strong saying), **by means of Abraham Levi also, who receiveth tithes** (who is the head and representative of the tithe-taking tribe. Indeed the name here is almost a collective one, the personal reference being taken up in the next clause), **hath been taken tithes of** (on the perfect, see above, ver. 6).

10.] **For he was yet in the loins of his father** (i. e. his forefather, Abraham: for Isaac was not yet born, much less Jacob. On the expression, compare ver. 5), **when Melchisedec met him**.

11–25.] *Further proof of the perfection of Christ's priesthood*, as compared with the Levitical: (11–14) *in that He sprang from a tribe not recognized as a priestly one by the law, thus setting aside the law*: (15–19) *in that He was constituted priest not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, thus impugning the former commandment as weak and unprofitable*: (20–22) *in that He was made with an oath, they without one*: (23, 21) *in that they by reason of their transitoriness were many, whereas He was one and unchangeable*. 11.] **If again** (this takes up the reasoning, not from the point immediately preceding, but from the main line of argument, of which what has just preceded has been merely a co-ordinate illustration. So that it is not necessary to say here, as some have attempted to do, from what point in the preceding chapters the reasoning is resumed. The main line of thought is again referred to, dependently on the promise of Ps. cx. 4, as made to our Lord and verified in Him) **perfection** (in the widest sense: *the bringing of man to his highest state*, viz. that of salvation and sanctification: see on ver. 19) **were by means of** (could be brought about by the instrumentality of) **the Levitical priesthood,—for upon it** (i. e. the Levitical priesthood: not, as many Commentators, *for the sake of obtaining perfection*. On the various meanings assigned, see the note in my Greek Test. If we consider the priesthood as the basis on which the law was constructed, so that not the priests only, but the *people* also [compare the same, in ch. ix. 19] were involved in the question of the dignity and finality of the priesthood, then a sufficient reason seems to be gained for inserting this parenthesis: as if it were said, not only they, but the whole system of which the priesthood was the basis and centre) **the people** (emphatic) **hath received the law** (the perfect is used, as indicating the fact that the people was still remaining, and observing the law),—**what farther need (was there)** (what need *after that,—any longer*, that being so) **that a different priest** (more than “*another*”—not only another, but of a different kind) **should arise after the order of Melchisedec**, and that he (the priest that should arise) is **said to be not after the order of Aaron** (on the construction, see my Greek Test.)?

12.] **For if the priesthood is changed** (better thus than A. V., “*the priesthood being changed*”), **there takes place of necessity a change of the law also** (viz. of that law, which as above, is legislated upon the ground of that priesthood: not of the *law of the priesthood* only, nor of the *ceremonial law* only. The connexion is with the parenthesis in ver. 11, which was inserted to prepare the way for our verse. The Writer as yet expresses himself mildly and cautiously: the **change** here in fact amounts to the *disannulling* in ver. 18, but is not yet so expressed).

13.] *Confirmation of the position that a change is made in the law, by another fact indicative of a change in the priesthood. For he with reference to whom these things* (viz. the promise in Ps. cx.: not, these which I am now saying) **are said is member of** (*pertaineth to*, literally, *hath taken part in*: the perfect implying the enduring of his humanity) **a different tribe** (from that of Levi, which has been already sufficiently indicated in the preceding context), **of which** (sprung from which, coming from which) **no one hath** (ever, to this day) **given attention** (applied himself, see ch. ii. 1, note) **to the altar** (i. e. as a general and normal practice, hath had any thing to do with the service of the priesthood).

14.] *Proof of ver. 13. For it is plain to all* (the word is used of that which lies before men's eyes, plain and undoubted) that our Lord (this is the only place in Scripture where Christ is called by this appellation, now so familiar to us, without the addition of either His personal or official name. 2 Pet. iii. 15, “*the long-suffering of our Lord*,” is hardly an exception: see there) **hath arisen** (some have thought that this word, which, as an intransitive verb, is generally used of the heavenly bodies, has reference to our Lord's rising as a Sun of Righteousness: so Mal. iv. 2 Isa. lx. 1; Num. xxiv. 17, to which Theophylact thinks there is allusion here. And it is quite legitimate, and a very beautiful thought, to regard these sublime ideas as having been in the Writer's mind, while at the same time we confess, that the word is used of the springing or rising up of other

things, e.g. of water: and especially of the sprouting of plants) **out of Judah** (this word may be the name, either of the tribe or of the patriarch. From Gen. xl ix. 10, it would appear to be the personal name: but preceded and followed as it is here by “a different tribe,” and “of which tribe,” it would rather seem to be that of the tribe); **of (with reference to) which tribe Moses said nothing concerning priests** (i. e. nothing to imply that any priests should be or be consecrated out of it: reserving that entirely for the tribe of Levi).

15–17.] Another proof that the law is changed (set aside): *for our Lord could not be of the law* (i. e., the Levitical priesthood), *seeing he is an eternal Priest.* **And it** (viz. the change of the law; the proposition of ver. 12) **is yet more abundantly manifest:** if (i. e. seeing that) **according to the similitude of** (equivalent to “*after the order of*” before) Melchisedec **ariseth a different priest** (i. e. Christ, not Melchisedec), **who is appointed** (hath become priest), **not according to the law of a carnal commandment** (i. e. not in accordance with, following out, the rule and order of an exterior ordinance founded on the present: fleshly and decaying state of things), **but according to the power of an indissoluble life** (the two clauses closely correspond in rhythm, as is much the practice of the Writer. The *power* here spoken of does not, however, strictly correspond, in its relation to the priesthood spoken of, with “the law of a carnal commandment” above. That was the rule, by and after which the priesthood constituted: this, the vigour inherent in the glorious priesthood of Christ,—for it is of His enduring Melchisedec-priesthood in glory that this is spoken—to endure for ever. Some have thought the power to be, Christ’s power to confer life on other: others the enduring nature of the divine decree which constituted this priesthood: but both are shewn to be wrong by the next verse, in which the enduringness of the priesthood is the point brought out).

17.] Proof of the last clause from Scripture. The stress of the citation is on **for ever. For he** (the different priest) **is borne witness of, that thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.**

18, 19.] These verses belong to the proof of 15–17, expanding the conclusion thence derived, and expressing it more decidedly than before in ver. 12.

For moreover there takes place an abrogation of the preceding commandment (the commandment intended is that mentioned in ver. 16, according to which the priesthood was constituted, not, as Chrysostom and others think, the whole Mosaic law, however much that may be involved in the assertion: compare the parenthesis in ver. 11. This commandment went before—not merely in time, but was an introduction to and gave way before the greater and final ordinance) **on account of its weakness and unprofitableness** (Rom. viii. 3, as Gal. iv. 9, is remarkably parallel, both in thought and mode of expression: one of those coincidences which could hardly take place where there was not community of thought and diction), **—for the law perfected nothing** (this parenthetical clause inserted to explain the implication contained in the words “*the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.*” The law had not the power to bring any thing whatever to perfection, to its appointed end and excellence:—perfection, in any kind, was not by the law), **—and an introduction** (*a bringing in besides*: the law being already there, this is brought in to and upon it) **of a better hope** (the contrast is between the preceding commandment, weak and unprofitable, and a better thing, viz. the *hope* which brings us near to God), **by means of which we draw near to God** (this note, of personal access to God, has been twice struck before, ch. iv. 16; vi. 19, and is further on in the Epistle expanded into a whole strain of argument. See ch. ix. 11 ff.; x. 19 ff. It is that access, which was only carnally and symbolically open to them by shedding of the blood of sacrifices, but has been spiritually and really opened to us by the shedding of Christ’s blood once for all, so that we being justified by faith can approach the very throne of God. The verb here used is the technical term in the Septuagint for the *drawing near* of the priests in their sacrificial ministrations. It remains to treat of the connexion of the above sentence, vv. 18, 19, which has been entirely mistaken by many, and among them by the A.V. The ending clause, “*but the bringing in of a better hope,*” has been wrongly joined with “*for the law made nothing perfect:*” and that, either 1) as A.V., “*but the bringing in of a better hope did.*” Beza appears here, as in so many other cases, to have led our translators into error: or 2) “*For the law perfected nothing, but was the introduction,*” &c. This latter is successfully impugned by Beza, on the ground that the law was not an *introduction* at all, from the very meaning [see above] of that word. See the rest of the matter argued in my Greek Test.).

20–22.] See summary at ver. 11. *Further proof of the superiority of the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ—in that he was constituted in it by an oath,* thus giving it a solemnity and weight which that other priesthood had not.

And inasmuch as [it was] **not without an oath** (the ellipsis here is variously supplied. Some fill it up out of what follows, “*that He became surely.*” And this seems on the whole more natural, and more agreeable to the style of our Epistle, than to put in, as A.V., “*he was made priest,*” or as Bleek, and others, “*this [the bringing in of a better hope] took place:*” **for they [as we know] without swearing of an oath are made priests** (*are made*, as strongly marking the existence of these priests at the time of writing); **but He with swearing of an oath by Him who saith** (i. e., certainly not the Psalmist, who cannot be said to have spoken this *unto Him*, unless indeed we take “*unto*” in the mere secondary sense of “with reference to.” In the following citation it is the words of address only to which this refers: the former part is the mere introduction to them. Not seeing this has led to the above mistake. It was God who addressed Him, God who made Him priest, God who swore unto Him) **to Him, The Lord (Jehovah) sware and will not repent** (i. e. the decree stands fast, and shall undergo no change), **Thou art a priest for ever:—of so much** (in that same proportion, viz. as the difference between the oath and no oath

indicates) **better a testament** (the meanings of the word thus rendered [*diatheké*], 1) an appointment, without concurrence of a second party, of somewhat concerning that second party,—of which nature is *a last will and testament*, 2) a mutual agreement in which all parties concerned consent,—*a covenant*, in the proper sense,—being confessed, our business here is, not to enquire what is the fixed theological acceptance of the word, and so to render it here, irrespective of any subsequent usage by our Writer himself; but to enquire 1) how he uses it in this Epistle, 2) whether he is likely to have used it in more than one sense:—and to render accordingly. Now it cannot well be doubted, that in ch. ix. 16, 17, he does use it in the sense of “*testament*.” And just as little can it be questioned, that he is speaking there of the same thing as here; that the “*new testament*” there answers to the **better testament** here, this first mention of it being in fact preparatory to that fuller treatment. I therefore keep here to the A.V.) **also hath Jesus become surety** (“Jesus is become the surety of the better covenant, i.e. in His person security and certainty is given to men, that a better covenant is made and sanctioned by God. For Christ, the Son of God, became man, to publish this covenant on earth,—has sealed it with His sufferings and death, and by His resurrection from the dead was declared with power to be sent by God as the Founder of such a Covenant.” Lüemann. This seems better, considering the context, in which our hope mainly, and not at present Christ’s satisfaction, is in question, than to bring in as some do, that satisfaction, or to regard His suretyship meaning His mediatorship [see ch. viii. 6, where He is described as *mediator of a better testament or covenant*] seen from both sides—that He is God’s surety for man and man’s surety for God).

23–25.] *Further proof still of the superiority of Christ’s priesthood, in that the Levitical priests were continually removed by death: Christ is undying and abiding.* This point was slightly touched before in ver. 8, and again in ver. 16 f.: in the first place it was to shew the abiding nature of the superiority of the priesthood—its endurance in Melchisedec, and in Christ, Melchisedec’s antitype, as contrasted with dying men who here receive tithes. In the second, it was to bring out the difference between the ordinances which constituted the two priesthoods: the one the law of a carnal commandment, the other, the power of an endless life. Here, the *personal* contrast is dwelt on: the *many*, which change: the ONE, who abides.

23.] And they indeed (i. e. the Levitical priests) **are appointed priests in numbers** (the chief emphasis is on this latter point, as contrasted with *unchangeable* below), **on account of their being by death hindered from continuing** (in *life*? or, in their *priesthood*? The latter is taken by many, and is the more probable. The context clearly here treats of abiding in the priesthood: besides which, it would be somewhat tautological to say that they were hindered by death from continuing in life): **but He, on account of his remaining for ever** (here again our former argument conversely applies, and obliges us to understand this *remaining* of endurance now in *life*, not in priesthood. It would be tautology to say, as some explain it, “because He remains a priest for ever, He has an unchangeable priesthood;” besides that thus the members of the parallelism would not correspond. They, on account of their deaths, are subject to continual renewal: He, because he lives for ever, has his priesthood *unchangeable*. See John viii. 35; xii. 34; xxi. 22 f.: 1 Cor. xv. 6: Phil. i. 25), **hath his priesthood unchangeable**.

25.] Whence (since he ever liveth) **also** (as a natural consequence, something else, flowing from and accompanying the last: but with a slightly characteristic force: a new and higher thing follows) **He is able to save** (in its usual solemn New Test. sense, to rescue from sin and condemnation) **to the uttermost** (some take this of *time*: “He is ever able to save,” or “He is able to save for ever.” But this is not the usage of the word. Bleek has shewn by very many instances, that *completeness*, not *duration*, is its idea) **those that approach** (see above, ver. 19) **through Him** (i. e. by faith in Him. The contrast is to those, whose approach to God was through the Levitical priesthood) **to God, ever living as He does** (this clause in fact is explanatory of the “*wherefore*,” giving the reason which is wrapped up in that conjunction) **to intercede for them** (this intercession implies the whole mediatorial work, which the exalted Saviour performs for his own with his heavenly Father, either by reference to his past death of blood by which He has bought them for Himself, or by continued intercession for them. See Rom. viii. 34 below, ch. ix. 24; 1 John ii, 1).

26–28.] *Further and concluding argument for the fact of Christ being such a High Priest: that such an one was necessary for us.* This necessity however is not pursued into its grounds, but only asserted, and then the description of His exalted perfections gone further into, and substantiated by facts in his own history and that of the priests of the law (ver. 28).

26.] For such (i. e. such as is above described: retrospective, not prospective, as some have taken it. Then the following adjectives serve as appositional predicates, carrying forward the word **such**, and enlarging on the attributes of our High Priest, which were already slightly touched ch. iv. 14, 15) **an High Priest was for us** (emphasis on *us*) **becoming also** (“nay, not only for all the above-mentioned reasons, but even for this”), **holy** (the word here thus rendered is not the ordinary one, “*hagios*,” but “*hosios*,” that used in Ps. xvi. 10, and cited in Acts ii. 27, as the especial title of the incarnate Son of God, perfect in piety and reverent holiness toward his heavenly Father), **harmless** (simple and free from vice or evil suspicion), **undefiled** (not only from legal, but from moral pollution, in deed, word, and thought), **separated from sinners** (from *the whole race and category* of sinners. This lets us into the true meaning, which is, not that Christ, ever and throughout, was free from sin, however true that may be, but [see next clause] that in his service as our High Priest, He, as the Levitical high priests in their service [Levit. xxi. 10 ff.], is void of all contact and commerce with sinners, removed far away in his glorified state and body, into God’s holy place. This expression exactly answers to that in ch. ix. 28, where it is said that he shall come a second time *without, apart from, sin*: see there), **and made** (*advanced to be*) **higher than the heavens; who hath not necessity** (the present tense shews, that the Writer is not setting forth the ideal of a high priest, but speaking of the actual existing attributes

of our great High Priest, as He is) **day by day** (the allusion is to the *daily offering* the priests, Ex. xxix. 38–42; Num. xxviii. 3–8, which are spoken of as offered by the high priests, though they took part in them only on festival days, because the high priests in fact lead and represent the whole priesthood), **as the high priests, to offer sacrifices first for his own sins, then for those of the people** (so Philo, speaking also of the daily sacrifices. Still it must be confessed that the application of such an idea to them has no authority in the law: and it would seem probable, as Bleek suggests, that the ceremonies of the great day of atonement were throughout before the mind of the Writer, as the chief and archetypal features of the High Priest's work, but repeated in some sort in the daily sacrifices. The most probable solution of the difficulty however is that proposed by Hofmann and approved by Delitzsch: that “*day by day*,” from its situation, belongs not to the high priests, but only to Christ: “*who has not need day by day, as the high priests had year by year,*” &c.): **for this he did** (what? of necessity, by the shewing of ver. 26 and of ch. iv. 15, the offering for the sins of the people only. To include in this the whole, “first for his own, then for those of the people,” would be either to contradict these testimonies of the Writer himself, or to give some second and unnatural sense to *sins*, as the Socinian interpreters do, who regard it as importing only *weaknesses* when applied to Christ. Besides, as Delitzsch well observes, the idea of “offering himself for his own sins” would be against all sacrificial analogy, according to which the *sinless* is an offering for the sinful) **once for all, when He offered** (see above) **Himself** (this is the first place in the Epistle where mention is made of Christ's having offered Himself. Henceforward it becomes more and more familiar to the reader: “once struck, the note sounds on ever louder and louder,” Delitzsch). **28.] Final bringing out of the contrast between the Aaronic priests and Christ.**

For (gives the reason for the difference in the last verse) **the law makes men** (emphatic, opposed to **the Son** below) **high priests, who have infirmity** (compare ch. v. 2, of the human high priest, and see below. The expression here involves, from the context, liability to sin, and subjection to, removal by, death. Christ had not the first, and therefore need not offer for his own sin: he was freed from the second, and therefore need not repeat His sacrifice); **but the word** (utterance; or, purport) **of the oath which was after the law** (these words, “the oath which was after the law,” belong together, which ought to be marked in the A.V. by the omission of the comma after “oath.” This oath is recorded in David, i.e. subsequently to the giving of the law, and therefore as antiquating it and setting it aside. The argument is similar to that in Gal. iii. 17), (**makes**) **the Son, made perfect** (in this participle, as Delitzsch remarks, lies enwrapped the whole process of the Son's assumption of human infirmity, and being exalted through it: for this *being made perfect* was *through sufferings*, ch. ii. 10, v. 9. Those priests, by their infirmity, were removed away in death, and replaced by others: He, by that infirmity, which He took on Him, went out through death into glory eternal, and an unrenewable priesthood) **for evermore** (these words belong simply and entirely to the participle, “*made perfect*.” The A.V. has obliterated both sense, and analogy with ch. ii. 10 and v. 9, by rendering this participle, ‘consecrated’).

Hebrews: Chapter 8

CHAP. VIII. 1–13.] Not only is Christ personally, as a High Priest, above the sons of Aaron, but the service and ordinances of the covenant to which His High Priesthood belongs are better than those of that to which they belong.

1.] Now the principal matter (the word here used also signifies *sum total*, and this other meaning would be apposite enough here, were the sense confined to ver. 1, which has been treated of before: but ver. 2 contains new particulars, which cannot be said to be the *sum* of any things hitherto said) **in** (**in**, or **upon**: lying as it were, by, and among) **the things which we are saying: We have such an High Priest** (emphasis on *such*, which refers, not to what preceded, but to what is to follow, viz. “*who sat down*,” &c.), **who sat down** (“in ch. i. 3, the sitting at the right hand of God was mentioned as a pre-eminence of the Son above the angels, who stand as ministering spirits before the presence of God: here, where the same is said of Christ as High Priest, Schlichting and others rightly remark that there is again a pre-eminence over the Jewish high priests: for these, even when they entered the holiest place, did not sit down by the throne of God, but only stood before it for a moment: compare ch. x. 11, 12.” Bleek. Lünemann calls this fanciful: but such distinctions are not surely to be overlooked altogether) **on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens** (better thus, than “*of the majesty in the heavens*”); **2.] a minister of the holy place, and of the true** (archetypal, *only true*, as so often in St. John, and in one passage of St. Luke, xvi. 11) **tabernacle, which the Lord** (here evidently the Father: see note on ch. xii. 14) **pitched, not [any] man** (it is an important question, symbolically considered, whether any and what distinction is intended by the Writer, between **the holy place** and **the tabernacle**. Delitzsch has gone into it at length, and Hofmann has treated of it in two places. Both are agreed that **the holy place** betokens the immediate immaterial presence of God, the veritable Holy of Holies, beyond, and ap-approached through, the heavens, ch. iv. 14. But as regards **the tabernacle** they differ. Hofmann maintains it to be the glorified body of Christ, and argues that it alone will satisfy such expressions as that in ch. ix. 11, “*not of this creation*.” in order to satisfying which, this **tabernacle** must belong to the new creation, the *regeneration*, which commences with the glorification of Christ. This glorified body of His is the new and abiding temple of God, in which He dwells and meets with us who are united to and have put on that glorified body, our house, eternal in the heavens: for so Hofmann interprets 2 Cor. v. 1 ff. On the other hand, Delitzsch controverts this view, as inconsistent with the symbolism in ch. ix. 11, 12, where Christ, “through the greater and more perfect tabernacle.... entered into the holy place,” taking this connexion of the words: and also with our ver. 5, where the Mosaic tabernacle is set forth as the representation and shadow of the heavenly. Accordingly, he believes the **tabernacle** here

to be the heavenly Jerusalem, the worship-place of blessed spirits [Ps. xxix. 9] and of those men who have been rapt in vision thither [Isa. vi.],—the “*temple of the tabernacle Of witness*,” of Rev. xv. 5,—the place where God’s *visible* presence [in contradistinction to His personal and invisible presence in the *holy places*] is manifested to his creatures angelic and human. In weighing these two opinions, I own they seem to me to run into one, and of that one by far the larger component is on Hofmann’s side.

For what is the Heavenly Jerusalem? What but the aggregate, in their persons and their glorious abiding-place, of the triumphant saints and servants of God? And what is this aggregate, but the mystical body of which Christ is the Head and they are the members, in its fulfilment and perfection? That glorified body of His, in which they are accepted before God, and in which as a heavenly temple they serve God, and God dwells, He has passed through, not by passing out of it, but by finally establishing it as an accomplished thing in God’s sight, and in and as proceeding forth from it carrying on his intercession and *ministration in the true tabernacle*, in the *holy place* itself, See more on this subject, ch. ix. 11: and the views of Bleek, Tholuck, &c.: also a sermon of Schileermacher’s on the text, vol. ii, of his *Predigten*, p. 504).

3–6.] This *heavenly office and work our High Priest must have, if He le veritably a High Priest*. 3.] **For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices** (see the very similar passage, ch. v. 1, and note there): **whence it is necessary that this (High Priest) also have somewhat which He may offer** (there is here considerable difficulty. For the Writer is evidently, from what follows, laying the stress on the *heavenly* “ministry” of Christ: and this “somewhat to offer” applies therefore to His work, not on earth, but in heaven, If so, how comes it to be said that He has somewhat to offer in heaven, seeing that His offering, of Himself, was made once for all, in contradistinction to those of the Levitical priests which were being constantly offered? See especially ch. x. 11, 12, which, on this view, brings the Writer here into direct contradiction to himself, In order to avoid this, Lünenmann and Hofmann attempt to make the “somewhat to offer” retrospective: “it is necessary for Him to have [there, in heaven] somewhat [viz. His body] which he may have offered.” But surely this is a view which cannot be admitted. The straightforward construction of our sentence makes it necessary that the words should refer to an act done in the state pointed out, however the nature of that act may be, in each ease of its being done, such as to be accomplished at the moment, and not enduring onwards: which latter would certainly involve the contradiction above spoken of. Thus regarded then, what is it which our High Priest in heaven has to offer? In ch. v. 7, He is described as *having offered* prayers and supplications in the days of His flesh: and it might be thought that His *interceding for us*, ch. vii. 25, might be here meant, the offering being those intercessions. But this would hardly satisfactorily give the force of the word **somewhat**, which, as Delitzsch remarks, is too concrete for such an interpretation. It must be something with which and by virtue of which, and as offering and applying which, our High Priest enters and ministers in the Holy of Holies above. Now if we look to the analogy of ch. ix. 7, 12, we see (1) that the high priest entered the holy place “*not without blood, which he offers for himself, and for the ignorances of the people*,”—(2) that Christ is entered into the *holy places of heaven, not with the blood of goats and bulls, but by His own blood*: see also ib. ver. 25. This BLOOD of the one offering, Christ is represented as bearing into the Holy Place, and its application is set ever forth to us as a continuing and constantly repeated one. Thus this *blood of sprinkling* is regarded us being in *heaven*, ch. xii. 24: as *being sprinkled on the believer as the end of his election*, 1 Pet. i. 2: as *cleansing us from all sin*, 1 John i. 7: as *that wherein the saints wash their robes and make them white*, Rev. vii. 14. Still, as Delitzsch also remarks, this is not the place to enlarge on this matter, seeing that it is merely incidentally introduced here, the present object being to shew that it is in heaven, and not on earth, that our High Priest ministers). 4.] **Yea, if** (the connexion is

obvious: “our High Priest must have somewhat to offer. But *on earth* this could not be: yea, &c.”) **H e were on earth, He would not even be a Priest** (observe the emphasis: which is not, as Bleek, He would not even be a *priest, much less a High Priest*, but the stress is on the verb be, and it is taken as a matter agreed that the *High Priest* belonged to the genus *priest*: “He would not even belong to the category of priests.” In the background lies, “and if not so, certainly could not be a High Priest:” but it is not brought forward, nor does it belong to the argument), **since there are** (‘there are already:’ not, “*were*,” as is shewn by the *present tense* below. The time indicated is that of writing the Epistle) **those who offer the gifts according to (the) law: men who serve** (this word thus rendered occurs eight times in St. Luke, four times in St. Paul, and six times in this Epistle. It has the general sense of “serving,” either God, as almost always: or some especial portion of divine service or sacred things, as here and ch. xiii. 10) **the delinea-tion** (the word cannot, as in ch. iv. 11, mean, a pattern, or example: but must be taken as meaning a suggestive representation, or sketch) **and shadow** (‘adumbration.’ See on ch. x. 1, where the *shadow* and *image* are contrasted) **of the heavenly things** (i. e. the things in heaven, in the heavenly sanctuary. Chrysostom understands it of *spiritual* things:—and then goes on to instance the work of the Spirit in baptism, the power of the keys, the utterance of Christian praise, &c. But the context clearly requires the other view), **even as Moses was commanded** (‘admonished of God,’ A.V., an excellent rendering) **when about to complete** (not in distinction from *beginning*, as if he were about to put the finishing stroke to the work already nearly ended: but involving the whole work: “to take in hand and carry on to completion”) **the tabernacle: for** (justifies the assertion by the following citation) **take heed, He says** (supply *God*; there can be no doubt of this here, where the words following are God’s own), **that thou makest all things** (this is not in the Septuagint, nor in the Hebrew, but is supplied also by Philo) **according to the pattern which was shewn thee in the mount.** If now we ask what this **pattern** was, we are met with various replies. Faber Stapulensis interprets it, “that what was shewn to Moses in the mount was not the truth itself, but only an adumbration and idea of it.” And so Schlichting, concluding, “so that the ancient tabernacle was only an example of an example, and a shadow of a shadow.” This view is strongly controverted by

Delitzsch, who takes the **pattern** to be the veritable heavenly things themselves, not seen however by Moses directly and naturally, which would be impossible, but made visible to him in a vision. I do not see that there is much to choose between the two views. If the latter be taken, then surely the vision thus vouchsafed to Moses was itself only an intermediate representation, and so this view comes much to the same as the other. **6.] But now** (the logical, not the temporal *now*, as in ch. ix. 26; xi. 16, and frequently in St. Paul, meaning, “as the fact really is”) **H e hath obtained a more excellent ministry** (than that of any earthly priests), **in proportion as He is also (also,** introducing a special reference to an already acknowledged fact, as in ch. vi. 7, where see note) **mediator** (the meaning of the word is, one who becomes a goer between two persons, assuring to each the consent of the other to some point agreed on in common. The genitive after *mediator* may either be of the *persons between whom*, as in 1 Tim. ii.

5: or of *one of the parties concerned*: or of the *object of the mediation*, the agreement or covenant. And in this last sense is the genitive here. Jesus is the mediator, between God and us) **o f a better covenant, of one which has been laid down** (literally, has been *law-given*, or enacted: see on cb. vii. 11. The word **law** is also used of the new covenant by St. James, i. 25; ii. 12: see also iv. 12, and St. Paul, Rom. iii. 27; viii. 2; ix. 31) **upon** (on the condition of) **better promises** (viz. those which are about to be particularized in the following citation. Theodoret says, “For the old covenant had joined to it material promises, a land flowing with milk and honey, and abundance of children, and the like: but the new has eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven.” But as Bleek objects, it would be very improbable that the Writer should intend to refer the promises, on which the old covenant was based, to mere earthly blessings, in the face of such a designation of the hope of Abraham and the patriarchs, as we find in ch. xi. 10–19). **7.] Argumentation**, exactly as in ch. vii. 11, *from sayings of God, to shew the imperfection of the former covenant. For if that first (covenant) were* (or, had been) **blameless** (without defect in that for which a covenant with God is intended. It is the contrary of “*weak and profitless*,” ch. vii. 18), **a place would not be** (not, would not have been) **sought** (i. e. space opened, viz. in the words of the following prophecy, which indicate the substitution of such a covenant for the old one. Bleek gives a rather far-fetched interpretation,—that the **place** is the place in men’s hearts, as distinguished from the tables of stone on which the first covenant was written; referring to 2 Cor. iii. 3 for a similar distinction. But it is far better to understand it of a *place in history*) **for a second** (the emphasis is on **second**). **8–12.] Proof, that a place for a second is contemplated**, by citation from Jeremiah. **For** (introduces the substantiation of the assertion) **blaming them (them, viz. the persons under the first covenant, who were not rendered perfect by it)** **He saith** (the following citation is the great prophetic passage Jer. xxxi. 31–34; see also Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27. “After the sack of Jerusalem, Jeremiah with the other captives was brought in chains to Rama, where Nebuzaradan had his head-quarters. There took place, at God’s special command, his prophecies of the future entire restoration of Israel, of another David, of Rachel’s wailing over her children at Rama, and their future return, of the new covenant resting on absolute and veritable forgiveness of sins which Jehovah would make with his people, these prophecies forming the third part of the third trilogy of the three great trilogies into which the prophecies of Jeremiah may be divided: ch. xxi.—xxv., the book against the shepherds of the people: ch. xxvi.—xxix., the book of Jeremiah’s conflict against the false prophets: ch. xxxx., xxxi., the book of restoration,” Delitzsch: “The question which has before now been abundantly handled, whether the saying refers to the return of the exiles, or to the covenant of which Christ is the mediator, or to the future general conversion of the Jews, or whether some things in it to one of these, some to another, or whether the whole in its lower literal sense to the return of the exiles and in its higher spiritual sense to Christ and His kingdom, must be answered by the considerations before adduced on ch. i. 5. It belongs throughout to the cycle of Messianic prophecies, and is one

of the most beautiful and sublime of them; and its true fulfilment can only be sought in the covenant brought in by the Saviour, and in the salvation through Him imparted to mankind, and ever more and more unfolded and completed. This is the case, however this salvation, in the perception and declaration of the prophet, is bound up with the restoration of the ancient covenant people and their reunion in the land of their home.” Bleek), **Behold, the days come, saith the Lord** (“the prophecy, taken from this rich cycle of prophecies concerning the last things, whose clear Messianic sense allows of no evasion, begins with Jeremiah’s constant formula. ‘*behold the days come.*’” Delitzsch), and (so literally, meaning, **when**) **I will ac-complish upon** (the Septuagint has, “*I will make with.*” The difference is beyond doubt intentional, to set forth the completeness of the new covenant) **the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah** (both these, Israel first and Judah afterwards, were sent into captivity for their sins: and both are specified severally in God’s promise of grace and restoration) **a new covenant** (see on ch. vii. 22): **9.]** (this covenant is first specified negatively: it is *not* to be like that first one) **not according to the covenant** (different in quality from, not after the measure of) **which I appointed to** (not “*with:*” it is a pure dative, and betokens mere agency on the part of the subject, God: the people of Israel, the objects, being only recipients, not co-agents) **their fathers in the day of my taking hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; because they abode not in my covenant, and I disregarded them** (many take the sentence beginning with **because** as an independent one—“because they abode not in my covenant, I also disregarded them”), **saith the Lord**. On the face of their not continuing in God’s covenant, Delitzsch gives a striking quotation from Schelling,—“The Law appears to be the mere ideal of a religious constitution, as it has never existed in fact: in practice, the Jews were almost throughout polytheists. The substance of their national feeling was formed by heathendom; the accidents only, by revelation. From the queen of heaven down to the abominations of the Phoeniciaus, and even to Cybele, the Jews passed through every grade of paganism.” “In fact,” adds Delitzsch, “there is no period of the history of Israel before the captivity, in which more or less idolatry was not united with the worship of Jehovah, except the time of David and the first years of Solomon, during which the influence of Samuel still continued to be felt. And

when by the captivity Idol-worship was completely eradicated from the people, as far at least as regards that part of it which returned, it is well known that a hypocritical letter-worship got the mastery over them, which was morally very little better." See note on Matt. xii. 43. **10.] For** (the reason rendered is for the expression "new," above: "new, I say: for...") **this** (predicate, explained in what follows) **is the covenant which I will establish to the house of Israel** (Israel here in its wider sense, comprehending both Israel proper and Judah: because then all Israel shall be again united) **after those days** (after the end of that dispensation, when those days of disregard are over), saith the **Lord, giving** (or, **putting**). This is the first of the **better promises** on which

the new covenant is established (my laws **into their mind** (their inward parts, their spiritual man, as distinguished from the mere sensorium which receives impressions from without); **and on their heart will I inscribe them** (contrast to the inscription of the old law, which was on tables of stone: see 2 Cor. iii. 3), **and I will be to them for** (as ch. i. 5, which see) **a God, and they shall be to me for a people.** **11.] Second of the better promises**—universal spread of the knowledge of God: following on the other, that God would put His laws in their minds and write them in their hearts. **And they shall not have to teach every man his [fellow]-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know** (plural: "Know ye") **the Lord: because all shall know me, from the small [one] even to the great [one] of them** (that is, "they shall be all taught of God," as cited by our Lord in John vi. 45, from Isa. liv. 13, as written in the prophets, alluding to such passages as this, and Joel ii. 28, 29, See also 1 John ii. 20, 27, and notes there. Under the old covenant, the priests' lips were to keep knowledge, and they were to teach the people God's ways: under the new, there is no more need for the believer to have recourse to man for teaching in the knowledge of God, for the Holy Spirit, which is given to all that ask, reveals the things of Christ to each, according to the measure of his spiritual attainment and strength of faith. And the inner reason of this now follows, making, formally, the third of these better promises, but in fact bound up with, and the condition of, the last mentioned). **Because** ("by God passing by the former guilt of His sinful people, and beginning a new relation of grace with them, is this blessed change made possible." De Wette) **I will be merciful to their iniquities, and of their sins will I make mention no more.**

13.] Transition to the antithetical parallel which he is about to draw between the former, earthly and ceremonial, and the latter, heavenly and actual tabernacle: see summary at ch. ix. 1. **In saying** (here, as in each of those, the subject is God, belonging here to the following verb: "when God saith"), **A new [covenant], he hath made old** (*made old*, viz. by speaking of,—and where God is the speaker, actually in decree establishing, seeing that all God's sayings are realities,—a new one) **the first [covenant]. But** (transition from a particular assertion, to an axiomatic general truth: as in Rom. xiv. 23) **that which is being made old** (the saying of God *hath made old* that first covenant: the state of *antiquation* thereby induced, continues, as the perfect tense shews,—and hence the covenant is continually *being made old*) **and getting into old age is nigh unto vanishing away** (the writer uses the expression of the whole time subsequent to the utterance of the prophecy. At that time the *being made old* began, by the mention of a new covenant: and from that time the first covenant might be regarded as ever dwindling away, so to speak, and near its end, which God might bring on at any time. It is far better to regard the *being ready to vanish away* thus, than, with some, to place it at the time of the Writer, when in fact it had already taken place).

Hebrews: Chapter 9

CHAP. IX. 1.] The chief train of thought and argument, although in the main forwarded, has been for the present somewhat broken, by the long citation in the last chapter. It is now resumed. Christ is the High Priest of a heavenly tabernacle, the Mediator of a covenant established upon better promises. This latter has been shewn out of Scripture: and it has been proved that the old covenant was by that Scripture pronounced to be transitory and near its end. As such, it is now *compared in detail with this second and better one, as to its liturgical apparatus and proffered means of access to God.* These are detailed somewhat minutely, mention being even made of some which are not insisted on, nor their symbolism explained: and the main point of comparison, the access into the holiest place, is hastened on. In this particular especially the infinite superiority of the new covenant is insisted on: and the whole access of Christ into God's presence for us is elaborately contrasted with the former insufficient ceremonial access by means of animal sacrifices. In one point, above all, is this contrast brought out: *the supreme efficacy of the blood of Christ, as set against the nullity of the blood of bulls and of goats to purge away sin.* Then the subject of the heavenly tabernacle and holy place is recurred to, and the future prospect of Christ's reappearing from thence opened.

1-5.] *The liturgical appliances of the first covenant.*

1.] Now accordingly (this takes up the thought of ch. viii. 5, where the command is recited directing Moses to make the tabernacle after the pattern shewn him in the mount. In pursuance of that command it was that *the first covenant had, &c.*) **the first [covenant]** (not, the first *tabernacle*, as the received text in the Greek wrongly and clumsily glosses. There is no question between a first and second *tabernacle*: the *greater and more perfect tabernacle* is a prototype, not an afterthought. The gloss has probably arisen from a blunder in interpreting "*the first tabernacle*" in ver. 8: see there) **had** (it was no longer subsisting in the Writer's time as a *covenant*, however its observances might be still surviving. Or perhaps the word **had** may refer back to the time indicated in ch. viii. 5, when Moses made the tabernacle: had, when its liturgical appliances were first provided.

But I prefer the other view) **also** (as well as this second and more perfect covenant: not that this has all the things below mentioned, but that it too possesses its corresponding liturgical appliances, though of a higher kind) **ordinances** ("the old covenant also had liturgical ordinances, which were of divine right, ordinances which rested their obligatory right upon revelation from God and declaration of His will." Delitzsch) **of service** (*worship*: see ch. viii. 5 and note), **and its** (or, *the*: see below) **worldly sanctuary** (as the whole passage treats of the distinction between the two sanctuaries, one into which the Levitical priests entered, and the other into which Christ is entered, it is certain that the signification must be local only).

worldly, i.e. '*mundane*,' belonging to this world. It stands opposed to *heavenly*, and is an epithet distinguishing the sanctuary of the first covenant from that of the second, not one common to the two. This is also shewn by the article *the*. The first covenant had not merely *a worldly* sanctuary, but the only sanctuary which was upon earth: that one which was constructed after the pattern of things in the heavens).

2-5.] Explanatory of the worldly sanctuary by a particular detail. **For the tabernacle was established** (set up as a tent), **the first one** (in situation to those entering: see Acts xvi. 12 note), **in which were the candlestick** (with seven lights: of gold, carved with almond flowers, pomegranates, and lilies: see Exod. xxv. 31-39, xxxvii. 17-24. There were *ten* of these in the Temple of Solomon, see 1 Kings vii. 49; 2 Chron. iv. 7: but in the second Temple, the Mosaic regulation was returned to, and *only one* placed in the tabernacle: see 1 Macc. i. 21, iv. 49. Josephus describes Vespasian's triumph, and the candlestick us borne in it, which is now to be seen in relief on the arch of Titus at Rome), **and the table** (for the shewbread: of shittim [acacia?] wood, overlaid with gold, Exod. xxv. 23-30, xxxvii. 10-16, of which there was *one only* in the Mosaic tabernacle, and in the second temple [1 Macc. as above], but *ten* in Solomon's temple, see 2 Chron. iv. 8; also ib. ver. 19; 1 Chron. xxviii. 16; 1 Kings vii. 48), **and the shew of the bread** (so literally. There can be little doubt that Tholuck and Delitzsch are right, who understand this not of the *custom of exhibiting* the bread, but, seeing that the Writer is speaking of concrete objects, as the heap of bread itself thus exhibited); **which tabernacle** ("that tabernacle namely, which") **is called the holy place** (literally, places or parts: there is no substantive expressed).

3.] But (as bringing out by anticipation the same contrast which we have in vv. 6, 7) **after** (i. e. in entering: "*behind*," as we should say, if regarding it '*in situ*') **the second veil** (or curtain hanging before the sanctuary. There were in reality two of these, as described in Exod. xxvi. 31-37: one before the holy of holies itself [vv. 31-35], the other before the tabernacle door [vv. 36, 37]) the (not "*a*," see above) **tabernacle which is called holy of holies** (literally **holies**); **having** (see below) **a golden censer** [or, **altar of incense**] (there is considerable difficulty here. The word used may mean either an *altar upon which*, or a *censer in which*, incense was burnt. On the side of the latter meaning it is remarkable, that much stress is laid by the Mischna upon the *censer to be used on the day of expiation*, as distinguished from that used on any other day: on the fact of its being *of gold*, and of a particular and precious kind of gold. But if this latter interpretation be adopted, we are involved in the following difficulty. This *golden censer* is nowhere named in the law: the word rendered "*censer*" by A.V. in Levit. xvi. 12, is a shallow basin, in which the high priest on the day of atonement was to take incense from the incense-altar into the holy place. Besides which, it is not specified as golden; nor was it kept in the Holy of holies. Indeed it could not have been, or the high priest would have been obliged to fetch it from thence before burning in-cense in it, which is most improbable. Of these, the first-mentioned objection is not decisive; for our Writer is speaking, not of Mosaic usage only, but of several things outside the provisions of the law itself; and thus our explanation of any difficulty need not be sought in the provisions of the law only, but also in subsequent Jewish usage. If now, influenced by the above difficulties, we adopt the interpretation "*altar of incense*," a difficulty arises, certainly not less than any of those adduced above. On the one hand the word **having** at first sight seems to admit of no other meaning than a local one, "*containing*." The parallelism with **wherein was** above appears to demand this, and the fact that the other things mentioned are beyond question intended to be *in*, not merely belonging to, the Holy of holies. On this, see more below. Taking it as our first impression, we are startled by the fact, that the altar of incense *was not in* the Holy of holies, but *outside it*. Hence Bleck, De Wette, and Lünemann, suppose that the Writer has fallen into a mistake, and Bleek infers from this that he was not an inhabitant of Palestine, but an Alexandrine. But as Delitzsch observes, whichever he were, he must have been perfect monster of ignorance, to have fallen into any such error. "Then," continues Delitzsch, "since we cannot submit him to such an imputation, is there any intent which our Writer may have had, inducing him to ascribe the altar of incense to the Holy of holies, notwithstanding that he knew its local situation to be in the Holy ep?" There is such an intent, recognized even by Bleek himself: "The Author," says Bleek, and after him Tholuck, "treats the Holy of holies, irrespective of the veil, as symbolical of the heavenly sanctuary, and had also a motive to include in it the altar of incense, whose offerings of incense are the symbol of the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii. 3 ff." And even so it is. Not only the New Test. writings, but the Old Test. also, Isa. vi. 6, speak of a heavenly altar, which is the antitype there of the earthly. Considering the fact that this antitypical altar belonged to the Holy of holies, into which Christ entered through the torn veil, it was obvious for our Writer to reckon the typical altar also among the things belonging to the Holy of holies. Our second question then whether our Writer is justified, having this motive, in reckoning the altar of incense among the furniture of the Holy of holies. And our answer is, Entirely so: the following considerations have weight: a) that the altar of incense, by Exod. xxx. 6, xl. 5, is to be placed before the ark of the covenant, or before the Capporeth [mercy-seat], ie. in the middle between the candlestick on the right and the table of shewbread on the left, so that its place is subordinate to the ark of the covenant: b) that on the day of atonement, it, as well as the mercy-seat, was sprinkled with the blood of the sin-offering: c) that 1 Kings vi. 22, as well as by our Writer, it is reckoned to the Holy of holies, being there culled the altar belonging to the sanctuary [A. V.

"the altar that was by the oracle"). The solution to be gathered from this would be, that the altar of incense, being appointed by the Mosaic ordinance to stand in immediate contiguity to the veil separating the Holy of holies, and being destined in its use especially for the service of the Holy of Holies [for this, notwithstanding the objection brought by Delitzsch, might have weight; the exterior altar of burnt-offering did not belong in any such strict sense to the sanctuary and mercy-seat], and being described in more than one place of Scripture [e. g. Exod. xxx. 6; 1 Kings vi. 22] as connected with the sanctuary, is taken by the Writer as appertaining to the Holy of holies: he choosing, thus to describe it, the somewhat ambiguous word **having**, and not "*wherein was*," as before. I have thus given both views of the solution to be sought: and will now state the result. 1) On either hypothesis, **having** cannot be kept to its stricter meaning of *containing*. For neither the censer nor the incense-altar was *kept in* the Holy of holies. 2) The language of the Mischna concerning the golden censer is very strong, and more weight still is given to it when we reflect that it is especially of the day of expiation that our Writer is preparing to speak. 3) The word **golden** should not be overlooked in the consideration. When the ark of the covenant by and by is spoken of, which like the altar of incense was overlaid with gold, it is not said to be *golden*, but only "*overlaid all round with gold.*" And this predicate being thus emphatically thrown forward, it is hardly possible to help feeling that a stress is laid on it, and it is not used without design. And if we enquire what this design is, we can hardly find fault with the reply which says that it is to distinguish a *golden censer* from some other kinds of censers. 4) On the whole then I should say that the balance inclines towards the "censer" interpretation, though I do not feel by any means that the difficulty is removed, and should hail any new solution which might clear it still further), **and the ark of the covenant** (see Exod. xxv. 10 ff., xxxvii. 1 ff.: called by this name, Josh. iii. 6 and in other places) **covered round on all sides** (*"within and without,"* Exod. xxv. 11) **with gold** (the ark, a chest, was of shittim [acacia] wood, overlaid with plates of fine gold, Exod. as above. The ark of the covenant was in the Holy of holies in the Mosaic tabernacle, and in the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 4, 6. In the sack by the Chaldeans, it disappeared. See a legend respecting its fate in 2 Macc. ii, 1–8, where curiously enough "the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense," are classed together. The second temple did not contain it, but it was represented by a stone basement three fingers high, called "the stone of foundation"), **in which [was] a golden pot** (Ex. xvi. 32–34. The word "*golden*" is added by the Septuagint: so also Philo: the Hetrew has merely "a pot," as A.V.) **containing the manna** (viz. an omer, each man's daily share laid up for a memorial, see Exod. xvi. 32 with ib. 16. That this pot was to be placed *in the ark*, is not said there, but it was gathered probably from the words "before the Lord." In 1 Kings viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10, it is stated that there was nothing in the ark in Solomon's temple, except the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb. But this, as Delitzsch observes, will not prove any thing against the pot of manna and the rod having *once* been there; nay rather, from the express declaration that there was *then* nothing but the tables of stone, it would seem that formerly there had been other things there. The Rabbis certainly treat of the pot of manna, as of the rod, as *being in the ark*), **and the rod of Aaron which budded** (see Numb. xvii. 1–11. It was to be laid up "before the testimony," in which Ben Gershom sees a proof that it was in the ark. The Gemara mentions a tradition that with the ark disappeared the pot of manna, and the cruse of anointing oil, and the rod of Aaron with its almonds and blossoms, and the chest which the Philistines sent for a trespass-offering, 1 Sam. vi. 4, 8), **and the tables of the covenant** (viz. the tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written by the finger of God, Exod. xxv. 16, xxxi. 18; Deut. x. 1–5; 1 Kings viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10, as above. It will be seen from these references, that these tables were ordered to be put in the ark);

5.] and over above it (the ark of the covenant) [**the**] **cherubim** (the well-known fourfold animal forms, fencing from human approach, and at the same time bearing up and supporting the glory of God: symbolizing, as I believe and have elsewhere maintained [Hulsean Lectures for 1841. Lect. i. See also note on Rev. iv. 6–8], *the creation of God*. See more below) **of glory** (the **glory**, is the Shechinah, or bright cloud of glory, in which Jehovah appeared between the cherubim forms, and to which, as attendants and watchers, and upholders, they belonged) **overshadowing** (casting shadow down upon, easing to be shadowed) **the mercy-seat** (*the mercy-seat* of Exod. xxv. 17: the massive golden cover of the ark of the covenant, on which the glory of Jehovah appeared between the cherubim. It was that upon which especially the blood of the propitiatory sacrifice was sprinkled on the day of atonement, Levit. xvi. 15, and from this circumstances apparently, the propitiation taking place on it, it obtained its name of *mercy-seat*, or *place of propitiation*. It was the footstool of God, 1 Chron. xxviii. 2 Ps. xcix. 5, cxxxii. 7; Lam. ii. 1; the spot where He, the God of the covenant, met. with Israel, the people of the covenant: see Exod. xxv. 22; Lev. xvi. 2; Numb. vii. 89); **concerning which it is not [opportune] now to speak one by one** (i. e. particularly. The clause refers evidently not to the cherubim only, but to all the contents of the Sanctuary just mentioned).

6, 7.] We now have that whereunto the above details have been tending, viz. *the use made of the Sanctuary by the High Priest on the day of atonement*. **But** (transitional) **these things being thus arranged, into the first** (foremost) **tabernacle** [indeed] **continually** (i. e. day by day, at any time, without limits prescribed by the law: certainly, twice at least in every day, see Exod. xxx. 7 ff.) **enter** (on the *present*, see above. It must not be rendered by an imperfect, as A.V., 'went') **the priests** (the ordinary priests), **accomplishing the services** (the services meant are the morning and evening care of the lamps, the morning and evening offering of incense, and the weekly change of the shewbread);

7.] but into the second (innermost, the Holy of holies) **once in the year** (i. e. on the day of atonement, the 10th day of the 7th month; the same expression is used in reff. Exod. and Levit. The entrance took place, on *that day*, twice at least, from Levit. xvi. 12–16: the Mischna says, four [three?] times, Joma v. 1; vii. 4. Much trouble has been spent by antiquarians on the question: see the whole treated in Bleek, if it be thought worth while: it may suffice here to say that the Writer follows the

ordinary way of speaking among the Jews and ourselves, meaning by "once," *on one occasion*. No one would think, if I said I was in the habit of seeing a certain person but once in every year, of asking how long I spent in his company during that day, and how often I looked upon him) **the High Priest alone, not without** (see ch. vii. 20) **blood, which he offers** (see ch. viii. 3) **on behalf of himself, and the ignorances** (sins of ignorance, see ch. v. 2. But the word may have a wider meaning than mere sins of ignorance) **of the people** (I have in my Greek Test. discussed the question whether this sentence will bear to be taken "for his own ignorances, and for those of the people" and have found it not improbable, that this may have been intended):

8.] the Holy Spirit signifying (by the typical arrangement of the sanctuary, excluding all from it except the High Priest once a year: the reference of "*signifying*" is not to be referred back to the prophecy of Jeremiah above quoted. We often have the verb in this meaning of "*signifying by a representation:*" so in ch. xii. 27) **this** (which follows), **that the way to the holy place** (i. e. the true holy places in heaven: for is of antitype, not of type, that the Writer is here speaking. Hence there is no danger of mistaking *the holy place* here for the outer tabernacle: it is as in Ezek. xli. 23; Lev. xvi. 16, 17, 20, 23, 27, *the holy place*, par excellence) **has not yet been manifested** (not, *had* not: the present form is maintained throughout: see below), **while the first tabernacle is as yet standing** (*what first tabernacle?* That which was first in *time*, or *first in order of space?* Clearly the latter, which has already been used in ver. 6: no reason can be given for changing the sense to the temporal one, especially as the Writer is regarding the whole as present, and drawing no contrast as to time. In fact, if time be regarded, the *heavenly*, not the earthly tabernacle is the first. Still less can we understand the tabernacle in the wilderness, as distinguished from the temple: which would yield no assignable sense. Bleek supposes that *the first tabernacle*, thus understood, symbolizes the whole Jewish Levitical worship which took place in the first or outer tabernacle: Ebrard, that the whole, exterior and interior tabernacle, is symbolical, the exterior of relative, the interior of absolute holiness. But both of these ideas are well refuted by Delitzsch, who reminds us that the first as well as the second tabernacle was symbolical of heavenly things): **the which** (viz. the first or anterior tabernacle, and that especially considered as obstructing, by its yet remaining, the way into the holiest) **is** (not, "*was*," see above) **a parable for** (in reference to) **the time** (period, or season, with reference to the divine dispensations) **now present** (so Primasius,—"for what was then done in the temple, was a figure and similitude of that truth which is now fulfilled in the church." And thus recently, and to my mind decisively, Delitzsch. But observe, the first tabernacle was not a parable of the present time, so that *the present time* should be the thing represented:—but a parable—for, reserved unto, or given in reference to, the present time,—of heavenly things, to which the access is in the present time revealed.

This application of the expression to *the time now present*, has not been the general view of Commentators. Chrysostom and others have interpreted it of the time *then* present, the time before the coming of Christ. But this meaning, "*the time which was instant*," would not agree with the present tense, **are offered**, to which consequently those interpreters are obliged to do violence. Accordingly we have modifications of this view, e.g. that of Ebrard, and others, that the time meant is the present time of offering Old Test. sacrifices, in which the readers of the Epistle were still taking a part. "The author might have called the time of the Old Test. worship 'the past time,' and he would doubtless have so called it, had he been minded to speak from his own standing-point: but with practical wisdom he here speaks from that of his readers, who yet joined in the temple worship, and for whom the period of sacrifices was not yet passed away." Ebrard:—that of Bleek, Tholuck, and Lünemann, "This *first tabernacle* is, or there lies in its establishment, a parabolic setting forth of the character of the present time in general, i.e. of the time of the Old Test.,—of Judaism." Bleek. And so A.V., "which was a figure for the time then present." See more below under "*the time of reformation*"); **according to which** (i. e. *in accordance with which typical meaning*; a specification accounting for and justifying the profitless character of the ordinances about to be spoken of) **both gifts and sacrifices are offered** (the *present* implies only the matter-of-fact endurance of the Levitical offerings, not their subsistence in the divine plan), **having no power to perfect in conscience** (see below) **him that serveth** (i. e. not the priests, but the people, who offered through them. "The offering Israelite assures,—doing, as he does, that which God's law requires,—his part, as a member, in the people of the law and of the promised salvation: he obtains also, if he does this with right feeling, operations of divine grace, which he seeks in the way prescribed: but, seeing that the Holy of holies is not yet unveiled, the offerings cannot perfect him in *conscience*, i.e. cannot put his moral-religious consciousness, in its inward feeling, into a state of entire and joyful looking for of salvation, so that his *conscience* should be an onward-waxing consciousness of perfect restoration, of entire clearing up, of total emancipation, of his relation to God." Delituseh: who continues, "The material offerings of animals are only parables, referring to the time when that which is parabolically set forth becomes actual, and passes into reality. They are, considered of themselves, incapable of any action on the inner part of a man; they are");

10.] only consisting in (on the ambiguity of construction, see in my Greek Test.) **meats and drinks, and divers washings** (probably the Writer has in mind both the legal and the Talmudical conditions imposed upon *them who served*. See the very parallel place, Col. ii. 16. The law prescribed much about eating: nothing: about drinking, except some general rules of uncleanness, such as Lev. xi. 34,—and in peculiar cases, such as the prohibition of wine to the Nazarite, Numb. vi. 3,—and to the priests when on actual service in the tabernacle, Lev. x. 9. But subsequent circumstances and usage added other observances and precedents: as, e.g. Dan. i. 8; Hagg. ii. 13. See Matt. xxiii. 24; Rom. xiv. 21. So there is no necessity to suppose that the allusion is to the feasts after sacrifice [ch. xiii. 10], or to the passover. The *divers washings* may refer to all the washings ordained by the law, Exod. xxix. 4; Lev. xi. 25, 28, 32, 40; xiv. 6–9; xv. 5 ff.; xvi. 4, 24 ff.; Numb. viii. 7; xix. 17 ff. But it seems likely that not the sacredotal washings, so much as those prescribed to or observed by the people, are mainly

in view: such as those mentioned in Mark vii. 4), **ordinances of [the] flesh** (i. e. belonging to flesh, as opposed to spirit. They regarded material things, gifts, sacrifices, means, drinks, washings, which from their very nature could only affect the outward not the inward man). **imposed until the season of rectification** (i. e. when all these things would be better arranged, the substance put where the shadow was before, the sufficient grace where the insufficient type. The expression probably refers to ch. viii. 8 f.—the time when God would make with His people a better covenant. I need hardly remind the reader who has kept pace with what has been said on “*the time now present*” above that this time of **reformation** is one and the same with that. Those who give another meaning there, yet agree in referring these words to Christian times).

11, 12.] *The fulfilment of these types by Christ.* **But** (the contrast is to the ineffectiveness and the merely provisional nature of the Levitical offerings) **Christ** (not “Jesus” here: because the Writer will introduce with emphasis that name which carries with it the fulfilment of all type and prophecy. Nor again “*the Christ,*” because he will not say that ‘the Messiah’ was come, but will use that well-known name as a personal name belonging to Him whom now all Christians know by it) **having appeared** (the verb here used is the usual word for *appearing* or *coming forward* as a historical person: appearing on the stage of the world. And it is of this appearance of Christ in history that the word is here used. That appearance was the point of demarcation between prophecy and fulfilment, between the old covenant and the new. So that the expression is rather to be taken of the whole accomplished course of Christ summed up in one, than either of His first incarnation upon earth, or of His full inauguration into His Melchisedec High Priesthood in heaven) **as High Priest of the good things to come** (i. e. in this case, the blessed promises of the Christian covenant, different, in the very nature of the case, from *their* “good things to come,” but still, in formal expression, a term common to them and us: so that the expression, “high priest of the good things to come,” might in its scantiness of sense have been used of a Jewish High Priest, just as it is in its fulness of completed sense used of Christ now. It is hardly necessary to add that I take **to come** as meaning’ not, which were future in *respect of the law*, but which *are now* future; the “*incorruptible inheritance*” of 1 Pet. i. 4, the “*things hoped for*” of our ch. xi. 1: see our Writer’s usage in reff. The genitive after the word **High Priest** is not an attributive, but an objective one: the *good things to come* are the objects and ultimate regard of His High Priesthood), **through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation** (1) *How are these words to be constructed?* 2) *to what tabernacle do they refer?* 1) *they belong to entered*

below, not to *what went before*. For in that case **neither** would he left without any preceding member of the negation to follow, or it must be considered as the sequence to “*not made with hands*,” or to “*not of this creation*,” either of which would be absurd. 2) the **through** is *local*: as the Jewish High Priest passed through the *first tabernacle* in entering into the earthly *holy place*, so our High Priest has passed through the *greater and more perfect tabernacle* to enter into the heavenly *holy place*. But, this settled, 2) *what is* this greater and more perfect tabernacle? The Fathers for the most part interpret it of *Christ's body or human nature*. Ebrard takes it of *Christ's holy life*, and “*the holy place*” of His exaltation; passing, in fact, from reality into symbol: others explain it of *the Church on earth*: others, of *the whole world*: Hofmann, of *the glorified Body of Christ*, which, and not the Body of His flesh, he maintains can alone be said to be *not of this creation*, and in which dwells [Col. ii. 9] all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: Bleek, De Wette, Lünemann, and Stier, of the *lower region of the heavens*, through which Christ passed in ascending to the throne of God. Tholnck thinks it to be merely a superadded feature, having no representation in reality but serving only to complete the idea of a heavenly sanctuary. Delitzsch keeps to his interpretation in ch. viii. 2 [which see discussed in note there], as against Hofmann. But here, as there, I believe that his and Hofmann’s views run up into one; though perhaps here the weight is on his side, as it was there on Hofmann’s. The *tabernacle* here, as in ch. viii. 2, is the *heavens* [see ch. iv. 14] through which Christ passed not only locally, but conditionally, being the abode of blessed spirits and just men made perfect: corresponding to His mystical Body [see on ch. viii. 2]:

and below, on the other epithets of this tabernacle], and *the holy place is the heaven itself* [ver. 24], the especial abode of the invisible and unapproachable God. As regards the epithets of this *tabernacle*, first it is distinguished by the article *the*, “*that tabernacle of which we know*.” Then it is called **greater**, in contrast with the small extent and import of that other, and more **perfect**, in contrast with its ineffectiveness and its exclusion from the divine presence: perhaps also with its merely symbolical, and its transitory nature. “The indeterminate **not made with hands**, a word of St. Luke in similar connexion, Acts vii. 48; xvii. 24, is explained by the Writer himself by **not of this creation**, and serves as an apposition to the preceding. That tabernacle is not built by hands of men, but by the Lord Himself, ch. viii. 2; it is of His own immediate placing, not belonging to this creation, not only not to this material creation which surrounds us, out of which we get our

building materials, but altogether not to this first and present creation: it belongs to the age of the future, to the glorified world.” Delitzsch. The rendering “*not of this building*,” A.V. is wrong, and misses the idea, giving in fact a tautological explanation for “*not made with*

hands”); **nor yet** (as if it were said, “no, nor with any of the typical accompaniments of that other tabernacle”) **through** (as a medium of preparation and approach. The instrumental sense very nearly approaches the local: so that takes need be no scruple about the apparently different senses given in the two clauses: see above) **blood of goats and calves** (the plurals are simply generic: for this portion of the ceremonies of the day of atonement, see Lev. xvi. 14, 15), **nay rather** (strongly contrasting) **through** (see above: through, us His medium of entrance: it was as a key opening the holiest to Him) **His own**

blood entered once for all (see ch. vii. 27) **into the holy place, and obtained** (not “*having obtained*,” as A.V. The redemption was not accomplished *when He entered*, but accomplished by His *entering*. Here, as there, the contemporaneous *completion* of the two acts must be kept in view, and any such rendering as Ebrard’s, “in bringing about,” carefully avoided) **eternal redemption for us (eternal)**, answering to “*once for all*” above: as Hofmann remarks, the *redemption* is the aim and end of the approach of our High Priest to God: if then this approach has once for all taken place, the *redemption* is therewith for ever accomplished. In the word **redemption**, as applied to our final redemption at the coming of Christ, the idea of ransom is rather in the background, and that of deliverance prevails over it: but in both, as applied to the redemption which Christ wrought by His death, the idea of price paid for redemption and redemption by that price, is kept prominent. The price paid for our redemption is His *death* [ver. 15] as sacrifice of Himself. Titus ii. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 5 f.—His *blood*, Eph. i. 7, as the sacrifice of His life, Matt. xx 28; 1 Pet. i. 19. And here also it is His blood which is the *price paid*).

13–X. 18.] Enlargement upon, and substantiation of, this obtaining of eternal redemption; on which then follows, x. 19 ff., the third or directly hortatory part of the Epistle. “For the blood of His self-offering purifies inwardly unto the living service of the living God [vv. 13, 14]: His redeeming death is the inaugurating act of a new covenant and of the heavenly sanctuary [vv. 15–23]: His entrance into the antitypical holiest place is the conclusion of his all-sufficing atonement for sin [vv. 24–26], after which only remains his reappearance to complete the realization of Redemption [vv. 27, 28]. In distinction from the legal offerings which were constantly repeated, He has, by his offering of Himself, performed the actual will of God which willed salvation [ch. x. 1–10]: our Sanctification is now for ever accomplished, and the exalted Saviour reigns in expectation of ultimate victory [x. 11–14]: and the promised new covenant has come in, resting on an eternal forgiveness of sins which requires no further offering [x. 15–18].” Delitzsch.

13, 14.] Argument, from the less to the greater, *to shew the cleansing power of Christ’s blood*. **For** (rendering a reason for ‘the obtaining of eternal redemption’) **if** (with the indicative “*sanctifieth*,” ‘as we know it does’) **the blood** (*the* blood, compared with *the* blood below, because it is not the one blood compared with the other in its quality, but the shedding of the one blood compared with the shedding of the other: the articles then *distribute* the *subject* in each case) **of goats and bulls** (viz, the yearly offering on the day of atonement, Levit. xvi.), **and ashes of an heifer** (see the whole ordinance, full of significance, in Num. xix. 1–22).

ashes has no article, because the ashes were to be laid up, and a portion used as wanted) **sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctifieth to** (so as to bring about) **the purity** (not “*purifying*,” as A. V.) **of the flesh** (it is evident, that the Writer speaks only of the Levitical rites in their matter-of-fact results as works done, not of any divine grace which might accrue to the soul of the faithful Israelite from a spiritual partaking in them. The outward effect of the sacrifices of the day of atonement, as well as of the sprinkling of the ashes of the heifer, was, to render ceremonially pure before God, in the one case from the imputation of the defilement of sin on the whole people, in the other, from the defilement actually contracted by contact with death or uncleanness. These effects they had in themselves: what others they had, out of themselves, belonged not so much to them, as to that great Sacrifice which they represented): **how much more** (see the logical connexion at the end) **shall the blood of [the] Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered HIMSELF** (emphatic) **without fault to God** (first, *when* did He offer Himself? Clearly not, as Socinus, and others, when he presented himself to God in heaven. For, as Delitzsch rightly observes, when Christ is antitypically or by way of contrast compared with the *victims* of the Old Test. sacrifices, as the ritual term **without fault** here shews that He is, then beyond question the offering on the cross is intended, which corresponds to the slaying the victim and offering him on the altar. Besides which, the ‘oblation in the holy place’ was but the completion of the ‘oblation on the altar,’ and, when Christ’s self-offering is spoken of generally, we are to take the whole from the beginning, not merely that which was the last act of it. This will guide us to the meaning of the somewhat difficult words, **through the eternal Spirit**. The animals which were offered had no will, *no spirit* of their own, which could concur with the act of sacrifice. Theirs was a transitory life, of no potency or virtue. They were offered *through the*

law rather than *through* any consent, or agency, or counteragency, of their own But Christ offered Himself, with His own consent assisting and empowering the sacrifice. And what was that consent? The consent of what? of the spirit of a man? such a consent as yours or mine, given in and through our finite spirit whose acts are bounded by its own allotted space in time and its own responsibilities? No: but the consenting act of His divine Personality—His “*eternal Spirit*,” His Godhead, which from before time acquiesced in, and wrought with, the redemption-purpose of the Father. Thus we have *spirit* contrasted with *flesh* in speaking of our Lord, in several places: see Rom. i. 3, 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 18. This divine Personality it was, which in the Resurrection so completely ruled and absorbed His *flesh*: this, which causes Him to be spoken of by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 45 as a “*life-giving Spirit*,” and in 2 Cor. iii. 17 f. as absolutely “*the Spirit*.” Not however that any confusion hence arises in the distinction of the divine Persons: “*the eternal Spirit*” is not the Spirit of the Father dwelling in Christ, nor is it the Holy Spirit given without measure to Christ, but it is the divine Spirit of the Godhead which Christ Himself had and was in His inner Personality. And the relevancy of such a clause here is, that the eternal Spirit is absolute spirit, divine spirit, and thus self-conscious, laying down its own course purely of itself unbound by: conditions, simply and entirely free: so that Christ’s offering of Himself *through the Eternal Spirit*, is, as such, a moral act of absolute worth.

through, i.e. by virtue of: so that His divine Spirit was the agent in the **offering**, penetrating and acting on the Humanity.

without fault, as above observed, is the regular word of the ritual in reference to the victims which must be without spot when offered. Therefore to understand it of the perfection of the glorified human nature of the ascended Saviour, as the Socinian interpreters, is clearly beside the meaning, and contrary to analogy), **purify our** (the question of reading, **our or your**, is one not easy to settle. At the word “*purify*” we unfortunately lose the evidence of the great Vatican MS.: as it terminates there, and has been completed by a later hand. From all analogy it would seem that we must infer our English word *conscience* does not reach the fulness of the term here used, the *self-consciousness as regards to God*, the inner consciousness of relation to Him. This is, by the blood of Christ, shed in the power of the divine Spirit, thoroughly purified, freed from the terror of guilt, cleared from alienation from Him and from all selfish regards and carnal pretences, and rendered living and real as He is living and real) **from dead works** (just as death was under the old law the fountain of ceremonial pollution, and any one by touching a dead body became unclean, so carnal works, having their origin in sin, with which death is bound up, pollute the conscience. They are like the touching of the dead body, rendering the man unclean in God’s sight, as not springing from life in Him: inducing decay and corruption in the spirit. See on ch. vi. 1, and Chrysostom there quoted. Here, the reference to the dead body can hardly be set aside, being more pointed than there, where I have rather advocated the general sense. The Writer does not here set forth *how* this blood of Christ acts in purifying the conscience: it is not his aim now to speak of *our way of participation of its benefits, but merely of its cleansing power itself*) **in order to the serving** (ministering to, which the unclean might not do in the ceremonial sanctuary, nor can the unclean do in heart and life) **the living God** (God in His spiritual reality and absolute holiness: not a God concealed by veils and signs, but approached in his verity by the sanctified soul)?

15.] See summary above at ver. 13. This pre-eminent spiritual virtue of His redeeming blood constitutes his fitness to be the Mediator of the new covenant, the main blessing of which, forgiveness, extends even back over the insufficient former one, and ensures the inheritances to the called. **And on this account** (*on account of this virtue of His blood*: or if it seem better, extend the reference further back still, over vv. 11–14, *on account of the great work which He hath accomplished by his death*: “because these things are so”) **is He mediator of a new covenant** (see ch. viii. 6 and note), **in order that,—death having taken place, for the propitiation of the transgressions under the first covenant,—they who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance** (first, the object of the new covenant is an eternal *inheritance*,—see ver. 11; ch. ii. 5: and therefore the idea of *inheritance* having once come in, gives to the word *covenant* [*diatheké*] that shade of meaning which is deepened and insisted on below, viz. that of a TESTAMENTARY covenant or arrangement.

receiving the promise is to be taken in the sense of receiving the fulfilment of a promise, not merely of having the promise granted. Then, the **called** are the “*partakers in the heavenly calling*” of ch. iii. 1: compare also “*the high calling*” of Phil. iii. 14. Calvin well remarks, “He speaks of the called, that he the better conciliate the Jews, who were partakers calling.” This end, of the called being put in possession of the promise of the eternal inheritance, is to be attained “*by death having taken place Sor the propitiation of the transgressions under the first testament.*” Without this death, it could not be attained. The full reason of this, that death must take place first, is presently gone into: it is with the concluding words of this clause that we are at present concerned. These *transgressions under the first covenant* are in fact those of all mankind. Israel was a pattern of God’s dealings with all: and His revelation of His will to Israel extended categorically to all mankind. Against this will, primavally revealed, revealed to the patriarchs, revealed in the law, our parents and the antediluvian earth, the sons of Noah and the postdiluvian earth, Israel itself as a people, had deeply and repeatedly transgressed: and before a new inheritance by testament could come in, there must be a propitiation of all these former transgressions. All the propitiatory sacrifices, so called, of the former covenant, were but imperfect and typical: but as this is to be a real inheritance, so there must be real and actual propitiation. See the remarkable parallel, Acts xiii. 39).

16.] For (justification of the *death taking place*, by an appeal to common usage) **where a testament is** (that it is quite vain to attempt to deny the testamentary sense of *diatheké* in this verse, see my Greek Test.), **there is necessity that the death of him who made it** (the *testator*, as A.V., but it is important to mark that it is him that *made* it, not him that *maketh* it, as it ought to be on Ebrard’s, &c. interpretation. In the meaning, Christ is He that *made* it: and this agrees wonderfully with St. Luke’s manner of speaking in that text which is in fact the key-text to this: *I appoint unto you, as my Father appointed unto me, a kingdom*: the same verb being used as here, Luke xxii. 29) **be implied** (as literally given, i.e., he who speaks of *a testament*, at the same time, carries in to, involves in, that assertion, the death of *him that made it*. On the logical connexion, see below).

17.] For (renders a fresh reason within the domain of the former “*for*,” explaining the axiom of ver. 16) **a testament is of force** (see on ch. ii. 2, and Rom. iv. 16) **in the case of the dead** (literally, **over dead men**, the thing predicated being the substratum or condition of the subject. Doubtless in choosing the plural, and indeed the word itself, the Writer has in his mind the transition which he is about to make from the death of the New Testament to the typical deaths of the Old, which were of animals, between which and men *dead things*, not *those who had died*, would be the common term), **seeing that it (a testament) is never availing when he that made it is alive.**

18.] Whence (because death must precede the validity of a testament) **neither has the first (testament) been inaugurated** (perfect, inasmuch as the rites, &c., belonging to it were still subsisting. Notice that the reference is, *here*, simply to the first

inauguration of the law when it was put forth as new: not to any subsequent renewal of sacrifices by death: this is presently alluded to, vv. 21 ff.) **without** (apart from, free from the exhibition of) **blood**.

19.] For (explanation of the assertion in last verse) **when every commandment had been spoken according to the law** (these last words, **according to the law**, belong not to *precept*, but to **spoken**, spoken according to the law, i.e. as the law directed, not varying from it in any point) **by Moses to all the people** (see Exod. xxiv. 3), **taking the blood** (the additional detail of Exod. xxiv. 5 is omitted, viz., that "he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord." It was of this blood that Moses took) **of the calves and goats** (the former only are mentioned in Exodus. But this is only said of the peace-offerings. The *burnt-offerings* [see above], after the analogy of the rites on the day of atonement, might be presumed to be goats. Indeed the key to the additions made here to the text of Exodus is, that the account is filled up by subsequent usage. We may presume, that the solemn legal appointment of various ceremonial details was in fact only a divine sanction of practices already existing: sacrifice having been long in use, and that under the direction and approval of God Himself), **with water** (prescribed, in Numb. xix. 6, 17, to be mixed with the ashes of the red heifer which were to be kept for purifying: compare also Lev. xiv. 50 f.: see above), **and scarlet wool, and hyssop** (see Lev. xiv. 49 ff.: by comparing which with Numb. xix. as above, it may fairly be inferred, as our text here assures us was the fact, that these instruments where the ordinary ones in cleansing and sprinkling, even before their positive enactment as such by the law. The hyssop indeed we find thus prescribed, Exod. xii. 22, in sprinkling the blood on the doorposts at the Passover. As to the manner of using, the stalk or bunch of hyssop was wrapt round with scarlet wool to make it absorb the blood, being tied with the same wool to a staff of cedar-wood to keep it stiff. On *hyssop* itself, there are various opinions. The most approved makes it to be a plant growing on walls, 'hyssopus officinalis,' with small lancet-formed woolly leaves, about an inch long, a knotty stalk from 1 to 1 ½ foot high, with blue [sometimes white] flowers), **he sprinkled both the book itself** (nothing is said of this in Exod. xxiv. The book is of course that out of which he had just read the ordinances of God. If, as Stier supposes, Moses took the book [Exod. xxiv. 7] from off the altar where it was lying when he sprinkled the altar with blood, then the book was sprinkled likewise: but nothing in the text of Exodus implies this), **and all the people** (of course the words *all the people* are not to be taken to mean that he sprinkled every individuals; but merely the whole mass, as they stood), **saying, This is the blood of the testament** (in Exod. xxiv. 8, "*Behold the blood...*") It has been suggested, that the change has been made by the Writer after the tenor of the New Test. inauguration of the testament by our Lord, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," Luke xxii. 20) **which God** (in Exod. xxiv. 8, "*the Lord;*" Jehovah: changed apparently to preserve more completely the Old Test. character of the saying) **commanded in regard to you** (it is much disputed, how the logic of this passage can cohere: seeing that how properly soever the latter *diatheké* may be spoken of and argued on as being a testament, the former one could have no such character, and consequently cannot be thus argued on. And the question is very variously answered according to the standing point of different Commentators. The matter seems to stand thus. The word *diatheké* has the double sense of a covenant and a testament. Both these senses may be applied to both *covenants*: to the latter more properly belongs the testamentary sense, but to the former also in as far as it was typical of and foreshadowed the other. In the latter, all is clear. Christ, the heir of all things, has bequeathed to us His people an everlasting inheritance; has died, sealing the testament with His blood. In the former all this is formally, though inadequately represented. The *inheritance*, faintly shadowed forth by temporal possessions, had yet a recognized blessed meaning far beyond those possessions: the testator was imperfectly, but still was formally represented by the animals slain in sacrifice: *there* was a death, *there* was a sprinkling of and sealing by blood: and surely it requires no more stretch of concession to acknowledge the victim in sacrifice to represent the Lamb of God in his sonship and his heritorship, than it does in his innocence and propitiatory power. The one idea is just as poorly and inadequately set forth by it as the other. But in both cases there is an inheritance, and in both it is the same. In both it is bequeathed: in the latter actually by One who has come in person and died: in the former, only typically, by the same One ceremonially present. So that, if our **whence** in ver. 18 were to be filled up, it would be, "Whence, i.e. since the former covenant also had its testamentary side, and thus was analogous to as well as typical of the latter."

The charge brought against the Writer on account of his transition of meaning in *diatheké*, is equally without foundation. He is thinking in Greek. In Greek, the word has these two meanings: not divided off from one another by any such line of demarcation as when expressed by two separate words, but both lying under one and the same word. What more common, or more ordinarily accepted, than to educe out of some one word its various shades of meaning, and argue on each separately as regards the matter in hand? Take the very word "Testament" as an example. In our common parlance it now means a *book*; the *Old Testament*, the book of the former covenant, the *New Testament*, the book of the latter. But we do not therefore sink the other and deeper meaning; nay, we rather insist on it, that it may not become lost in that other and more familiar one. I cannot see how the Writer's method of procedure here differs essentially from this).

21.] And moreover he in like manner sprinkled with the blood the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry (this cannot be spoken of the same occasion as that referred to in the previous verses: for at that time the tabernacle did not exist. Nor again can it be said of any practice of sprinkling with blood which existed throughout the legal ordinances: for the tense in original shews the reference to be to some one act, and the subject of the verb is, as before, Moses. This being so, we must look beyond the ordinances of the law itself for the fact here detailed. For all that we have in the law respecting the dedication of the tabernacle and its vessels is in Exod. xl. 9, 10, where Moses is commanded to take the anointing oil, and to anoint the tabernacle and all that is therein, and to hallow it, and all the vessels thereof. So that our Writer is probably referring to some

traditional account, which added to this anointing oil, the sprinkling with blood. And this is not merely a hypothesis. For Josephus gives an account agreeing with ours almost verbatim. In Levit. viii. 30, from which the account of anointing Aaron and his sons is taken, distinct mention is made of sprinkling on them, and on their garments, the blood which was on the altar. It was a natural addition, to extend that sprinkling to the tabernacle and its vessels: especially as [Levit. ver. 15] the altar was already to be touched with the blood).

22.] And almost (one may say, that) in [with] blood all things are purified (there is a combination throughout of the ideas of the inheritance by testament, whereof the death is a condition, and the purification by covenant, whereof the death is the efficient cause. The combination is not a rhetorical figure in the mind of the Writer, but a deep truth in the verity of God. The same Death which purifies us from guilt, makes us partakers of the kingdom of glory; the same Blood which cleanses us from sin, seals the testament of our inheritance. The fact that *almost* in all cases the law purified by blood, provides for such exceptions as Exod. xix. 10; Lev. xv. 5 ff.; xvi. 26, 28; xxii. 6; Numb. xxxi. 22–24) **according to the law** (i. e. receive legal purification); **and that apart from shedding** (literally, **pouring out**) **of blood** (there has been a question, whether this **pouring out** imports the shedding of blood in the slaughter of the victims, or the pouring out of the blood at the foot of the altar, so often enjoined in the ordinances of legal sacrifice. “It seems most probable that the Writer here has the *shedding of blood* in mind. It would not by any means follow, that he treats this *blood-shedding* as a propitiation. He does not directly call it the *medium* of forgiveness, he says only, that apart from it there was no remission, that it is the indispensable means to obtain the expiatory life’s blood.... One thing which determines the reference to be to the *shedding of blood*, is the expression, ‘*which is being shed for you*,’ in the institution of the Lord’s Supper in Luke xxii. 20,—at all events the close parallel in word and in thought to this. It is hardly probable that the Writer would mean a *pouring out of blood*, of which that so called on Christ’s part is not the antitype: not to say that since ver. 13, *blood and death* have been ideas most closely connected,” Delitzsch) **there cometh not** (taketh not place) **remission** (viz. of sins, As to the fact, Lev. xvii. 11 sufficiently proves it: and the Rabbis deduced from that passage an axiom almost verbatim the same as our text: “There is no expiation except through blood.” The case of the poor man, who cannot afford the animal victim, Lev. vv. 11–13, seems to present. an exception, and to justify the application of the “*one may almost say*” to this clause).

23.] There [was] (more probably than ‘*is*’ seeing that he was before speaking, not of the renewed cleansing year by year, but of the solemn inauguration: and much more, now that he is coming to speak of the heavenly sanctuary, must he be asserting a necessity not of continually renewed cleansing, but of a past one, once for all) **necessity therefore** (this first inference follows from the facts just mentioned: and is introduced only to lead the way to the second, “*but the heavenly things themselves, &c.,*” which itself is a conclusion from the analogy between type and antitype, and is the converse of the proposition of verses 13, 14) **that the delineations** (or **figures**; not, “*patterns:*”) at least not in the present acceptation of that word. The heavenly things themselves would be the patterns, or antitypes. See on ch. viii. 5) **of the things in the heavens** (i. e. of the heavenly tabernacle with its contents: see below) **should be purified** (for the “*dedication*” was in fact not only an inauguration, but a purification likewise: and the proposition of ver. 22,—“wherever there is remission, there is *blood-shedding*,”—will bear converting,—wherever there is a sprinkling with blood, there is remission, and consequently, purification) **with these** (i. e. not the various purifications mentioned up to this time, the ashes of the red heifer included; for these last were never used to purity the tabernacle or its vessels: nor again, “blood and the like,” e.g. the oil which was used with it; for this has not been mentioned: nor, with such things, viz. Levitical ordinances, which is far too vague. It is the blood, and that only, which is meant: the plural being used most probably to indicate the animals slain, the “*goats and calves*”); **but the heavenly things themselves** (i. e. heaven and the things therein: see the next verse, of which Bleck well remarks, that the junction to this by “*for*” can only then be valid when those words refer to the same as our “*heavenly things themselves*.”) But it has appeared difficult to Commentators to understand, how heaven itself should need this cleansing. Consequently various expedients have been adopted: and various meanings given, which I have discussed in my Greek Test., and have found all equally futile. We must rest in the plain and literal sense: that *the heaven itself needed, and obtained, purification* by the atoning blood of Christ. And if we enquire how this could be, we may find an answer in reflecting on the consequence of man’s sin on the mind and aspect of God towards him. That unclouded benignity wherewith the Creator contemplated his creation, Gen. i. 31, had become overcast by the divine anger on account of sin, but was again restored by

Him in whom the Father was well pleased the darkness being by His blood turned into light, the frown into an eternal smile. So Delitzsch beautifully: “If I see aright, the meaning of the Writer is, in its ground-thought, this: the supernal holiest place, i.e. as ver. 24 shows, *heaven itself*, the uncreated eternal heaven of God, although in itself untroubled light, yet needed a *purification* in so far as the light of Love towards man was, so to speak, outflared and obscured by the fire of wrath against sinful man; and the heavenly tabernacle, i.e. the place of God’s revealing of His majesty and grace for angels and men, needed a *purification*, in so far as men had rendered this place, which was destined for them from the beginning, unapproachable by reason of their sin, and so it must be changed into an approachable place of manifestation of a God gracious to men”) **with sacrifices** (categoric plural of an abstract proposition: not therefore implying that the sacrifice was repeated: applicable in its reality, only to the one Sacrifice of the body of Christ once for all, and most emphatically designating that *as a sacrifice better than* (see on ch. i. 4) **these**.

24.] He now reasserts, under the fuller light which has since been cast upon it, that which was enounced in verses 11, 12, and

by it shews at what the term *heavenly places* above pointed. In fact, as Delitzsch observes, the proposition of vv. 11, 12, has been in course of elucidation ever since: in vv. 13, 14, he explained “*through his own blood*,” in vv. 15–23 the “*high priest of the good things to come*,” and now the “*entered once for all into the holy place*.” **For** (resumption of the *heavenly things* above) **not into holy places made with hands** (such as those into which the Jewish high priests entered: see above, ver. 11: and the two expressions Acts vii. 48; xvii. 24) **did Christ enter, counterfeits of the true** [holy places] (literally, **antitypes**, correspondent to the *type*; either, as in this case, *copies from* a pattern, viz. the *type* shewn in the mount, however understood, ch. viii. 5, also Rom. v. 14, or the *reality corresponding* to a previously shewn figure, as baptism in 1 Pet. iii. 21, where baptism is the *antitype* to the food of Noah: which latter is our more usual English sense of antitype. The *true, genuine holy*

places are those in heaven, where God's presence is manifested. See below); **but into the heaven itself** (none of the *heavens*, all of which the Lord *has gone through*, ch. iv. 14,—but the very holiest place, where God peculiarly reveals Himself, and which is uncreated. Delitzsch quotes from Sebastian Schmidt, “The heaven into which Christ hath entered is not any form of the created heaven, but the heaven in which God is irrespective of any created heaven,—the very divine glory itself.” Hence what follows), **now** (in the present dispensation: almost equivalent to *henceforth*. It is an anticipation of the next verse) **to be manifested** (as to the peculiar propriety of the term **to be made manifest**. It is one found mostly in St. Luke (Acts). It. is there principally in the sense of *making manifest*, giving information: in Matt. xxviii. 53, it is used of the bodies of the saints appearing to many: and in John xiv. 21, 22, of Jesus manifesting himself to his people. But the key-text to the understanding of it here is Exod. xxxiii. 13. Moses desired to advance beyond the mere vision of God, and prayed “*manifest thyself to me*” [so in the Greek of the Septuagint, the same verb being used as here]. This, which might not be granted to Moses [nor to any man, compare Lev. xvi. 13]—this open sight of God, is that which takes place between the Father and the Son. “None knoweth the Son but the Father.” There is no veil hiding the Father's face from the Son: so completely does this *manifestation* take place, that he is the perfect image of the Father: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” “No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him”) **to** (before) **the face of God** Rev. xxii. 4, where it is said that the servants of God shall see *His face*) **for us** (this is the intent of His entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, to appear and to plead *for us*: see ch. vii. 25. “He brings before the face of God no offering which has exhausted itself and, as only sufficing for a time, needs renewal; but He himself is in person our offering, and by virtue of the eternal Spirit, i.e. of the imperishable life. of His person, now for ever freed from death, our eternally present offering before God.” Delitzsch).

25–28.] In ver. 24, His having entered into a mere typical sanctuary was denied: now it is denied, that His sacrifice needs, as those others did, to be repented continually. **Nor yet** (did He enter into heaven) **that He may** (i. e. with this intent, to) **oftentimes offer Himself** (before God in the holiest place: continue, as those High Priests, year by year coming in before the face of God in His sanctuary. This *offering himself* is not to be understood of Christ's *death*, nor confounded, as many have done, with *his suffering*, below: see there), **just as the** (Jewish) **High Priest entereth into the holy** (holiest) **place year by year with** (literally, **in**: not instrumental, but elemental: he enters, furnished with, as it were clad with, that which follows. We use our “*in*” of even the lesser articles of personal wear in a similar sense: “a man in spectacles”) **blood of others** (i. e. “not his own,” which is an important point of contrast with Christ: see this brought in in the argumentation below): **since** (in that case) **it were necessary that He should oftentimes suffer** (not, ‘*have suffered*,’ as A.V.; by *it were necessary* we are already carried back to a time antecedent to the supposed repeated acts indicated by *suffering*, and therefore do not need another carrying back in time. Notice, as against the Commentators mentioned above under the words “*offer Himself*,” and others, that this suffering is here not equivalent to that *offering*, but is emphatically placed as a new necessity, involved in that; the **often** being common to both: the *often offering* necessitated the *often suffering*. If Christ's view in entering heaven was, to offer, present, himself often to God, then, as a condition of that frequent presentation, there would be an antecedent necessity for Him to *suffer* often: because that self-presentation is in fact the bringing in before God of the Blood of that his suffering: and if the one was to be renewed, so must the other be likewise. So that the meaning is not, that Christ must again and again have descended on earth and died. To such a descent there is no allusion, as there is none to a renewed entrance into the *holy places* in heaven. That entrance Christ has effected once for all: this lies, as a “*fait accompli*,” at the ground of the hypothesis. But the rejected hypothesis is, that *once being in* the celestial holy place, Christ intended to renew often his oblation of Himself. And in that case, says our Writer, it would be necessary that He should often suffer, often die: because each such oblation necessitated as its condition a corresponding *suffering*. When, as in the case of the Jewish high priests, the *blood* was *that of others*, such repetition was possible [see Lev. xvi. 14, 15]: but not so, when the blood was His *own*) **since the foundation of the world** (why this addition? Not, as often understood, so as to bring under the merits of the Suffering, all the sins of mankind past as well as future,—which thought arising from the erroneous view of a frequent repeated *entrance* into heaven being sup-posed, has nothing whatever to do with the argument; but, inasmuch as the theatre of Christ's sufferings is of necessity this present world, pointing out that those supposed repeated sufferings must necessarily in that case take place within the temporal limits indicated by the phrase “*from the foundation of the world*”: that such sufferings would be spread over the space of time from the *foundation of the world* till He entered into the presence of God, each oblation of Himself there being the sequel of, and conditioned by, one such *suffering* since the world been. I may mention, that no parenthesis is here admissible. The words of this clause are strictly and indispensably a link in the argument): **now, however (now, not temporal,** but meaning, “as the state of the case is”), **once** (for all without need of renewal) **at** (as close upon, put in immediate contiguity with) **the end of the ages of time** (i. e. when the whole period above indicated by *from the foundation of the world*

is gathered up and brought to an end. Between the first and second coming of Christ, the New Test. Scriptures know of no intermediate interposition of the divine dealings with men: in Him we are *perfect*, and at His appearing, our *ages* had their accomplishment. All these centuries which have been since, are merely the lengthening out of the time in the mercy of God. The first Christians universally spoke of the second coming of the Lord as close at hand, as indeed it ever was and is: the *fatlings* are *sacrificed*, and all is ready: but the long-suffering of God waits while the guests are being gathered in: or, in the other: view of His coming, while the ark is a preparing) **hath He been manifested** (viz. at His first coming in our flesh: the *manifestation in the flesh*, spoken of 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 20. On the other meaning given, see below) **for the putting away of sin** (see ch. vii. 18 note: putting away, i.e. abrogation, “both of the guilt and power of sin”) **by means of His sacrifice** (i. e. in the *sense*, ‘the sacrifice of Himself’ but not here so expressed in the original).

By very many expositors, the construction of this verse is differently taken. Some understand “*hath been manifested*” of His appearance before God. But this cannot be for a moment maintained. Analogy is wholly against it, and so is the *second appearance*, mentioned below: not to mention that had it been so, we should certainly have had *before God*, or some such qualification, added).

27, 28.] It is shewn by a comparison with our human lot in general, of which Christ, Himself man, is partaker, that this often suffering (dying) and often offering Himself, has no place: that as in our case, we die once only, and after that comes the judgment, for us *who are to be judged*, so for Him there was one death from sin, and after no repetition of it, but the judgment, for Him *who is to judge*. But in this latter member of the comparison, the bright and saving side only is put forward (see below): it is not said he shall appear *to judge the world*, but He shall appear *without sin* (and therefore with no more purpose to expiate sin) *to them that wait for Him, unto salvation*: these last words carrying with them a hortatory force, that the readers might thus wait for Him.

27.] And inasmuch as (seeing that Christ is not only a *fit object of comparison* with man, but *is man*) **it is appointed to men** (all men) **once** (and no more) **to die, and after that, judgment** (not necessarily here to be taken on its unfavourable side: the word is perfectly general: nor is there, as Böhne imagined, any opposition between *men* here and *those that wait for Him* below. Such opposition indeed would mar the whole context, which has a totally different object, and deals with the general and inevitable fate of all men indiscriminately. Nor again must the question, whether judgment is spoken of as immediately to follow death, or after an interval, be imported into the consideration of the text. The indefinite **after that** does not admit of any such question being raised. Next to death, with no more like events between, comes judgment: this is the fact contemplated—the appointed destiny of man, according to which that of the man Christ Jesus also, as far as it is applicable to Him, is apportioned): **so also the Christ** (not Christ, without the article, but **the Christ**, that man who was God’s Christ—*the Christ*, it being plain and palpable to all that *the Christ* belongs to the category, *men*. In ver. 24, the case was different), **once** (for all) **having been offered** (not the same as ‘having offered himself.’ The form and the meaning are both passive; and the reason of this is, I believe, to be found in the fact that it is in this verse not so much the agency, as the destiny of Christ, that is spoken of; that which, though the expression itself is avoided with regard to Him, is appointed for Him as for us. It is hardly necessary to mention, that the very terms of the context here necessitate the understanding this *offering* of the death of Christ, —not as in ver. 25, where the context, as there insisted, confines it to His offering of Himself to God in the heavenly sanctuary) **to bear the sins of many** (a plain allusion to Isa. liii. 12: and here, as there, importing the “*bearing*,” “*carrying on Himself*;” see also Lev. xxiv. 15, “Whosoever curseth his God shall *bear* his sin;” Numb. v. 31, “The woman shall *bear* her iniquity;” xiv. 34, “Each day for a year shall *ye bear* your iniquities, even forty years.” And so in ver. 33, “shall bear Your whoredoms.” On **many**, and its supposed contrast to **all**, see above, ch. ii. 10, and Schlichting’s true distinction, “**Many** is opposed here, not to **all**, but to **few**.” **Many** is, as Delitzsch says, the qualitative designation of **all**: *all men are many* in number. There is reference in it to “*once for all*.” He was offered, One, for all: and once for all), **shall appear** (the usual verb of the appearances of Christ after his resurrection) **a second time without** (separate from) **sin** (in order to understand this, we must remember what it is that the Writer is proving: viz. that Christ’s death, the repetition of which would be the condition of a repeated offering of Himself in heaven to God, admits of no such repetition. It was a death in which He bore the sins of many—but He shall appear the second time with no sin upon Him, and consequently the whole work of atonement done and accomplished by that first offering. So that there is no need of any far-fetched explanation, either of *sin*, or of *without sin*. At His first appearance in the world He came *with sin*, not *in him*, but *on him*: He was *made to be sin*: but this sin has been once for all taken away by his bearing it as our Sacrifice: and at his second appearance He shall appear *without*, having done with, separate from, *sin*), **to them that wait for Him,—unto** (to bring in: for the purpose of) **salvation** (these last words belong to **shall appear**, not, to *them that wait for Him*. The object of Christ’s second appearance shall be, to bring in salvation; this is the bright and Christian side of His appearing, the side which we, who ought to be *waiting for Him*, should ever look upon).

Hebrews: Chapter 10

CHAP. X. 1–18.] SOLEMN CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT: 1) *Christ’s voluntary self-offering, as contrasted with the yearly offerings of victims under the law, is the carrying out of God’s real will* (vv. 1–10); 2) *Christ’s priestly service, in contrast to the daily repeated service of the priests of the law, is for ever perfected by one high-priestly act, which has issued*

in His kingly exaltation and waiting till His foes be subdued under Him (vv. 11–14): 3) *Christ's finished work is the inauguration of that new covenant before referred to, in which, the law being written on the heart, and sin put away and forgotten, there is no more need for sin-offering* (vv. 15–18). And so, as Delitzsch observes, in this passage the leading thoughts of the whole argument are brought together in one grand finale, just as in the finale of a piece of music all the hitherto scattered elements are united in an effective whole.

1–10.] See above.

1.] **For** (connects with the whole passage, ch. ix. 24–28: hitherto has been shewn the impossibility of Christ's offering being repeated as were those of the law: now is to be shewn its absolute perfection as compared with those of the law) **the law having** (as it has; the participle has a reasoning force, which passes on upon what follows) **a shadow** (or, ‘the shadow,’ which in sense would be much the same. The putting forward of the word to the beginning of the sentence would render it anarthrous. I prefer, however, ‘a shadow,’ because of the meaning of the word, presently to be treated of: see below) **of the good things to come** (viz. the same good things of which, in ch. ix. 11, Christ is said to be the High Priest,—which belong to the “*age to come*” of ch. vi. 5, whose *powers* are working in the present dispensation,—and to the *completion* of the “*world to come*” of ch. ii. 5: the good things which are still future to us as they were to those under the law, but are now made sure to us in and by Christ), **not the very image of the things** (every representation of *good things to come* must be an *image*, whether it be in words, or in types, or in any other method of representation. The full description and entire revelation of the things thus designated will be “*the very image*” of the things: which we possess in the gospel covenant: the very setting forth and form of the heavenly realities themselves. But the law had no such “*image*” constructed out of the heavenly realities themselves: it had merely a *shadow*, merely a rough sketch or outline), **year by year with the same sacrifices** (in the A.V. the words **year by year** are placed in the next clause. But there is no need to disturb the plain order of the sentence, in which **year by year** belongs to the verb, “*can never*.”) “This,” says Delitzsch, “is more accordant with the sense of the Writer: for he does not say, that the law by means of the offerings which were always the same year by year never was able to perfect, &c., —but that the law, year by year, by the repetition of the same offerings, testified its inability to perfect, &c., viz. on the day of atonement, on which the same expiatory offerings were always repeated, being necessary, notwithstanding the many offerings brought throughout the year, and after which the same round of offerings again began anew.” It will be evident that the words **with the same sacrifices** must refer, not to the daily offerings, but to those of propitiation on the great day of atonement) **which they** (the ministering priests) **offer continually** (the offering of these sacrifices is looked upon as continuous, being unbroken from year to year. When I say, “the celebration of the day of atonement continued unbroken till the destruction of Jerusalem,” I use the same method of expression) **never** (not even at any time) **is able to perfect** (see on ch. ii. 10, where I have entered into the meanings of this verb, **to perfect**, in our Epistle) **those who draw near** (to God, by means of them).

2.] **For** (if it were so, if the law were able to perfect the worshippers) **would they (the same sacrifices) not have ceased being offered, on account of the worshippers** (the servers in the service of the tabernacle, used here in a wide sense, including priests and people) **having no longer any conscience of sins** (guilt of sin on the conscience, consciousness of the guilt of sin), **if once (for all) purified?**

3.] Which cessation is far from being the case, as is the having no more conscience of sin:—**But** (on the contrary, opposes the whole question of ver. 2, in both its clauses) **in them** (the sacrifices: not in the fact of their being offered, but in the course of their being offered on the day of atonement, see below) **there is a recollection** (“recalling to mind;” better than ‘public mention,’ as some, thinking on the solemn confession of the sins of Israel made by the High Priest, Lev. xvi. 20 f. But the other is simpler, and suits the context better. Where sins are continually called to mind, there clearly the conscience is not clear from them) **of sins year by year**.

4.] And that on account of inherent defect in the sacrifices themselves. **For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin** (the Writer by no means denies the typical virtue of the Old Test. sacrifices, but asserts that which the schoolmen explained by saying that they wrought remission of sin not “*by their proper virtue*,” but “*by an accident*,” viz. by means of something not inherent in them, viz. the grace of the true Propitiation which was to come, and of faith directed to it. And thus only is it said, Lev. xvii. 11, that the blood upon the altar makes an atonement for the soul: it was shed, as Ebrard well observes, not as the instrument of complete vicarious propitiation, but as an exhibition of the postulate of vicarious propitiation).

5–10.] *Christ's voluntary self-offering shewn to be the perfect fulfilment of the will of God. Wherfore* (seeing that the animal sacrifices of the Old Test. had no power to take away sin, and that for that end a nobler sacrifice was wanting) **coming into the world, he saith** (first, on the citation from Ps. xl. That Psalm, which is inscribed “A Psalm of David,” seems to be a general retrospect, in some time of trouble, of God's former mercies to him, and of his own course of loving obedience as distinguished from mere expression of outward thankfulness by sacrifice and offering. Thus understood, there will be no difficulty in the direct application of its words to Him, of whose sufferings and of whose obedience all human experiences in suffering and obeying are but a faint resemblance. I have entered on this subject in speaking of the Messianic citation in ch. ii, and need not lay down again the principles there contended for, further than to say, that the more any son of man approaches,

in position, or office, or individual spiritual experience, the incarnate Son of God, the more directly may his holy breathings in the power of Christ's Spirit he taken as the utterances of Christ Himself. And of all men, the prophet-king of Israel thus resembled and out-shadowed Him the most. The Psalm itself seems to belong to the time of David's persecution by Saul; and the sentiment of this portion of it is, as Delitzsch observes, an echo of Samuel's saying to Saul in 1 Sam. xv. 22,— “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” Next, what is **when he cometh into the world?** It expresses, I believe, the whole time during which the Lord, being ripened in human resolution, was in intent devoting himself to the doing of his Father's will: the time of which that youthful question, “Wist ye not that I must be *among the things of my Father?*” was one of the opening announcements. See also Isa. vii. 16), **Sacrifice** (of slain animals) **and offering** (of any kind) **thou wouldest not** (similar declarations are found frequently in the Old Test., and mostly in the prophets: see Ps. 1. 7–15; li. 16 f.; Isa. i. 11; Jer. vi. 20; vii. 21–23; Hos. vi. 6; Amos v. 21 ff.; Micah vi. 6–8), **but a body didst thou prepare for me** (in the Hebrew, “*mine ears hast thou opened,*” i.e. to hear and obey Thee. The idea of there being any allusion to the custom of boring through the ear of a slave who voluntarily remained subject to his master, Exod. xxi. 6: Deut. xv. 17, seems to be a mistake. The difficulty is, how such a clause can be rendered by a **body hast thou prepared for me**, as it is in the Septuagint. The various solutions of this difficulty, and their unsatisfactory nature, may be seen in my Greek Test. I would leave the difficulty an unsolved one, not being satisfied by either of the above views, and having no other to propound. As Christian believers, our course is plain. How the word **body** came into the Septuagint version, we cannot say: but being there, it is now sanctioned for us by the citation here: not as *the*, or even *a* proper rendering of the Hebrew, but as

a prophetic utterance, equivalent to and representing that other): **whole burnt-offerings** (offerings of whole animals to be burnt on the altar) and (**sacrifices**) **for sin thou didst not approve.** **Then I said** (viz. when Thou hadst prepared a body for me), **Behold, I am come, in the volume of the book it is written concerning me, to do, O God, thy will** (the connexion and construction are somewhat differently given from those in the Septuagint, Hebrew, and A.V. See the passage in the A.V.

volume, as its name imports, is a **roll**).

8.] The Writer now proceeds to expound the prophecy; and in so doing, cites it again, but in a freer form, and one accommodated to the explanation which he gives. **Saying** (as he does) **above, that** (mere particle of recitation, not expressed in an English version) **sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices concerning sin thou wouldest not, nor yet didst approve** (observe that the two distinct clauses of the previous citation are now combined, for the sake of throwing into contrast the rejection of legal sacrifices and the acceptable self-sacrifice of the Son of God); **of such sort as** (the word used does not, like the simple relative, identify, but classifies, the antecedent) **are** (habitually) **offered according to** (in pursuance of) **the law; then** (more logical than chronological; but used probably in allusion to that **then** above, in the passage itself) **hath he said, Behold, I am come to do thy will. He** (Christ again) **taketh away the first** (the sacrifices), **that he may set**

up (establish) the second (the will of God).

10.] **In** (the course of, the fulfilment of: not properly “*by:*” the instrumentality belongs more to the *offering*, mentioned below) **which will** (viz. the will and purpose of God towards us by Christ: the will which He came to fulfil. There is no real difference, between the will of God to redeem us by the sufferings and death of Christ, and the will of God as fulfilled by Christ's obedience: the one includes the other: the latter was the condition of the former) **we have been sanctified** (see on the word **to sanctify**, and on the use of the present and past passive participles of it, note on ch. ii. 11. Here the perfect is used, inasmuch as it is the finished work of Christ in its potentiality, not the process of it on us, which is spoken of: see ver. 14: that final completion is here indicated by the perfect), **through the offering of the body** (some read, “*of the blood.*” But this would, besides losing the reference to the words, “*a body hast thou prepared me,*” introduce an inaccuracy into the typology. It is by the Blood of Christ that we are reconciled to God, but by the offering of His Body that we are made holy. The one concerns our acceptance as acquitted from sin; the other our perfection in holiness by union with Him and participation in His Spirit. Thus we distinguish the two in the Communion Service: “that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood”) **of Jesus Christ once for all** (this is to be taken with the words, “*the offering, &c.,*” not with “*we have been sanctified,*” as is done by many. See the discussion in my Greek Test.).

11–14.] See summary at ver. 1. **And** (introduces a new particular of contrast: ‘and besides’) **every high priest** (much has of late been said against the reading **high priest**, as bringing in an inaccuracy which our Writer could not be guilty of, seeing that the *high* priests did not officiate in the daily sacrifice. But all such arguments are worthless against our most ancient MSS., and tend indeed the other way, viz. to shew how natural it was to alter *high priest* to *priest*, on account of this very difficulty. With regard to the alleged inaccuracy, I really think that if closely viewed, it will prove rather to be a fine and deep touch of truth. The high priesthood of our Lord is to be compared with that of the Jewish legal high priests. On the one side is Jesus, alone in the glory of his office and virtue of his sacrifice; on the other is the Jewish high priesthood, not one man but many, by reason of death; represented in all its acts, personal or delegated, by its holder for the time, by “*every high priest,*” offering not one, but many sacrifices. This *High Priest* is the representative of the whole priesthood. Whether he ministered in the daily service of the temple himself or not, it is he who embodies the acts and sufferings of Israel in his own person. How Delitzsch

can say that such an idea is foreign alike to the Bible and the Jewish mind, I am at a loss to understand, considering the liberation at the death of the High Priest, not to insist on the ceremonies themselves at the day of atonement, when he was clearly the centre and representative of the priesthood, hood, and indeed of all Israel. In treating of the Head of so compact a system as the Jewish priesthood, it is clearly allowable, if anywhere, to bring in the principle that he who acts by another acts himself. See ch. vii. 27, where the very same daily service is predicated of the high priest) **standeth** (no priest nor other person might *sit* in the inner court of the temple, except the king. There is perhaps more than a fortuitous contrast to “*sat down*” below: the one posture being proper to worshipping, the other to being worshipped, as Chrysostom remarks) **day by day ministering** (see note, ch. viii. 2) **and** (brings out that in the *service*, which the Writer wishes most to emphasize) **often offering the same sacrifices, the which** (i. e. of a sort which, such as) **can never take away** (literally, “strip off all round.”) Such a word is peculiarly fitting to express the removal of that of which it is said, ch. v. 2, “*He is surrounded with infirmity,*” and which is called, ch. xii. 1, “*sin which is easily [naturally] cast about us.*” The sacrifice might bring sense of partial forgiveness: but it could never denude the offerer of sinfulness—strip off and take away his guilt) **sins:**

12.] but He (‘this [man],’ or, [priest]: but such rendering should be avoided if possible, as should all renderings which import a new generic idea into the text, as always causing confusion: see for a notable example, 1 Cor. ii. 11 end, in A.V.—where there is nothing corresponding to “*man*” in the original), **having offered one sacrifice for sins for ever** (**for ever** may be joined either with the preceding or with the following words. See the matter discussed in my Greek Test. It will there be seen that I incline to join them with what follows, but would leave it an open question. My ground is that the words seem

better to refer to an enduring state, than to a past act. The objection taken to this arrangement, above, that there will be change in the nature of a session at the end, when all things shall have been put under His feet, may be met by saying that such change, being obviously included in His ultimate state of reception into God’s presence in heaven, does not here *count as* a change, where the question is of renewal of sacrifice, with regard to which that session is eternal) **sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth waiting until his enemies be placed as footstool of his feet** (there is no real discrepancy between this passage and 1 Cor. xv. 23–26. If this seems to date the subjection of all to Christ *before* the second advent, and that places it *after* the same event, we may well say, that the second advent is not here taken into account by the Writer,—whose object is the contrast between the suffering and triumphant Christ,—as it is by St. Paul, who is specially giving an account of the resurrection, which is so inseparably bound up with that *advent*. The second advent is no break in Christ’s waiting till his enemies be subdued to him, but it is the last step but one of that subjection; the last of all being the subjection of Himself, and his mystical Body with him, to Him that did put all things under him. For among the enemies are His own elect, who *were* enemies: and they are not thoroughly subject to Him, till He with them is subject to the Father, the mediatorial veil being withdrawn, and the One God being all in all).

14.] And He need not renew his sacrifice: For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them who are being sanctified (‘the Writer says not ‘*them that are being perfected*,’ but ‘*them that are being sanctified*.’ Sanctification, i.e. the imputed and implanted purification from sins [for both these are alike contained in the idea], is the way whereby the objective perfection already provided in the self-sacrifice of Christ gradually renders itself subjective in men.’ Delitzsch).

15–18.] See summary at ver. 1. The prophetic word testifies the same, making absolute and final forgiveness of sins a characteristic of the new Covenant. **Moreover the Holy Spirit also testifies to us** (Christians in general): **for after having said** (then the citation proceeds much as in ch. viii. 10 ff. with some differences, noticed below. On the common points, see notes there), **This is the covenant which I will make with them** (in viii. 10, “*with the house of Israel.*” Here the prophecy is taken out of its national limits and universalized) **after those days, saith the Lord, giving my laws into their hearts** (ch. viii. 10, “*their mind*”), **and on their mind** (“*their heart*,” ch. viii. 10) **will I inscribe them** (now comes the finish of the sentence after the words “*after that he had said before:*” a whole clause, expressed in ch. viii. 10, 11, being omitted [see below], he further says); **and, their sins and their transgressions will I remember no more** (ver. 17 carries the whole burden of the citation with it. This is the object of the citation, to prove that there needs no more sacrifice for sins. And the previous portion of it is adduced to shew that this, *the oblivion of sins*, does form an integral part of the prophecy of the introduction of the new and spiritual covenant).

18.] But (or, *now*: it is the ‘*but*’ of the demonstration, referring to a well-known axiomatic fact as contrasting with the contrary hypothesis) **where there is remission of these, there is no longer offering concerning sin.** “Here ends the finale (x. 1–18) of the great tripartite arrangement (vii. 1–25, vii. 26–ix. 12, ix. 13–x. 18) of the middle portion of the Epistle. ‘Christ a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec,’ this was its great theme, now brought to a conclusion. That the Priesthood of Christ, as Melchisedecite, is as high above the Levitical as God’s heaven is above the earth,—that Christ, with His One High-priestly self-sacrifice, has accomplished that which the Levitical priesthood with its sacrifices was unable to accomplish,—that henceforth, both our present possession of salvation, and our future completion of salvation, are as certain to us as that He is with God, ruling as a Priest and reigning as a King, once more to appear, no more as a bearer of our sins, but in glory as a Judge;—these are the three great fundamental thoughts, now brought to their full development. What it is, to be a high priest after the order of Melchisedec and not of Aaron, is set forth, ch. vii. 1–25 That Christ however us High Priest is Aaron’s antitype, ruling in the true holy place by virtue of His self-sacrifice here on earth,—and Mediator of a better

covenant, whose essential character the old covenant only shadowed forth and typified, we learn, vii. 26–ix. 12. And that the self-sacrifice of Christ, offered through the eternal Spirit, is of everlasting power, as contrasted with the unavailing cycle of legal offerings, is established in the third part, ix. 13–x. 18: the second half of this portion, x. 1–18, being devoted to a reiterated and conclusive treatment of the main position of the whole,—the High Priesthood of Christ, grounded on His offering of Himself,—its Kingly character, its eternal accomplishment of its end, confirmed by Ps. xl. Ps. cx.; Jer. xxxi.” Delitzsch. **CHAP. X. 19—XIII.] THE THIRD GREAT DIVISION OF THE EPISTLE: OUR DUTY IN THE INTERVAL OF WAITING BETWEEN THE BEGINNING AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR SALVATION.** And herein, x. 19–39, exhortation to enter boldly into the holiest place, 19–22: to hold fast our profession, 23: to stir up one another, 24, 25: in consideration of the fearful punishment which awaits the rejectors of Christ, 26–31: and in remembrance of the previous sufferings which they underwent when first converted, 32–34. Finally, exhortation not to cast away confidence, for the time until His coming is short, and during that time, faith is the life of the soul.

There has been no *exhortation*, properly speaking, since ch. vii. 1, i.e. during the great doctrinal argument of the Epistle. Before that, argument and exhortation were rapidly alternated. But so exquisite is the skill of arrangement and development, that the very exhortation with which he closed the former portion of the Epistle, where first he began to prepare the way for his great argument, ch. iv. 14–16, is now resumed, deepened indeed and expanded by the intervening demonstration, but in spirit and substance the same: “*let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*” here, answering to “*let us approach with boldness to the throne of grace*” there, and “*let us hold fast the confession of our hope*” here, to “*let us hold fast our confession*” there.

19.] Having (placed first as carrying the emphasis: “possessing, as we do...”) **therefore** (as above proved: it collects and infers), **brethren** (see on ch. iii. 1), confidence (see on ch. iii. 6) **as regards the** (our: see below) **entering into the holy place in** (or, **by:** see below) **the blood of Jesus** (He having once entered in with His blood as our High Priest, and thereby all atonement and propitiation having been for ever accomplished, it is in that blood that our boldness to enter in is grounded. To understand **in**, with Bleek and Stier as in ch. ix. 25, is in fact to make us, as priests, renew Christ’s offering of Himself “We enter,” says Stier, “with the blood of Jesus, even with the same, wherewith He entered before us:” which is very like a contradiction in terms, and is at all events inaccurate theology. We do not take the blood of Christ with us into the presence of God: it is there already once for all, and our confidence of access is therein grounded, that it *is* there. See note on ch. xii. 24), **which He initiated** (first opened: better than A.V. ‘consecrated,’ which seems as if it existed before) **for us, (as) a way recent (new, ‘of late origin.’)** “None before Him trod this way; no believer under the Old Test. dared or could, though under a dispensation of preparatory grace, approach God so freely and openly, so fearlessly and joyfully, so closely and intimately, as we now, who come to the Father by the blood of Jesus, His Son.” Stier. The rendering given here in the notes is the literal one, and the only one which gives the force of the original. But in an English *version*, it is absolutely necessary to invert the clauses and disturb the meaning) **and living** (as contrasted with the mere dead ceremony of entrance into the earthly holy place. This entrance is a real, living, and working entrance; the animated substance of what is imported, not the dead shadow. Most Commentators make **living** mean “*life-giving*,” producing, or leading to life. Others interpret it “*everlasting:*” so Chrysostom), **through** (in its primary, local meaning, ‘through,’ not in its derived instrumental one) **the that is, his flesh** (on *the veil*, see note, ch. vi. 19. The flesh of Christ is here spoken of as the veil hung before the holiest place; that weak human mortal flesh was the state through which He had to pass before He could enter the holiest in heaven for us, and when He put off that flesh, the actual veil in the temple was rent, from top to bottom, Matt. xxvii. 51); **and (‘having’) a great Priest** (i. e. a great High Priest; but here his Priesthood, not his High Priesthood, is more brought into prominence. He is a *great Priest*, because He is a Priest on his throne, a kingly Priest, and priestly King) **over the house of God** (the **house of God** here need not be more limited in meaning than in the similar passage ch. iii. 2. It is alleged that the expression here must mean the heaven. But Delitzsch well observes that the one meaning, the narrower, need not exclude the other, the wider. It is hardly probable, to begin with, that our Writer should in two places describe Christ as set *over the house of God*, in meanings entirely different from each other, clearly, the heavenly sanctuary is regarded by him as also including the earthly, the church above as the home of the church below: see ch. xii. 22 ff.);

22.] let us approach (*draw near to God*). So that the clauses which follow are best regarded as both belonging to this **approach**, since they also describe requisite preparations for worship: see this further treated below, on ver. 23) **with a true heart** (*without hypocrisy*, Chrysostom. So Hezekiah pleads, Isa. xxxviii. 3, “I have walked before thee in truth with a perfect (Septuagint, ‘true’) heart”) **in fall assurance** (ch. vi. 11: see note there) **of faith** (with no doubt as to the certainty of our access to God by the blood of Jesus), **having our hearts sprinkled from** (meaning, “sprinkled, and by that sprinkling cleansed from”) **an evil conscience** (a conscience polluted with the guilt of sin: for “if a man’s practice be bad, his conscience, in so far it is the consciousness of that practice, is *evil*”), **and having our body washed with pure water** (both these clauses refer to the legal purifications of the Levitical priests, which took place by means of blood and water. At their first dedication, Aaron and his sons were sprinkled with blood, their bodies and their clothes, Exod. xxxi. 21; Lev. viii. 30). And so are we to be as God’s priests, having access to Him, sprinkled with blood, not outwardly with that of the ram of consecration, but inwardly with that of the Lamb of God: the first could only produce *purity of the flesh* [ch. ix. 13], but the second, purity of heart and conscience in God’s sight. The washing with water also [Exod. xxix. 4] was to be part of the cleansing of Aaron and his sons: nor only so, but as often as they entered the holy place or approached the altar, they were to wash their hands and

feet in the brazen laver, Exod. xxx. 20; xl. 30–32: and the High Priest, on the day of atonement, *was to wash his whole body with water*, Lev. xvi. 4. There can be no reasonable doubt that this clause refers directly to Christian baptism. The “*font of the water*” of Eph. v. 26, and the “*font of regeneration*,” Tit. iii. 5, are analogous expressions: and the express mention of **body** here, as distinguished from “*heart*” before, stamps this interpretation with certainty. This distinction makes it impossible, with Calvin, and others, to spiritualize away the meaning into “the Spirit and doctrine of Christ,—the spiritual water with which Christ sprinkles his own: even His blood is not here excluded” [Schlichting]; for the word **body** confines the reference to an outward act. And so the majority of Commentators. Still in maintaining the externality of the words, as referring, and referring solely, to Baptism, we must remember, that Baptism itself is not a mere external rite, but at every mention of it carries the thought further, viz. to that spiritual washing of which it is itself symbolical and sacramental. Notice here that the word is **body**, and not “*flesh*,” as ch. ix. 13: our whole natural life, and not the mere outside surface: that in which our soul dwells and works, the seat of the emotions and desires: this also must be purified in those who would approach God in Christ. So that I would understand with Delitzsch, that the *sprinkling the heart from an evil conscience* is, so to speak, intra-sacramental, a spiritual application of the purifying Blood, beyond sacramental rites, and the *washing the body with pure water* is purely sacramental, the effect of baptism taken in its whole blessed meaning and fulfilment as regards our natural existence. The end of his note very beautiful: “As priests we are sprinkled, as priests we are bathed: sprinkled so that our hearts are freed from an evil conscience, and thus from self-condemnation, sprinkled with Christ’s Blood, to be sprinkled with which and to be certain of and joyful in justification before God is one and the same thing,—washed in Holy Baptism, whose pure water penetrates with its saving power not only into the depths of our self-conscious life, but also into the very foundation of our corporeity, and thus sanctifies us not only in the flesh, but in the body and in the spirit: so bringing us, in our whole personal existence, through the Blood speaking in the Sanctuary, through the Water welling forth out of the Sanctuary, into so real a connexion, so close an union with the Sanctuary itself, that we are at all times privileged to enter into the Sanctuary, and to use, in faith, the new and living way”).

23.] Let us hold fast (ch. iv. 14: let us hold with full and conscious possession: see ch. iii. 6, 14) **the confession** (see on ch. iv. 14: subjective, but in a pregnant sense,—that which we confess, held in our confession of it) **of our hope** (see ch. iii. 6: and bear in mind that **hope** is used also for the object of hope subjectivized: our hope [subj.], as including that on which it is fixed.

We have here an extraordinary example of the persistence of a blunder through centuries. The word “*faith*,” given here by the A.V., instead of **hope**—breaking up the beautiful triad of vv. 22, 23, 24,—faith, hope, love,—was a *mere mistake*, **hope** being the original, without any variety of reading, and **hope** being accordingly the rendering of all the English versions previously to 1611. And yet this is the version which some would have us regard as infallible, and receive as the written word of God!) **so that it may be without wavering; for He is faithful that promised** (viz. God, see ch. vi. 13, xi. 11, xii. 26, as referring to Him the title of “*the Promiser*”);

24.] and (“how beautifully does this chain of exhortations of our Writer fall into a triple division, according Paul’s triad of the Christian life, 1 Cor. xiii. 13; 1 Thess. i. 3, v. 8; Col. i. 4 f.! Next to an exhortation to approach God in full assurance of *faith*, follows one to hold fast the confession of *hope*, and now comes one to emulate one another in *love*.” Delitzsch) **let us consider one another** (all of us have all in continual remembrance, bearing one another’s characters and wants and weaknesses in mind) **with a view to provocation** (usually in a bad sense, but here in a good one) **of** (tending to produce: or we may say that it is a provocative of the love itself being thereby excited) **love and good works;**

25.] not deserting the assembling together of ourselves (in the only other place, 2 Thess. ii. 1, where this substantive, “*assembling together*,” occurs, it is of our gathering together to Christ at His coming, just as the verb is commonly used in the Gospels, Matt. xxiii. 37, xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 27; Luke xiii. 34. Here, the question is, whether it is to be understood of the congregation of the faithful generally, the church,—as the word *congregation* has come from the act of assembling to signify the body thus assembled,—or of the single acts of assembling and gathering together of the various assemblies of Christians at various times. The latter is held by most Commentators, and seems far most appropriate here), **as is the habit with some** (this pretty plainly shews that not formal apostasies, but habits of negligence, are in the Writer’s view. How far these might in time lead to the other, is a thought which no doubt lies in the background when he says, “*let us consider one another*,” and “*using exhortation*:” and is more directly suggested by the awful cautions which follow); **but using exhortation: and so much the more** (this is better taken as belonging to the two preceding clauses only, to which it is attached, than as belonging to the whole from ver. 23), as (‘*in proportion as*,’ ‘*the more:*’ must be joined with *ye see*, not with “*approaching*,” ‘*the nearer ye see*’) **ye see** (this *ye see*, in the *second* person, is unexpected in the midst of a sentence in the *first* person. It appeals at once to the watchfulness and discernment of the readers as regards the signs of the times. That Day, indeed, in its great final sense, is always near, always ready to break forth upon the church: but these Hebrews lived actually close upon one of those great types and foretastes of it, the destruction of the Holy City—the bloody and fiery dawn, as Delitzsch finely calls it, of the Great Day) the day (this shortest of all designations of the day of the Lord’s coming, is found only in 1 Cor. iii. 13; 1 Thess. v. 4. “It is the Day of days, the ending-day of all days, the settling-day of all days, the Day of the promotion of Time into Eternity, the Day which for the Church breaks through and breaks off the night of this present world.” Delitzsch) **approaching.**

26–31.] Caution, arising from the mention of that day,—which will be not a day of grace, but a day of judgment,—*of the*

fearful peril of falling away from Christ. The passage finds a close parallel in ch. vi. 4 ff., and much of what was there said will apply here.

26.] For if we willingly sin (contrast to the “*ignorant and erring,*” ch. v. 2. The sin meant is sufficiently defined by the connexion [for] with the preceding exhortations, and by the description of one who has so sinned in ver. 29. Neglect of assembling together, and loss of mutual exhortation and stimulus, would naturally result in [as it would be prompted by an inclination that way at first] the “*departing from God*” of ch. iii. 12; the “*falling away*” of ch. vi 6. It is the sin of apostasy from Christ back to the state which preceded the reception of Christ, viz. Judaism. This is the ground-sin of all other sins. The verb is in the present, not the past. “If we be found wilfully sinning,” not “if we have wilfully sinned,” at that Day. It is not of an act. or of any number of acts of sin, that the Writer is speaking, which might be repented of and blotted out: but of a *state of sin*, in which a man is formed when that day shall come) **after the receiving** (having received) **the knowledge** (“the word used for knowledge is one which of necessity means a *thorough, heart-knowledge*. And the Writer, by the use of this word, gives us to understand that he means by it not only a shallow historical notion about the Truth, but a living, believing knowledge of it, which has laid hold of a man and fused him into union with itself.” Delitzsch. It is most important here to keep this cardinal point distinctly in mind: that these sinners willingly are not mere professors of religion, but real converts, or else ver. 29 becomes unintelligible) **of the truth** (the truth of God, as so often in St. Paul and St. John), **there is no longer left remaining** (see on ch. iv. 6) **a sacrifice for sins** (for there is but One true sacrifice for sins: if a man, having availed himself of that One, then deliberately casts it behind him, there is no second left for him. It will be observed that one thing is not, and need not be, specified in the text. That he has exhausted the virtue of the One Sacrifice, is not said: but in proportion to his willing rejection of it, has it ceased to operate for him. He has in fact, as Delitzsch observes, shut the door of repentance behind him, by the very fact of his being in an abiding state of willing sin. And this is still more forcibly brought out when, which Delitzsch does not notice, the scene of action is transferred to the great day of the Lord’s coming, and he is found in that impenitent state irreparably. This verse has been misunderstood, 1) b: the Fathers, who apply it to the Novatian controversy, and make it assert the impossibility of a second baptism: 2) by Theodore of Mopsuestia and others, who interpret it only of those in a state of impenitence, understanding that on penitence they will again come under the cleansing influence of the blood of Christ), **but** (there is left remaining: this is common to both clauses) **a certain** (some one, out of all that might befall various men and dispositions. The indefiniteness makes the declaration more awful) **fearful** (objective,—tremendous, not timid: fearful to think of, frightful) **reception** (i. e. *meed, doom*: not, as I believe universally interpreted without remark, *expectation*. The word used (*ecdocké*) appears never to have this sense, and this is the only place where it occurs in the New Test. All which *remains* is, the reception of the doom of judgment, and the *fiery indignation, &c.*) **of judgment** (i. e. by the *context*, unfavourable judgment), **and fervour of fire** (so literally. In an English version we cannot give it well, except by paraphrasing, as in the text: the stress is on *fire*, and *fire* is personified. It is the fire of God’s presence, identified with Himself exactly as in ch. xii. 29: and it is the zeal, the fervour, the excandescence of this consuming fire, which awaits the apostate from Christ), **which**

shall (in using this future, the Writer transfers himself again to the present time: as if he had said, ‘the fire which is destined to...’) **devour** (and therefore finally and entirely) **the adversaries**.

28, 29] Argument from the less to the greater, to shew how grievous will be the punishment of the apostate from Christ. There is a very similar inference in ch. ii. 2, 3; xii. 25. **Any one having set at nought the law of Moses** (we must not take this as a general assertion, as true of whoever in any way broke the Mosaic law: but as an alleging of a well-known fact, that in certain cases a breaker of that law was subject to the penalty following. The form of the sentence might be changed thus, “If Moses’ law could attach to violations of it the inexorable doom of death,” &c. The reference is especially to Deut. xvii. 2–7, where the punishment of death is attached to the same sin as is here in question, viz. apostasy: see ver. 3) **dies** (the normal present) **without benefit of** (apart from: not implying that no one felt compassion for him, but that such compassion, be it what it might, could not affect his doom) **mercies** (so literally: the merciful feelings of any who might be interested for him) **before two or three witnesses** (the allusion is to Deut. as above, where it is thus prescribed): **of how much worse punishment, think ye** (an appeal to the judgment of the readers themselves), **shall he be found worthy** (i. e. by God), **who trampled under foot** (the verb is in the past tense, as spoken at that day, and looking back upon this life. By “trampling under foot” is meant that flagrant contempt which those shew who deliberately abandon the Lord and His precepts. Stier remarks: Some of us remember the cry, “Ecrasez l’ infame!”) **the Son of God** (the higher title of the Mediator of the new covenant is used, to heighten the enormity of the crime), **and accounted common the blood of the covenant** (being the “*precious blood*” of Christ Himself, far above all blood of sprinkling under’ the old covenant. Even that [Lev. xvi. 19] had hallowing power: how much more this. But the apostate “accounted common” this blood—deemed it mere ordinary blood of a common man, and if so, consented to its shedding, for then Christ deserved to die as a blasphemer. And this, of that holy Blood, by which we have access to God! So that we have quite enough for the solemn sense, by rendering the word literally *common*, without going to the further meaning, *unclean*. Compare Acts x. 28, where the two are distinguished. The old Syriac version has “hath counted the blood of the covenant of him by whom he hath been sanctified as that of every man.” The reader will recall our Lord’s own expression, “*the blood of the new testament (covenant)*,” Matt. xxvi. 28), **in which** (so literally: as sprinkled with which his element and condition of sanctification) **he was sanctified** (see Lev. xvi. 19 Septuagint, and our ch. xiii. 12 and ix. 13. He had advanced so far in the reality of the spiritual life, that this blood had been really applied to his heart by faith, and its

hallowing and purifying effects were visible in his life: which makes the contrast the more terrible. And Delitzsch finely remarks, as against the assertors of mere shallow supralapsarianism, that without former experience of grace, without a life of faith far more than superficial, so irrecoverable a fall into the abyss is not possible. It is worthy of remark how Calvin evades the deep truth contained in the words **wherewith he was sanctified**:— “It is most unworthy to profane the blood of Christ, *which is the material of our sanctification*: and this those do who apostatize from the faith.” thus making

he was sanctified into *we are sanctified*), and insulted the **Spirit of grace** (for the **Spirit of grace**, see Zech. xii. 10. No two things can be more opposed, as Delitzsch remarks, than *insolence* and *grace*. And this remark guides us to the answer to the question whether **of grace** here is a genitive *objective* or *subjective*: whether it is the spirit which belongs to *grace*, so that it is the gift of the divine *grace* [so most of the moderns], or *grace* which belongs to *spirit*, so that it is the gift of and the character of the *spirit*. The latter is much the more probable, both on account of the prophecy of Zechariah which is referred to, “*I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication*,” and on account of the verb **insulted**, which is most naturally referred to a Person as its object)?

30, 31.] And this *reception of judgment and fervour of fire* are certainties, testified to by God Himself. **For we know Him who said, “To me belongeth vengeance, I will repay, saith the Lord”** (the citation is from Deut. xxxii. 35, and is given not in agreement with the Hebrew text nor with the Septuagint [“in the day of vengeance will I recompense:” so also in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and in Philo], but, remarkably enough, in verbal accordance with St. Paul’s citation of the same text, Rom. xii. 19, even to the adding of the words “*saith the Lord*,” which are neither in the Hebrew nor the Septuagint. Two solutions of this are possible: 1) that the expression had become a common saying in the church: 2) that our Writer takes it from St. Paul’s citation. A third alternative is of course open; that it is St. Paul himself, who quotes here as there. For a solution, see Introduction, on the authorship of this Epistle). **And again, The Lord will judge His people** (no doubt quoted primarily from the passage where it primarily occurs, in Deut. xxxii. 36. The *judging* there expresses another function of the judge from that which is adduced here. There, He will judge for rescue and for defence: here, for punishment and for condemnation. But the *office of Judge*, generally asserted, involves all that belongs to a judge: and if there it induces the comforting of those of whom He saw that their power is gone, and that there is here shut up or left, here the same general office of judgment also induces the punishment of the wilful sinner and apostate).

31.] Axiomatic conclusion of these solemn warnings. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (yet in 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, David says, “Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; and let us not fall into the hand of man:” and in Eccl. ii. 18 we have “we will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men; for as His majesty is, so is His mercy.” But the two sentiments are easily set at one, For the faithful, in their chastisement, it is a blessed thing to fall into God’s Hands: for the unfaithful, in their doom, a dreadful on. On *living*, as a characteristic of *God*, see on ch. iii. 12. Here, the idea of life and energy, attached to the name of God, brings vividly out the *fervour* with which He will consume His adversaries).

32–34.] As in ch. vi. 9–12, so here, the Writer turns from solemn exhortation and warning to *encouragement arising from the conduct of his readers in the past*. This their firmness did not look likely to end in apostasy: and accordingly by the memory of it he now cheers and invigorates them.

32.] But (in contrast to these fearful things which have been spoken of) **call ever to mind** (call over in your minds, one by one) **the former days, in which when (first) enlightened** (see on this, note, ch. vi. 4), **ye underwent** (with fortitude: which though not implied in the word, signifying mere endurance, yet is in the context) **much contest of sufferings** (the genitive may be either subjective, implying that your contest *consisted of* sufferings: or objective, that it was *waged with* sufferings, as the foe to be contended against: the former perhaps is the more probable from what follows);

33.] (the *nature of these sufferings* is now specified) **partly, being made a spectacle** (literally, exposed in a theatre, the theatre being the place where conspicuous punishments were inflicted, on account of the multitudes there assembling. See Acts xix. 29. The word may therefore be *literally* taken, if [see Introd. §ii. and §iii. 3] the Epistle was written *to Rome, after the Neronian persecution*. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 9) **in reproaches** (the **in** gives the manner in which) **and tribulations; partly also, having become** (there is something of purpose in this: “having made yourselves.” It is a fine encomium on their Christian sympathy and love) **partakers with them who were thus living** (viz., *in reproaches and afflictions*).

34.] Illustration, in reverse order, of the two particulars mentioned in ver. 33. **For ye both sympathized with** (see on ch. iv. 15) **them who were in bonds, and ye took with joy the plundering of your goods, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and abiding** (that cannot be plundered: compare Matt. vi. 20).

35–39.] Hortatory conclusion, enforced by [ver. 36] the need of endurance, which itself is recommended by the assurance of the speedy coming of the Lord, and the knowledge that we are not of the number of the backsliders, but of those who live by that faith by which our hope is substantiated.

35.] Cast not away therefore your confidence, the which (the simple relative would predicate what follows of the one preceding individual antecedent only, whereas *the which* predicates it of a whole class of which that antecedent is one. **For it** expresses it well: “being of such sort, as”...) **hath** (*present*, although the reward is future: hath set down over against it: possesses in reversion) **great recompence of reward.**

36.] For (justification of the foregoing exhortation) **of endurance** (this in the original is placed first, carrying the main emphasis, “By degrees,” Bengel, “the Apostle from this verse to ver. 38 introduces the prophetic citation.” In the Septuagint, in Hab. ii. 3, 4, the whole passage runs thus: “Though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not tarry. If any man draw back, my Lord hath no pleasure in him: but the just by my faith shall live”) **ye have need, that ye may do the will of God and receive the promise** (this is the most correct rendering of the original: and thus it certainly ought to be taken here. No endurance or patience would be wanted, when they had done the will of God, to receive the promise: because such interval as should elapse between their *having done the will of God* in this sense, and *receiving the promise*, would be not here, but in the intermediate state. But that which they really do want *endurance* for, is that they may “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God,” and thus receive the promise: see ch. xiii. 21. **The promise** means, not the *word* of promise, but the substance of the promise, the promise in its fulfilment).

37, 38.] Encouragement to this endurance, by the fact of the time being short, and at the same time further proof of the necessity of it by God's renunciation of him that draws back: all from the same prophecy of Habakkuk. **For yet a little little while** (so literally. This expression is not in Habakkuk, but is found in Isa. xxvi. 20, to which the Writer probably alludes) **He that is coming** (the solemn prophetic title, ‘He that is to come.’ The Apostle paraphrases the prophetic words, and thus inserts Christ into the place of *the vision* in Habakkuk) **shall come, and shall not tarry.**

38.] Continuation of the paraphrase: the two clauses of Hab. ii. 4 being transposed. In the original it runs as in A.V.: “Behold, his soul (which) is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith;” or, an ambiguity extending to all three places where the saying is quoted, here, and reff. Rom., Gal., “The just by his faith, shall live.” But the other is more probable. The transposition is apparently made on purpose. **But my just man** (there is much controversy about the word **my**, whether to insert it, and where to insert it. See in my Greek Test. Placed as in our text, **my** will point out, that man who is just before God, who belongs to God's people) **shall live by faith: and if he** (i. e. the *just man*, as Delitzsch very properly insists: not as in A.V., understood, “*any man*,” but, in the true spirit of this whole cautionary passage, the very man himself who was justified, and partakes of the Christian life, by faith. The possibility of such a fall is, as he observes, among the principal things taught us by this Epistle) **draw back, my soul** (“whose soul? That of God, according to Scripture usage, as in this saying, My soul hateth your solemn feasts [Isa. i. 14],—or perhaps, that of Christ.” Chrysostom. The former reference is doubtless right, not the latter, nor that given by Calvin, that “the Apostle is speaking in his own person”) **hath not pleasure in him.**

39.] Here again he returns from that which is threatening in appearance to that which is encouraging and reassuring. **But we** (emphatic; bringing with it, in its mention, all that we are as Christians and that God has made us: you and I, *partakers of the heavenly calling*, ch. iii. 1) **are not of backsliding** (i. e. do not belong to the category of backsliding) **unto** (as its result: so Rom. vi. 19, *unto iniquity, unto sanctification*) **destruction** (everlasting perdition); **but of faith unto [the] preservation of [the] soul** (“the soul is the subject of life and salvation. Faith saves the soul, by linking it to God, the living One. The unbelieving man loses his soul: for not being God's, neither is he his own: all that his personality has in itself, and round itself, is fallen under wrath and the powers of wrath.” Delitzsch).

Hebrews: Chapter 11

CHAP. XI.]—“We are of FAITH” concluded the last chapter. And now this great word comes before the mind of the Writer for its *definition*, its *exemplification*, its *triumphs*. By this, all the servants of God from the first have been upheld, and stimulated, and carried through their glorious course. By this exemplification the Writer evermore warmed and carried forward, breaks out at last into a strain of sublime eloquence, in which he gathers together in one the many noble deeds of faith which time and space would not allow of his specifying severally.

1.] Now Faith is (notice that it is of *faith* in general, *all* faith, not here of faith in God in particular, that the Writer is speaking) **confidence** (there has been much difference concerning the meaning of this word [*hypostasis*]. The ancients for the most part understand it here as substance, the real and true essence: faith gives reality to things not yet seen, so that they are treated as veritably present. Others have rendered it *foundation*. On the other hand the majority of modern Commentators have preferred the meaning which the word bears in ch. iii. 14, where see note: viz. “confidence.” And there can be no reasonable doubt, that this is the true rendering here. Thus only do the two descriptions given correspond in nature and quality. The one being subjective in both these cases of parallel, it is but reasonable that the other should be also) **of things hoped for, demonstration** (*conviction, or proof*). The modern Commentators are divided: some have taken the subjective sense of *conviction*,—*inward persuasion of the truth of*. But this sense of the word is hardly borne out by usage. And therefore we seem driven back on the objective meaning as referred to things, viz. *proof, or demonstration*. As far as the *sense* is

concerned, both come to the same in the end. It is faith, an act of the mind, which is this demonstration: it is therefore necessarily subjective in its effect,—is the demonstration *to him who believes*) of **matters not seen** (this is a much wider designation than *things hoped for*, embracing the whole realm of the spiritual and invisible, even to the being and essence of God Himself: see below, ver. 6: and compare Rom. viii. 24, where St. Paul's expressions differ slightly in form from these. There is no ground whatever for saying that our Writer makes faith identical with hope. Faith is the *confidence of things hoped for*: Hope exists independently of it," but derives its reality, and is ripened into confidence, by its means. And faith is the demonstration to us of that which we do not see: compare the beautiful words of Calvin: "Eternal life is promised to us, but after death: we are told of a blessed resurrection, but we meantime become the prey of decay: we are pronounced righteous, and yet sin dwells in us: we hear ourselves called blessed, and meantime are overwhelmed with infinite miseries: we are promised affluence of all good things, but are all our days in hunger and thirst: God proclaims that He will be ever present to help us, but seems deaf to our cries. What would become of us if we leant not on hope, and unless our mind, guided by the Word and Spirit of God, emerged through the midst of the shades, above this present world?").

2.] **For** ("and-so high a description of faith is not undeserved, seeing that...." The **for** does not bring in any *proof* of the foregoing description, only shews that faith is noble enough to be dignified with the offices just named) **in** (not, by, merely: but elemental; in the domain, or region, or matter of) **this** (in this it was, that...) **the elders** (i. e. not merely those who lived before us, but those ancients whom we dignify with the name of elders. So also

"*the fathers,*" see Rom. ix. 5; Heb. i. 1) **were testified of** (it is of course implied, that the testimony was a good one).

3.] The Writer now begins his series of examples of the power of faith. But instead of opening them with the example of our first parents, which he probably passes over as not sufficiently recorded in Scripture, he adduces the great and primary postulate of faith, which has regard to a fact contemporaneous indeed with them, and holding this first chronological place in the series: viz. the creation of the world itself. **By faith** (*faith* is the instrumental cause, and the expression is nearly equivalent to **through faith**, with which indeed it is interchanged in ver. 33) **we perceive** (we have intellectual perception. The world itself, and the therein, are *seen* by us: but the its eration by God is *apprehended*, with our rational or spiritual faculties) the **ages** (see note on ch. i. 2, where I have maintained that this expression includes in it all that exists under the conditions of time and space, together with those conditions of time and space themselves, conditions which do not bind God, and did not exist independently of Him, but are themselves the work of His word) **to have been framed** (so A.V.: and we cannot perhaps do better. It is rather however, *furnished forth*, "made to be, and to be what we find them") **by the word of God** (the *spoken word*, the command, as throughout Gen. i.:—the term in the Greek is not *logos*. Not must it here be taken for the personal word: ch. i. 2, is on a different matter), **so that not out of things apparent hath that which is seen** (i. e. the visible world) **been made** (in all that we see with our sense, of recreation and reproduction, *that which is seen is made out of that which appears*. The seed becomes the plant: the grub, the moth. But that which is above sight, viz., faith, leads us to apprehend, that this has not been so in the first instance: that the visible world has not been made out of apparent materials).

4.] **By faith** (see above) **Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice** (literally, more sacrifice) **than Cain** (than Cain did. But how a **more excellent sacrifice**? First, there can be no doubt that the adjective must be taken not of quantity, but of quality: it was not a more abundant, but: a more excellent. But how was it so? Our text answers us: *because of, by, faith*. The more excellence must be looked for then rather in the disposition with which the sacrifice was offered, than in the nature of the sacrifice itself. Gregory the Great [cited by Delitzsch] says well, "All that is given to God, is weighed according to the disposition of its giver: whence it is written, 'God had regard to Abel, and to his gifts, but had no regard to Cain and his gifts' The Scripture does not say, 'He regarded the gifts of Abel, and did not regard the gifts of Cain,' but first says, that 'He regarded Abel,' and then adds, 'and his gifts.' So we see that it was not the gifts which made Abel to be acceptable, but Abel who made the gifts to be so." This beyond doubt is the principal ground of the designation **more excellent**. With regard to the sacrifices themselves; with our present knowledge of type and sacrifice, many reasons might be alleged why that of Abel should be more according to God's will than that of Cain; but none of those reasons can be safely or decisively applied here. That Abel's consisted of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof—the *first and the best*, whereas Cain's was merely an offering of the fruit of the ground, perfunctory and common-place, may be a circumstance not without weight in appreciating the term **by faith**. That Abel's was offering of slain animals, God's own appointed way, so soon after, of the sinner's approach to Him, whereas Cain's was only a gift, as if he could approach God without shedding of blood,—this may also be an important element in the term **by faith**. But it would not be safe here to insist on either of these), **by means of which** (viz. *which faith*, not, which *sacrifice*: **by which** must apply to the same as **by it** below, and that surely can refer to nothing but the *faith*, which is the great leading idea of the chapter) **he was testified** (see above, ver. 2) **to be righteous** (when? by whom? not, by our Saviour, nor by St. John [1 John iii. 12], though in both places such testimony is borne to him: but as explained in the next clause, at the time of his sacrifice, and by God Himself), **God bearing testimony upon** (in regard to) **his gifts** (of what kind this testimony was, there can be little doubt. Theodotion's rendering of the text in Genesis, "*and God consumed them by fire*," though wrong as a rendering, is probably right in fact. Compare Exod. xiv. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 24, 28): **and by means of it** (his faith, again, not, his sacrifice: see above) **having died he yet speaketh** (viz., as interpreted by the parallel place, ch. xii. 24, where it is said of the "*blood of sprinkling*," *that it speaketh better things than Abel*,—by means of his blood, of which it is said by God in Gen. iv. 10, "*The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground*." Some have

taken it in the sense of speaks to us to follow his example? And perhaps Stuart may be partly right, who recognizing the allusion to Gen. iv. 10, says, “The form of expression only in our verse seems to be borrowed from Gen. iv. 10, for here it is the *faith* of Abel which makes him speak after his death; viz. to those who should come after him, exhorting and encouraging them to follow his example.” I say *partly* right, for however this may be in the background the cry of his blood is obviously primary in the Writer’s thought, from ch. xii. 24, where the voice of Abel is contrasted with that of the Christian blood of sprinkling).

5, 6] *The example of Enoch: and axiomatic declaration upon it.* **By faith** (“how was he translated by faith? Because his well-pleasing to God was the ground of his translation, and faith was the ground of this well-pleasing.” Chrysostom) **Enoch was translated not to see death** (see the Septuagint version of Gen. v. 24, after which this verse is framed: “And Enoch pleased God, and was not found, because God translated him.” **was translated**, by a sudden disappearance from this earth. This translation was hardly, as Calvin thinks, “some extraordinary death,” though he means this in no rationalistic sense, as is plain from his accompanying remarks:—but rather 1a change which passed upon him altogether without death, from corruptibility to incorruptibility, from the natural body to the spiritual); **and was not found** (see above), **because God translated him: for before his translation a testimony is given to him** (the expression implies the continued existence of the testimony in the text of Scripture), **that he hath (had) pleased God.** **But apart from faith it is impossible** (it is general axiom, not a mere assertion regarding Enoch; if it were, we should expect *it was impossible for him*) **to please** (Him, as is evident) **at all** (to do a single act well pleasing to God): **for it behoves him that cometh to God** (that approach which is elsewhere designated *by drawing near to God*, ch. vii. 19,—for the purposes of worship or of communion, or of trust, or service generally) **to believe** (literally, **to have believed**, because it is not here the state in which the comer is at his coming, but the state which has originated his coming, of which that coming is the insisted on) **that He is** (exists: his faith being to him thus a *demonstration of a thing not seen*), **and becomes** (is eventually) **a renderer of reward** (ch. ii. 2) **to them that seek Him out** (thus his faith is also to him the *confidence of things hoped for*: God’s existence is realized to him by it, and by it his future reward assured)

7.] Example of NOAH. Gen. vi. 8 ff. **By faith Noah, having been warned** (viz. by God, Gen. vi. 13 ff.) **concerning the things not yet seen, taking forethought** (many interpret this word “fearing God;” and most, “fearing;” but the distinction is important, which is brought out in ch. v. 7, where the same word occurs, that this is the fear of caution or reverence, and not of terror) **prepared the ark** (not ‘*an ark*’) **for the preservation of his house; by means of which** (to what does **which** refer? to “*preservation*,” to “*ark*,” or to “*faith*?”) Certainly not to the former: for thus Noah’s *preservation* would be the inheriting of the righteousness which is by faith. Possibly, to *the ark*; for it was by the building of it that he condemned the world in its unbelief, and by it that in some sense, as the manifested result of his faith, he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. But it must be confessed that this latter part of the interpretation halts considerably. And on this account, as well as on account of its inadequacy to the spirit of the passage, I do not hesitate, with most of the recent Commentators, to prefer “*faith*” as the antecedent: “by which faith,” as above, ver. 4. It is true, that the word *faith*, as last mentioned, here is somewhat far off; but it is the burden of the chapter, and continually before the Writer’s mind, and it was by his *faith*, rather than by the results of that faith, that he *condemned the world*, and became, &c.) **he condemned** (the sense may be either imperfect, he condemned, while building the ark, the unbelieving world around,—or, *past*, he once for all condemned the unbelieving then, and in them, the world, which lies in unbelief. Better perhaps the latter. On the sense, Limborch says, “He is said to *condemn* another who by his deed shews what another ought to have done, and, because he did not do it, convicts him of a fault, and shews his liability to punishment”) **the world** (so also in Matt. xii. 41, 42), **and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith** (Noah is the first in Scripture who is called “righteous” or “just,” Gen. vi. 9. See Ezek. xiv. 14, 20, where he is named together with Daniel and Job as an example of righteousness: and Wisd. x. 4, 6; Ecclus. xliv. 17; 2 Pet. ii. 5; where he is called *a preacher of righteousness*. And this righteousness, which is matter of history in the Old Test., our Writer refers to his faith as its measure. So Calvin: “Moses relates that he was righteous: that the cause and root of this righteousness was faith, is not told in the history, but is proved by the Apostle from the facts.” This *righteousness according to faith* seems to be altogether in St. Paul’s sense, the righteousness which is *by faith*, Rom. iv. 13, though the expression itself is foreign to St. Paul. The idea of its being *matter of inheritance* is also according to St. Paul. It should be noticed that the whole expression is used, in an Epistle in which righteousness by faith forms no part of the main subject, as one *familiar* and well known to the readers).

8–22.] Thus far the examples have been taken from the antediluvian world. Next, he takes them from the patriarchs of Israel; with whom *the promise* was ever the object of faith: a *land*, in which they were strangers: a son, who was not yet born: a people, who were yet to be.

8.] ABRAHAM’ S example. By faith Abraham, being called (viz. by God, Gen. xii. 1 ff. Another reading, having considerable authority, is, “he that was called, named, Abraham.”) And the sense thus would be very good,—whatever Bleek and Delitzsch have said against it,—when we take into account the meaning of the name Abraham, a *father of nations*. That this change of name did not take place till twenty-five years after his removal from Haran, is no objection, but is just what would be the point raised: “By faith, he who was [afterwards] called Abram, father of nations, &c.” But on the whole, I adhere to the received text), **obeyed, to go out** (the infinitive explains *wherein* he obeyed) **to a** (or, ‘*the*’ **place which he was**

hereafter to receive for an inheritance (not that he was conscious even of this promise when he went out, for it was made to him afterwards in Canaan, see Gen. xii. 7); **and went out, not knowing whither he was going** (coming).

9, 10.] By faith he sojourned in the land of the promise (concerning which the promise, Gen. xii. 7, had been given), **as a stranger's** (as if it did not belong to him, but to another: see Acts vii. 6, which is strictly parallel, and Gen. xv. 13), **dwelling in tents** (see Gen. xii. 8; xiii. 3; xviii. 1 ff.) **with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise** (what is implied is, not so much that the promise was renewed to them, as that all three waited for the performance of the same promise, and in this waiting, built themselves no permanent abode)

10.] for (reason of his sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange land) **he waited for the city which has the foundations** (beyond doubt, the heavenly city, the “*Jerusalem which is above*,” thus contrasted with the frail and moveable tents in which the patriarchs dwelt. No other interpretation will suit the language here used. The “*city of the living God*” of ch. xii. 32, and the “*city which is to come*” of ch. xiii. 14, must be here meant also. Of the earthly Jerusalem indeed it is said, Ps. lxxxvii. 1, “*its foundation is in the holy mountains*”: but it is impossible, that the earthly Jerusalem can be meant here. The lives of the dwellers in her rather corresponded to the precarious dwelling in tents than to the abiding in a permanent city: and the true reference of the expression “**having the foundations**” is to be found in Rev. xxi. 14, 19. As having these foundations, it forms a contrast to the tent, placed on the ground and easily transported. Ebrard objects to this view, that it is unhistoric to say that the patriarchs looked for the heavenly city: but Delitzsch well answers, that it is not the mere historic question, what they knew and expected, with which our Writer is concerned, but the question what it was that their faith, breaking through this knowledge in its yearnings for the future, framed to itself as matter of hope. The expectation of the literal fulfilment of a promise is one thing: the hopes and prospects and surmises built upon the character of that promise, another. The one is mere belief: the other is faith), **of which the architect and master-builder is God** (very similarly ch. viii. 2: see also ver. 16 below).

11.] Example of SARAH, whose faith worked with that of Abraham to produce Isaac. By faith Sara herself also (the words **herself also** merely indicate transition from one personal subject to another, the new subject being thus thrown out into prominence) **received power for the deposition of seed** (power, to fructify seed deposited), **and that beyond** (in inconsistency with, contrary to the law of) **the time of age** (proper for such fructification), **seeing that she esteemed Him faithful who had promised.**

12.] Wonderful result of this faith of Abraham and Sarah. Wherefore also from one sprung there, and that one deadened (past that vital power which nature requires), **even as the stars of the heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is by the lip** (margin) **of the sea which is innumerable** (so ran the promises to Abraham, Gen. xiii. 16, and more fully Gen. xxii. 17. The comparison th the sand as indicating great number is frequently found in the Old Test., e.g., Gen. xli. 49; Josh. xi. 4; 1 Sam. xiii. 5; 2 Sam. xvi. 11; 1 Kings iv. 29; Isa. x. 22).

13–16.] Before the Writer passes on to more examples of faith, he looks back over the patriarchal age, and gathers in one the *attributes of their faith*. **In** (according to, consistently with, in the course of: not this time by faith, because their deaths were not the results of their faith, but merely according to and consistent with it) **faith died these all** (there is no need to say with some of the ancient commentators, “*except Enoch*:” the promises began with Abraham, and it is evident from the end of our verse, and from ver. 15, that the reference is solely to the patriarchs), **not having received** (in their *fulfilment*, that is) the promises (plural, because the promise was again and again repeated to the patriarchs, see the citations from Gen. above, and add Gen. xvii. 5–8, xxvi. 3, 4, xxviii. 13, 14), **but having seen them from afar, and greeted them** (“from afar they saw the promises in the reality of their fulfilment, from afar they greeted them as the wanderer greets his longed-for home even when he only comes in sight of it at a distance, drawing to himself as it were magnetically and embracing with inward love that which is yet afar off. The exclamation, ‘I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,’ Gen. xl ix. 18, is such a *salutation*, such a greeting of salvation from afar.” Delitzsch), **and confessed that they were strangers and sojourners upon the earth** (this Abraham did, Gen. xxiii. 4, in these very words, in the Greek of the Septuagint, to the children of Heth, and Jacob, Gen. xl vii. 9, to Pharaoh.... See Ps. cxix. 19; Eccles. xii. 5).

14.] For (justification of the assertion, that it was *according to faith* that they ran and finished their course, by the inference from their own confession) **they who say such things make manifest that they seek after a home** (our English word ‘country,’ without some possessive pronoun, does not give the idea strongly enough).

15.] And if indeed they were mindful of that (home) **from which they went out, they would continually be having opportunity to return.**

16.] But now (as the case now is: the logical “*now*:” see 1 Cor. xiii. 13 note, and our ch. viii. 6) **they desire a better** (home), **that is, a heavenly one** (the justification of this assertion, which seems to ascribe New Test. ideas to the Old Test. fathers, must be found in such sayings as that of the dying Jacob, Gen. xl ix. 18, which only represent a wide class of their faithful thoughts): **wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God** (from the present tense, is not ashamed, and

especially from the clause which follows, it is probable, as Bleek has well remarked, that the Writer intends not merely to adduce that God did once call Himself their God, but that he is *now* not ashamed to be so called, they enduring and abiding with Him where He is: in the same sense in which our Lord adduces the same circumstance, Matt. xxii. 31 ff. See below): **for He prepared for them a city** (permanent and eternal, in contrast to the tents in which they wandered. There are two ways of understanding this clause: 1) to take the verb *asa* pluperfect, “for God had prepared for them a city.” 2) God is not ashamed of them, nor to be called their God: and we find proof of this not only in His thus naming Himself, but in His *preparing* for them a city: the home for which they yearned: He did not deceive their hopes, but acted as their God by verifying those hopes. Thus, and thus only, does the *preparing* keep its proper emphasis, and the past tense its proper time: *they looked for a city*: and God refused not to be called their God, for *He prepared* for them that city, verified those their hopes. And if we ask for the *interpretation* of this *preparing*, I answer, in the preparation of the way of Christ, and bringing in salvation by Him, of which salvation they in their anticipation of faith were partakers John viii. 56).

17–31.] Having spoken thus generally of the faith of the patriarchs, he returns to *individual instances*, and begins again with Abraham, recounting the severest test to which his faith was put. Chrysostom remarks, that he here proceeds to a far greater triumph of faith, in a matter in which God seemed to contradict Himself, and faith contended with faith, and command with promise. Compare Eccl. xliv. 20; Wisd. x. 5; 1 Macc. ii. 52; James ii. 21. **By faith Abraham hath offered** (perfect tense, as if the work and its praise were yet enduring) **Isaac when tempted: and** (the **and** rises into climax: not only Abraham offered Isaac, but&c.) **he that had accepted the promises** (more than “*had* the promises,” ch. vii. 6; he had as it were with open arms accepted and taken to himself each and all of the promises, the possession of Canaan, the multiplication of his seed, the blessing of all nations in his seed) **was offering** (now the Writer transforms the time into the purely temporal and strict one—he was in the act of offering—the work was begun) **his only begotten, he to whom** (this refers, not to Isaac, as many Commentators and our A.V. “*of whom* it was said,” but to Abraham, the immediate antecedent in the text, and the immediately resumed subject, after the relative clause, “*accounting, &c.*”) **it was spoken** (by God), **In Isaac shall thy seed be called** (in Isaac, through and in descent from him, shall thy seed be called thy seed: only Isaac’s descendants shall be known as Abraham’s seed):

19.] (reason of this paradoxical conduct: because Abraham’s faith was able, in anticipation, to clear the suspicion of God’s faithfulness by the suggestion of His power. He could and would make a way to the keeping of His own promise) **reckoning that God is** (not, *was*, see below) **able to raise** (no supply of ‘*him*’ is admissible, as mistakenly inserted by many Commentators, and even by the A.V. It was not God’s power to raise *Isaac*, but God’s power, generally, to raise from the dead, that Abraham believed) **even from [among] the dead; from whence** (i. e. from the dead) **he also (besides the conviction in his mind) received him back in a parable** (figuratively.—I have discussed at length in my Greek Test. the various interpretations, and seen cause to adhere to this, the ordinary one. We may with reason ask, *What was the figure or parable?* if it is meant merely, that though not actually, yet in some sense, Abraham received Isaac from the dead, would not “*so to speak,*” or a similar phrase, be the more obvious way of expressing this? The true identification of the *parable* is I am persuaded to be found in the figure under which Isaac was sacrificed, viz. the ram, as already hinted by Chrysostom. Abraham virtually sacrificed his son: God designated Isaac for the burnt-offering, but provided a ram in his stead. Under the figure of that ram, Isaac was slain, being received back by his father in his proper person, risen from that death which he had undergone in a *figure or parable*, in, under the figure of the ram).

20.] By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau even concerning things future (or, *concerning things future also*,—blessed them concerning not only things present, but things future. Jacob is named before Esau, as the worthier and more important. in the theocratic sense; perhaps also as having gained the greater portion of the blessing).

21.] By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph (the faith consisted in transposing his hands wittingly, laying the right hand on the head of the younger, Ephraim, who was to become the greater tribe); **and he worshipped** (this incident is not connected with the other, but took place before it, on another occasion, when Jacob made Joseph swear to him that he would bury him with his fathers, and not in Egypt, Gen. xlvi. 31. Perhaps the Writer inverts, the order of the two, to bring the two acts of blessing, that of Isaac and that of Jacob, together. This act of worship was one of faith, inasmuch as it was connected with a command, the point of which was, God’s promise respecting the land of Canaan. And the faith was shewn by the turning of, his aged and dying body in a posture of thankful adoration) **on the top of his staff** (an incalculable quantity of idolatrous nonsense has been written on these words by Roman-Catholic Commentators, taking as their starting-point the rendering of the Vulgate, “and adored the top of his staff,” and thence deriving an argument for the worship of images, assuming that there was an image or symbol of power upon *Joseph’s* staff, to which they apply the words. But first, it must be *Jacob’s*, not Joseph’s staff, which is intended, as remarked by Augustine. In his comment on the place, he has nothing of adoring the staff or the top of the staff. What Jerome thought of such an idea, is plainly seen: for he derides it, and treats it simply as a mistranslation of the Hebrew, which he explains as it stands in our A.V. Chrysostom has the idea, but not a word of the *image*: thinks that Jacob worshipped the power, symbolized by Joseph. I will only cite the inference from the above ancient data in Cornelius-a-Lapide, as most instructive regarding the grounds on which age after age the chief abominations of the church of Rome have been introduced: “Rightly therefore do the Fathers of the second Nicene Council prove, from this adoration of Joseph’s staff, the adoration and culture of images, and teach that it does not stop with the image, but is referred

and passed on to its prototype." The real question with regard to the passage is confined within very narrow limits. The same Hebrew word signifies a *staff*, or a *bed*, according as it is pointed. And, as there are no points in the ancient Hebrew texts, it is an open question, which meaning we are to take. The Septuagint have taken "staff," though, as Jerome notices, they have rendered the same word "*bed*" in Gen. xlvi. 2, two verses after. Our A.V. has taken this latter: "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." And so almost all the moderns agree in taking it. Stuart, it is true, has argued at some length for the meaning "staff," on the ground that the eastern beds have no head properly so called, being merely a carpet or rag spread on the ground. But he has in his mind in thus objecting, a bed *stead*, not a bed. The head of a bed, be it where or what it may, is that part of it where the person's head lies; and Delitzsch has made it probable, that Jacob turned himself in his bed so as to lay his face to the pillow: compare Isa. xxxviii. 2. If the 'staff' is to be taken, then it must be his own, not Joseph's staff, which is indicated, and the gesture might have had a meaning correspondent to the thought in Gen. xxii. 10, "*with my staff I passed this Jordan;*" viz. the recognition of that God who had supported him through life, and declaration of his having done with all human supports. It is due to the better Roman-Catholic Commentators, such as Estius and Justiniani, to say, that no such inference as that cited above is to be found in them. Some have expressed surprise that no mention is made of the far more important blessings of the twelve sons of Jacob in Gen. xlvi. But Delitzsch says well, "He plucks, so to speak, only the flowers which stand by his way, and leaves the whole meadow-full to his readers".

22.] By faith Joseph, when dying, made mention of the exodus (by this time technically so known, from the title of the second book of Moses) **of the sons of Israel; and commanded concerning his bones** (even Joseph, who had attained such eminence and power in Egypt, did not account it his country, but in faith spoke of the promise of God as certain, Gen. i. 24, and realized it so as to enjoin the removal of his own remains when it should come to pass).

23.] Now the Writer passes on to Exodus, and its chief example, Moses, who even in his preservation by his parents was the child of faith. **By faith Moses, when born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw the child was comely; and they feared not the command of the king** (to destroy all the male children, Exod. i. 22, faith was, loving trust in God who had given them so fair a child, which led them to perform, as far as in them lay, the duties of parents to it, and not the cruel part which the tyrant prescribed). **24–28.] The faith of Moses when come to man's estate. By faith Moses, when grown up** (literally, *become great*. The expression is from the Greek of the passage in Exodus), **refused to be called son of a (or, the) daughter of Pharaoh** (there is no record in the Old Test. of this refusal of Moses: but the fact of the adoption was matter of Jewish traditional belief: and the refusal is fairly gathered from his whole conduct); **choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to possess a temporary enjoyment of sin; esteeming** (this comes in with a slightly ratiocinative force—"esteeming, as he did") **the reproach of Christ** (what is this? Certainly not, with some, merely reproach similar to that of Christ: nor again does the more usual explanation, reproach *on account of Christ*, satisfy the meaning; nor even the modification of it which makes Moses thus choose, from a principle of faith in the Messiah to come. Far better is Bleek, "reproach which Christ in his own person, and has to members." And in this view, we may say, that all Israel's reproach was Christ's reproach: Israel typified Christ: all Israel's sufferings as the people of God were Christ's sufferings, not only by anticipation in type, but, by that inclusion in Christ which they, His members before the Head was revealed, possessed in common with us. Christ was ever present in and among God's people: and thus De Wette well and finely says here, "The Writer calls the reproach which Moses suffered, the reproach of Christ, as Paul, 2 Cor. i. 5; Col. i. 24, calls the sufferings of Christians the sufferings of Christ, i.e. of Christ dwelling, striving, suffering, in his Church as in His body; to which this reproach is referred according to the idea of the unity of the Old and New Testaments, and of the eternal Christ [the Logos] already living and reigning in the former") **greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked** (the verb means, "so to look at any thing, as to be by waiting for it, or generally by the regard of it, determined or strengthened in a course of action") **to the recompence of reward** (viz. the great eternal reward spoken of vv. 39 f.: not the possession of Canaan merely)

27.] By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king (*when?* This is much disputed. Was it when he fled after the murder of the Egyptian? or when he left Egypt with the children of Israel? Against the latter, it seems a decisive objection, that the Exodus was made, not in defiance of the king of Egypt, but with his consent, and at his urgent instance. It is also a lesser objection to it, that thus the chronological order is broken, the next particular, the institution of the Passover, having taken place previously to the Exodus. A third objection is, and one not easily got over, that the singular, *he left* Egypt, cannot well be referred to an event in Israel's history, but must refer to the personal history of Moses. Otherwise we should expect "*he crossed,*" and not "*they crossed,*" below in ver. 29, Regard being had to these objections, I cannot but think that to understand this, of the Exodus is altogether impossible. It must then refer to the former flight. And this is the view of all the ancient expositors: and of many among the moderns. But we are here met by a startling difficulty. In Exod. ii. 14, we read that on finding that his slaying of the Egyptian was known, "*Moses was afraid:*" here we read, "*not fearing the wrath of the king.*" Were it not for this difficulty, we may ly say that the other interpretation would never have been thought of; but standing as it does, it is no wonder that it has driven Commentators to another resource. Still, if owing to other circumstances in the text it is, as we have seen it to be, necessary to refer it to that first leaving of Egypt, we have no right to set those aside on account of this difficulty: rather should we say that there must be some solution of it, however difficult to find. In attempting to give a solution, I may confess that I see as yet no *satisfactory* one. It may be that the truth is, that though the fact of his flight was the effect of his fear, the same flight itself, the dereliction of Egypt and reserving himself for farther action, shewed that that fear did not possess nor bear him away. But on any solution, the difficulty remains. Had it stood "*fearing,*" instead of **not fearing**,

the whole would have been plain enough: "when he feared the anger of the king"): **for he endured, as seeing the invisible One** (or, "the King who is invisible." compare 1 Tim. i. 17).

28.] By faith he hath celebrated (the perfect is used, on account of the Passover being 2 still enduring feast) **the Passover** (not as some interpret, in faith of the Redeemer to come, which point does not enter into consideration here: but that by faith which was to him the evidence of things unseen, viz. of the promise that the Destroyer should *pass over* and not hurt them), **and the effusion of the blood** (viz. of the blood of the paschal lamb on the lintel and door-posts. This word is ordinarily used of those cases where the blood was sprinkled round the altar, e.g. Lev. i. 5; vi. 32, &c. So that the word applies well to this ordinance, where the blood was sprinkled by means of a bunch of hyssop), **that he who destroyed the firstborn might not touch them. them**, of a subject not before expressed, is to be understood out of the context as meaning the Israelites, who sprinkled the blood. It prepares the way for the change into the plural, at the next verse.

29.] By faith they (see above) **crossed the Red sea as through dry land: of which the Egyptians making experiment were swallowed up.**

30.] A second example of the strength of faith in Israel generally. By faith (of Israel, who obeyed the command of Joshua through all the days, which to the unbeliever would seem irrational. Chrysostom, says, "For there is no power in the sound of a trumpet to throw down stones, even if a man go on blowing for a thousand years: but faith can do all things") **the Walls of Jericho fell** (see Josh. vi. 5, 20), **having been compassed about** (see the narrative in Josh. vi.) **during seven days.**

31.] The last example is one connected with the taking of Jericho, just mentioned. **By faith** (shewn in her confession, Josh. ii. 9, "I know that Jehovah hath given you the land:" and ver. 11, "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath") **Rahab the harlot** (not to be softened into *an innkeeper*, as some have done. Clement of Rome devotes to her a whole chapter of his Epistle to the Corinthians, and has no idea of her other than as an harlot. See note, Matt. i. 5) **did not perish with them who were disobedient** (the inhabitants of Jericho were disobedient to the will of God manifested by the signs and wonders which he had wrought for Israel: as is implied by Rahab's speech, Josh. ii. 9–12), **having received** (viz. to her house: they *lodged there*, Josh. ii. 1) **the spies** (sent by Joshua to Jericho, Josh. ii. 1) **with peace** (so that they had nothing hostile to fear from her). On the introduction of Rahab in James ii. 25, as an example of justification by works, see note there.

32–40.] The Writer breaks off, feel-ing that such an illustration of faith by examples would be endless, and *gathers up those many which remain in one.*

32.] And what say I yet (more, any) further? for the time (which might be reasonable for writing an epistle) **will fail me narrating** (if I narrate) **concerning Gideon** (see Judges vi.–viii.), and **Barak** (Judges iv. v. Barak was not so strong in faith as he might have been, though he did believe and go to the fight, and triumph: see Judg. iv. 8, 9), **and Samson** (Judges xiii.–xvi.), **and Jephthah** (Judges xi. l.–xii, 7); **and David, and Samuel, and of the prophets; who** (does not strictly identify the antecedents: for many of the actions which follow were done by others than those previously mentioned) **through faith (through faith**, instead of "*by faith*," for the first time in the chapter, suits perhaps better the miscellaneous verbs of predication which follow, e.g. *quenched the violence of fire*) **subdued kingdoms** (the acts referred to may be Gideon's victory over the Midianites Judges vii.], Barak's over the Canaanites [ib. iv.], Samson's over the Philistines [ib. xiv. ff.], Jephthah's over the Ammonites [ib. ix.], David's over the Philistines [2 Sam. v. 17–25; viii. 1; xxi. 15 ff.], Moabites, Syrians, Edomites [ib. viii. 2 ff.], Ammonites [ib. x. xii. 26 ff.]), **wrought righteousness** (so Samuel, the righteous judge, 1 Sam. xii. 3, 4; David, the righteous king, 2 Sam. viii., 15; 1 Chron. xviii., 14: and indeed in a wide sense all of them, see Jer. xxiii. 5; Ezek. xlvi. 9), **obtained promises** (the words are capable of two senses: 1) got from God spoken promises, as e.g. the prophets: or 2) obtained the fulfilment of promises. 1) is taken by Chrysostom [referring it to the promise to David that his seed should sit on his throne], and others. But it seems to me altogether improbable that the Writer should thus illustrate faith by a fact which, though it may have accompanied faith in the recipient, was certainly no fruit or direct triumph of it: and that in the face of such sayings as Josh. xxi. 45; 1 Kings viii. 56, and of Gideon's trials of God. The objection which is brought against 2), that it is inconsistent with "*not having received the promises*," ver. 13, and with "*received not the promise*," ver. 39, is very simply answered: it is not said that they obtained **the promises**, or **the promise**, but anarthrously: they obtained promises, but not **the promises** which were yet future. And so most Commentators), **stopped the mouths of lions** (referring principally, it may be, to Daniel, of whom it is said, Dan. vi. 22, that God sent his angel and stopped the mouths of the lions: where notice also the addition "*because he believed in his God.*" But reference may be also to Samson, Judges xiv. 6, and David, 1 Sam. xvii. 34: and I may add, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, 2 Sam. xxiii. 20; 1 Chron. xi. 22),

34.] quenched the power of fire (so the three companions of Daniel,—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Dan. iii. Theophylact says, "He does not say, extinguished *fire*, but *the power of fire*, which is even greater: though it remained kindled, yet it had no power against them to burn them." It is said of them, 1 Macc. ii. 59, that they "*by believing were saved out of the flame.*" Delitzsch reminds us that one of the two martyrs at Brussels, Henry Voes and Joh. Esche, when the flames of the faggots rose round him, said, that it felt to him as if they were strewing roses under him), **escaped the edge** (literally, **mouths**, or **edges**, plural, because the Writer has various examples in mind) **of the sword** (e. g. David from Saul, 1 Sam. xviii.

11; xix. 10, 12; xxi. 10: Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 1 ff.: Elisha, 2 Kings vi 14 ff., 31 ff.: Jeremiah, Baruch, Jer. xxxvi. 26: Ebedmelech, Jer. xxxviii. 8 ff., compared with xxxix. 18), **were made strong out of weakness** (so Samson, after his hair grew, Judges xvi. 28 ff.: David, who ends so many of his plaintive psalms with jubilant thanksgiving: Hezekiah, who after deadly sickness was restored to fifteen years of health, 2 Kings xx.; Isa. xxxviii. The ancient expositors refer the words, not so probably, to the strengthening of Israel after the return from the captivity), **were made strong in war** (Theodoret says, "Both those mentioned before, and the sons of Mattathias, Judas, and Jonathan, and Simon." It is not improbable that these later glories of the faith were also before the Writer's mind: they unquestionably are in the next verse), **put to flight armies of aliens** (the word is common in the Septuagint, of Gentiles, aliens from God's people. The reference of the fact may be general, to many who have preceded: but I should rather regard it as describing the Maccabean victories. Delitzsch would understand all from "*escaped the edge of the sword*" of those times; the escape of Mattathias and his sons into the mountains, the increase and success of the little band that strengthened itself in God, the first victories of Judas Maccabæus over Apollonius, Seron, and others, the formal and victorious war of the Asmonæan heroes with the Syrians and neighbouring people. "That the Writer," he continues, "should recognize these as illustrious deeds of faith, is no wonder. In our times indeed it is the custom to represent the mighty revival of the Maccabæan period rather as human than divine, rather as patriotic and popular than theocratic and national: but the book of Daniel shews us, in prophetic delineation of that time, the holy people of the Most High, conflicting with the atheistic and antichristian prince of this world, and ascribes to this conflict the highest imaginable importance in reference to the sacred history. Therefore I hold that these clauses pass beyond '*the prophets*,' and over the book of Daniel to the first of Maccabees, which in the Septuagint is attached to it: which indeed is generally acknowledged with regard to the two last clauses, and is the more certain because the unusual word here used for armies, as well as that for aliens, are of frequent occurrence in the first book of Maccabees." And perhaps, after all, this may be the true view),

35.] Women received their dead by (out of, by means of, their reception springing out of it as its cause) **resurrection** (not, *the resurrection*: see below. The cases alluded to seem to be those of the widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 17 ff., and the Shunamite, 2 Kings iv. 17 ff., whose sons were raised, the former by Elijah, the latter by Elisha. The faith must be that of the women themselves, the subject of the sentence, not merely that in the prophets): **but** (for the contrast, see below) **others were broken on the wheel** (the case especially referred to is that of Eleazar, 2 Macc. vi. 18–end; and the *tympanum* here mentioned seems to have been an instrument like a wheel or drum-head, on which the victim was stretched and scourged to death. Josephus makes Eleazar say to Antiochus, "*Now then prepare thy wheel*".... And in the deaths of the seven others, which are related differently from the account in 2 Macc. vii., we read of the first [4 Macc. ix. 12], "*they put him upon the wheel*," and similarly of several of the others), **not accepting the deliverance** (offered to them: see in the deaths of the seven brethren, 2 Macc. vii. Eleazar himself says, 2 Macc. vi. 30, "*Whereas I might have been delivered from death, I now endure sore pain, &c.*"), **that they might obtain a better resurrection** (there can, I think, be little doubt that Chrysostom's explanation of **better** is right,—better, i.e. not such as the dead of the women before mentioned. Those sons were raised by a kind of resurrection to a life which should again end in death: but these expected a glorious resurrection to endless life. See 2 Macc. vii. 9, "*The King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for this law, unto everlasting life:*" also ib. vv. 11, 14, 20, 23, 36. Hence we may perhaps understand the **others again**, distinguishing these even higher triumphs of faith from these former): **others again had trial of cruel mockings** (so the A.V. well: for the word must mean insult accompanied with cruelty, judging from its use in the place here referred to, viz. 2 Macc. vii. 7, 10. See also 1 Macc. ix. 26) **and of scourgings** (see 2 Macc. as before), **yea, moreover of bonds and prison** (so Jonathan, 1 Macc. xiii. 12. But perhaps he now speaks more e.g. of Hanani, 2 Chron. xvi. 10, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, 1 Kings xxii. 26, and Jeremiah, Jer. xxxii. 2, 3, &c.): **they were stoned** (so Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20–22, referred to by our Lord, Luke xi. 51, Matt. xxviii. 35, 'There was a tradition, reported by Tertullian and other fathers, that Jeremiah was stoned at Daphne in Egypt, by the people: and perhaps the Writer refers to this also. It cannot refer still to the Maccabæan times, seeing that stoning not a Greek but purely Jewish punishment. Some imagine it to refer to Naboth, 1 Kings xxi.: but this is hardly probable), **they were sawn asunder** (the traditional death of Isaiah at the hands of king Manasseh. There seems no reason to doubt, that this tradition was known in the apostolic times: Jerome calls it a "most certain tradition among the Jews," and mentions the general reference of these words to it by Christians. The punishment was used sometimes in the case of captives in war: see 2 Sam. xii. 31, 1 Chron. xx, 3), **were tempted** (certainly it is surprising, to meet with so mild a word in the midst of torments and ways of dreadful death. Our surprise is not much mitigated by the sense given, e.g. by Stuart, "temptations presented by persecutors to the victims of their torture, in order to induce them to forsake their religion, and worship the gods of the idolaters." And this surprise having been all but universally felt, various have been the conjectures resorted to. Some have been for leaving out the word altogether. And other proposals have been made, consisting of the substitution of other Greek words somewhat like this one, and bearing the sense of *were burned*, or *were mutilated*, &c. As it stands, I do not see how any appropriate meaning can be given to the mere enduring of temptation, placed as it is between being sawn asunder and dying by the sword), **died in the murder of the sword** (i. e. were slain by the sword: see reff. One prophet only perished by the sword in the kingdom of Judah, viz. Urijah, Jer. xxvi. 23: but under Israel it is said, 1 Kings xix. 10, "They [the house of Omri] have slain thy prophets with the sword." Perhaps the Maccabæan persecutions may again be before the Writer's mind: see 2 Macc. vii. 4. Chrysostom says beautifully, "What means this? what sayest thou? Some escaped the edge of the sword, and some died in the murder of the sword? what does this mean? which praisest thou? which admirest thou? the last, or the first? Yea, he replies, both one and the other: for double are the wonders of faith: it both does great things, and it suffers great things without seeming to: suffer any thing"):

37 b, 38.] Examples of those who, though not put to violent death, lived lives of apparent wretchedness in the endurance of faith. **They wandered about in sheepskins** (the garment spoken of was the skin of any small kine with the hair on. The Septuagint uses the word for Elijah's garment, to whom the allusion seems principally to be) **and goatskins** (this, coming after *sheepskins*, which may mean the same, has surprised some, and has seemed to them a mere gloss on that word. Perhaps the Writer regarded the former as merely the sheepskin, and mentioned the other because goats were as often kept and their skin as often worn); **destitute, afflicted, in misery** (see ver. 25);

38.] **of whom** (viz. those who wandered about as in ver. 37: for the construction is resumed below, and in reference to these same persons. **These all** first occurs in the next verse) **the world was not worthy** (the world, by casting them out and persecuting them, proved that it was not fit to have them in it: condemned itself, in condemning them); **wandering in deserts, and mountains, and caves, and the chinks of the earth** (the Holy Land was especially calculated, by its geological formation, and its wildernesses, to afford shelter to persecuted persons: so did to a hundred of the Lord's prophets whom Obadiah hid by fifty in a cave, 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13; to Elijah, ib. xix. 9, 13; to Mattathias and his sons, who fled to the mountains 1 Macc. ii, 28 f., and many others in the wilderness: to Judas Maccabaeus, who fled with others *into the wilderness* and there lived *in the mountains*, like the wild beasts, 2 Macc. v. 27. See also ib. vi. 11, x. 6).

39.] **And these all** ("these, every one of them." All, viz. all that have been named or referred to throughout the chapter: not only those *others* since ver. 35), **borne witness to by their faith** (the emphasis is on *being borne witness to*, not on *by their faith*: and the sense is rather, "*though* borne witness to," than "*being*" or "*because*, borne witness to"), **did not receive the promise** (many promises indeed they did receive, ver. 33: but not THE PROMISE, the promise of final salvation, or as it is called, ch. ix. 15, "*the promise of the eternal inheritance:*" the perfection, to which without us they were not to attain. "But," says Delitzsch, "do we not read ch. vi. 15, of Abraham, *he obtained the promise?* Certainly, he has obtained the promise, yet not this side the grave, but, as we there maintained, in his life on the other side the grave: the general and actual salvation of the New Test. is, in their heavenly estate, the joy of the patriarchs. And this view is confirmed by looking forward to ch. xii., where the Old Test. believers translated into heaven are called the '*spirits of just men made perfect*,' or at all events are included in that designation. And another question arises. It is said of the Old Test. saints, that they did not obtain the promise: but is it not plain, from ch. x. 36, that *the obtaining the promise* is for us also a thing future? Doubtless, but with a significant difference. For them, final salvation was a thing purely future: for us, it is a thing present as well as future: present, in that it is once for all brought about by Christ's offering of Himself,—future, inasmuch as the unfolding of all the fulness of that which we possess, and the taking possession of it, when unfolded in its fulness, is for us yet to come: compare ch. ix. 28 with x. 14"),

40.] **God having provided** (foreseen from afar)

concerning us (viz. the Writer and his readers, as belonging to the New Test. church) **something better** (what is this? The Fathers generally interpret it of the ultimate state of glorious perfection, which shall only then come in, when all the number of the elect shall be accomplished. On this view, as Delitzsch says, the **something better** would consist in this, that the history of mankind has not been cut short, as it would have been if the ancients had received the promise in this sense, but has been continued for us to partake of our present privileges under the New Test. But, he continues, this narrow acceptance of the promise, as referring to the last things only, has against it not only what is said of Abraham in ch. vi. 15, that he "*obtained the promise,*" but also the whole spirit of the Epistle, which regards final salvation as brought in with the propitiation of Christ, and the "*end of the days*" as begun with His first Advent. The Writer cannot be ignoring this all-inclusive beginning of the New Test. fulfilment of the promises, in attributing to us *something better* than the Old Test. believers had. And consequently we must understand by the expression, something better than they had, viz. the enjoyment, here, of the fulfilment of the promise, which they never had here, and only have there since Christ's descent into Hades and ascension into Heaven. It is that "*something better*" for which the Lord felicitates his disciples, Matt. xiii. 17, the revelation of the Son of God, ch. i. 1, the "*salvation*" of ch. ii. 3), **that they should not apart from us be made perfect** (the design of God in this provision of something better for us was, that they, the Old Test. saints, should not be perfected without us, i.e. independently of the New Test. salvation of which we are partakers,—cut off from Christ's universal Church, of which we are members. But we read, ch. xii. 23, of them as "*made perfect*" now. And therefore the Writer implies, as indeed ch. x. 14 seems to testify, that the Advent and work of Christ has changed the estate of the Old Test. Fathers and saints into great and perfect bliss; an inference which is forced on us by many other places in Scripture. So that their perfection was dependent on our perfection: their and our perfection was all brought in at the same time, when Christ "*by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*" So that the result with regard to them is, that their spirits, from the time when Christ descended into Hades and ascended up into heaven, enjoy heavenly blessedness, and are waiting, with all who have followed their glorified High Priest within the veil, for the resurrection of their bodies, the Regeneration, the renovation of all things. This thought naturally leads on to the opening verses of the next chapter).

Hebrews: Chapter 12

CHAP. XII. 1–11.] EXHORTATION, mixed with reproof, on looking back at all these witnesses, and looking also to Jesus, who has come to glory through suffering, not to faint in the conflict with sin; nor to forget the love of our Father, who visits us with chastisement that we may bring forth the fruit of righteousness. This exhortation was begun at ch. x. 19, and broken off by the insertion of all those examples of the nature and triumphs of faith. It is now resumed, having, so to speak, accumulated new momentum by the interruption, and is pressed home directly on the readers.

1.] Wherfore (the word used is one of earnest and solemn inference;—“these things then being so...”) **we also** (as well as those just enumerated), **having so great a cloud** (see below) of **witnesses surrounding us** (in order to understand this aright, we must bear in mind both the similitude here used, and the connexion with the preceding chapter. “This verse is altogether made up of words derived from the games,” says Hammond. And this being so, who can help referring this cloud of witnesses which surrounds us to the scene in the games which is depicted, and regarding them as lookers on while our race is run? Whoever denies such reference, misses, it seems to me, the very point of the sense. But even thus we have not exhausted the meaning of the word **witnesses**. It is improbable, as Delitzsch well observes, that: the Writer should have used the word “*witnesses*” so closely upon “*bore witness to*,” ch. xi, 39, without any reference to that idea. See also ib. vv. 2, 4, 5, So that we can hardly help giving to ‘*witnesses*’ a sense not confined to their” looking on upon us, but extending to their ethical condition of witnesses for the faith. But we may notice, that Delitzsch in contending for this double sense, has in fact a triple reference of the word to justify: they are *bore witness to*, they have their *testimony*, ch. xi, 5: and by this they become *witnesses*: and they carry out that office in being witnesses “of our conflict here below. And now the propriety of the other words used at once appears. **cloud**, not only an immense multitude, and that number as it were pressing us all around as the spectators did the combatants in the circus—but also fitly compared to a cloud from the fact of its being *above us*, they looking on from that heavenly bliss which they entered at Christ’s triumph. So that the words must be taken as distinctly so far implying community between the church triumphant and the church below, that they who have entered into heavenly rest are conscious of what passes among ourselves. Any interpretation short of this leaves the exhortation here tame and without point. If they are merely quasi-witnesses, merely witnesses in a metaphor, the motive, as far as this clause supplies one, is gone. The best note on the whole idea and imagery is that of Schlichting: “He introduces us as it were into an immense theatre, where a vast crowd of spectators has assembled, which fills all the benches and spaces, seeming like a dense cloud poured around those contending in the middle. Before the eyes of such a multitude, and so many spectators, he represents us contending. Now as of old such a multitude of spectators added courage to the combatants, and was a great stimulus to use every effort for victory: so to us also, so many witnesses, who also themselves have toiled in the same conflict, ought to add alacrity, and cause us to run with all our force the race which we have begun. And he calls them *witnesses*, not only in a figure, allusive to the spectators of a contest, as we have said, who are witnesses of the prowess of those who contend; but, and much more, because they witness concerning God and His goodness and justice, and all as with one mouth declare that God is, and is a rewarder of those who seek Him: that with Him, as the Chief Lord of the games, there is laid up a prize for earnest contenders: that He is true in His promises; that even after death He can render those happy who for His sake have given their lives. For, thirdly, they are specially to be understood in this place by the name, who by their blood, witness to the faithfulness and goodness of God. Whence they are par excellence called *martyrs*, i.e. *witnesses*”),

laying aside all superfluous weight (the word means, *any superfluous mass or burden*. It is used doubtless here with direct reference to athletes, who before running trained themselves so as to get rid of all superfluous flesh: and also of weight accessory from without, as well as of weight carried on the person. So that the word may be taken of every weight of every kind which may weigh down the runner. Though, on account of what follows, I should understand it rather of weight *of* the person than weight *on* the person. See below), **and sin, which doth naturally enwrap** (the word thus rendered is used only here in all Greek literature, and is therefore somewhat difficult to interpret. The sum of what I have said on it in my Greek Test. is this, that it may best be understood “*easily surrounding*.” And so the A.V., “which doth so easily beset us:” and by far the greater part of expositors, some with, some without the sense of active hostility. The word being thus taken, the various acceptations of the similitude intended are well summed up by Bleek: we must understand **sin** either us our inner propensity to sin, which clings fast to us, and will not part from us: or as a cumbersome garment girding us round and hindering us from running, or personified, as an adversary, who surrounds us on all sides, and waylays us to make us his prey; or generally, as something which lies about us and is ever ready to catch us: or which is ever from all sides standing in the way so as to entangle and impede our course. But the connexion with the verb, **laying aside**, which evidently Delitzsch feels, seems to me fatal to his view, indeed to all views except that which makes **sin to lie about us, as a garment, or beset us, as an inward propensity**. Of both these **laying aside** may be said; of the former literally, of the latter figuratively. And in choosing between these two, I have no hesitation in preferring the former. The Writer is speaking of our *race*: and having expected us to lay aside all superfluous weight of body, which the athletes did, he passes to their other lightening for the race, viz., *stripping naked*, and exhorts us to put off sin, which lies so easily about us. Most likely perhaps the word **sin** alludes especially, though it need not exclusively, to apostasy. There does not seem to be any allusion to the different sins which may, in the sense now so common, and originally derived from this passage in A.V., “*beset*” various persons: though, of course, such an *application* of the passage is quite admissible), **let us through** (not merely ‘*with*,’ although we must so express ourselves in an English version, but as *the state in, by means of which*) **endurance run the race set before us**,

2.] looking unto (so A.V. very exactly. There does not appear to be in the word here used any intimation of looking *off from*

every thing else unto, as sometimes asserted) **the Leader** (one who precedes others by his example, they following him. But see note on ch. ii, 10. *Author* seems the best English word here, as there) **and Perfecter** (this is variously interpreted. The most likely meaning is that *H e perfected the faith*, inasmuch as He perfected faith in his own person and example: *but He perfected the faith* also, inasmuch as He became the Author of perfect salvation to them that obey Him. His going before us in faith has made faith possible for us: His perfecting faith in his own person and example, has made faith effectual for us) **of the faith** (viz. that faith of which we have been speaking through ch. xi.: and thus rather “*the faith*” than “*our faith*,” which latter is liable to the mistake so often made in English, viz. to being taken us if it meant *faith in us*, so that Jesus should be said to be “author and finisher” of each individual Christian’s faith which he has within him. The word here may be rendered merely “*faith*” without the article; but it would seem most probable that the article here used in the original, whereas it was not throughout ch. xi., is intended to have a definite force. Besides which, the ascription of faith to our Lord is so plain in our Epistle, compare ch. ii. 13; iii. 2, that we must not seem to exclude this sense in our rendering, which we certainly do by “*our faith*:” whereas “*the faith*” includes both, and satisfies that which follows, in which His own example of endurance in prospect of triumph is set before us), [**even**] **Jesus, who for** (literally, **instead of**: see below) **the joy set before Him** (the words of the original thus rendered have been otherwise interpreted both by ancients and moderns. The ancient Syriac version, Beza, and others, take it to mean, “*instead of the joy which He had before His incarnation*. ” But this, though not an incorrect rendering, seems to me doubly objectionable. First, which many have noticed, *joy* which He already had could not well be designated as *set before Him*: and then, which I have not seen noticed, the term **joy** can hardly be used of a state of bliss in which one already is, a quiescent or pre-existent joy, but more naturally applies to joy prompted by some cause of active rejoicing. Then another modification of this same view is found in Chrysostom, viz., that the preferable alternative of escaping the cross was before Him, and He might have taken it, if He would. And so Luther, Calvin, and others. But this again, though it might satisfy the “*set before Him*,” falls short of the above sense maintained for *joy*. Erasmus and others explain it, that He *despised the joys of this life*. This makes **joy** identical with **pleasure**, besides giving a low and unworthy sense to the *joy set before Him*, in making it to mean the pleasures of this life. The sense given above, “for the joy set before Him,” i.e. as in comparison with, as in exchange for, the joy which was to come after in the day of His triumph, is adopted by most Commentators,

and is fully borne out both by usage, and the contest) **endured crucifixion, despising shame** (or, “*the shame*:” Dut most probably every kind of shame, even to that of the shameful death which He died), **and is set down** (the perfect tense gives the state of triumph as it now endures, having happened) **on the right hand of the throne of God** (i. e. on the throne of God, at His right hand: see on ch. viii. 1; and compare Rev. iii. 21).

3.] For (meaning, “and there is reason in what I say;” *looking to Him*, for He like yourselves had much and continual conflict with the sinners of His day) **compare** (with yourselves: think on, by way of comparison: “consider Him, as set in comparison with yourselves”) **Him who hath endured** (*perfect* again, to set before them Christ as not merely a character of the past, but one ever present) **such contradiction** (the *contradiction* need not be confined to *words*, but may also be in *deeds*) **by the sinners against Himself** (the A.V. is ambiguous: in it, the sentence may mean either “*the contradiction of sinners against Himself*,” “*against*” being taken with “*contradiction*,” which is wrong,—or “*the contradiction of sinners against Himself*,” “*against*” being taken with “*sinners*,” which is right. In the text, the ambiguity is removed), **that ye weary not, fainting in your souls.**

4.] Bengel’s remark, which De Wette charges with pedantry, “from the *race* he comes to *boxing*, as Paul, 1 Cor. ix, 26,” is nevertheless a just one. **Not yet have ye resisted unto blood** (many take this to mean, have not yet sacrificed your lives: so Chrysostom, “ye have undergone spoiling of your goods, defamation, banishment, but not yet this” And it may be so: but 1 would rather abide by the idea of the pugilistic figure being intended, and apply **unto blood** to the figure, not to the interpretation. Seneca says: “An athlete cannot bring great courage to the contest who has never been bruised. He who has seen his own blood, whose teeth have crashed beneath the fist, he who has been thrown and borne the weight of his adversary on him, and has not been prostrated in his spirit, who as often as he has fallen has risen more indomitable in spirit, he it is who comes down to the fight with great hope.” On the relation of such passages as this to the date of the Epistle, see in the Introduction, §ii, 29 ff.), **contending against sin** (personified, as an adversary: not to be limited in its meaning to sin in themselves, or to sin in their persecutors, but understood of both. Delitzsch, who would confine it to the latter, says that it was not sin in themselves which would *shed* their blood, but rather, which would *spare* its being shed. Yes, and for this very reason the *resisting* that sin of unfaithfulness which would lead them to *spare* their blood, would, if carried far enough, lead to the shedding of it. Similarly, the sin in their persecutors, which they were to resist, would, if yielded to, spare their blood by seducing them into apostasy).

5, 6.] And ye have completely forgotten (or, **have ye completely forgotten...?** but the affirmative form is more probable than the interrogative) **the exhortation, the which** (that kind of exhortation, of which the following is a specimen) **discourses with you as with sons**, **My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when corrected by Him** (in the Hebrew, “and have no aversion to His correction”): **for whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, yea, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth** (this clause is very different in the Hebrew, and our English Bible: “*even as a father the son in whom he delighteth*.” See on the difference in my Greek Test. **Receiveth**, i.e. takes to him as a veritable son, receives in his heart and cherishes).

7, 8.] Application of the passage of Scripture to the readers.

7.] The question of the various reading here hardly be made intelligible to the English reader. The meaning is, “It is for chastisement that ye are enduring, not for punishment, not for any evil purpose.” “Your *endurance*, like His *endurance*, will not be thrown away. He had joy before Him, you have life (ver. 9) before you.”

It is for chastisement that ye are en-during: as with sons God is dealing with you, For what son is there whom the (i. e., his) father chasteneth not?

8.] **But if ye are without** (separate from, no partakers in) **chastisement, of which all** (God's sons: or those above mentioned, ch. xi., which is better, on account of the perfect verb) **have been made partakers, then ye are bastards** (beneath the attention and affectionate superintendence of the father), **and not sons.**

9.] **Then again** (this brings in a fresh argument: “furthermore,” as A.V.) **we once had** (the tense is imperfect, and is used of a state of former habit) **the fathers of our flesh** (see below) **as chastisers** (**the fathers** is the object, **chastisers** the predicate: not as A.V., “*we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us*,” which is an ungrammatical rendering), **and reverenced them: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits** (or, of *our spirits*. But [see also below] the other is more majestic, and more in accord with the text which probably was before the Writer's mind, Numb. xvi. 2, and again xxvii. 16), **and live** (viz, in life, eternal)? An inquiry arises out of the expression here used, in what sense our earthly fathers are said to be the fathers of our flesh, and God the Father of (our) spirits. I have given in my Greek Test. the various opinions, and have come to this conclusion, that I would understand the expression as an exalted contrast of God, a Spirit Himself, and the Creator of spirits, His like, to men, flesh themselves, and the progenitors of fleshy bodies, their like.

10.] The argument from the stronger consideration is strengthened, by ing out the difference between the two chastisements as to their *character*. **For they indeed** (our earthly parts) **for a few days** (see the meaning below) **chastised us after their own pleasure** (according to that which seemed good to them: their standard and rule of action in the matter was at best their own view of what was right, and too often their own caprice or temper); **but He in order to that which is profitable, in order to our partaking of His holiness** (the becoming partakers of God's holiness is manifestly to be taken subjectively: becoming holy like Him). Two questions arise regarding this verse, 1) what is the intended reference of **for a few days**? 2) What are the clauses opposed to one another? The former of these questions in fact involves the latter. **for a few days** has been understood by many of the *duration of our natural life*, as the term to which the chastisement of our natural parents had reference, whereas that of our heavenly Father regarded eternity. But this cannot be the meaning of the Writer. For in the first place it is not true that all earthly correction had regard only to the present life. And in the next, there is not one word in the latter clause expressing the eternal nature of God's purpose, which surely there would have been. The other interpretation, ‘during and in reference to the time of our being subject to their chastisement,’ is certainly the right one. Then we come to the second question, how the antitheses are to be arranged. Some lave thought that “*for a few days*” is to be supplied in the second member of the sentence also: seeing that the divine chastisement, like the human, lasts for a few days only, i.e. for the term of this time of trial. Others again would supply in the second member some *contrast* to the terin “*for a few days*.” Surely the true antithesis is that pointed out by the order of the clauses themselves, and by their correspondence: 1) “*for a few days*,” and “*for our profit*,” 2) “*after their pleasure*,” and “*that we may be partakers of his holiness*.” In 1), we have set over against one another,—the short time during which, the temporary reference with which, their chastisement was inflicted,—and the great purpose implied as eternal from its very expression as *that*

which is profitable for an immortal being, for which He chastises us: and in 2). are opposed,—their purpose and standard of action, to satisfy their own seeming, be it good or bad,—and His purpose, to make us partakers of His holiness, which holiness, absolute and pure, is His rule of acting, and no mere pleasure of His own. Thus all is straightforward, and no clause need be supplied.

11.] Recurrence to the common ground of ver. 8, in describing the attribute of *all chastisement*, divine as well as human. In asserting what he does of *all chastisement*, the Writer lets fall out of view the capricious nature and uncertain result of human chastisement, and regards it more as a type and representative of that which is divine:—all chastisement, properly so called, and answering its proper purpose. This is brought ont in the second clause: the first is equally true of every sort of *chastisement*. Now (introducing an axiom to which all will assent) **all chastisement for** (‘during and in respect of’) **the time present seems** (the *reality*, as Chrysostom remarks, being otherwise) **not to be matter of joy, but of grief: but afterwards it yields peaceable fruit of righteousness** (the genitive is one of apposition; the righteousness is the fruit, the *chastisement* being the tree. The words are sometimes otherwise taken, making righteousness that which yields the fruit. But seeing that chastisement *yields fruit*, it must be its own fruit, and not that belonging to righteousness, that it yields. And this fruit, thus considered, is the practical righteousness which springs, from faith, not the forensic righteousness which comes by faith [as in Rom. v. 1]. And this fruit is called *peaceful*, in contrast to the *contest* by which it is won: it is, as Tholuck expresses it, “fruit of righteousness to be enjoyed in peace after the conflict”). **to those who have been exercised by it** (viz. *chastisement*). The

word **exercised** is a clear reference to the conflict alluded to in the former verses).

12–17.] Further exhortation rather to promote the running the Christian race, and to take care, following peace and holiness, that there be no bitter root of sin among them, which, as in Esau's case, might deprive them of the promised blessing.

12.] Wherfore (connects with the reasoning, and also with the imagery, of the foregoing verses:—because suffering chastisement is the part of God's sons—because the running the race successfully brings joy and peace) **put straight again** (into their proper places) **the relaxed hands, and the paralyzed knees;**

13.] and make straight tracks for your feet (these words are quoted in substance from Prov. iv. 26. In the Septuagint the A.V. has “ponder the paths of thy feet.” The word means properly the mark left by the *wheel*, the rut or wheel-mark, indicating a track or road. The meaning seems to be, Let your walk be so firm and so unanimous in the right direction, that a plain track and highway may be thereby established for those who accompany and follow you to perceive and walk in. Compare Isa. xxxv. 8), **that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed** (“*that which is lame*,” indicates that part of the church which was wavering between Christianity and Judaism: answering to the “*weak*” of the Epistle to the Romans. If the whole congregation, by their united and consistent walk, trod a plain and beaten path for men's feet, these lame ones, though halting, would be easily able to keep in it, and by keeping in the *straight track*, would even acquire the habit of walking straight onward, and so be healed: but if the tracks were errant and confused, their erratic steps would deviate more and more, till at length they fell away out of the right way altogether. It should be noticed that the Writer has still the image of a race before him. The making a beaten track for all is, that they may not miss the way and lose the prize).

14.] Follow peace with all (**with all** belongs to **peace**, not to the verb, Some have understood **all** to refer not only to the brethren, but to unbelievers also. But thus taken, the exhortation would lose much of its proper force here. For it is introduced by a caution that the lame be not turned out of the way, and followed by taking heed that none of the grace of God: and between these two an exhortation to follow peace with all mankind would come in very flat and disjointed. It is clearly the brethren who are here meant by **all**. The sentiment thus is the me as in Rom. xiv. 19), **and sanctification** (*holiness* is not **sanctification**, but the putting on of it and becoming *holy*). Many Commentators, misled by the peculiar contextual reference of the word in 1 Thess. iv. 3, have restricted the meaning here to *chastity*. But the wider meaning, as a rule, must always be kept where the context does not require a narrower. And thus understood, the reference of it is well given by Limboreh: “That they should not, while anxious for peace, by too great wish to please others, commit any fault against Christian holiness”), **without** (apart from) **which none shall see the Lord** (whether **the Lord** is to be applied to Christ, or to the Father, is uncertain. It is clearly the Father in ch. viii. 2: as clearly the Son in ch. ii. 3. But here it would seem that the Father is intended. For we know, Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. i. 7, that every eye shall see the Son, even in His glory: whereas we have our Lord using, in an ethical sentence not much unlike this one, the expression “*they shall see God*”): **looking well lest any one falling short of the grace of God** (see on ch. iv. 1. The whole sentence is imitated from Deut. xxix. 18: and the sense passes on to the verb **trouble**

you below),—lest any root of bitterness (not the same as “*bitter root*,” but *bitterness* is the origin and the ingrained character of the root, not its mere attribute. So Chrysostom well, “He says not, ‘*bitter*,’ but, of **bitterness**. For a bitter root might bring forth sweet fruit, but a root and fount and foundation of bitterness can never bear sweet fruit: for all things are bitter, it has nothing sweet; all is bitter, all is unsweet, all is full of hate and abomination”) **springing up,—trouble you, and by its means the many** (the whole congregation: see Gal. v. 9 quoted below) **be polluted** (how? by intercourse, by compromise, by over-persuasion, by imitation. The kind of pollution he explains in the next verse to arise from fornication and profanity); **lest (there be) any fornicator** (to be taken literally, not as alluding to spiritual fornication, see Deut. xxxi. 16; Exod. xxxiv. 15 f.: for as Delitzsch observes, this sense is foreign to the New Test., except in the Apocalypse: and it is very unlikely that the Writer should have used a meaning lying so far from the context, and not suggested either by the passage of Deut. to which he was before alluding, or by the history of Esau which he is now introducing. Nearly connected with the question of the scuse of **fornicator**, is that of the punctuation: whether by a comma after it we are to sever it from connexion with Esau, or not. Most Commentators join it with what follows: and explain it partly of the gluttony of Esau, partly of his having wedded strange women, partly by the character of a fornicator which is given him by later Jewish tradition. But others divide the word *fornicator* from what follows. It seems hardly possible to decide. The character of Esau, from Scripture as well as tradition, will very well hear the designation *fornicator*: and the balance of the sentence is better preserved by applying both to him, than by leaving the word *fornicator* insulated), **or profane person** (a man of low views, who has no appreciation of any high or divine thing), **as Esau, who for one meal sold his own birthright** t (the reflexive *his own*, which must be read, may seem to be superfluous; but it serves to intensify the unworthiness of the act).

17.] For (gives a reason for the caution, from the terrible result in Esau's case) **ye know** (it was a fact of which no Hebrew could be ignorant) **that when he afterward on his part** (*he dishonoured his inheritance, but was in his turn rejected from the blessing*) **wished to inherit the blessing, he was rejected** (some supply *by God*, some *by his father*. But there is no reason why both should not be joined. His father's blessing was God's blessing; his father's rejection was God's rejection): **for he**

found not place of repentance (*whose* repentance, *his own*, or *his father's*? The former is held by all the Greek expositors: by Luther, Calvin, and many others. The latter, by Beza, and most of the moderns. But the former I believe to be the only admissible sense. It is no mean argument for it, that the Fathers thought not of the other, though it would have been so useful to them in the Novatian controversy. Theodore of Mopsuestia, though he wrests the passage from those who wished to preclude *repentance*, never hints at any other meaning. And thus referred to Esau himself, it will mean, that he found no way open to reverse what had been done, by *repentance*: the sin had been committed and the consequence entailed, irrevocably. He might change, but the penalty could not, from the very nature of the circumstances, be taken off. So that *repentance*, in its full sense, had no *place*. And such is the meaning of *a place for repentance*, wherever occurring. We do not mean by it an opportunity to repent in a man's own bosom, to be sorry for what he has done, for this may be under any circumstances, and this might have been with Esau: but we mean, *a chance, by repenting, to repair*. So when a condemned criminal has a *place for repentance* allowed him, we do not mean that he may die penitent, but that he is reprieved. I see not how else to understand this, and what follows: and thus understood nothing can be plainer), **although he earnestly sought it** (*what? not the blessing*, as many think, for this would be, as Ebrard characterizes it, most unnatural, the antecedent being thus separated from the pronoun "it" by a whole intervening clause, which will not bear parenthesizing.... Regarding *repentance* then as the only admissible antecedent for **it**, the explanation will be very simple. *Place for repentance* is, in fact, *repentance*. He found no place for *repentance*: if he had found one, *repentance* would have been secured: this was what he sought) **with tears** (Gen. xxvii. 38. It is obvious, that our passage, rightly understood, cannot by any means favour the exclusion of any sinner from *repentance*. In Esau's case the *place for repentance* was closed, by circumstances themselves: the blessing had been given and could not be recalled. And this is our warning. It may be so, in many cases, with us. That it is always so, is not even hinted: but warning is given us that a path is not safe where even such a possibility may be encountered.

See Prov. i. 24–32).

18–29.] Connected with what has preceded by **for**. *Take heed that there be not such [as in vv. 15, 16] among you: for (not only have we the solemn warning of Esau, but) we are not under the law with its terrors, but under the Gospel with its promises,—hearing one who speaks for the last time, who speaks from heaven—and receiving a kingdom' which shall not be moved.*

18, 19.] **For** (see above) **ye have not drawn near to** (‘in your approaching unto God [in the original text], it has not been to....’ The A.V. ‘ye are not come to,’ omits the approach to God, implied in the words **draw near**) **that which was being touched** (so literally: “mountain” must be understood, which is expressed below with Zion, and hence has come in as a gloss here). **That might be touched** has been variously interpreted. Some understand it, *touched* by the fire of God, compare Ps. ciii. 32, “*He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*” But this seems hardly consistent with the present participle, nor indeed at all with the sense of the word itself, which is to touch by feeling about, as a blind man does. And this sense will I believe fit our passage very well. Mount Sinai was a material mountain, which not only *might* be *touched*,—but *was being touched*, would have been touched by the people had it not been for-bidden), **and which was burnt** (kindled) **with fire** (the same expression occurs in Deut. iv. 11, v. 23, where nearly the same words, “darkness, clouds, and thick darkness,” follow), **and to blackness, and darkness, and tempest** (see Deut. iv. 11, cited above), **and to sound of trumpet** (see Exod. xix. 16. The Writer avoids the word “*voice*” there used, having so soon to speak of “*the voice of words*”), **and the voice of words; which they who heard intreated that** (more) **discourse should not be added to them** (so literally. See Deut. v. 25. Calvin explains the sense, “We must not understand that the people refused to hear the words of God, but deprecated hearing them from God Himself. The person of Moses being interposed, in some degree mitigated their fear”):

20, 21.] *Parenthetical, explaining the reason of this horror on the part of the hearers. For they could not bear that which was commanded, Even if a beast* (much more if a man) **touch the mountain, it shall be stoned** (an abbreviation of Exod. xix. 12, 13): **and** (this clause is diversely punctuated. Before Beza, there was no comma at **and**, and the sense was read straight on, “And so terrible was the sight, [that] Moses said”—as in A.V. And thus, as Bleek well observes, should we have punctuated in an Epistle of *St. Paul*, who is full of these broken constructions. But nothing can be more different than the style of this Epistle, which is weighed and rhetorically balanced with constant care. There can be little doubt in any who take this style into account, that the punctuation which began with Beza is right, viz. the setting a comma at **and**, and regarding **so terrible was the sight**, as a parenthesis),—**so fearful was that which was revealed** (which appeared to them as a vision of the glory and majesty of Jehovah), **Moses said, I am in great terror and in trembling** (no such saying of Moses at this time is to be found in the sacred narrative. In Deut. ix. 19, he says, “*I was afraid*” (in the Septuagint, “*I am afraid*”): but this refers to the time when Moses went up to the mount after he had broken the tables. Our Writer probably transfers these words from that time to this, indicative of the terror which Moses felt at the divine presence on Sinai. Some have supposed that the saying is taken from some tradition: but none has been found to justify the idea):

22–24.] *Contrast to the above negation, in setting forth that to which they are come. But ye have drawn near* both congregations drew near, Deut. iv. 11: the difference is in that, to which, So that Chrysostom misses the mark when he says, “*They drew not near, but stood afar off: so even did Moses: but ye have drawn near*”) **to mount Sion** (here at length the word **mountain** is expressed: see above. Mount Sion, the abode of God which He loved and where He will abide continually, is used to signify, not its mere representative, which men know by that name, but the reality, God's own abode in heaven. See

Ps. lxxviii. 68, ex. 2, cxxxii, 13 ff.; Isa. ii. 2 f., xxviii. 16; Joel ii. 32; Micah iv. 1 f.; Obad. 17, &c.), **and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem** (as the earthly Jerusalem, situate on Mount Zion, was the *city of the great King*, Matt. v. 35, so in a more blessed sense is that heavenly city the city of the living God. He is its maker and builder, ch. xi. 10: nor only so, but also evermore dwells in it with the light of His presence, cf. Rev. xxi. 22–24):

23.] The difficult question of the punctuation has been dealt with in my Greek Testament. The matter would be unintelligible to the English reader. It is enough to say that the Writer begins with the **innumerable company** (literally *myriads*), in order afterwards to say of what these myriads consist. Adopting then this-*ngement*, the verse will stand,—**and to myriads** (the word is commonly used of the angelic company surrounding Jehovah), **the festal host** (so the word imports) **of angels, and the assembly of the firstborn which are written in heaven** (who are these? Why are they put with the angels? Why does the Writer place **God the Judge of all** between the assembly of the firstborn and the spirits of just men made perfect? These, says Delitzsch, are three closely connected questions, and among the very hardest in our Epistle. The answers to them are very various, Many understand **the assembly of the firstborn** of the firstfruits of the Christian church (Rey. xiv. 4): so De Wette, “those who are fallen asleep in the faith of Christ, and possibly also glorified by martyrdom, who have entered earlier than others, as it were the firstborn, into blissful union with God and Christ.” As Delitzsch observes, if we

hold them to be martyrs, the following words, **and to God the Judge of all**, might have a certain propriety from Rev. vi. 9 f., where the souls of the martyrs under the altar cry, “*How long.... dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, &c.?*” But this view seems altogether to fail when we attempt to explain by it the words, **written in heaven**. Those of whom our Lord says, Luke x. 20, “*Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven,*” are yet *living on earth*. According to St. Luke’s manner of speaking, the firstborn are hereby designated as enrolled (in Luke ii. 1, 3, 5, he uses the word here rendered “written” for enrolling in the census) in the heavenly roll: and Scripture usage seems to demand that we consider one thus described, as not yet in possession of everlasting life in the fullest sense, but as destined to life [see Acts xiii. 48]. This would forbid us from thinking of the 141, 000 whom St. John saw with the Lamb on the heavenly Zion, who bore on their foreheads the name of the Lamb and of the Father. For this sealing was among the insignia of their eternal glorification: whereas the being enrolled in the book of life is the token to us, while here below, of our heavenly citizenship, and seems to lose all its significance, as soon as we have entered the heavenly city and need no assurance of our citizenship either for ourselves or for others. So that though we are tempted, both by the fact of their being classed with the angels, and by their being *firstborn* (so we have “*firstfruits from*

among men,” Rev. xiv. 4), to identify these with the *thousands* seen by St. John, we must give up the parallel, these *persons written in heaven* being not yet citizens of heaven who have taken up their fall citizenship by passing through death, but persons to whom their citizenship is assured, they being as yet here below. Add to which, that they are distinguished from the spirits of just men made perfect, by the term **assembly** or **church** [*ecclesia*]: and that it would be difficult or rather impossible, on this hypothesis, to give any account of the sense or arrangement of the two following clauses. Just as inadmissible is it, or even more so, to understand by the firstborn the patriarchs and saints of the Old Test., and then by **spirits of just men made perfect**, not the Old Test. but the New Test. saints. So that, to say nothing of other varieties of interpretation not worth mentioning, there is no way left but to see, in the words, *the assembly of the firstborn written in heaven*, THE CHURCH BELOW. And this view, far from being a last refuge, is justified by every consideration. For 1) thus *ecclesia* is explained, which every where, when used of men and not of angels, Ps. lxxxix. 5, designates the assembly of saints on earth: 2) the adjunct *written in heaven* is accounted for, indicating as it does the heavenly charter of the church below, the invisible side of their sonship and citizenship (see 1 John iii. 2), with which in this description of heaven we are mainly concerned: 3) we get an explanation of the choice of the term *firstborn* to describe Christian believers. The Writer having given the warning example of Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright, has prepared the way for such a designation, while at the same time, as Knapp rightly remarks, the long sentence beginning at ver. 18 aims at this “that Christians may be defended against unbelief, and may learn to know their rights of inheritance.” There is no distinction between first-born and later-born Christians, but all Christians as such are called firstborn because of their heritorship of the heavenly inheritance. We may also remark that thus the analogy with the firstborn of Israel is completely fulfilled. They were dedicated to God specially as his priests (Exod. xiii. 1, 2, 11–15), and royal succession was in the firstborn: so that in the word *firstborn* we have that which St. John says: “He made as a kingdom, priests to God and His Father.” This primogeniture, which belonged to Israel as such (Exod. iv. 22), belongs to Christians as such, and to every one of them: they are enrolled not merely in an earthly register, Num. iii. 42, but in the book of life in heaven. We also thus 4) obtain an explanation of the juxtaposition in the sentence of the myriads of angels and the myriads of the firstborn: the key to it being found in ch. i. 14, where God is said to have apportioned the angels as *ministering spirits* to minister to the *heirs of salvation*. Thus we have the heavenly spirits and the firstborn whose names are in heaven, the jubilant choir above and the militant church below, ranged together. But 5) we also get, what we find on no other hypothesis, an explanation of the sequence of **God the judge of all** on *the assembly of the firstborn*, and of that of **spirits of just men. made perfect** on *God the judge of all*. The key to the words is in ch. x. 30, “*The Lord shall judge His people.*” The church militant here below brings to mind those enemies and persecutors, for deliverance and righting from whom she looks to the righteous judgment of God. And he who is in fellowship (1 John i. 7) with the great Judge has no judgment to fear, but is *justified*; thereby leading on to the “*spirits of just men made perfect*” which follows), **and to God the Judge of all** (this clause comes between the mention of the elect, written in heaven, and the spirits of the just,

shewing that the *enrolment in heaven* is no arbitrary selection,—the *justification* no unreasonable procedure. It is not probable that the Writer may have had in view Abraham's question Gen. xviii. 25, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Some Commentators understand this, "*God, the Judge of all,*" of Christ: but it is a characteristic of this Epistle that all judgment is formally, and in words, referred to God the Father: see ch. iv. 11 f., x. 30 f.: ver. 29: ch. xiii. 4), **and to the spirits of just men who have been perfected** (i. e. the whole number of the just who have passed into their rest, from righteous Abel downwards; not yet absolutely called "*just men made perfect*," because they are as yet disembodied and awaiting the resurrection, but "*the spirits of just men made perfect*." This *making perfect* has been through sufferings, through trials, through running and having ended their race. All is accomplished, their probation, their righteousness, God's purposes respecting them. They are not sleeping, they are not unconscious, they are not absent from us: they are perfected, lacking nothing, except, and that is our defect because we are as yet imprisoned in an unspiritual body, communion with us: their spirits are perfect, and therefore not suspended from the spirit life, but waiting only for bodily perfection also), **and to the mediator of the latter covenant, Jesus** (the mention of the *just made perfect* at once introduces that of Him who was Himself *made perfect*, ch. ii. 10, and who is the *perfecter of the faith*, ver. 2. See ch. vii. 22. Our Writer especially loves to use the name JESUS. To *Christ*, all that is predicated of our Lord belonged officially: but when it is predicated of Jesus, it becomes personal fact, realized in one whom we know and who loves us, That Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, is a theological truth: that Jesus is, is a glorious token of God's love manifested to us men), **and to the blood of sprinkling** (naturally following on the mention of *the covenant*, for no *covenant* is consecrated without blood, ch. ix. 18, 22. And if Moses had blood wherewith to sprinkle the people, much more Jesus, of whom Moses was a shadow. And therefore the Writer, enumerating the great differences of our Sion from their Sinai, though he has not recounted their blood of sprinkling, as not being worthy of mention in the face of the terrors of God's law, mentions ours, by which we were redeemed unto God, and assigns it a place in the heavenly city, next to, but separate from, Jesus Himself in His glorified state. If we come to enquire how this can be, we enter on an interesting but high and difficult subject, on which learned and holy men have been much divided. Our Lord's Blood was shed from Him on the Cross. And as His Body did not see corruption, it is obvious to suppose, that His Blood did not corrupt as that of ordinary men, being as it is so important a portion of the body. Hence, and because His resurrection Body seems to have been bloodless,—see Luke xxiv, 32; John xx. 27, and notes,—some have supposed that the Blood of the Lord remains, as it was poured out, incorruptible, in the presence of God. On such a matter I would neither affirm nor deny, but mention, with all reverence, that which seems to suit the requirements of the words before us. By that Blood we live, wherever it is: but as here it is mentioned separately from the Lord Himself, as an item in the glories of the heavenly city, and as "*yet speaking*," it seems to require some such view to account for the words used. Bengel has here a long excursus on the point, in which he takes strongly the above view. Chrysostom also seems to have done so. The blood of Christ is called "*the blood of sprinkling*," inasmuch as, like that sacrificial blood of old materially, it is spiritually sprinkled on the conscience of those who come unto God by Him, compare ch. ix. 13 ff.; x. 22; xiii. 12) **speaking better** (adverbially; as in 1 Cor. vii. 38, *doing better* is opposed to *doing well*. And the adverb refers not to the *manner* of the speaking, but to the matter spoken; so that "*better things*" in the English expresses well the meaning) **than Abel** (not, "*than that of Abel*:" for in ch. xi. 4, it is Abel himself who speaks, in his blood: see note there).

25.] This voice of the blood of sprinkling, just mentioned, leads naturally to the *caution not to despise that voice, nor put it by as they of old did the "voice of words" from Sinai*. **Take heed that ye decline not** (see above on ver. 19) **him that speaketh** (i. e. God in Christ, see below). **For if they did not escape** (how? in one of two senses: either 1) they did not escape hearing the voice on account of this their *refusal*: or 2) which seems more probable, they did not escape God's vengeance in punishment: the Writer taking this their *refusal* of the divine voice as a sort of sample of their disobedient and unbelieving spirit), **declining as they did** (not '*who refused*') **him who spoke on earth** (on Mount Sinai), **much more we (shall not escape), who are turning away from him** (who *speaks*) **from (the) heavens**:—We now come to the somewhat difficult question, the answer to which we have taken for granted in the rendering of this verse: viz., who are intended by the various objects, "*him that speaketh*,"—" *him that speaketh on earth*,"—" *him from heaven*." Let us take the second of these first, as furnishing the key to the others. "Whom does he mean (says Chrysostom)? It seems to me, Moses." But this cannot well be. For the participle **refusing**, manifestly refers back to ver. 19: where it was not Moses, but God, whom they *refused*. It must be laid down then as certain, that **he that speaketh on earth** is God. Then if so, who is **he from heaven**, or in other words who is **he that speaketh**, for these two are manifestly the same? Clearly, not Jesus: for by the words **whose voice**, which follow, the voice of this same speaker shook the earth at the giving of the law: and it can by no ingenuity be pretended, that the terrors of the law proceeded from the Son of God; especially in the face of the contrast drawn here, and in ch. ii. 2 ff. And it would be against all accuracy and decorum in divine things, to pass from the speaking of the God of Israel to that of our Lord Jesus Christ in the way of climax as is here done, with "*much more shall we not escape*." Add to which, that, if Christ is to be understood as the subject of vv. 26 ff., we shall have Him uttering the prophetic words, "*yet once more, &c.*;" whereas both from our Writer's habit of quoting prophecy [compare ch. i. 1; iv. 7; vi. 13; viii. 8; xi. 11], and from the context of the prophecy itself, they must be attributed to the Father. How then are these difficulties to be got over? Simply by taking above, the speaker in both cases to be GOD: in the first, as speaking from Mount Sinai by His Angels: in the second, as speaking from His heavenly throne through His exalted Son. Thus it is true we lie open to one objection, viz. that the giving of the law is ever regarded in the Old Test. as a speaking from heaven: so Exod. xx. 22; Deut. iv. 36; Neh. ix. 13. But this objection, though at first sight weighty, is by no means decisive. The "*heaven*" spoken of there is surely nothing but the material heaven, as apparent to the Israelites in the clouds and darkness which rested on Sinai, and totally distinct from the "*heaven*" here, the

site of our blessed Lord's glorification, who is spoken of, ch. iv. 14, as "having passed through the heavens." Thus the words have been explained from early times.

26.] whose voice (see on last verse) **shook the earth then** (so in Judg. v. 5, in Deborah's Song, "*The earth trembled; the mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the God of Israel.*" See also Ps. cxiv. 7. In Exod. xix. 18, where the A.V. has, after the Hebrew, "the whole mount quaked greatly,"—the Septuagint render, "*The whole people was much astonished.*" Some take this shaking of the earth to be meant of a figurative excitement of men's minds. But there can be little doubt, that the material explanation is the true one): **but now** (now, not only in an argumentative sense, "*as the case now is,*" but here in a more temporal sense, as opposed to *then: now*, under the prophetic revelations since the captivity,—under the New Test. dispensation in which those prophecies will find their fulfilment) **hath He** (God: see above) **promised, saying,** **Yet once** (more) **and I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.** The prophecy in Haggai is uttered, like the whole of his prophecies, with reference to the second temple, which was then rising out of the ruins of the first, smaller indeed and poorer, but destined to witness greater glories. It was to be the scene of the last revelation of Jehovah to His people: and the house of David, then so low, was to rise above the ruins of the thrones of the earth, and endure as the signet on God's right hand (Hagg. ii. 21–23). It is this ruin of earthly powers, this antitypical shaking of the earth and all that is in it, after the typical material shaking at Sinai, of which the prophet speaks. And the result of this shaking was to be, that the desire, or best treasures, of all nations (not to be understood personally of Christ, but as in the Septuagint, "the chosen things of all the nations shall come") should be brought to adorn that temple. The expression here (as in the Septuagint) rendered "*yet once....*" is in the Hebrew, "yet once, it is a little while, and:" i.e. the period which shall elapse shall be but one, not admitting of being broken into many; and that one, but short. Thus the prophecy seems to point to the same great final bringing of all the earth under the Kingdom of God, which is spoken of in Zechariah xiv., when the Lord shall come and all His saints with Him, the great antitype of Sinai (see Deut. xxxiii. 2), so often the subject of ancient prophecy. It is clearly wrong, with some interpreters, to understand this shaking of the mere breaking down of Judaism before the Gospel, or of any thing which shall be fulfilled *during* the Christian economy short of its glorious end and accomplishment. The **not only...** but, which the Writer has substituted for the simple "*and*" of the Septuagint, is adopted for the sake of bringing out the point which is before him, the earth, and the speaking from the earth, on the one hand, the heaven, and the speaking from the heaven, on the other. But the **heaven** here, that is to be shaken, is the material heaven stretched above this earth,

27.] But (now) **this Yet once** (more) **indicates the removal of the things shaken, as of things which have been made, in order that the things which are not** (i. e. cannot be) **shaken may abide** (the great final shaking which is to introduce the accomplished kingdom of God is that after which there shall be no other. To what does in order that belong? Two ways of taking the sentence are possible. 1) That given above, to the consideration of which I will presently return. 2) We may join *in order that, &c.*, not with the fact pointed at, the *removal of the things shaken*, as its purpose, but with the verb, **have been made;** 'as of things which have been made in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.' i.e. the scope of Creation has been, the establishing of the kingdom of Redemption: that it, the transitory and baseless, may pass away when its work is fulfilled, and give place to that which shall never pass away. This view is strongly taken by Delitzsch, after Grotius, Bengel, Tholuck, and others. But I cannot accede to it, beautiful as is the thought, and strictly true, that Creation was made but to subserve Redemption: the things removable, to give place to the things unremoveable. For, a) the word *remain* will thus have an exceedingly awkward elliptic sense, "that the things which cannot be shaken may remain," i.e. "may come into the place of those removed, and thus abide for ever:" for things which cannot be shaken *remaining* merely, would be a matter of course. b) the logical propriety as well as the rhythm of the sentence is thus destroyed. For we should on this rendering have the clause beginning with "*in order that*" entirely subordinated to the word **made**, and indicating, not the purpose of the main action of the sentence, but that of the creation, a matter lying quite out of the present record. So that, it seems to me, we must fall back on 1), viz. the making **in**

order that to belong to "*the remaining,*" the action of the sentence. This, it is true, is not without difficulty. For, a) even thus we must go some little out of our way for a sense for **remain**, though not so far as in the other case. It must then mean, *may remain over*, when the *things shaken* are gone: may be permanently left: to which sense there is no objection, but it does not exactly fit the requirements of the sentence: b) if the term **which have been made** be taken absolutely, we might be met by the citation from Isa. lxvi. 22, to shew that the new heavens and the new earth are also *made*: see also Isa. lxv. 17, 18. The answer to this must be, though I own it is not altogether a satisfactory one, that the *making* is not the same in the two cases: that this word carries rather with it *made*

with hands, of this creation, as that word is explained, ch. ix. 11: whereas the other *I make* rests in the almighty power of God, by which the spirit-world as well as the world of sense was called into existence. See by all means, on the whole, Luke xxi. 26).

28.] Wherefore (gathers its inference, not from the whole preceding paragraph, but from the yet once more shaking and consequent removing of earthly things before those things which shall remain) **receiving as we do a kingdom which cannot be shaken** (the participle, **receiving**, is descriptive of our Christian state of privilege and expectation: designating us by anticipation as in possession of that, whose firstfruits and foretastes we do actually possess), **let us have thankfulness** (so

Chrysostom, and most Commentators, ancient and modern. Others render, as the A.V., "let us have, or hold fast grace," which is hardly a legitimate rendering. So the Syriac, Beza, Estius, Schlichting, Grotius, and others, On the sense, see Ps. I. 23 "Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me"), **by whic h** (thankfulness) **let us serve** (this cannot be taken as in A.V., "by which we *may* serve," but must be hortatory like the other) **God well-pleasingly with reverent submission and fear** (see on ch. v. 7)

29.] For moreover our God is a consuming fire (the words are taken from Deut. iv. 24. Compare also Deut. ix. 3. And thus the fact that God's anger continues to burn now, as then, against those who reject his Kingdom, is brought in; and in the background lie all those gracious dealings, by which the fire of God's presence and purity becomes to His people, while it consumes their vanity and sin and earthly state, the fire of purity and light and love for their enduring citizenship of His kingdom).

Hebrews: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII. 1-16.] Various exhortations to Christian virtues: more especially to the imitation of the faith of their leaders who had departed in the Lord: to firmness in the faith: and following of Jesus, who suffered outside the camp to teach us to bear His reproach.

1.] Let brotherly love (the word signifies, in the classics, the love of brothers and sisters for one another; in the New Test., the love of the Christian brethren) **remain** (we learn from the Acts,—on the hypothesis of this Epistle being addressed to the church at Jerusalem [on which however see Introd.],—how eminent this brotherly love had been in that church, and, without any hypothesis as to the readers, we see from our ch. x. 32 ff., that the persons here addressed had exercised it aforetime, and from ch. vi. 10, that they still continued to exercise it. Let it then remain, not die out. And it is put first, as being the first of the fruits of faith. The exhortations in ch. iii. 12 f.; x. 24 f.; xii. 12 ff., point the same way).

2, 3.] Brotherly love is now specifically urged in two of its departments, hospitality and care of prisoners, **Forget not hospitality to strangers** (so in 1 Pet. v. 9, after recommending *earnest love to one another*, he proceeds *to recommend hospitality*. Compare also Rom. xii. 13; and Tit. i. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 2. Bleek remarks, that the notices found in the writings of the enemies of Christianity shew how much this virtue was practised among the early believers): **for thereby** (by exercising it) **some unawares entertained angels** (viz. Abraham, Gen. xviii., Lot, Gen. xix. Certainly it would appear at first sight from the former account, that Abraham regarded the "three men" from the first as angels: but the contrary view has nothing against it in the narrative, and was taken by the Jewish expositors. On the motive propounded, Calvin remarks, "If any one objects that this is a rare occurrence, the reply is ready, that not angels alone are received, but Christ Himself, when we receive the poor in His name").

3.] Remember them that are in bonds, as if bound with them (compare 1 Cor. xii. 26: as fully sympathizing with them in their those in distress (a general idea, including captives and any other classes of distressed persons), **as also yourselves being in the body** (i. e. bound up with a body which has the same capacity of suffering).

4.] Exhortation to chastity. Let your marriage be (held) in honour in all things (see below) **and your marriage bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God shall judge.** There are several debatable matters in this verse. First, is it a command or an assertion? The latter view is taken in the ancient Syriac version: "Honourable is marriage among all, and their bed is undefiled;" also in the A.V. and by some Commentators, Chrysostom included. But the arrangement of the words in the original is against this: and so is the context, in which the whole is of a hortatory character: the very same collocation of words immediately follows in ver. 5, where no one suggests the indicative rendering. The imperative view has accordingly been taken by very many ancient Commentators, and the great mass of moderns. That **in all** is to be supplied not with "men," but with "things," I have endeavoured to shew in my Greek Test. The latter clause carries with it the anticipation of condemnation in the term **shall judge**. Man may, or may not, punish them: one thing is sure: they shall come into judgment, and if so into condemnation, when God shall judge all.

5, 6.] St. Paul usually couples with filthy desire, *filthy lucre*, as both of them incompatible with the kingdom of God: e.g. 1 Cor. v. 10, 11; vi. 9 f.; Eph. v. 3, 5; Col. iii. 5. Let your manner of life be void of avarice: contented (sufficed) with things present: for He (viz. He that promised: compare ch. x. 23, God, already named, ver. 4) **hath said, I will not leave thee, no nor will I forsake thee** (passages bearing some resemblance to this are found in the Old Test., but nowhere the words themselves: see Josh. i. 5: also, Gen. xxviii. 15; 1 Chron. xxviii. 20; Deut. xxxi. 6, 8. But in Philo we have the same quotation made, and in the very same Greek words. This is certainly singular, and cannot be mere coincidence. Bleek and Lünemann suppose the Writer to have made the citation direct from Philo [see the Introd. §i., par 156], whereas Delitzsch believes that the expression was taken from Deut. xxxi. 6, and had become inwoven into some liturgical or homiletic portion of the services in the Hellenistic synagogue): **so that we say** ('are in the habit of saying,' 'say always;' not, 'can say' nor 'may say,' both which weaken the confidence expressed) **with confidence, The Lord** (*Jehovah* in the Psalm, and probably used of the Father,

as in other citations in this Epistle, e.g. ch. vii. 21; viii. 8–11; x. 16, 30; xii. 5 al., and without a citation, ch. viii. 2) **is my helper [and]** (not in Hebrew), **I will not be afraid: what shall man do unto me** (such is the connexion, both in the Hebrew and here: not, “I will not be afraid what man shall do unto me,” as the English Prayer Book, after the vulgate, which is an ungrammatical rendering)?

7.] **Remember** (may be taken in two ways, as Theophylact says: either “remember to help them in their bodily wants,” or, “remember to imitate them.” The former meaning would agree with ver. 3; but it is plain from what follows here that the course of these *leaders* is past, and it is remembering with a view to imitation that is enjoined) **your leaders** (*leaders* in the faith) **the which** (of that kind, who) **spoke to you the word of God** (the past tense shews that this speaking was over, and numbers these leaders among those in ch. ii, 3: as those who heard the Lord, “by whom the salvation of the Gospel was confirmed to them”), **of whom surveying** (*contemplating*, or searching from one end to the other) **the termination** (by death. It is perhaps to be inferred that these died by martyrdom, as Stephen, James the brother of John, and possibly [but see the matter discussed in Introd. to James] James the brother of the Lord: and possibly too, St. Peter [see Introd. to 1 Pet.]) **of their conversation** (i. e. their Christian behaviour, walk, course. No English word completely gives it), **imitate the faith.**

8.] **Jesus Christ is yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever** (the verse stands as a transition from what has passed to what follows. “It was Christ whom these *leaders* preached, when they spoke the word of God: Christ who supported them to the end, being the author and finisher of their faith; and He remains still the same with regard to you,—*the same*: be not then carried away&c.” As to the meaning of the words, **yesterday** refers to the time past, when their *leaders* passed away from them, **to-day** to the time present, when the Writer and the readers were living. In our A.V., this verse, by the omission of the copula “is,” appears as if it were in apposition with “the end of whose conversation:” and in the carelessly printed polyglott of Bagster, the matter is made worse, by a *colon* being substituted for the *period*, after ‘conversation.’ Observe **Jesus Christ**, not common with our Writer: only e.g. ver. 21, where he wishes to give a solemn fulness to the mention of the Lord: Jesus, the Person, of whom we have been proving, that He is *the Christ*, the Anointed of God. Compare also ch. x. 10). **Be not carried away** (the fixed point from which they are not to be carried away, is clearly that given in the last verse, viz. Jesus Christ) **by various and strange** (*strangers to the truth*) **doctrines** (teachings, Matt. xv. 9; Col. ii. 22; 1 Tim. iv. 1): **for it is good that the heart be confirmed with grace** (God’s grace, working on us by faith), **not with meats** (it is a question whether this be meant of meat eaten after sacrifices, or of “meats” as spoken of so much by St. Paul, meats partaken of or abstained from as a matter of conscience: see 1 Cor. viii. 8, 13; ib. vi 13; Rom. xiv. 15, 20. The former view is taken by Schlichting, Bleek, Lünnemann, &c., on the grounds, 1) that the expression will not suit meats *abstained from*, only those partaken of: 2) that ver. 10, which is in close connexion with this, speaks of an altar and of partaking of meats sacrificed: and 3) that this same reference, to meats offered in sacrifice, is retained throughout, to ver. 15. The other view is taken by Chrysostom, &c., the great body of later Commentators, and recently by Böhme, Tholuck, and Delitzsch. And I own the reasons urged in its favour incline me strongly to this view, to the exclusion of the other), **in which** (the observance of which: the word **meats** being used for *the observance of rules concerning meats and drinks, &c.*) **they who walked were not profited** (these, who walked in such observances, are the whole people of God under the Old Test. dispensation [notice the past tenses], to whom they were of themselves useless and profitless, though ordained for a preparatory purpose: so that Calvin’s objection is answered, that “the discipline of which the distinction between meats was a part, was useful to the fathers under the law.” Yes, and so was the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats part of the discipline: but it was useless to take away sin).

10.] *What is the connexion with ver. 9?* It is represented as being entirely done away by our interpretation of **meats** above. If I regard it aright, it is not only not done away, but established in its proper light. Those ancient distinctions are profitless: one distinction remains: that our true meat is not to be partaken of by those who adhere to those old distinctions: that Christianity and Judaism are necessarily and totally distinct. See more below. **We have an altar** (to what does the Writer allude? Some have said that no distinct idea was before him, but that he merely used the term altar, to help the figure which he was about to introduce. And this view has just so much truth in it, that there is no *emphasis* on the word **altar**. The altar bears only a secondary place in the figure; but still I cannot think that it has not a definite meaning. Others understand by the altar, *Christ himself*. This again has so much truth in it, that the Victim is so superior to the altar, as to cast it altogether into shade; but still is not Himself the altar. Some again understand, *the table of the Lord*, at which we eat the Lord’s Supper. This is so far true, that that table may be said to *represent* to us the Cross whereupon the Sacrifice was offered, just as the bread and wine, laid on it, represent the oblation itself: but it is not the altar, in any propriety of language, however we may be justified, in common parlance, in so calling it. Some again have interpreted it to mean the *heavenly place*, where Christ now offers the virtue of His Blood to the Father for us. This again is so far true, that it is the antitype of the Cross, just as the Cross is the antitype of the Lord’s table: but we do not want, in this word, the heavenly thing represented by, any more than the enduring ordinance representing, the original historic concrete material altar: we want that altar itself: and that altar is, the CROSS, on which the Lord suffered. That is our altar: not to be emphasized, nor exalted into any comparison with the adorable Victim thereon offered; but still our altar, that wherein we glory that for which as for our altars, we contend: of which our banners, our tokens, our adornments, our churches, are full: severed from which, we know not Christ; laid upon which, He is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. And so it is here explained by most of the best Commentators) **to eat of which** (see esp. 1 Cor. ix. 13) **they have not licence who serve the tabernacle** (who are these? Some, as Schlichting, Morus, and strange to say recently Hofmann, understand by them the same, viz. Christians, as the subject of **we**

have. We Christians have an altar whereof [even] they who serve the [Christian] tabernacle have no right to eat: i.e. as explained by Hofmann, as the high priest himself did not eat of the sin-offerings whose blood was brought into the tabernacle, but they were burnt without the camp, so we Christians have no sacrifice of which we have any right to eat, no *further profit* to be derived from that one sacrifice, by which we have bee reconciled to God. But this is 1) false in fact. We *have a right* to eat of our Sacrifice, and are commanded so to do. All that our Lord says of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood [explain it how we will] would be nullified and set aside by such an interpretation. And 2) it is directly against the whole context, in which the meats, whatever they are, are pronounced profitless, and they who walked in them contrasted with us who have higher privileges. To what purpose then would it be to say, that we have an altar of which we *cannot* eat? that we have a sacrifice which brings us no profit, but only shame? I pass over the interpretation which understands by the words some particular class of Christians among the Hebrews, because it involves the anachronism of a distinction between clergy and laity which certainly then had no place: and also because it would furnish no sense at all suiting the passage, referring as it then would to *some* Christians only, not to all. The only true reference of our words, as also that which has been all but universally acknowledged, is that to the Jewish priesthood, and in them to those who have part with them in serving the rites and ordinances of the ceremonial law. These have no right to eat of our altar: for just as the bodies of those beasts whose blood was brought into the sanctuary were burnt without the camp, so Jesus suffered altogether without the gate of legal Judaism. Let us then not tarry serving that tabernacle which has no part in Him, but go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For we cleave not to any abiding city, such as the earthly Jerusalem, but seek one to come. Let us then not tarry in the Jewish tabernacle, serving their rites, offering their sacrifices; but offer our now only possible sacrifice, that of praise, the fruit of a good confession, acceptable to God through Him. Thus, and thus only, does the whole context stand in harmony. Thus the words in *they that serve the tabernacle* keep their former meanings: see ch. viii. 5, where we have “*such as have the delineation and the shadow of heavenly things:*” and remember that “*the tabernacle,*” barely so placed, cannot by any possibility mean any part of the Christian apparatus of worship, nor have any antitypical reference, but can only import that which throughout the Epistle it has imported, viz. the Jewish tabernacle: see ch. viii. 5, ix. 21, &c.).

11.] For (reason why this exclusion has place: because our great Sacrifice is not one of those in which the servants of the tabernacle had any share, but answers to one which was wholly taken out and burnt; see below) **of the animals of which the blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest, of these the bodies are consumed by fire outside the camp** (there was a distinction in the sacrifices as to the subsequent participation of certain parts of them by the priests. Those of which they *did partake* were: 1) the sin-offering of the rulers [a male kid], and the sin-offering of the common people [a female kid or lamb], Lev. iv. 22 ff., 27 ff. [compare the rules in ch. vi. about eating and not eating the sacrifices]: 2) the dove of the poor man, Lev. v. 9: 8) the trespass-offering, Lev. vii. 7: 4) the skin of the whole burnt-offering, ib. ver. 8; 5) the wave-breast and heave-shoulder of the peace-offerings: 6) the wave-offerings on the feast of weeks, entire. But those of which they *did not partake* were 1) the sin-offering of the high priest for himself, Lev. iv. 5–7, esp. ver. 12: 2) the sin-offering for sins of ignorance of the congregation, Lev. iv. 16–21, see Num. xv. 24: 3) the sin-offering for high priest and people combined, on the great day of atonement, the blood of which was brought not only into the holy but into the holiest place, Lev. xvi. 27. Besides which we have a general rule, to which doubtless the Writer here alludes, Lev. vi. 30, “No sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire.” As regards particular expressions: **the holy place** here, as in ch. ix. 8, 12, 24, 25, and x. 19, probably means not the holy place commonly so called, but the holy of holies, into which the blood of the sin-offering was brought on the day of atonement, and which only typified heaven, whither Christ as High Priest is entered with His Blood. **Without the camp** refers to the time when Israel was encamped in the wilderness: the enclosure of the camp was afterwards succeeded by the walls of Jerusalem, so that **without the gate** below answers to it).

12.] Wherfore (as being the antitype of the sin-offering on the day of atonement) **Jesus also, that He might sanctify** (see on ch. ii. 11) **the people** (see on ch. ii. 17) **through His own blood, suffered outside the gate** (of Jerusalem. It is necessary in order to understand this verse rightly, to trace with some care the various steps of the symbolism. The offering of Christ consists of two parts: 1) His offering on earth, which was accomplished on the cross, and answered to the slaying of the legal victim and the destruction of its body by fire, the annihilation of the fleshly life: and 2) His offering in the holy place above, which consisted in His entering heaven, the abode of God, through the veil, that is to say his flesh, and carrying His blood there as a standing atonement for the world’s sin. This, the sanctifying of the people through His own blood, was the ulterior end of that sacrifice on earth: and therefore whatever belonged to that sacrifice on earth, is said to have been done in order to that other. This will sufficiently account for the clause indicating purpose here, without making it seem as if the ultimate end, the sanctification of God’s people, depended on the subordinate circumstance of Christ’s having suffered outside the gate. It did depend on the entire fulfilment by Him of all things written of Him in the law: and of them this was one). **So then let us go forth to Him outside the camp** (“meaning, outside the polity which is according to the law.” Theodoret. This is certainly intended, and not the meaning given by Chrysostom [“let us take up His cross, and remain outside the world”]), nor that of Schlichting, and others [“let us undergo exile, reproach, and the like, with Him”]. Both these may be involved in that which is intended; the latter particular is presently mentioned: but they are not identical with it. Possibly there may be a reference to Exod. xxixii. 7, “*It came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.*” Bleek objects that if so, we should not expect the tabernacle to have been so shortly before

mentioned as representing the Jewish sanctuary, in distinction from the Christian. But this seems hardly sufficient reason for denying the reference. The occasion in Exod. xxxiii. was a remarkable one. The people were just quitting Sinai,

the home of the law; and the term, “*every one which sought the Lord*,” seems to bear more than ordinary solemnity), **bearing His reproach** (see on ch. xi. 26).

14.] For (reason why such going forth is agreeable to our whole profession: not why the word “*camp*,” and not “*city*,” is used above) **we have not here** (on earth: not, in the earthly Jerusalem) **an abiding city, but we seek for that** (abiding city) **which is to come** (“he calls the city, *one to come*, because it is future to us. To God, Christ, the angels, it is already present.” Schlichting. Yet this is not altogether true. The heavenly Jerusalem, in all her glory, is not yet existing, nor shall be until the number of the elect is accomplished. Then she shall come down out of heaven as a bride prepared for her husband, Rev. xxi. 2. This verse certainly comes with a solemn tone on the reader, considering how short a time the *abiding city* did actually remain, and how soon the destruction of Jerusalem put an end to the Jewish polity which was supposed to be so enduring).

15.] Through Him (placed first, as carrying all the emphasis—through Him, not by means of the Jewish ritual observances) **therefore** (this gathers its inference from the whole argument, vv. 10–14) **let us offer up a sacrifice of praise** (this, *a sacrifice of praise*, is in the Septuagint version. It is the term for a thank-offering in the law. The Commentators quote an old saying of the Rabbis, “In the future age all sacrifices shall cease, but praises shall not cease”) **continually** (not at fixed days and seasons, as the Levitical sacrifices, but all through our lives) **to God, that is, the fruit of our lips** (from Hosea [ref.]: the literal meaning of the Hebrew is, “we will account our lips as calves” [for a sacrifice]: A.V., “we will render the calves of our lips.” The fruit of the lips is explained by the next words to be, a good confession to God) **confessing to His name** (i. e. the name of God, as the ultimate object to which the confession, *through Him*, Jesus, is referred).

16.] But (as if it were said, the fruit of the lips is not the only sacrifice: God must be praised not only with the lips, but with the life) **of beneficence and communication** (of your means to others who are in want: an usage of the word which, as Bleck remarks, sprung up in the primitive Christian Church, as also the corresponding one of the verb: see on ch. ii. 14) **be not forgetful** (ver. 2): **for with such sacrifices** (viz. *beneficence and communication*, not including ver. 15, which is complete in itself) **God is well pleased**.

17—end.] Concluding exhortations and notices.

17.] Having already in ver. 7 spoken of their deceased leaders in the church, and thereby been reminded of *their* steadfastness in the faith, he has taken occasion in the intervening verses to admonish them respecting the danger of apostasy to Judaism, and to exhort them to come fearlessly out of it to Christ. Now he returns to their *duty to their leaders*. **Obey your leaders, and submit (to them)** (**obey**, in the regular course of your habits, guided by them, persuaded that their rule is right **submit**, where that rule interferes with your own will: **obey** has more of free following, **submit** of dutiful yielding): **for they** (on their part) **keep watch on behalf of your souls** (not the same as *on behalf of you*, but rather equivalent to “*on behalf of you for your salvation*”: the word **soul** bringing in the idea of immortality), **as having to give an account** (by these words, as Theophylact well observes, bestir up the rulers also to diligence, and remembering their own responsibility): **that they may do this** (viz. *watch*, not give an account, for thus the present tenses which follow would be inapplicable) **with joy, and not lamenting** (over your disobedience): **for this** (their having to lament over you) **is unprofitable for you**.

18.] Pray for us (here, as elsewhere, it is probably a mistake to suppose that the first person plural indicates the Writer alone. As Delitzsch observes, the passage from the *rulers* to the Writer individually would be harsh. And when Bleek finds in ver. 19 a proof that the Writer only is meant, he misses the point, that this **us**, including the Writer and his companions, is in fact a transition note between ver. 17 and ver. 19. See Eph. vi. 19; Rom. xv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 11): **for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to behave ourselves with seemliness** (i. e. to live without giving offence or scandal. This appears to point at some offence of the same kind as we know to have been taken at the life and teaching of St. Paul with reference to the law and Jewish customs).

19.] But I the more abundantly (see on ch. ii. 1) **exhort you to do this** (i. e. to pray for us), **that I may be the sooner restored to you** (on the inferences from this and the other notices in this concluding passage, see Introduction.)

20, 21.] Solemn concluding prayer. “He first asks their prayers, then prays for all blessings on them.” Chrysostom.

20.] But (breaking off, as we use the same term: see again ver. 22) **the God of peace** (so often, at the end of St. Paul’s Epistles: see Rom. xv. 33; xvi. 20; 1 Cor. xiv. 33; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. iv. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 23; and 2 Thess. iii. 16. In the presence of so many instances of the expression under different circumstances, it would perhaps be hardly safe to infer from it here any reference to danger of strife within the church addressed. Still the words are not a mere formula, and in all the above places, some reference is made, doubtless, to circumstances either of internal dissension or external tribulation. And certainly both the exhortations in vv. 17–19 point to a state in which there was danger of disobedience within and suspicion towards the

Writer and those who were on his part. So that ‘peace’ was a natural wish for them, even without taking into account those troubles which harassed and threatened them from without, in regard of which it would be also a haven, where they would be), **who brought up from the dead** (perhaps this is said not of the Resurrection only, but of the Ascension also. “This is the only place where our Writer mentions the Resurrection. Every where else he lifts his eyes from the depth of our Lord’s humiliation, passing over all that is intermediate, to the highest point of His exaltation. The connexion here suggests to him once at least to make mention of that which lay between Golgotha and the throne of God, between the altar of the Cross and the heavenly sanctuary, the resurrection of Him who died as our sin-offering”) **the great Shepherd of the sheep** (the passage before the Writer’s mind has been that in the prophetic sixty-third chapter of Isaiah [ver. 11], where speaking of Moses, it is said, “Where is He that brought them up out of the sea unto the Shepherd of his flock?” In Isaiah, the shepherd is Moses; and the comparison between Moses and Christ is familiar to our Writer, ch. iii, 2–6. The addition of **great** as applied to Christ, is correspondent to His title **great Priest**, ch. x. 21. To deny this reference, with Lünemann, seems impossible, with the remarkable conjunction of “*the Shepherd of the sheep.*” The connexion here in which this title of our Lord is brought in, may be, that the *Rulers* having been just mentioned, and himself also, and his labours and theirs for the settlement of the Church in peace being before his mind, he is led to speak of Him who is the Chief Shepherd [1 Pet. v. 4], who was brought again from the dead by the God of Peace), **in the blood of the everlasting covenant** (but in what sense? Theodoret says, “He calls the new Covenant everlasting; for that there shall be none after it.” Then, the expression itself can hardly but be a reminiscence of Zech. ix. 11, “*By (in) the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoner out of the pit wherein is no water:*” and if so, the import of the preposition **in** here will be at least indicated by its import there. And there it is, by virtue of, in the power of, the blood of thy covenant, i.e. of that blood which was the seal of the covenant entered into with thee. So also we must understand it here. The instrumental, conditioning-element force of *in* seems to predominate: **through**, or in virtue of, the blood [Acts xx. 28]. See on the whole, Isa. iv. 3; lxi. 8; John x. 11–18), **even our Lord Jesus** (here the personal name, **Jesus**, is joined with the assertion of His lordship over us: below, where the inworking of the Spirit through Him is spoken of, it is “*through Jesus Christ,*” His office as Christ at God’s right hand having made Him the channel of the Spirit to us: the anointing on Him, the Head, flowing down to the skirts of the raiment. See Acts ii. 36) **perfect you in every good work, towards the doing His will** (see ch. x. 36. Here as there, it is not a *habit* which is spoken of, but the accomplishment of the whole course of obedience), **doing in you (doing, chosen expressly as taking up the doing of His will, in exact correspondence with St. Paul’s saying, Phil. ii. 13) that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ** (the reference is variously given to “well-pleasing,”—well-pleasing&c. through Jesus Christ: or to the verb, “*doing.*” The latter is by far the more probable, as the former would introduce a superfluity): **to whom** (i. e. to God, the chief subject of the whole sentence, God, who is the God of peace, who brought up the Lord Jesus from the dead, who can perfect us in every good work, to accomplish His will, and works in’ ns that which is well-pleasing to Him through Jesus Christ. The whole majesty of the sentence requires this reverting to its main agent, and speaks against the referring **to whom be glory** to our Blessed Lord, who is only incidentally mentioned. See the very similar construction of 1 Pet. iv. 11, where however the reference is not by any means equally certain) **be** (in 1 Pet. iv. 11, “*is:*” and possibly also here: but perhaps “*be*” is the more probable supplement) **the glory for ever. Amen.**

22.] But (breaking off, see above, ver. 20) **I beseech you, brethren, endure the word of my exhortation** (or, *of exhortation.* The expression applies without doubt to the whole Epistle, from what follows: not as Beza, and others, to the few exhortations preceding, nor as Grotius, to ch. x.–xiii, only: nor as Kuinoel, and others, to the exhortations scattered up and down in the Epistle); **for also** (besides other reasons, there is this) **in** (by means of, in the material of) **few [words]** (few in comparison of what might have been said on such a subject) **I have written to you.**

28.] Know (not, “*ye know,*” see in my Greek Test.) **that our brother Timothy is dismissed** (the word thus rendered does not occur in St. Paul, but is frequent in St. Luke; e.g. Luke xxii, 68; xxiii. 16 ff.; Acts iii. 13; iv. 21, of dismissal from prison or custody; Acts xiii. 3; xv. 30, of official sending away; Acts xv. 33, of solemn dismissal; and Acts xix. 41, xxiii. 22, of simple dismissal), **with whom, if he come** (“to me: it is probable, that Timothy had been discharged from prison, but had not yet reached St. Paul for, the writer, whoever he was.”) (Ecumenius) **soon, I will see you** (by going to you).

24.] Salute all your leaders, and all the saints, They from Italy salute you (on this, see Introd., §ii. 13).

25.] Grace (literally, *the grace*, viz. of God. “He does not express whose grace and favour he wishes for them, as that was a matter notorious to all Christians.” Schlichting) **be with all of you. Amen.**

JAMES

Chapter 1

Chapter 4

Chapter 2

Chapter 5

Chapter 3

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

James: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1.] ADDRESS AND GREETING. **James** (for all questions who the Author of this Epistle was, see the Introduction. I assume here that which I have there endeavoured to establish, that it is “James the Lord’s brother,” the first president or bishop of the church at Jerusalem, an Apostle, but not one of the Twelve), **servant** (not necessarily, as Huther, an official appellation; but implying, as he also confesses, devotion to God and His work alone, irrespectively of self-will or other men’s will) **of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ** (not “*of the God and Lord, J.C.*,” but, as Ecumenius, “**by God**, he means the Father: **by Lord**, the Son.” Huther remarks, that in all the addresses of Epistles, the whole name *Jesus Christ* is given. St. James mentions our Lord only here and ch. ii. 1 in this Epistle, and not at all in his speeches in Acts xv. and xxi. Bengel says, “It might have seemed, if he had often named Jesus, as if he did it to exalt himself as the brother of our Lord. For that very reason, he ‘knew Christ according to the flesh’ less than others”), **to the twelve tribes** (of Israel: nor can there be any reasonable doubt that this Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians in the first place. Not however to them, as distinguished from Gentile Christians: for the two classes appear to have

been not as yet distinct. If the later date of the Epistle be taken [see Introd.], then the Jewish Christians are addressed as the nucleus and kernel of all Christendom. But to my mind, the former is more probable) **which are in the dispersion** (the most likely reference of this word is to the literal and actual Jewish dispersion: and the Epistle must be considered as addressed, from the head of the mother church in Jerusalem, to the Jewish believers, residing among the dispersed tribes of Israel), **greeting** (the formula thus rendered is not found in the address of any other apostolical Epistle; but it occurs in the Epistle drawn up under the direction of James to the Gentile churches in Acts xv. 23).

2–12.] Exhortations regarding the endurance of trials. **Think it all joy** (the word *joy* is taken up out of the word rendered greeting, which literally means *to rejoice*. It is a characteristic of the style of this Epistle thus to take up again words just used: so “endurance. But let endurance,” ver. 3, 4: “deficient...is deficient,” ver. 4, 5: “doubting...he that doubteth,” ver. 6: “slow to wrath: for the wrath,” ver. 19, 20: “the implanted word...but be ye doers of the word,” ver. 21, 22; “that man’s religion is vain...pure religion,” ver. 26, 27, &c., &c. **all joy**, i.e. all conceivable joy—a matter on all hands joyful), **my brethren** (this is the constant address in our Epistle. It betokens community of origin and of faith), **whosoever ye fall into various temptations** (these are not only what we properly call *temptations*, but any kind of distresses which happen to us, from without or from within, which in God’s purpose serve as *trials* of us: the latter word being, in this its now common general meaning, a word derived from the Christian life. See 1 Pet. i. 6, which is strictly parallel):

3.] ground of this joy: knowing (as you do) **that the proof ‘of your faith worketh endurance (per-severance:** more than patience. But does not St. Paul, Rom. v. 3, 4, state precisely the converse, viz. that “*tribulation worketh endurance, and endurance approval?*” Doubtless: but it is really the same that is said: *tribulation* there is equivalent to **proof** here. As De Wette observes, the thought is not carried to its end as in Romans, but the Apostle breaks away at *endurance* to exhort respecting it).

4.] But (as if it had been said, and be not weary of enduring: but) **let endurance have a perfect work** (the allusion seems to be to our Lord’s saying, Matt. xxiv. 13, “*He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.*”) So that the words are to be taken simply and literally; **endurance** as the abstract, mere endurance, and **work** as the work wrought out by *endurance* in its continuance. And **perfect** is not to be understood as *enduring to the end*, but in its ordinary sense of ‘perfect,’ fully brought out and accomplished), **that ye may be perfect** (for the work of God in a man is the man. If God’s teaching by patience have had a perfect work in you, *you* are perfect: His is an *implanted word*, ver. 21. And the purpose of that work is, to make us perfect) **and entire** (that in which every part is present in its place), **deficient in nothing** (the subjoining a negative corroboration to a positive clause is characteristic of St. James: compare vv. 5 and 6).

5.] But (i. e., but this perfection and entireness, this defect in nothing, will not be yet attained; and you will find, when you aim at it, that you are lacking in the very first requisite) **if any of you is deficient in wisdom** (for what is meant by wisdom here, see ch. iii. 15–17), let him ask (either supply ‘*it*,’ or take the verb absolutely, which is better: so A.V., see below) **from God who giveth** (asking and giving are put forward as belonging to us and God in the abstract, and we do not want any object, as “*it*,” or “*wisdom*,” supplied) to **all men simply** (so Rom. xii. 8, “*He that imparteth, with simplicity:*” which is perhaps better than “*with liberality:*” we must here interpret by what follows, and understand it of simply giving, and adding nothing afterwards which may take off from the graciousness of the gift) **and upbraideth not** (in what sense is rather doubtful. Many interpret it of sending away with a refusal: the word will not bear this meaning. By far the greatest part of Commentators understand it of reproaching by the recounting of benefits bestowed. But this again does not reach the full and general nature

of the expression here. The real meaning here is just as in Eccl. xx. 15, "He giveth little, and upbraideth much," and in Eccl. xli. 22, "After thou hast given, upbraid not," viz. upbraiding with any kind of reproaches, as God might well do, so unworthy are we to approach Him with any request. This of course would include that other), **and it shall be given to him** (viz. *wisdom*, see 3 Kings iii. 9–12. The whole verse seems to be written in remembrance of Matt. vii. 7–12).

6.] But let him ask in faith (persuasion that God can and will give: see Matt. xxi. 22; and compare "*the prayer of faith*," 15), **nothing doubting** (compare Matt. xxi. 21, from which this is evidently taken, "*If ye have faith, and doubt not,*" &c. Huther says well, "*Doubt* is not *unbelief*" [Luke xxiv. 11], but includes in it the essential character of *unbelief*: while *faith* says 'Yes,' and *unbelief* 'No,' *doubt* is the union of 'Yes' and 'No,' but so that 'No' is the weightier: it is that inward giving way which leans not to *faith*, but to *unbelief*. 'The deep-lying ground of it is *pride*'): **for he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea**

(see Eph. iv. 14 and Isa. lvii. 20) **driven by the wind and tossed about** (the word forms a synonym with the former, "*driven by the wind*:" and the use of these synonymous expressions so close to one another is again a characteristic of St. James. A good explanation of the figure is quoted by Wiesinger from Heisen: "Sometimes he is east on the shore of faith and hope, sometimes he is rolled back into the deep of distrust: now he is borne up into the height of worldly pride, now he is mingled with the lowest sands of desperation and trouble"): **for** (takes up and repeats the former **for**) **let not that man** (said with a certain slight expression of contempt) **think that he shall receive any thing** (viz. of what he asks: some things, as life, food, raiment, &c., he does continually receive) **from the Lord** (i. e. as usually in this Epistle, from GOD. So ch. iv. 10, 15; v. 4, 10, 11: see at each of those places. On the other hand, "*the Lord*," ch. v. 7, 14, 15, is used of Christ. Hofmann remarks that where the Father is not expressly distinguished from the Son by the context, the Godhead, in its unity, is to be understood by the word **God**: and the same may be said of **the Lord**).

8.] He is a man with two minds, unstable in all his ways (such is the best way of taking this sentence, making it all predicate and all to apply to **that man** as its subject. The common way, to take "*a double-minded man*" as a new subject, as A.V. 'a double-minded man is unstable,' has this against it, that it makes the very unusual word "**doubled-souled**," found here and in ch. iv. 8 for the first time in Greek literature, to be a mere usual epithet and word of passage).

9.] The connexion appears to be this: we must not pray before God, we must not be before God, double-minded; in our trials, we shall get no heavenly wisdom, if this is so. This double-mindedness, one soul drawn upwards to God, the other drawn downwards to the world, causes nothing but instability, and cannot result in that joy which is to be *our* attitude in trial. And it arises from misapprehension of our appointed state in trial: the poor and humble forget the exceeding honour thus done to him, which ought to be to him ground of boasting, far more worthy than (see below) the rich in this world have in their riches which shall so soon fade away: whereas (ver. 12) he that is tried shall receive a crown of life from the Lord. **But** (contrasted with the *double-mindedness* above) **let the brother** (the Christian believer) **who is low** (poor and afflicted; not merely, low in station: this explanation disappears with the view that *the rich man* [below] is Christian also) **glory in his exaltation** (which he has obtained by being admitted into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and which he has further in reversion in the glorious crown of life hereafter, ver. 12): **but the rich** (not the rich *brother*, nor is the rich to be understood any otherwise than in the rest of the Epistle, compare ch. ii. 6f., v. 1ff. There are difficulties either way; but on mature consideration I find those on the usual hypothesis, of the *rich man being also a brother*, insuperable. For in that case 1) a most unnatural change in the sense is necessary at "*because*:"— 'Let the rich brother glory in his humiliation, for, or because, *considered merely as a rich man, &c.*'") So that he is a Christian brother at first, and then a mere rich man in the next clause: 2) such a meaning will not suit the concluding words of ver. 11: which are simply predicated of *the rich man*, the subject enunciated above, and cannot with any probability be supposed to be said of him merely as regards his riches. Whereas on the other view the difficulties are no more than arise from a confessedly elliptical parallelism. After **the rich** we must supply *glorieth*: 'let the *low* glory in his exaltation, whereas the rich ran glories in his debasement,' compare Phil. iii. 19, "*whose glory is in their shame*") **glories** (see above) **in his humiliation** (see Phil. iii. 19, above,—in that which is in reality his debasement, just as in the other case the lowly Christian is called on to boast in what is in reality his exaltation. Thus, and thus only, the parallelism coheres. On the ordinary view, the *exaltation* of the *low brother* is, that which is really but not apparently his exaltation, whereas the *humiliation* of the *rich brother* is that which is apparently but not really his debasement); **because as a flower of the grass he shall pass away.**

11.] For (justification of the last words) **the sun arose** (it is given in the form of a tale, a narration of what happened and ever does happen: see Isa. xl. 7, from which the whole is adapted) **with the heat** (or, the hot east wind: this interpretation seems approved by the Greek of Jonah iv. 8, where the same word is used for that which we render "*a vehement east wind*." I prefer the other meaning, the arid scorching which accompanies the increasing power of the sun), **and dried up the grass, and the flower thereof fell away** (all from Isaiah), **and the beauty of its appearance** (literally, *face*, i.e. external appearance) **perished: thus also shall the rich man** (the same as was spoken of ver. 10) **wither** (the verb continues the similitude) **in his ways** (Ps. lxviii. 24; and Prov. ii. 8).

12.] We now return to the suffering and tempted Christian, who has his *blessedness*, and a possession more precious and more sure than worldly wealth. **Blessed is the man who endureth** (the emphasis is on this verb, which distinguishes this saying

from that in ver. 2; it is not the mere *falling among temptations*, but the **enduring temptation**, which is felicitated) **temptation: because when he has become approved** (by the trial: when he has undergone the *proof* ver. 2) **he shall receive the crown of life** (of life is genitive of apposition: the crown *is* life eternal. No image derived from *athletes* must be thought of in the verse, as is done by many: such an image would be foreign to the ideas of Jews, with whom the receiving a crown from God was a familiar image, irrespective of any previous contest for a prize: see Ps. xxi. 3; Wisd. v. 16, “*They shall receive the kingdom of glory and the diadem of beauty from the hand of the Lord*”), **which He promised to them that love Him** (*who* promised it, is understood: God, repeatedly, in substance: whenever a kingdom is foretold as the future inheritance of His people: **to them that love Him**, 2 Tim. iv. 8; and the same words again in ch. ii. 5. It is a formula frequently occurring in the law and the prophets: compare Exod. xx. 6; Deut. vii. 9; Judg. v. 31; Neh. i. 5; Ps. v. 11, exliv. 20; Dan. ix. 4; Eccl. xxxi. [xxxiv.] 16, xlvi. 22).

13, 14.] Let no one when tempted (in the manner hitherto spoken of through the chapter. There is no warrant for changing in the slightest degree the reference of the word. The *temptation* is a trying of the man by the solicitation of evil: whether that evil be the terror of external danger, or whatever it be, all *temptation* by means of it arises not from God, but from ourselves—our own *lust*. God ordains the temptation, overrules the temptation, but does not tempt, is not the spring of the solicitation to sin) **say that I am tempted from [by] God** (by agency proceeding out and coming from God: very different from “*of God*,” which would represent God as the agent. Thus the man would transfer his own responsibility to God. There does not seem to be any allusion to the fatalism of the Pharisees, as some seem to think: the fault is one of common life, and is alluded to Eccl. xv. 11, “*Say not thou, It is through the Lord that I fell away*”): **for God is unversed in things evil** (the meaning usually given, “*untempted*,” or “*not able to be tempted*,” is against the usage of the word. Besides, there is no question here of God *being tempted*, but of God *tempting*. It seems that we must take refuge in the ordinary meaning of the word, and render it ‘*unversed in*,’ having no experience of), **but HE tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, being** (slightly causal, ‘*in that he is*’) **drawn out and enticed by** (it is the same preposition in the Greek as above, ver. 13: the source rather than the agent: but we cannot here render it *from*, as the sentence would thus become ambiguous) **his own lust** (James is not here speaking of the *original* source of sin in man, but of the actual source of temptation to sin, when it occurs. The “*sin*” of St. Paul, the sinful principle in man, is not here in question: we take up the matter, so to speak, lower down the stream: and the *lust* here is the *lust* there, itself the effect of sin [abstr.] in the members, and leading to sin [concrete] in the conduct):

15.] then lust having conceived, bringeth forth sin: and sin, when completed, bringeth forth death (it has been questioned whether *sin* is here in one, or in two senses. De Wette holds that the first *sin* is the purpose, or inner act, of sin,—the *completion*, carrying this *sin* out into an act, which act brings forth death, the wages of sin. But this is decidedly wrong. Wiesinger has disputed it, and insisted rightly that the *inner act* is the union of the will with the *lust*, the “*bringing forth*” denoting extrusion into outward act: then the second *sin*,—which Huther rightly maintains to be the sinful act when brought to perfection in all its consequences, in a series of results following on one another and bringing a man under bondage to his sin,—being thus perfected, brings forth eternal death. The imagery is throughout consistent. The harlot **lust draws away** and **entices** the man: the guilty union is committed by the will embracing the temptress: the consequence is that she **conceives sin**, sin, in general, of some kind, of that kind to which the temptation inclines: then [so literally], **the sin**, that particular sin, when grown up and mature, herself **bringeth forth**, as if all along pregnant with it, Death, the final result of sin. So that *temptation to sin* cannot be from God, while *trial* is from Him. The one, being our proof, works endurance, and endurance, when she has a perfect work, life: the other, being a bait and excitement arising from lust, “brings forth sin, and sin being completed, brings forth **death**.” The English reader will not fail to remember Milton’s sublime allegory in *Paradise Lost*, where Satan, by his own evil lust, brings forth sin: and then by an incestuous union with Sin [which doubtless may be said to lie here also in the background, no cause being assigned for the *conception*] causes her to bring forth Death).

16–18.] The idea that God tempts to sin has been as yet only negatively contradicted. But so far is it from this being so, that *He is the Author of all good*. **Do not err** (some have ended the paragraph with these words: some have begun a new one. But this formula thus used seems invariably to look to what follows), **my beloved brethren** (both this earnest address, and the caution, shew how important the Writer feels this to be, which he is about to enunciate): **every good gift** (properly, *act of giving*) **and every perfect gift** (properly, *thing given*. But we cannot express the two by two words in English) **descendeth from above** (not as A.V., is from above, and descendeth, &c.), **from the Father of the lights** (of heaven) (it seems now generally agreed that by **the lights** here is meant the *heavenly bodies*, and by **Father** the creator, originator, as in Job xxxviii. 28, “*Who is the father of the rain?*” Being this, being the Father of those glorious fountains of light, and thus [see below] purer and clearer than they all, it cannot be that He should tempt to evil. Our very life, as renewed in Christ, is of His begetting, and we are a firstfruit of His new world), **with** (‘*chez*,’ in the presence of whom) **whom there is no change** (none of that uncertainty of degree of light which we see in the material heavenly bodies, but which is not in God their Creator) **or shadow** (*a shadow*, the dark mark of shadow, the result of being overshadowed, and cast from any object) **of turning** (arising from turning: from that *revolution* in which the heavens are ever found: by means of which the moon turns her dark side to us, in a constant state of *change, and shadow of turning*: by means of which the moon is eclipsed by the shadow of the earth, and the sun by the body of the moon, or, if you will, though this is hardly so likely to have been in view, is hidden from us during the night. From all these God, the Father of lights, is free; as 1 John i. 5, “*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*”).

18.] *The greatest example of this position*, that all good and perfect gifts come from Him: mentioned not merely as an example, but as leading on to the following context. **Because He willed it** (the past participle is 1) contemporary with the verb: 2) slightly causal, involving the condition of the act which follows. It was of His own mere will, ‘proprio motu,’ and the emphasis is on this word) **begat He** (the spiritual birth, not the natural, is meant, as is evident by what follows) **us** (signifies the Writer and his readers, not Christians in general: not especially as *Jewish* Christians, for that is not [see below] the reference here) **with the word of truth** (the genitive is one of apposition; compare John xvii. 17, “*Thy word is truth.*” And the word of truth is the gospel, preached, and *implanted* as below: compare 1 Pet. i. 23, “*born again...by the word of the living God*”), **that we should be** (aim, but not the primary aim, of the *begetting*. His gracious purpose with regard to *us* in particular was, that we should be, &c. His great purpose with regard to *all* Christians is not here in question) **a kind of firstfruit** (this, **a kind of**, does not appear to be intended, as Bengel, “to be said in modesty, because properly and absolutely, *Christ* is the firstfruit.” Rather, I should say, it would point to the early date of our Epistle, in which an idea afterwards so familiar is thus introduced as it were with an apologetic explanation. The figure is from the appointment of the law by which the firstborn of man, of cattle, of fruits, &c., were to be consecrated to God; and the word must be taken with this sacred meaning, not merely as an ordinary word indicating priority. The first Christians, to whom St. James is writing, were as firstborn of the great family, dedicated as firstfruits to God. Weisinger beautifully says, “The thought fully given would be this: they by Regeneration were dedicated as the firstfruits of a sacrificial gift which shall only be completed with the offering up of all creatures”) **of His creatures** (this expression manifestly extends wider than merely to the great multitude of the regenerated whom no man can number; it embraces all creation, which we know shall partake in the ultimate glorious perfection of the sons of God: see Rom. viii. 20, 21. Wiesinger has an important note, shewing from this verse what must be the right understanding of much which follows in this Epistle. “This passage,” he says, “is among those which reveal the depth of Christian knowledge in which the practical and moral exhortations of the Writer are grounded: lying as it does expressly (‘wherefore,’ ver. 21) at the basis of them. We will here bring together in a few words the teaching of the passage, for the sake of its important bearing on the rest of the Epistle. It teaches us 1) as a positive supplement to vv. 14, 15, that the life of man must be renewed, from its very root and foundation: 2) it designates this renewal as God’s work, moreover as an imparting of the life of God, as only possible by the working of the Spirit, only on the foundation of the objective fact of our Redemption in Christ, which is the content of the *word of truth*: 3) it sets forth this re-generation as an act once for all accomplished, and distinguishes it from the gradual penetration and sanctification of the individual life by means of this new principle of life imparted in the re-generation: 4) it declares also expressly that the re-generation is a free act of God’s love not induced by any work of man (Eph. ii. 8, 9; Tit. iii. 5), so that man is placed by God in his right relation to God, antecedently to all works well-pleasing to God: for this the expression **begat He us** involves: and in so far as this *begetting* necessarily implies the justification of the sinner (to use the language of St. Paul), it is plain also, that St. James cannot, without contradicting himself, make this *justification*, in the sense of St. Paul, dependent on the works of faith. 5) *the word of truth* is specified as the objective medium of re-generation: and herewith we must have *faith* as the appropriating medium on the part of man himself: of the central import of which *faith* in St. James also we have already seen something (vv. 3, 6), and shall see more (ch. ii. 5, 14 ff.). 6) Together with this act of re-generation proceeding from God, we have also the high destination of the Christian, which the Apostle gives so significantly and deeply in these words, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. And that which God has done to him, is now in the following verses made the foundation of that which the Christian has on his part to do: by which that which we said under 3) and 4) receives fresh confirmation. This passage is one to be remembered, when we to know what the Apostle understands by the *perfect law* (i. 25, ii. 12), and what he means, when (ii. 14 ff.) he deduces *justification* from the works of faith. As regards the dogmatical use, which some make of this passage, wishing to shew that regeneration is brought about by the word, as distinguished from the Sacrament of Baptism (Tit. iii. 5–7), we may remark, that seeing that **the word of truth** designates the gospel, as a whole, without any respect to such distinction, nothing regarding it can be gathered from this passage. The word of the Lord constitutes, we know, the force of the Sacrament also. And is it meant to be inferred that the readers of this Epistle were *not baptized?*”)

19–27.] Exhortation to receive rightly this word of truth. (See the general connexion in the introduction.)

19.] On the reading,—whether “*Wherefore, my beloved brethren,*” or “*Ye know it, my beloved brethren,*”—see my Greek Testament. **Ye know it, my beloved brethren; but** (consequently) **let every man be swift to hear** (the word of truth, which has so great power for good and for life: the verb is absolute and general, having only *reference* to the word of truth), **slow to speak** (the meaning is, be eager to listen, not eager to discourse: the former may lead to implanting or strengthening the new life, the latter to wrath and suddenness of temper, so often found in the wake of swift rejoinder and ready chattering. Ecumenius reminds us that a certain divine man says, He that talketh repenteth often, he that holdeth his peace never), **slow to wrath** (the reference is general, as the precept is. The quick speaker is the quick kindler):

20.] for the wrath (any wrath, all wrath) **of man worketh not** (‘practiseth not,’ ‘worketh not habitually’) **the righteousness of God** (that which is righteousness in God’s sight. We must not interpret the righteousness of God the state of righteousness before God, as some, or that righteousness *in another*, into which God begets men by his word of truth, as Hofmann and Weisinger. When this latter asks, What relevance here has the remark that anger doeth not that which is right in the sight of God?—an easy answer can be given. Be not intemperately zealous, hastily rash to speak and to be angered, even in God’s behalf [for this is implied]: be humble, ready to listen:—for your angry zeal, your quick speaking, work not God’s righteous

purposes—serve not Him, are not carriers forward of that righteousness which is the characteristic of His kingdom, ch. iii. 18. How many an endeavour, which might have ended in *working the righteousness of God*, has been diverted and blighted by hasty speaking and anger, and ended only in disgracing ourselves, and Him whom we would have served, before men!).

21.] Wherefore (consequence from ver. 20: seeing that *wrath* excludes you from having a share in the righteous work of God) **putting off** (it must be done as a single act, antecedently to that which follows. The previous putting off is the condition of the subsequent reception) **all filthiness** (here figurative, as Rev. xxii. 11. Some Commentators take it here as standing alone: others join it with *and superabundance*, as belonging to the genitive “*of malignity*;” and this seems better for the context, which concerns not the putting away of moral pollution of all kinds, but only of that kind which belongs to *malignity*: see below. And, thus taken, it will mean that *malignity* pollutes the soul, and renders it unfit to receive the *implanted word*. It is very possible that the agricultural similitude in the word **implanted** may have influenced the choice of both these words, *filthiness* and *superabundance*. The ground must be ridded of all that pollutes and chokes it, before the seed can sink in and come to maturity; must be cleaned and cleared) and abundance (‘*superfluity*’ is perhaps too strong: it is, if the above figure be allowed, the rank growth, the abundant crop) **of malignity** (evil disposition towards one another. ‘The word carries on the “*wrath*” above: which springs from *malignity*, evil disposition, which is inherent in our hearts, and requires putting off before we can receive the word of God. That this is so, is evident from the recommendation of *mildness* which follows. However the exhortation may apply in the wider sense, it is not its sense here, as the context plainly shews), **in mildness** (towards one another) **receive** (so Mark iv. 20, of the good ground) **the implanted word** (the word spoken of is beyond doubt the same as the *word of truth* above—i. e. the Gospel, in its fulness. But the epithet makes some little difficulty. First of all, it clearly is not, as Eusebius seems to take it, ‘innate:’ for this would stultify the command to *receive* it, we having it already. Nor can it mean “the word which has been planted in the whole of Christendom,” seeing that individuals are here being dealt with: but the allusion is apparently to the parable of the sower, and it is the word implanted [equivalent to which has been sown], the word whose attribute and *virtue* is to be *implanted*, and which is *implanted*, awaiting your reception of it to spring up and take up your being into it and make you new plants) **which is able to save your souls** (so Rom. i. 16, where the *Gospel* is said to be *the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*. Observe “*your*

souls.” It is the *soul* which carries the personality of the man: which is between the *spirit* drawing it upwards, and the *flesh* drawing it downwards, and is saved or lost, passes into life or death, according to the choice between these two. And the *implanted word*, working through the *spirit*, and by the divine Spirit, is a spiritual agency, able to save the *soul*,—to complete the work, and to have done it for ever).

22.] The *swiftness to hear, and the reception of the truth* are qualified, at the same time that they are enforced, by a caution. **But be ye doers of the word** (viz. of the *implanted word*, the *word of truth*. Observe, not only “*do*,” but **be doers**: the substantive means more than the verb; it carries an enduring, a sort of official force with it: ‘let this be your occupation’), **not hearers only, deceiving yourselves** (the “*hearer only*” does this, when he infers that the mere sound of the word received in his outward ear will suffice for him).

23–25.] Justification of the expression, “deceiving your own selves,” and of the foregoing exhortation. Because, if any is a hearer of the word, and not (strictly, it is ‘if any one is a hearer, and a not-doer’) **a doer, this man** (the demonstrative pronoun points more markedly at the individual in whom the hearing and not-doing are united) **is like to a man contemplating** (probably the example was meant to have a general reference: for though it may be true, as De Wette says, that many men remember well their appearance in the mirror, the common rule is that men forget it) **the countenance of his birth** (i. e. as A.V., *his natural face*: the face he was born with. The expression is to be explained apparently as Wiesinger: ‘Not that he can see in the glass any other than his natural face, but the addition serves more plainly to point out the sphere of mere material perception from which the comparison is taken, as distinguished from the ethical sphere of ‘*hearing the word*,’ and at the same time hints at the easy translation of the remark from the one department to the other, in which ‘the word of God is a mirror in which we may and ought to see our moral visage,’ as De Wette”) **in a mirror: for** (this seems to stamp the example as a general one, applying to all, not merely taking some possible man who may do this; see above) **he contemplated himself, and has departed, and immediately forgot of what appearance he was** (viz. in the mirror. It is to be observed, that the *contemplating* answers to the hearing of the word: the *going away* to the relaxing the attention after hearing—letting the mind go elsewhere, and the interest of the thing heard pass away: and then the forgetfulness in both cases follows. In the next verse we pass to one who looks and does not depart). **But he who looked into** (here we have the figure mingled with the reality, the comparison being dropped. Probably the verb used here, which signifies *to stoop and look in*, has reference to a mirror being placed on a table or on the ground, to contemplate which steadily, a man must put his face near to it. But we must not perhaps urge this too strictly: for in 1 Pet. i. 12, it is used of looking closely into any thing. It is here the opposite of *contemplating*: attention bestowed for a time only and then withdrawn. And this opposition is strengthened by the words which follow: see below) **the perfect law which is** (the law) **of our (Christian) liberty** (‘*the perfect law*,’ not, the gospel as contrasted with the law, nor the covenant of faith more perfect than that of legal obedience: but the rule of life as revealed in the gospel, which is perfect and perfecting, but not in contrast with the former law as being not perfect, and not able to make perfect: that distinction is not in view here: see below. The whole Epistle is founded on this perfect law of Christ, more especially on that declaration of it contained in the Sermon on the mount: see Introd. And that this law here is meant, the

implanted word, the word of truth, as it is a rule of conduct, is evident from what follows, where *deeds*, and they only, are spoken of. It is the law of our liberty, not as in contrast with a former law of bondage, but as viewed on the side of its being the law of the new life and birth, with all its spontaneous and free development of obedience. Huther remarks, “Ever in the Old Test. the sweetness of the law was subject of praise [Ps xix. 8–11]. But the life-giving power belonged to the law only in an imperfect manner, because the covenant on which it rested, was as yet only one of promise, and not of fulfilment”), **and remains there** (remains looking in, does not depart as the other. As Wiesinger remarks, the matter spoken of here is not so much observing the law in act, as observing it in attention—not letting it pass out of the thoughts. That is to action, as below), **being** (not, *having become*: see above on ver. 22) **not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of work** (not, *of the work*, but abstract. of *work*, something which brings a result with it), **this man shall be blessed in his doing** (the words imply that even in the act there is blessing: the life of obedience is the element wherein the blessedness is found and consists).

26, 27.] The Apostle is still on the command in ver. 19. As yet he has been exemplifying the being *swift to hear*, in connexion with the *slow to wrath*. From this *he passes to that which is again so nearly connected with it,—the being slow to speak. If any man imagines that he is* (our A.V. ‘seem to be’ is ambiguous: it may mean ‘to others,’ whereas the word really means only, ‘to himself.’ ‘thinks that he is’) **religious** (in the sense of ‘observant of God’s outward service,’ marking the external manifestation of a religious mind. We have no word at all adequately expressing the original term), **not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his heart** (see above on “*deceiving yourselves*,” ver. 22: viz. by imagining such a character consistent with true religion), **of this man the religious service is vain** (idle and fruitless). **Religious service pure and unpolluted** (the two adjectives seem merely to bring out the positive and negative sides of purity, as in the two acts described below) **in the estimation of** (Rom. ii. 13; Gal. iii. 11) **Him who is our God and Father** (or, according as the original is read, “(our) God and Father.”) That the paternal relation here ascribed to God must be understood as referring to *us*, is evident) **is** (consists in) **this, To visit orphans** (perhaps in reference to the appellation “*Father*,” which has preceded: so Ps lxviii. 5, God is called “*father of the fatherless, and judge of the widows*”) **and widows in their affliction** (shews at the same time the reason for the *visit*, and the object of it); **to** (there is no coupling conjunction. These uncoupled clauses are found in our Epistle especially, where various particulars are enumerated which go to make up a whole, or apply to the description of one thing: as e.g., ver. 19; ch. iii. 6: see also ch. v. 5, 6) **preserve himself unspotted from the world** (not merely earthly things as far as they tempt to sin: still less the natural evil disposition of men; but, as in ch. iv. 4, *the whole earthly creation*, separated from God, and lying in sin, which, whether considered as consisting in the men who serve it, or the enticements which it holds out to evil lusts, is to Christians a source of continual defilement. They, by their new birth under God, are taken out of the world; but at the same time, by sin still dwelling in them, are ever liable to be enticed and polluted by it: and therefore must keep themselves [1 Tim. vi. 14], for fear of such pollution. This keeping is indeed in the higher sense God’s work: John xvii. 15; but it is also our work, 1 Tim. v. 22).

James: Chapter 2

CHAP. II.]

1–13.] THE SIN OF RESPECT OF PERSONS: as the first of a series of reproofs for errors in practice which spring out of the mention of the “*perfect law of liberty*”: compare ch. i. 25, and ver. 12. The Apostle begins, as is his wont, with strong blame of the sin: then illustrates it vv. 2–4: then gives the ground of its sinfulness vv. 5–11, and concludes vv. 12, 13 with a reference again to the law of liberty.

1–4.] The warning and its practical ground. My brethren, do not in respectings of persons (‘in,’ i.e. in the practice of, in the midst of. The substantive in the original is plural, to point out the various kinds and occasions of the fault. The fault itself, as here intended, is easily explained by the context, where an example is taken of one kind of it. Theile says well, that it is the fault of measuring individual Christians not by their Christian graces, but by their fortune, and external qualities,—and of preferring some to others according to this standard) **hold the faith** (not merely ‘faith in,’ but *the faith of*, thus setting before them more forcibly the utter inconsistency of such respect of persons with the service of Christ) **of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory** (these words [the Lord] do not exist in the original. See the question, what is to be supplied, discussed in my Greek Test.).

2, 3, 4.] Hypothetical example, to explain to ‘them that to which he especially points. The hypothesis carries however in itself a foundation of fact, and appeals to the consciences of the readers whether it were not so. **For** (as if it were said, “that which I mean, is”) **if there chance to have come** (the entrance is accomplished when that which is alleged takes place) **into your assembly** (the word in the original is *synagogue*: but from this some have too hastily inferred from the word that the *Jewish synagogue* is meant. This, in the face of the organization of the church implied in ch. v. 14, would be impossible. The word may well be understood of a Christian assembly, or as merely an assembly in general. But it is most likely here, from the allusions to sitting and standing below, a place of Christian worship, the name being a natural one, considering by whom the Epistle was written, and to whom it was addressed) **a man with gold rings** (we have evidence of the practice of overloading the fingers with rings. Martial speaks of a certain Charinus, who wore six rings on each finger, and never took them off, not

even at night, nor in the bath: and Lucian mentions sixteen heavy rings being worn on the fingers at once), **in a splendid garment** (glittering, either in colour, or with ornaments), **and there have come in also a poor man in a vile garment;**

and ye look upon (with respect: so as to take into consideration) **the man wearing the splendid garment** (thus designated, it is this which wins for him the respect:—which attracts your notice), **and say, Sit thou here** (pointing out a spot to him: and that, as the contrast between *here* and *there* shews, in the midst, near [for the words must be supposed to be spoken by those who would be the mouthpiece of the assembly] those in honour) **in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under** (i. e. not literally *underneath*; but ‘on the ground beside,’ ‘down by’) **my footstool** (thus it is implied that the speaker is in a good place, and furnished with a footstool. The question, argued at considerable length by Wiesinger and Huther, who these in-comers are supposed to be, whether Christians, or Jews who have looked in as strangers, is perhaps hardly worth the trouble spent upon it. The illustration merely requires that they should be strangers, not having a regular place in the congregation. Certainly so far I agree with Huther, that there appears nothing in the text which compels us to assume them to be Christians. They are taken merely as samples of a class, the rich and the poor: and these two are dealt with again in vv. 5 ff., as classes of persons, out of one of which God hath chosen His people for the most part, and out of the other of which the oppressors of His people arise. So that it is better to leave the examples in their general reference).

4.] (now comes the application, in the form of a question): **did ye not** (in the case supposed) **doubt** (such is the constant sense of the word *here* used, throughout the New Test. And here the sense seems very good: “Did ye not, in making such distinction between rich and poor, become of the number of those who doubt respecting their faith, ch. i. 6? Your faith abolishes such distinction: you set it up in practice. You are not then whole in that faith.” See the other explanations discussed in my Greek Test.) **within yourselves** (in your own minds, being at issue with your own faith), **and become judges** (in the case of the rich and poor; judges of the case before you), **of evil thoughts** (the genitive is one of quality. The evil thoughts are in the judges themselves, and consist in the undue preference given by them to the rich. The same blame, of being a judge when a man ought to be an obeyer of the law, is found in ch. iv. 11)?

5.] Listen, my beloved brethren (bespeaking attention to that which follows, as shewing them in a marked manner the sin of their *respecting of persons*), **Did not God choose out** (in His proceeding, namely, in the promulgation of the Gospel by Christ, Matt. v. 3 ff.; Luke vi. 20. See also 1 Cor. i. 27) **the poor** (as a class, set against *the rich* as a class, below) **as regards the world** (or, those who in the world’s estimation are accounted poor; but the other is most likely here) **rich in faith** (i. e. to be rich in faith, or so that they are rich in faith). **In faith**, as the element, *the world*, so to speak, *in which they pass for rich*, as in 1 Tim. i. 2: not as the material of rich their riches consist, as in Eph. ii. 4. Wiesinger well says, “Not the measure of *faith*, in virtue of which one man is richer than another, is before the Writer’s mind, but the *substance* of the faith, by virtue of which substance every believer is rich. The riches are the treasures of salvation, and especially, owing to the following word *heirs*, the sonship in God’s family”), **and heirs of the kingdom which He promised** (Luke xii. 31, 32, &c.) **to them that love Him?**

6.] Contrast to God’s estimate of the poor. **But ye dishonoured the poor man** (in the ease just now put. “It is improper to debase those whom God extols, and to treat contumeliously those whom He counts worthy of honour. But God honours the poor: therefore he inverts God’s order, who rejects them.” Calvin. This is his first argument. Now, vv. 6, 7, he brings in another, deduced from the conduct of rich men towards Christians, and towards Christ Himself). **Do not the rich** (opposed as a class, to *the poor* above. This serves to shew that “*the rich man*,” when generally spoken of in the Epistle, as e.g. ch. i. 10, is not the Christian rich man, but the rich man as such, in his worldliness and enmity to God) **oppress you** (literally, use power, or lordship, or licence, against you to your hurt), **and is it not they that drag you** (the term implies violence) **to courts of judgment** (see ch. v. 6. The words may refer either to persecutions, or to oppressive law-suits; or perhaps to both, See on the matter, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 4)?

7.] Is it not they that blaspheme (actually and literally, in words, it being, as we have maintained throughout, ungodly and heathens who are pointed at. Those who maintain them to be Christian rich men, would understand this *blasphemy* of disgracing by their lives) **the goodly name which was called on you** (i. e. which when you were admitted into Christ’s Church by baptism was made yours, so that you are called *Christ’s*, 1 Cor. iii. 28 [not necessarily “*Christians*:” no particular form of the appropriation of the name is alluded to, but only the fact of the name being called over them. The appellation may or may not have been in use at this time, for aught that this shews]. The name is of course that of *Christ*: not that of God, as some think, nor that of ‘brethren,’ as others)? So that if ye thus dishonour the poor in comparison with the rich, you are 1) contravening the standard of honour which God sets up in His dealings: 2) opposing your own interest: 3) helping to blaspheme the name of Christ.

8-11.] Proof that this behaviour is a transgression of God’s law. The connexion is somewhat recondite. The adversative **yet** clearly takes exception at something, expressed or understood. Calvin and others suppose the Apostle to be meeting an objection of his readers:— “But thus, according to you, we should be breaking the injunction, Love thy neighbour, &c., for we should view the rich with hatred and contempt.” Then he replies, “Certainly, if ye, &c. ye do well:” understanding **ye do well** as a very feeble approbation. But this seems to me very unnatural. It contains indeed the germ of the true view, which

appears to be this: The Apostle is not replying to a fancied objection on the part of others, but is guarding his own argument from misconstruction: "All this is true of the rich. Still I do not say, hate them, drive them from your assemblies, &c.: if you choose to observe faithfully the great command, Love others as yourselves, in your conduct to all, well and good: but respect of persons, instead of being a keeping, is a breach of this law; for I have proved it to be sin, and he who commits sin is a transgressor of the law, of the whole law, by the very terms of legal obedience." Thus the context seems to run smoothly and naturally. Yet (for the connexion see above) **if ye fulfil** (if ye really choose to fulfil in its completeness that law) **the royal law** (the law which is the king of all laws, as the old saying makes *law itself king of all*. **Love fulfills the whole law, Rom. xiii. 10**), according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well (i. e. well and good; see above: if you choose to do this, I have nothing to object. But then, this you can never do, as long as you respect persons):

9.] but if ye respect persons, it is sin that ye are working (not obedience to this royal law), **being** (i. e. seeing that ye are) **convicted by the law as transgressors** (viz. by virtue of what I have already proved as wrong in your conduct. "For God commands us to love our neighbours, not to respect persons." Calvin).

10.] The fact of transgression of this law is proved by its *solidarity*, not admitting of being broken in one point, and yet kept in the whole. "God," says Calvin, "will not he served with reservations, so that we might except from this law what happens not to please us." **For whosoever shall have kept the whole law, but shall have offended** (literally, stumbled) **in** (the matter of: as in ch. iii. 2: see there) **one thing** (one thing enjoined, one commandment, as by and by explained), **has become guilty of** (brought into the condemning power of, involved in) **all** (things mentioned as objects of prohibition—for such is the reference here, see below—in the law).

11.] Reason for this assertion: the unity of the divine Author of the whole law, and of that law, as the exponent of His will: "He is one who made the whole law: those who violate His will in one thing, violate it all." Bengel. **For He who said, Commit not adultery, said also, Commit not murder. Now if thou committest no adultery, but committest murder, thou hast become a transgressor of the law.** Various fanciful reasons have been given for the selection of these two commandments: 'because these two were punished with death,' Baumgarten: 'because no one had laid a charge of adultery against the readers, but the other they violated by violating the law of love,' Wiesinger. But it is far more likely that they are alleged as the two first which regard our duty to our neighbour generally: the prohibition of adultery being put first, as in Mark x. 19; Luke xviii. 20; Rom. xiii. 9; Philo also has this order, and lays a stress on it, as shewing that adultery is the greatest of social crimes. So that this order must have been one preserved in ancient tradition: or perhaps found anciently in the Septuagint. The Rabbis have the same sentiment as this. They say of the thirty-nine precepts of Moses, "If a man do them all, but omit one, he is guilty of all and every of them."

12, 13.] Concluding and summary exhortations, to speak and act as subject to the law of liberty and love. **So speak, and so do** (**so** both times does not regard what has gone before, but what follows. *Speaking* had been before hinted at in ch. i. 19: and will come again under consideration in ch. iii.), **as being about to be judged by** (by means of, as the measure by which your lives will be estimated) **the law of liberty** (the same as in ch. i. 25: that perfect expansion of God's will, resting on the free unrestrained principle of love, which is the moral code of the Gospel. And the point of the exhortation is, "So do good, as not constrained by the law, but free agents").

13.] Reason why we should be careful thus to speak and do: viz. that if we do not, we cast ourselves out of that merciful judgment at God's hands which is promised to the merciful: Matt. v. 7, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy:" which is the key to our verse. **For the judgment** (which is coming) (**shall be**) **unmerciful to him who wrought not** (the past tense is anticipatory, the Writer standing at the day of the judgment and looking back over life) **mercy: mercy boasteth over judgment** (without a copula, the sentence is introduced more emphatically and strikingly. The meaning is, the judgment which would condemn any and all of us, is, in the case of merciful, overpowered by the blessed effect of mercy, and mercy prevails over it. The saying is abstract: to turn it into a concrete, 'the merciful man,' or to appropriate the *mercy*, 'the mercy of God,' is to limit that which is purposely and weightily left unlimited, as an universal truth).

14–26.] In close connexion with what has gone before, the Apostle sets forth that *bare faith without works can never save a man*. The following remarks of De Wette on the passage are important, and well condensed. They have been impugned by many, among whom are Neander, Schneckenburger, Theile, Thierseh, Hofmann: but they seem to me best to represent the simple and honest view of the matter, without any finessing to make the two Apostles in exact accord in their meaning of terms and their positions respecting them. "In order rightly to understand this polemical passage, it is necessary accurately to define St. James's ideas of *faith*, of *works*, and of *justification*, and to compare them with those of St. Paul. *Faith* is, according to St. James, the result of the reception of the Word (ch. i. 22), especially in a moral point of view: *moral conviction* (Rom. xiv. 23): and although he recognizes it also as belief in Christ (ch. ii. 1), *as trust* (i. 6; v. 15), and *truth* (i. 3), yet he makes these particulars here of so little moment, that he regards it as *theoretical* belief only, and ascribes it to the evil spirits (ii. 19). Widely different from this is St. Paul's idea of faith, which presupposes self-abasement, the feeling of unworthiness and incapability (Rom. iii. 9 ff., 23), and consists in trust on the grace of God revealed in the atoning death of Christ (Rom. iii. 25; v. 8; 2 Cor. v. 18 f.). Of this faith, moral faith is a branch (Rom. xiv. 23): but this latter, which is the adoption of the working

principle of love (Gal. v. 6), can only spring from the purification of the inner man by faith in the atonement. So that it is impossible to say, as some have done, that the idea of faith in the two Apostles is the same. Works, according to St. James, are not the works of the law in the lower sense, the mere observance of, carnal ordinances and usages,—but an active life of practical morality, the rule of which is indeed found in the Mosaical law, and especially in the command to love one another, but so found, as apprehended, and appropriated by the spirit of liberty (see ch. i. 25; ii. 12). St. Paul also understands by ‘the works of the law’ not merely ceremonial observances, as plainly appears from Rom. vii. 14 ff.: but when he contends against the Jewish righteousness by works, and their pride, as in Rom. ix. 30 ff., he includes these observances in that to which he refers. As regards *justification*, St. James understands it in a *proper*, or moral sense (compare Matt. xii. 37), which St. Paul also recognizes. But in the latter Apostle’s idea of justification, we must distinguish a threefold point of view: 1) the general moral, at which he stops, Rom. ii. 13 (compare ib. ver. 5 ff.), taking no account, *how* the highest aim of morality, there indicated, is *to be* attained, and *is* attained: 2) In his polemical point of view, as combating Jewish righteousness by works, he denies that we can, by the fulfilment of the law (even of its moral part, seeing that no man fulfils it aright), attain justification or well-pleasingness to God (Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16). 3) In the third point of view also, in the Christian life itself, St. Paul recognizes the inadequacy of a good conscience to give peace and blessedness to men (1 Cor. iv. 4), and finds peace only in faith in God, who justifies him of His free grace, i.e. so looks on and accepts him, as if he were righteous. This higher kind of justification, St. James does not recognize.” The whole question of fact, as to whether St. Paul’s teaching, or some misunderstanding of it, or neither the one nor the other, was in St. James’s view here, I have discussed in the Introduction,§iii. 5 ff.

14.] What is the profit (arising from that to be mentioned: the resulting profit), **my brethren, if any man say** (there is no emphasis on the word **say**, as many have supposed: the whole argument proceeds on the hypothesis of his *possessing* faith: and in ver. 19, faith is actually ascribed to him. At the same time it is not to be wholly passed over, that the Apostle has written not “*have* faith,” but “*say he hath* faith.” While this does not imply any want of genuineness in the faith, it perhaps slightly distinguishes the possession of such faith from the absolute *having* faith: or, perhaps belongs to the dramatic form of the hypothesis, in which the man is introduced boasting of and appealing to his faith) **that he has faith, but have not works** (i. e. those acts in his life which are proofs and fruits of faith: not mere ceremonial works: see De Wette’s remarks cited above)? (a note of interrogation, not a comma, is to be placed here. The sentence contains two distinct but connected questions: “What is the profit, if&c.?” and, “Can&c.?”) **can (his) faith save him** (**him** is noticeable, as confining the question within the limits of the hypothesis, by making this particular man, who has faith and not works, the object of the question, and not any, or every man. Here lies the true key to the nullity of the faith in question)?

15, 16.] The quality, and unprofitableness, of such faith shewn, as in vv. 2, 3, by a familiar example. **But** (so literally. It takes up the argument against the person supposed, or against his supporters. It is best rendered in English by beginning the sentence abruptly, not giving any word for it) **if a brother or a sister** (the case of a Christian brother or sister is supposed, to bring out more strongly the obligation to help, as a duty) **be** (found, on your access to them) **naked** (there is no need to interpret the word *badly clothed*, as so many Commentators: extreme destitution, and nakedness in the literal, or almost literal sense, might well go together) **and destitute of daily food, and** (literally, **but**: bringing in the slight contrast between the want and the manner of its supply) **some one from among you** (not, as Grotius, of you, “who believe faith to suffice for salvation,” but generally; and put in this form to bring the inference nearer home to themselves) **say** (‘shall have said’), **Go in peace** (see Judg. xviii. 6; 2 Sam. xv. 9. The words would imply, that the wants were satisfied), **be warmed** (as being *naked*) **and filled;** **but ye** (enlarging the former “*one of you*,” and now applying the hypothesis to all) **give them not** (have not given them) **the necessities of the body; what is the profit?**

17.] Application of the similitude. So also faith, if it have not (be not accompanied by as its proper result. Here, again, the quasi-identification of the *faith* with the man, and ascription of the *works* to it as a possession, shew in what relative places the two stand in the Apostle’s estimate) **works, is dead in itself** (not as A.V., “being alone,” but the words belong to and qualify **dead**; it is dead, not merely to this extent, but absolutely, in itself: has no living root whereby it energizes).

18.] But (in any case of faith without works, analogous to that supposed above, of one of you having dismissed the naked and hungry with mere words) **some one will say** (he will be liable to this reproach from any one who takes the more effectual and sensible method, of uniting faith with works), **Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me** (not, ‘prove to me,’ but ‘exhibit to me’) **thy faith without the works** (which ought to accompany it), **and I will shew thee my faith by** (from the evidence of, out of, as the ground of the manifestation) **my works.** The whole difficulty found in this verse by Commentators has arisen from overlooking the fact that it continues the argument from the previous verses, and does not begin a new portion of the subject. And the reason why this has been overlooked, is, the occurrence between the two of the general clause in ver. 17. The same mistaken person is in the Apostle’s view throughout, down to ver. 22: and it is as addressed to him, on the part of a chance objector to his inconsistency, that this saying is introduced: the **but** conveying the opposition of an objection not to the Apostle himself, but to him whom the Apostle is opposing.

19.] Still addressed to the same advocate of faith only, but now directly, and not in the person of the speaker just introduced. This is better than to suppose this last still speaking; on account of the length of argumentation before, the second person

singular is dropped, and the analogy of the two arguments drawn from Abraham and Rahab, both of which most naturally come, as the latter on any view does, from the Apostle himself. **Thou believest** (better without an interrogation: see John xvi. 31, note) **that God is one** (or, ‘that there is one God.’ The Apostle selects, from all points of dogmatic belief, that one which stands at the head of the creed of Jews and Christians alike. Compare especi: lly Deut. vi. 4; Neh. ix. 6; Mark xii. 29, 32; Rom. iii. 30; 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6; ch. iv. 12); **thou doest well** (i. e. ‘so far is well.’ ‘it is a good faith, as far as it goes’): **the demons also believe** (the verb is purposely used absolutely: not merely, ‘believe this truth,’ but, ‘*thus far, are believers in common with thyself*’), **and shudder** (the word is used properly of the hair standing on end with terror. Their belief does nothing for them but certify to them their own misery “This particular, inserted beyond the expectation of the reader, has immense force.” Bengel).

20–23.] Proof of the uselessness of faith without works, from the example of Abraham; introduced by a severe ant triumphant appeal to the objector. **But** (passing on to another example which is to prove it even more certainly) **wilt thou know** (the use of **wilt thou**, **dost thou**, **consent to**, **know**, serves to shew that the knowledge itself is plain and palpable, and the resisting it can only arise from perversity), **O empty** (void of knowledge and seriousness: content with a dead and bootless notion) **man** (so in Rom. ix. 20), **that faith** (here abstract: all faith, faith by itself: not merely faith, in any supposed case) **separate from works** (here again, abstract; and therefore, in subordination to the former abstract noun, the works which belong to it, which might be expected from it) **is idle** (bootless, without result)?

21.] The example of Abraham. Was not Abraham our father (the Apostle and his readers being all Jews) **justified** (accounted righteous before God. No other meaning will satisfy the connexion, inevitable to any intelligent reader, between this **justification** and the **salvation** of ver. 14: which again is connected with the “*being about to be judged*” of ver. 12). Commentators have endeavoured to evade this full meaning, in various ways. On the difficulty itself, see in the Introduction) **by** (*out of*, as the ground of the justification: precisely as St. Paul so constantly uses the phrase *to be justified by, or out of, faith*) **works** (the category to which the ground of his justification belonged. It was one especial work, in matter of fact: and that work, itself springing out of preeminent faith), **when he offered** (not, as A.V., ‘had offered’) **Isaac his son at the altar?**

22.] Thou seest (better not a question: in which case the “*and*” of ver. 23 does not follow so naturally as when we couple the direct verb **seest** with the direct verb **was fulfilled**) **that** (not, *how*, as A.V.: it is not the manner in which, nor even ‘*how*,’ in the sense of ‘*how that*,’ which is meant. The assertion is, that the inference indubitable, that the fact was *as stated*) **faith wrought** (at the time, ‘*was working*’) **with his works** (this plural again is categorical, the work in the example being but one), **and by** (*out of*, as the ground and source) **works** (again categorical; the general proposition proved by the particular case). Doubtless this second time it *might be* ‘*by his works, his faith...:*’ but the other is more like St. James, who is singularly given to introduce abstract propositions as applicable to particular cases) **faith** (see above) **was made complete** (in one act, once for all. The Apostle’s argument is, that faith is developed and brought to perfection by obedience: see below on ver. 26. And hence also is it evident, how faith *wrought with his works*. By the Apostle’s own comparison, ver. 26, faith is the body, obedience the spirit: faith without obedience is dead, until obedience, the spirit, sets faith in motion: then faith, like the limbs of the body, moves with and works with the acts of obedience. Which is prior in time, which the ground of the other, is a point not touched by St. James at all); **and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, But Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness** (i. e. that saying of Scripture which long preceded the offering of Isaac, received its realization, not, it may be, its only realization, but certainly its chief one, in this act of obedience. It was not, until this, fulfilled, in the sense of being entirely exemplified and filled up. Wiesinger combats this sense as an unworthy one: no such objection as that which he brings [viz. that we make thus the truth of God’s saying depend on Abraham’s subsequent conduct] lies against our view, that the saying received on, and not till this occasion, its entire and full realization. It was true, when uttered: but it became more and more gloriously true of Abraham’s life and acts till it reached this its culminating point, in his chief act of self-denying obedience): **and he was called** (couple with *was fulfilled*, not with *was reckoned*) **God’s friend** (i. e. ‘*loved by God*,’ not ‘*loving God*.’ This appellation of Abram is not found in the Septuagint. In Gen. xviii. 17, where they have “*Abraham my servant*,” Philo cites it “*Abraham my friend*.” And in Isa. xli. 8 the words “*the seed of Abraham whom I loved*” are rendered by the Vulgate and by the A.V. ‘*the seed of Abraham my friend*.’ So also in 2 Chron. xx. 7).

24.] General inference from the example of Abraham. Ye see that by (from, out of, as a source) **works a man is justified** (accounted righteous before God, as above), **and not by** (from) **faith only** (notice **only**: St. James never says that a man is not justified by faith, provided that faith include in it the condition of obedience: but by faith *only, without works*, is no man justified).

25.] The example of Rahab. Various reasons have been assigned for this example being added. See the whole matter discussed in the Introduction, §3. **And in like manner** (with Abraham) **was not Rahab the harlot** (to be taken literally: see on Heb. xi. 31) **justified by works, when she received the messengers** (spies, Heb. xi. 31), **and thrust them forth** (in haste and fear, Josh. ii. 15, 16: the term is not simply *sent then forth*) **by another way** (viz. *through the window*, Josh. ii. 15)?

26.] General conclusion to the argument, but in the form of a comparison, as in ver. 17. **For** (**for** binds the verse on to the

foregoing, and makes *it* rather depend on this axiom, than this axiom a conclusion from it: ‘it must be so, Rahab must have been thus justified, seeing that...’) **just as the body without** (separate from) **spirit** (or, the spirit) **is dead, so also faith without works** (or without its works, the works belonging to it: as in ver. 20) **is dead**. This comparison has been found matter of surprise to some Commentators, inasmuch as the things compared do not seem relatively to correspond. Faith is unquestionably a thing spiritual: works are external and material: so that it would seem as if the members of the comparison should have been inverted, and works made the body, faith the spirit. But the Apostle’s view seems rather to be this: Faith is the body, the sum and substance, of the Christian life: works (obedience), the moving and quickening of that body; just as the spirit is the moving and quickening principle of the natural body. So that as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

James: Chapter 3

CHAP. III.]

a) 1–12.] *The danger, as connected with the upholding of faith without works, of eagerness to teach: and, by occasion, the manifold and irrepressible sins of the tongue.* Then follows, **b) 13–18.]** *an exhortation, to prove a man’s wisdom by mildness, not by a contentious spirit.*

1.] The more the idea prevailed, that faith, without corresponding obedience, was all that is needful, the more men would eagerly press forward to teach: as indeed the Church has found in all ages when such an opinion has become prevalent: for then teachers and preachers of their own appointing have rapidly multiplied. **Be not** (‘become not.’ let not that state of things prevail among you, in which you become) **many teachers** (not, as A.V., ‘masters,’ which conveys a wrong idea: but *teachers*, persons imparting knowledge in the congregation. This in the primitive times might be done by all in turn, as we know from 1 Cor. xiv. 26–33: and St. James exhorts against the too eager and too general assumption of this privilege), **my brethren, knowing** (as ye do: or, as ye ought to do: it is a good remark of Huther’s, that **knowing**, being closely joined to the imperative, is itself hortatory: ‘knowing, as ye might know’) **that we** (i. e. as many of us as are teachers) **shall receive greater condemnation** (than others who are not teachers. This being so, it has surprised some Commentators that the Apostle includes himself with those whom he is dissuading: but the solution is easy,—viz. that he includes himself out of humility, and obviously on the assumption that the office of teacher is not faithfully performed. The sense might he thus filled up, as, indeed, it is virtually filled up in ver. 2: “be not many teachers, for in such office there is great danger of failing, and if we teachers fail, our condemnation will be greater”).

2.] For (see above: this supplies the ellipsis) **oftentimes we all** (without exception: the original word implies this) **offend** (to be taken in the widest moral sense, as an axiom applying to our whole conduct. It is in the next clause limited to the subject in hand, viz. the tongue). **If any man offendeth not in word** (in speaking: and therefore the hypothesis is applicable to these many who set up for teachers, seeing that thus their chances of offence would be multiplied many fold), **he [is] a perfect man** (explained by what follows), **able to bridle the whole body also** (this sense runs thus: We all oftentimes offend: and of those frequent offences, sins of the tongue are so weighty a part and so constant a cause, that he who is free from them may be said to be perfect, inasmuch as he is able to rule every other minor cause of offence: ‘the whole body’ standing for all those other members by which, as by the tongue, sin may be committed: which may be *instruments of unrighteousness for sin, or, instruments of righteousness for God*, Rom. vi. 13).

3–6.] *The importance and depravity of the tongue, so small a member, is illustrated by comparisons: 1) with the small instrument, the horse-bit, ver. 3: 2) with the small instrument, the ship-rudder, ver. 4: 3) with a small fire burning a great forest, vv. 5, 6.*

3.] This mention of *bridling*, and the situation of the tongue where the *bridle* also is placed, introduce this similitude: *bridle* and *mouth* being ideas already given by the context. **But** (transitional) **if** (as we do: in our vernacular, ‘when,’ ‘as often as’) **in the mouths of horses we put bits** (literally, **the bits**: i.e. which are in common use: the bits, of which every one knows), **in order to their obeying us** (thus shewing, by the expression of this purpose, that we recognize the principle of turning the whole body by the tongue—now comes the result after the **if**: see below); **we turn about also** (in turning the bit one way or the other) **their whole body**.

4.] *The second comparison takes up, not the supposition with its “if,” but only the result foregoing. Behold even (or also) the ships, though so great, and driven by fierce winds* (Bede interprets this as having a meaning respecting ourselves, the winds being the appetites and passions. But it is not likely that the Apostle had any such meaning), **are turned about by a very small rudder, whithersoever the desire of the steersman** (him who actually handles the tiller) **may wish.**

5.] Application of the comparison. *Thus also the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things* (vaunts great words, which bring about great acts of mischief). **Behold** (rendering the sentence literally:—for the purpose of an English version, it

must be inverted), **how small a fire kindleth how great a forest** (the word also sometimes signifies “*matter*,” and thus the A.V. But the ordinary meaning, **forest**, gives a far livelier and more graphic sense here)!

6.] Likewise the tongue is a fire, that world of iniquity (a complete repertory of all wickedness, as the world is of all things): **the tongue is** (literally, is constituted: but meaning no more than that it *is*) **among our members, that one which defileth the whole body** (thus justifying the title given to it of “*that world of iniquity*”), **and setteth on fire** (the other clause, **the tongue is a fire**, is now taken up) **the orb (or, wheel) of the creation** (in interpreting these difficult words, one thing must especially be borne in mind: that, like *the whole body*, they designate some material thing which agreeably to the figure used may be set on fire. This would at once set aside all figurative explanations See the proposed meanings discussed in my Greek Test. The sense, *the whole orb or cycle of creation*, is that which I have seen cause to adopt: for other reasons, and because it fits well into the context. After the mention of the *orb of creation*, it is natural that the Apostle should take up, with the **for** (ver. 7), the details of creation, and assert that they might all be tamed by man, but that the tongue is untameable. Again, such sense is most agreeable to the similitude just used, of a small spark kindling a vast forest. The expression in the A.V., **the course of nature**, is sufficiently near the meaning, and expresses it in better English, perhaps, than any other); **and is itself set on fire** (in the original the verb is in the *present tense*, indicating that it is habitually, continually, so set on fire: see below) **by hell** (which is itself *the hell of fire*, in Matt. v. 22, and many other places. These words are not to be explained away: but are to be literally taken. It is the devil for whom hell is prepared, that is the tempter and instigator of the habitual sins of the tongue. It is out of the question [see above] to regard the sentence as alluding to the original temptations of the fall: equally so, to suppose it to have a future reference, and to imply that the tongue shall be tormented in hell: as some have done. Wiesinger says: “This passage reminds us, in its general sense, of the Old Test. sayings, Prov. xvi. 27; Ps. cxx. 2–4; Eccl. xxviii. 11 ff.” This last clause is strikingly paralleled by the Targum on Ps. cxx. 2, where the deceitful tongue is compared with coals of juniper, which are set on fire in hell beneath. But none of these passages treats of the destruction which the tongue brings on its own body).

7, 8.] The untameableness of the tongue. The thought in ver. 3, though not directly leading on to this, yet is a hint tending towards it. **For** (a fresh fact is adduced, substantiating the strong terms used of the mischief of the tongue) **every nature** (natural generic disposition and character; and so below, when joined to **of man**: not, *kind*, ‘genus,’ as A.V. and many Commentators) **of beasts** (quadrupeds, see below), **and winged things, and of creeping things, and things in the sea** (creation is divided into these four classes. The first then is not to be taken in its wide sense, as Acts xxviii. 4, 5, but as distinguished from the other three, i.e. as in quadrupeds, beasts of the earth, proper. The classification in Peter’s vision, Acts x., is different: “*Fourfooted things of the earth, and Beasts, and creeping things, and winged things of heaven:*” **beasts** there at least including the fishes), **is (habitually) tamed, and hath been tamed** (has long ago been reduced into subjection: such taming has become an enduring fact in the world’s history, exemplified every day) **by the nature** (not, the great skill; **nature** means, as before, natural generic character) **of man:**

8.] but (exception) the tongue no one of men can tame (the assertion is absolute, not to be weakened by “*without great labour*,” as some have done. The word in the original means, *even to tame*, even once: not, to tame habitually. Now we see fully the meaning of ver. 2): **it is a restless mischief, [it is]** (compare “adders’ poison is under their lips,” Ps. cxl. 3; the characteristic following refers not to the word **mischief**, but back to **the tongue**. It is therefore necessary to repeat “*it is*”) **full of death-bringing poison.**

9, 10.] Exemplification of the restless mischief, by the inconsistent use of the tongue. The first person is used of mankind in general, considered as one agent. **Therewith bless we** (i. e. as applied to God, “praise we”) **the Lord and Father** (an unusual connexion to designate God: see ch. i. 27, where we have the more usual one, found also here in the ordinary text. Both terms are to be taken of the Father: the former, on the side of His Power: the latter, on that of His Love); **and therewith curse we men, which** (not, *who*, which would personally designate *certain men* thus made; but *which*, generic. This distinction, which some modern philologists are striving to obliterate, is very important in the rendering of Scripture, and has been accurately observed by our English translators) **have been created** (and are still, as the perfect tense shews. See below) **after the likeness of God** (which remains in us, marred indeed, but not, as is sometimes carelessly said, destroyed. This likeness we ought to revere, in ourselves and in others: and he who curses, despises it. Not man’s original state, but man’s present state is here under consideration: and on that consideration depends the force of the Apostle’s argument).

10.] Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing (by this resuming and collocation of the two opposite acts, the inconsistency is further shewn). **These things, my brethren, ought not so to take place.**

11.] Illustration from nature, that such conduct is unnatural. **Doth a fountain out of the same chink** (hole, from which the water flows, in a rock, or in the earth) **send forth the sweet and the bitter** (water, of course: but there is no need to supply any thing: the contrast is in the contrary nature of the two)?

12.] Shews further, that *natural organizations do not bring forth things opposite to or inconsistent with their usual fruits*, but each one has one result, and that always. **Can, my brethren, a fig tree bring forth** (see on the whole, Matt. vii. 16 ff. De

Wette is wrong, when he says that thistles or the like would be here, as there, more agreeable to the similitude. For the reasoning is not here, that we must not look for good fruit from a bad tree: but that no tree can bring forth fruit inconsistent with its own nature) **olives, or a vine, figs? nor** (as if the former sentence had been a negative one) **can salt [water] bring forth sweet water** (i. e. if the mouth emit cursing, thereby making itself a brackish spring, it cannot to any purpose also emit the sweet stream of praise and good words: if it appear to do so, all must be hypocrisy and mere seeming).

13–18.] *Wisdom must be shewn by meekness and peaceableness, not by contentiousness.* This paragraph is closely connected with the subject of the chapter as enounced in ver. 1. Where that ambition, and rivalry to be teachers, existed, there was sure to be conscientiousness and every evil thing.

13.] Who is (compare the similar question in Ps. xxxiv. 12) **wise and a man of knowledge** (the same adjectives are joined in the Septuagint version in Dent. i. 13, 15; iv. 6. It is not easy to mark the difference, if any is here intended) **among you? Let him shew out of** (the Apostle seems again to be referring to his reasoning in ch. ii. 18. The *wisdom* and *knowledge* would be dead without this exhibition, as faith without works) **his good conduct** (in life) **his works** (the good conduct is the general manifestation: the works, the particular results of that general manifestation. The sum of both makes up the *works* in the former case, ch. ii.) **in meekness of wisdom** (in that meekness which is the proper attribute of wisdom).

14–16.] *Consequences of the opposite course. But if ye have* (as is the fact: this is implied) **bitter emulation** (bitter seems to refer back to the example in vv. 11, 12) **and rivalry in your heart** (*out of which* come thoughts and words and acts, see Matt. xv. 18, 19), **do not** (in giving yourselves out for wise, which [compare ver. 15] you cannot really be) **boast against and lie against the truth** (of which their whole lives would be thus a negation and an opposition;—which would be in their persons vaunted against and lied against).

15.] Designation of such pretended wisdom. This wisdom is not one descending from above (the verb is purposely thus broken up in the original, to throw out the negation, and to put the categorical word, **descending**, into prominence, as a class to which this *wisdom* does not belong. So that we must not miss this purpose by rendering “*descendeth not*,” as does A.V.), **but earthly** (as the sharpest contrast, to *descending from above*: belonging to this earth, and its life of sin and strife), **sensual** (it is almost impossible to express satisfactorily in English the idea given by the original word here [*psychic*, from *psyché*, the soul]. Our ‘*soul*’ is so identified with man’s spiritual part in common parlance, that we have lost the distinction between *soul* and *spirit*, except when we can give a periphrastic explanation. The idea here is, belonging to the unspiritual mind of man. See the whole treated in the note on Jude 19), **devilish** (like, or partaking of the nature of, the devils. This word must not be figuratively taken: it betokens both the origin of this hypocritical wisdom [compare *set on fire by hell*, above, ver. 6], and its character: it is from,—not God, the giver of all true wisdom, ch. i. 5, but the devil,—and bears the character of its author).

16.] Justification of the foregoing assertion. For where is emulation (in a bad sense) **and rivalry** (see above), **there is confusion** (anarchy, restless disturbance), **and every evil thing** (or, deed).

17, 18.] Character and praise of heavenly wisdom. But (contrast) **the wisdom from above is first of all pure** (it is necessary to guard the mere English reader against the abuse of this text often found, when it is made to signify that the heavenly-wise must be pure, i.e. free from all contact with any thing that offends, *before he can be* peaceable: and thus it is used to further, instead of to discourage, an uncharitable spirit), **then** (i. e. ‘in the second place:’ its external qualities are now enumerated) **peaceable, forbearing, easily persuaded, full of compassion** (the great triumph of the Christian practical life is won by *compassion*: see ch. ii. 13) **and good fruits** (contrast to “*every evil thing*,” above), **without doubting** (as might be expected, from the various meanings of the Greek term thus rendered, this word has been variously interpreted. Luther, A.V., and most Commentators, render it ‘*without partiality*.’ Two considerations contribute to substantiate the rendering given above, which is that of De Wette, Wiesinger, and Huther. 1) ‘The word would seem, from its close junction with ‘*without hypocrisy*,’ rather to betoken an inner quality than an outward circumstance; 2) when thus used of an inner quality, ch. i. 6; ii. 4, our Apostle, in common with other New Test. writers, signifies by it ‘*to doubt*.’ So that I would understand by it *free from all ambiguity and simulation*), **without feigning** (“these two characteristics are also added with especial reference to the state of things among the readers: on *without doubting*, compare ch. i. 6–8; ii. 4: on *without feigning*, ch. i. 22, 26; ii. 1.” Huther).

18.] Before, in ver. 16, after the characterization came the *statement of the result*: and so now here, That result was designated as a present one,” “*confusion and every evil thing*.” this is a future one, but beautifully anticipated by the pregnant expression of “*fruit being sown*.” see below. **But** (so literally: passing from the subjective character to the objective result) **fruit** (or, *the fruit*) **of righteousness** (genitive of apposition: that fruit which is righteousness: see Heb. xii. 11; and compare Isa. xxxii. 17: righteousness in its wider sense; in themselves and in others: in practice and in reward: in time and in eternity) **is sown** (in saying this, the Apostle speaks in anticipation, as if a husbandman should this autumn be said to sow next year’s bread) **in peace** (betokening the spirit and mode in which the sowing takes place, as opposed to *where envying and rivalry is*) **by them who work** (better than ‘*make*,’ which seems to confine the meaning to the reconciling persons at variance, So also in Matt. v. 9) **peace.**

James: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV.]

1–10.] Exhortations and pleadings, as connected with what preceded, first against wars and fightings, then against the lusts and worldly desires out of which these spring. And herein,

1–3.] against wars and fightings, the origin of which is detailed and exposed.

1.] Whence are wars, and whence fightings among you (by what follows, it would appear to be not contentions *between teachers* that are meant, or *between sects*, but concerning “mine” and “thine.” Grotius refers them to the tumults which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. But this idea, that these are strife about mine and thine, confines them perhaps to too narrow a space; they seem rather, as Huther, to represent all those quarrels which spring up about common worldly interests from selfish considerations of pride, envy, covetousness, and the like)? **Are they not from thence** (this second question contains in fact the answer to the former, in an appeal to the consciences of the readers), **from your lusts** (literally, **your pleasures**) **which militate** (campaign, have their camp, and, as it were, forage about. We are meant, in the figure used, to see as the adversaries, our fellow-men, against whom, to put down whom and set ourselves up, our lusts are as it were an army of soldiers ever encamped within us and waging war) **in your members?**

2.] carries on the assertion in detail. Ye desire (generally: it is not said what: but evidently worldly possessions and honours are intended by the context, vv. 4 ff.), **and possess not** (lust of possession does not ensure possession itself, then comes a further step, out of this lust): **ye murder** (but how comes murder to be introduced at this early stage of the development of lust, before *desire to have*, which itself leads on to *wars and fightings*? It appears as if we were meant to understand it as alluding to such cases, e.g., as those in the Old Test. of David and Ahab, who, in their desire to possess, committed murder. And if it be said, that this is a hard saying of those who feared the Lord, be it remembered that the Apostle is speaking of *wars and fightings*, and though he may include under these terms the lesser forms of variance, the greater and more atrocious ones are clearly not excluded. In the state of Jewish society during the apostolic age, it is to be feared that examples of them were but too plentiful, and there is no saying how far the Christian portion of Jewish communities may have suffered themselves to become entangled in such quarrels and their murderous consequences) **and envy, and are not able to obtain: ye fight and make war** (these words form the final answer to the question with which the section begins: and are therefore not to be joined with the following, as in the A.V.).

Reason why ye have not. Ye have not, because ye ask not (in prayer to God: in the following verse he explains, and as it were corrects this):

3.] ye ask and do not receive, because ye ask amiss (with evil intent, see below), **that ye may spend [it]** (that which ye ask for) **in** (‘in the exercise of,’ ‘under the dominion of.’ **in** does not belong to the verb,—‘that ye may consume it upon,’ as A.V.: ‘may spend it, but to the state in which the spenders are, in the course of satisfying) **your lusts.** The general sense is: if you really prayed aright, this feeling of continual craving after more worldly things would not exist: all your proper wants would be supplied: and these improper ones which beget wars and fightings among you would not exist. Ye would ask, and ask aright, and consequently would obtain.

4.] Ye adulteresses (the occurrence of the feminine only is rightly explained by Theile: “This denomination, taken from the feminine, and not from the masculine, might be suggested by the figure itself. For it puts God in the place of *husband*: and thus it is as natural to call individual men adulteresses, as the whole human race, or any particular nation.” Some have thought that St. James is addressing Churches here. But God is the Lord and husband of every soul that is His, as much as of every church; and the indignant *exclamation* of the Apostle is just as applicable to every one who forsakes his or her God, as to an apostate church. This is one of those cases where the testimony of our ancient MSS. is so valuable, in restoring to us the nervous and pregnant rebuke of the original), **know ye not that the friendship of the world (the world** here, precisely as in ch. i. 27, men, and men’s interests and employments, in so far as they are without God) **is enmity** (the state of being an enemy) **of God** (the man who is taken out of the world by Christ, cannot again become a friend and companion of worldly men and their schemes for self, without passing into enmity with God, of whose family he was a reconciled member. God and the world stand opposed to one another: so that a man cannot join the one without deserting the other. This is further stated in what follows)? **whosoever therefore** (particular consequence on the general axiom just stated; carried however further, into all approach to, and not merely the completion of the outward state) **shall be minded** (sets his mind and thought and wish that way. He that *would be* a friend of the world, must make up his mind to be God’s enemy) **to be a friend of the world, is** (thereby, by the proceeding in the direction indicated by that *mind*) **constituted** (as above; not merely ‘is,’ or ‘becomes:’ ‘becomes,’ ‘then and there,’ is rather the meaning) **an enemy of God.**

5, 6.] Testimony from Scripture to convince further those who might question what has just been stated. **Or** (the formula puts a hypothetical alternative, the assumption of which negatives itself) **do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, The**

Spirit that He (God) placed in us (viz. when the Spirit descended on the church) **jealously desireth** (us for his own)? These words connect naturally with the foregoing. We are married to one, even God, who has implanted in us His Spirit: and He is a jealous God, who will not suffer us to be friends of His enemy and His friends at the same time. The only difficulty seems to be, to trace this latter saying in any part of Scripture. I will state the solution which seems to me the most probable, and then give an account of other methods of solving it. The emphasis of this clause lies on the words **jealously desireth**: and, interpreting those words as above, we are naturally led to ask, is there any chapter or passage especially, where such a mind towards His people is ascribed to God? And this directs our thoughts at once to Deut. xxxii., where the love of Jehovah for Israel, and His jealousy over them is described. In that song of Moses we have this very word used of God, ver. 19–21. So that here we have the elements of the sense of that which is cited, viz. the jealous desire of the Lord over His people. And for the rest, “*the Spirit that He placed in us*,” the only solution seems to be, that the Apostle translates into the language of the Gospel the former declarations of the God of Israel, e.g. such as that Num. xxxv. 34, “*I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel*,” combining them with such prophecies as Ezek. xxxvi. 27, “*I will put my Spirit within you*.” I own that such a solution does not seem to me wholly satisfactory: still there is nothing improbable in the idea that St. James may have combined the general sense of Scripture on the point of God's jealousy over His people, and instead of the God who dwelt in Israel, may have placed the Holy Spirit who dwelleth in us. At all events it is better to understand it thus, than to force the words of the citation from their simple meaning. The statement of the other interpretations of this difficult verse would be quite unintelligible to an English reader. It will be found in my Greek Test. With regard to the sense above given, as fitting into the context, Theile well says, that it introduces us into the same figurative realm of thought in which the appellation “*adulteresses*” placed us before. The Apostle is speaking of the eager and jealous love of God those those whom He has united as it were in the bond of marriage with Himself.

6.] But He (God, by His Holy Spirit dwelling in us, the same subject as in the previous sentence) **giveth the more grace** (the more and greater, for this longing and jealous desire): **wherfore he saith** (the Spirit, again: for it is the same Spirit who is implanted in us that speaks in Scripture), **God** (*the Lord*, in the Septuagint: and the same variation is found where the words are again cited in 1 Pet. v. 5) **is set against the proud, but giveth grace to the lowly** (see Rom. xii. 16. This is a proof that the ambitious and restless after worldly honours and riches, are God's enemies, whereas the humble and lowly the objects of His gifts of ever-increasing grace. The inference follows in the pe of *solemn exhortation*).

7-10.] Submit yourselves therefore to God (addressed mainly to the proud—the “*adulteresses*” above; but also to all): **but resist the devil** (the *ruler of this world*), **and he shall flee** (better than the A.V. ‘will flee,’ which is merely an assurance as from man to man: this is a divine promise) **from you: draw near to God, and He will draw near** (here better ‘wilt’ in speaking of the divine dealings, positive declarations are better softened: see John xvi. 23, A.V. Not that this is always observed: see Rev. vii. 17, A.V.). But it is only the pure in heart and hand that can approach God: therefore—**Purify your hands** (the hands being the external organs of action, and becoming polluted by the act, as e.g. by blood in the act of murder: see Isa. i. 15, lix. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 8. And, for both the particulars here mentioned, Ps. xxiv. 4), **ye sinners: and make chaste your hearts** (in allusion to the figure of “*adultery*” above), **ye double-minded** (ye whose affections are divided between God and the world. The Apostle is addressing not two classes of persons, but one and the same: the *sinners* are *double-minded*).

9.] This cannot be done without *true and earnest repentance*, leading them through *deep sorrow*. **Be wretched** (in your minds, from a sense of your sinfulness. That such feeling will have its outward demonstrations is evident: but this word itself does not allude to them), **and mourn and weep** (here again, the exhortation does not regard outward things, as a mourning habit, or the like. These may follow on that which is here commanded, but are not the thing itself): **let your laughter be turned into mourning** (now he speaks rather of outward manifestations), **and your joy into humiliation** (literally, casting down of the eyes: hence shame or humiliation, which produces such downcast looks. These latter are more said of the inner states of mind).

10.] Conclusion of the exhortation: the true way to exaltation, through humility. **Be humbled before the Lord** (Matt. xxiii. 12, and 1 Pet. v. 6: but “*under the hand of God*” there is not an equivalent to **in the sight of**, or, **before the Lord** here. The latter gives more the realization in the soul of the presence of God, as drawing near to Him in humility: that, the subjection to Him in recognition of His providence and His judgments. **the Lord**, not Christ, but the Father: see on ch. i. 7), **and He shall exalt you** (both here and hereafter: by His grace and counsel here to the hidden glory of His waiting children, and by His fruition and presence hereafter to the ineffable glory of His manifested children; **in due time**, as 1 Pet. v. 6. Compare Luke i. 52; Job v. 11; Ezek. xxi. 26).

11, 12.] Exhortation against evil speaking and uncharitable judgment. Some have thought that there is no close connexion with the preceding: and Huther urges this from the milder word **brethren** being here used, whereas before it was “*adulteresses*,” “*sinners*,” “*double-minded*.” But it may be observed, that St. James frequently begins his exhortations mildly, and moves onward into severity: in this very paragraph we have an example of it, where unquestionably the tone of the question, “Who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?” is more severe than the “*brethren*” with which it began, The connexion is with the whole spirit of this part of the Epistle, as dissuading mutual quarrels, undue self exaltation, and neighbour depreciation. Chap. iii. dealt with the sins of the tongue: and now, after speaking against pride and strife, the Apostle naturally

returns to them, as springing out of a proud uncharitable spirit. **Do not speak against one another** (it is evident, what sort of speaking against one another he means, by the junction of **judging** with it below: it is that kind which follows upon unfavourable judgment:—depreciation of character and motive), **brethren** (prepares the way for the frequent mention of *a brother* below): **he that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law** (of Christian life: the old moral law glorified and amplified by Christ: the “*royal law*,” ch. ii. 8; “*law of Christ*,” i. 25), **and judgeth the law** (viz. by setting himself up over that law, as pronouncing upon its observance or non-observance by another): **but if** (as thou dost) **thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge** (seeing that he who judges, judges not only the man before him, but the law also: for he pronounces not only on the fact, but on that fact being, or not being, a breach of the law. So that thus to bring men’s actions under the cognizance of the law, is the office of a judge).

12.] One (God) **is the lawgiver and judge** (unites these two offices in His own person: the latter of them depending on the former), **He who is able to save and destroy** (He who is **able**, because He alone has the power to carry out His judgment when pronounced. On the word **save**, see on ch. i. 21, ii. 14, as relating to ultimate salvation: and on **save and destroy**, Matt. x. 28, to which this is the key-text, fixing the reference there to God, and not to God’s Enemy): **but thou, who art thou** (thou feeble man, who hast no such power, and who art not the lawgiver) **that judgest thy neighbour?**

13–17.] Against ungodly and presumptuous confidence in our worldly plans for the future. This again falls into the previous context, where we are warned against hearts divided between God and the world. But, as has been rightly remarked as early as Bede, and by many since, St. James, though carrying on the same subject, is no longer, from this place to ch. v. 6, addressing members of Christ’s church, but those without: the ungodly and the rich in this world. This however must be taken with just this reservation,—that he addresses Christians in so far as they allow themselves to be identified with those others. This first paragraph, for example, might well serve as a warning for Christians who are in the habit of leaving God out of their thoughts and plans. That it is still *Jews* who are addressed, appears from ver. 15, and ch. v. 4. **Go to now** (Bengel calls this an exclamation to excite attention. This seems to be the true view of it: ‘come on,’ let us reason together: as in Isa. i. 18. The **now** serves to mark the time, as noted by the point to which the argument of the Epistle has arrived), **ye that say To-day,**

or to-morrow (**or** supposes an alternative, “to-day, it may be, or to-morrow:” if, with some ancient MSS., we read **and**, the two days are assigned for the journey, without any alternative), **we will go into this** (most Commentators render, ‘*this or that*,’ equivalent to ‘*such a*’ as A.V.: but this is not the usage of the word in the original. **this city** expresses in general terms the city then present to the mind of the speaker) **city, and will spend there one year** (A. V., “continue there a year,” is not accurate. It is, “spend a year there,” which savours of presumption much more strongly and vividly. They speak, as Bengel says, as if intending afterwards to settle about the following years), **and will traffic** (this word brings up the worldly nature of the plan) **and get gain:**

14.] whereas ye know not the (event) (or, *matter*, or *content*: the more general and indefinite, the better. The original has only, **that of the morrow of the morrow: for** (substantiates the ignorance just alleged) **of what sort** (depreciative, as in 1 Pet. ii. 20) **is your life? for** (refers to the depreciative force in **of what sort**: “I may well pour contempt on it, for...”) **ye are** (ye yourselves: so that any thing of yours, even your life, must partake of the same unstability and transitoriness. So in ch. i. 10 the rich is said to pass away as the flower of the grass. It is not your *life*, which is not a thing seen, but *ye*, that *appear for a little while*) **a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, afterwards, as it appeared, so** (i. e. ‘vanishing as it came’) **vanishing:**

15.] (ver. 14 was parenthetical, and demonstrated the folly of their conduct. Now the sense proceeds) **instead of your saying, If the Lord** (God, as usual in this Epistle: see on ver. 10) **will** (properly, shall have willed; i.e. have so determined it in His counsel), **we shall both live, and shall do this or that.**

16.] But (contrast to the spirit of resignation to the divine will just recommended) **now** (as things now are, see 1 Cor. v. 11; xiv. 6) **ye boast in** (not, as in ch. i. 9, ‘make your boast in:’ the *in* indicates the state, as in ch. iii. 18; and iv. 3 especially. The *vainglory* is the source, but not the material of the boasting) **your vaingloriousnesses** (so literally. ‘The word signifies the self-deceived and groundless confidence in the stability of life and health on which the worldly pride themselves. On this, as on its foundation, your boastful speeches are built): **all such boasting** (all boasting so made and so grounded) **is evil.**

17.] This conclusion is most naturally understood to refer to the universal notoriety of the shortness of human life, and to apply only to the subject just treated). **So that** (therefore we see by this example the truth of the general axiom...) **to him who knoweth to do good, and doeth it not** (not merely, *omits to do it*, as might be the case if it were some one definite deed that was spoken of. It is not sins of *omission* that men are here convicted of, as so often mistakenly supposed: bat. the doing *evil*, as in the case of the speech above supposed, where *good* is easy and obvious), **it is sin to him** (i. e. reckoned to him as sin).

James: Chapter 5

CHAP. V.]

1-6.] Denunciation of woe on the rich in this world. These verses need not necessarily be addressed (as Huther) to the same persons as ch. iv. 13 ff. Indeed the **go to now** repeated seems to indicate a fresh beginning. Commentators have differed as to whether this denunciation has for its object, or not, exhortation to repentance. I believe the right answer to be, much as De Wette, that in the outward form indeed the words contain no such exhortation: but that we are bound to believe all such triumphant denunciation to have but one ultimate view, that of grace and mercy to those addressed. That such does not here appear, is owing chiefly to the close proximity of judgment, which the writer has before him. Calvin then is in the main right,—when he says, “They are wrong who imagine that James is here exhorting rich men to repentance: it seems to me rather to be a simple denunciation of the judgment of God, with which he wished to alarm them *without hope of pardon*,”—except in those four last rather characteristic words.

1.] Go to now (see above, ch. iv. 13), **ye rich, go weep** (the *tense* in the original gives the command a concentrated force, as that which ought to be done at once and without delay), **howling** (it is a word in the Old Test. confined to the prophets, and used, as here, with reference to the near approach of God’s judgments. See Isa. xiii. 6) **over your miseries which are coming on** (no supply of the word “*you*” is required after the verb. These miseries are not to be thought of as the natural and determined end of all worldly riches, but are the judgments connected with the coming of the Lord: see ver. 8. It may be that this prospect was as yet intimately bound up with the approaching destruction of the Jewish city and polity: for it must be remembered that they are Jews who are here addressed).

2.] The effect of the coming judgment is depicted as already present, and its material as already stored up against them. What is meant by the figure used, we learn in ver. 4. **Your riches are corrupted** (see Job xxxiii. 21; xl. 7. The expression is figurative, and to be understood of *all* riches;—‘your possessions’), **and your garments** (the general term **riches** is now split into its component parts, clothing and treasure) **are become moth-eaten** (ref.: see also Isa. li. 8; Acts xii. 23. The reference to Matt. vi. 19, 20 is obvious):

3.] your gold and your silver is rusted through (the language is popular, seeing that gold does not contract rust. In the Epistle of Jeremiah, xii. 24, the same terms are used of golden and silver images of idols. Rust, happening generally to metals, is predicated of gold and silver without care for exact precision. So that there is no need to seek for some interpretation which may make the expression true of gold, as that [Bretschneider] copper vessels plated with gold are intended. The stern and vivid depiction of prophetic denunciation does not take such trifles into account), **and the rust of them shall be for a testimony to you** (not, as A.V., “*against you*,” i.e., the rust which you have allowed to accumulate on them by want of use, shall testify against you in judgment,—but, as Wiesinger and Huther rightly, seeing that the rust is the effect of judgment begun, not of want of use,—the rust of them is a token what shall happen to yourselves: in the consuming of your wealth, you see depicted your own), **and shall eat your flesh as fire** (i. e. as fire devours the flesh). **Ye laid up treasure in** (not “*for*,” or “*against*”) **the last days** (i. e. in these, the last days before the coming of the Lord, ye, instead of repenting and saving your souls, laid up treasure to no profit; employed yourselves in the vain accumulation of this world’s wealth. The past tense, as so often when the course of life and action is spoken of, is used as if from the standing-point of the day of judgment, looking back over this life).

4-6.] Specification of the sins, the incipient judgments for which hitherto have been hinted at under the figures of rust and moth. And

4.] the unjust frauds of the rich, in non-payment of just debts. **Behold** (belongs to the fervid graphic style), **the hire of the workmen who mowed your fields, which has been held back** (for the sense, see Lev. xix. 13; Jer. xxii. 13, and especially Mal. iii. 5. In Eccl. xxxiv, 22, we have, “*He that defraudedeth the labourer of his hire is a bloodshedder*”), **crieth out** (for vengeance on you. See Gen. iv. 10) **from you** (i. e. from your possession, where you have deposited it: from your coffers, where it lies): **and the cries of them who reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts** (not only does the abstracted hire cry out from its place, but the defrauded victims themselves join, and the cry is heard of God. This is the only place in the New Test. where **the Lord of Sabaoth (hosts)** is used by any writer: Rom. ix. 29 is a citation. The Jewish character of the whole will sufficiently account for it. Bede gives another reason, which also doubtless was in the Apostle’s mind: “He calls God the Lord of armies, to strike terror into those who imagine that the poor have no defender”).

5.] Second class of sins: luxury and self-indulgence. **Ye luxuriated on the earth** (the last words of ver. 4 placed the thought in heaven, where their judgment is laid up) **and wantoned, ye nourished** (satiated, fattened) **your hearts** (compare Acts xiv. 17. Although the body is really that which is filled, the heart is that in which the satisfaction of repletion is felt) in the day of slaughter (i. e. as Theile, “Like cattle, who on the very day of slaughter feed and fill themselves, happy and careless.” Compare Jer. xii. 3. This seems the simplest and most obvious interpretation. Many Commentators understand *the day of slaughter* to mean a day of banqueting, when oxen and fatlings are slain),

6.] Third class of sins: condemning the innocent. **Ye condemned, ye murdered the just man** (these words are probably

spoken generally, the singular being collective. “*The just man*,” not merely “*the innocent man*;” it’ is his justice itself which provokes the enmity and cruelty of the *rich*. It has been usual to refer these words to the condemnation and execution of Christ. But there is surely nothing in the context to indicate this, further than that such a particular case may be included in the general charge, as its most notorious example. I cannot see, with Huther, how the *present* tense, “*doth not resist*,” makes against this; for any how we must suppose a change of sense before the *present* can be introduced: and then it may as well be a description of Christ’s patient endurance, or of His present long-suffering, as of the present meekness of the [generic] *just man*. But I prefer the latter, and with it the other reference throughout): **he** (*the just man*) **doth not resist you** (the behaviour of the just under your persecutions is ever that ‘of meekness and submission. This last clause serves as a note of transition to what follows. So Herder remarks, as cited by Wiesinger: “And thus we have as it were standing before us the slain and unresisting righteous man, when lo the curtain falls: Be patient, brethren, wait!” See, on the whole sense, Amos ii. 6, 7; v. 12; and the description in Wisd. ii. 6–20).

7–11.] Exhortation to suffering Christians to endure unto the coming of the Lord. On the connexion, see above.

7.] Be patient therefore (“*therefore*” is a general reference to the prophetic strain of the previous passage: judgment on your oppressors being so near, and your own part, as the Lord’s *just ones*, being that of unresistingness), **brethren** (contrast to the *rich men*, last addressed), **until the coming of the Lord** (i. e. here, beyond all reasonable question, of Christ. **The Lord**, it is true, usually in this Epistle is to be taken in the Old Test. sense, as denoting the Father: but we have in ch. i. 1; ii. 1, examples of St. James using it of our Saviour, and it is therefore better to so well-known a phrase to its ordinary meaning).

Encouragement by the example of the husbandman. **Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it** (with reference to it: as it were sitting over it and watching it) **till it** (better than ‘*he*,’ as Luther and A.V.) **shall have received the early and latter [rain]** (see reff. It appears that the early rain fell in Oct., Nov, and Dec, extending, with occasional snow, into Jan. See reff, Deut. Jer.: and after fine spring weather in Feb., the latter rain in March to the end of April, Jer. iii. 3, Heb. and A.V.):

8.] be ye also patient (as well as, after the example of, the husbandman): **establish** (confirm, strengthen, both which are required for patience) **your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is nigh.**

9.] Exhortation to mutual forbearance. “He has been encouraging them to suffer open and grave injuries from the wicked with fortitude: he now exhorts the same persons to be prompt in making up, or concealing, those lesser offences which often arise among Christians themselves. For it happens that those who bear often with equanimity the greatest contumelies and injuries from enemies and wicked men, yet cannot easily bear much less offences when given by their brethren.” Horneius. **Murmur not, brethren, against one another, that ye be not judged** (seeing that murmuring against one another involves the violation of our Lord’s “*judge not*” [Matt. vii. 1], he finishes with the following clause there, “*that ye be not judged.*” the passive verb here, as there, being to be taken in a condemnatory sense, or at all events as assuming the condemnatory issue): **behold, the Judge standeth before the door** (the Judge, viz. the Lord. These last words are added with a view to both portions of the sentence preceding, not to the latter one only. The near approach of the Judge is a motive for suspending our own judgment, as well as for deterring us from incurring that speedy judgment on ourselves which we shall incur if we do not suspend it).

10, 11.] Encouragement to patience in affliction by Old Test. examples. **Take, my brethren, as an example of affliction** (not ‘of enduring’ or ‘suffering affliction,’ as A.V.) **and of patience the prophets** (so Matt. v. 12), **who spoke in the name (or, by the name) of the Lord (God).**

11.] Another example, in which a further point is gained. **Behold, we count happy them that have endured** (see Matt. v. 10): **ye [have] heard of the endurance of Job; behold also** (A. V. “*and have seen.*” The testimony of the ancient MSS. is divided; but the imperative is the more probable reading) **the end of the Lord** (‘the termination which the Lord [in Old Test. sense] gave:’ do not limit your attention to Job’s sufferings, but look on to the end and see the mercy shewn him by God); **for** (better than ‘*that*,’ as A.V.: the sense being, “Job’s patience is known to you all: do not rest there, but look on to the end which God gave him: and it is well worth your while so to do, for you will find that He is, &c.”) And this has apparently occasioned the repetition by the Apostle of the words **the Lord) the Lord is very pitiful and merciful** (this remembrance of God’s pity and mercy would encourage them also to hope that whatever their sufferings, the “*end of the Lord*” might prove similar in their own case).

12–20.] Various exhortations and dehortations, connected with the foregoing chiefly by the situation, sufferings, and duties of the readers.

12.] This dehortation from swearing is connected with what went before by the obvious peril that they, whose temptations were to impatience under suffering, might be betrayed by that impatience into hasty swearing and imprecations. That this suffering state of theirs is still in view, is evident from “*Is any afflicted?*” which follows: that *it alone* is not in view is equally

evident, from the “*Is any merry?*” which also follows. So that we may safely say that the Apostle passes from their particular temptations under suffering to their general temptations in life. **But** (contrast of the spirit which would prompt that which he is about to forbid, to that recommended in the last verses) **above all things** (meaning, ‘So far is the practice alien from Christian meekness, that whatever you feel or say, let it not for a moment he given way to’), **my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath** (Huther’s note here is valuable and just: “It is to be noticed, that swearing by the name of God is not mentioned: for we must not imagine that this is included in the last member of the clause, the Apostle intending evidently by the words, ‘or by any other oath,’ to point only at similar formulæ, of which several are mentioned in Matt. v. 34, 35. Had he intended to forbid swearing by the name of God, he would most certainly have mentioned it expressly: for not only is it in the law, in contradistinction to other oaths, commanded,—see Deut. vi. 13; x. 20; Ps. lxiii. 11,—but in the prophets is announced as a token of the future turning of men to God: ref. Isa.; Jer. xii. 16; xxiii. 7, 8. The omission of notice of *this oath* shews that James in this warning has in view only the abuse, common among the Jews generally and among his readers, of introducing in the common every-day affairs of life, instead off the common yea and nay, such asseverations as those here mentioned: so that we are not justified in deducing from his words any prohibition of swearing in general, as has been attempted by many expositors of our Epistle. The use of oaths *by heaven, &c.*, arises on the one hand from forgetting that every oath, in its deeper significance, is a swearing *by God*, and on the other from a depreciation of simple truth in words: either way therefore from a lightness and frivolity which is in direct contrast to the earnest seriousness of a Christian spirit.” See my note on Matt. v. 34): **but** (contrast to the habit of swearing) **let your yea be yea, and [your] nay, nay** (it is hardly possible here to render “But let yours be [your habit of conversation be] yea yea and nay nay,” on account of the *position* of the words in the original. So that, in form at least, our precept here differs slightly from that in St. Matt. The fact represented by both would be the same: confidence in men’s simple assertions, and consequently absence of all need for asseveration): **that ye fall not under judgment** (i. e. condemnation: not as the meaning of the word used, but as the necessary contextual result. The words in fact nearly amount to “*that ye be not judged*” above. Notice that there is here no exhortation to truthful speaking, as so many Commentators have assumed: that is not in question at all).

13.] The connexion seems to be, Let not this light and frivolous spirit at any time appear among you: if suffering, or if rejoicing, express your feelings not by random and unjustifiable exclamations, but in a Christian and sober manner, as here prescribed. **Is any among you in trouble? let him pray. Is any in joy (light of heart)? let him sing praise** (literally, play on an instrument: but used in Rom. xv. 9, and 1 Cor. xiv. 15, and elsewhere, of singing praise generally).

14.] Is any sick among you (here one case of *affliction* is specified, and for it specific directions

are given)? **let him summon to him** (send for) **the elders of the congregation** (to which he belongs: but not, *some one among those elders*, as many Roman-Catholic interpreters. The Council of Trent anathematizes those who say that these elders are not priests ordained by a bishop, but elders in age in the congregation, and thus deny that the priest is the sole administrator of extreme unction. It is true the **elders** are not simply “the elders in age in every congregation,” but those who were officially *elders*, or *bishops*, which in the apostolic times were identical: see notes on Acts xx. 17, 28: so that “*priests ordained by a bishop*” above, would, as applied to the text, be an anachronism), **and let them pray over him** (either 1. literally as coming and standing over his bed: or 2. figuratively, with reference to him, as if their intent in praying, went out towards him), **anointing** (or, *when they have anointed*), **him with oil in the name of the Lord** (the act thus qualified was plainly not a mere human medium of cure, but bad a sacramental character: compare the same words, used of *baptism*, Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts ii. 38; x. 48; xix. 5; 1 Cor. i. 13, 15. **The Lord** here is probably Christ, from analogy: His name being universally used as the vehicle of all miraculous power exercised by His followers),

15.] and the prayer of faith (the prayer which faith offers) **shall save** (clearly here, considering that the forgiveness of sins is separately stated afterwards, this term can *only* be used of *corporeal healing*, not of the salvation of the soul, This has not always been recognized. The R.-Cath. interpreters, who pervert the whole passage to the defence of the practice of extreme unction, take it of the salvation of the soul: Cornelius-a-Lapide saying, “*The prayer of faith*, i.e. the sacrament and the sacramental form of extreme unction (!), shall save the sick, i.e., shall confer on him grace by which his soul may be saved.” Some Commentators take both meanings. The Council of Trent prevaricates between the two) **the sick man, and the Lord** (most probably Christ, again: He who is Lord in the Christian church) **shall raise him up** (from his bed of sickness: thus the Greek word is used in Mark i. 31; Matt. viii. 15; ix. 5–7, &c. Here again our R.-Cath. friends are in sad perplexity, seeing that these words entirely deprive the passage of all relevancy to extreme unction): **even if he have committed** (he be *in a state of having committed*, i.e. abiding under the consequence of, some commission of sin; for so the *perfect tense* implies; and hereby the sin in question is presumed to have been the working cause of his present sickness) **sins, it shall be forgiven him** (supply as a subject, *the having committed them*, from the foregoing).

Among all the daring perversions of Scripture by which the Church of Rome has defended her superstitions, there is none more patent than that of the present passage. Not without reason has the Council of Trent defended its misinterpretation with the anathema above cited: for indeed it needed that, and every other recommendation, to support it, and give it any kind of acceptance. The Apostle is treating of a matter totally distinct from the occasion, and the object, of extreme unction. He is enforcing the efficacy of the prayer of faith in afflictions, ver. 13. Of such efficacy, he adduces one special instance. In

sickness, let the sick man inform the elders of the Church. Let them, representing the congregation of the faithful, pray over the sick man, accompanying that prayer with the symbolic and sacramental act of anointing with oil in the name of the Lord. Then, the prayer of faith (see Cornelius-a-Lapide above for the audacious interpretation) shall save (heal) the sick man, and the Lord shall bring him up out of his sickness; and even if it were occasioned by some sin, that sin shall be forgiven him. Such is the simple and undeniable sense of the Apostle, arguing for the efficacy of prayer: and such, as above seen, the perversion of that sense by the Church of Rome. Here, as in the rest of these cases, it is our comfort to know that there is a God of truth, whose judgment shall begin at His Church. Observe, the promises here made of recovery and forgiveness are unconditional, as in Mark xvi. 18, &c.

16.] *A general injunction* arising out of a circumstance necessarily to be inferred in the preceding example. There, the sin would of necessity have been confessed to the elders, before the prayer of faith could deal with it. And seeing the blessed consequences in that case,— “generally,” says the Apostle, “in all similar cases, and one to another universally, pursue the same salutary practice of confessing your sins.” **Confess therefore to one another** (not only to the presbyters in the case supposed, but to one another generally) **your transgressions** (i. e. not merely offences against your brethren; but also sins against God: compare Matt. vi. 14, 15), **and pray for one another that ye may be healed** (in case of sickness, as above. The context here forbids any wider meaning: and so rightly De Wette, Wiesinger, and Huther. So even Cornelius-a-Lapide). It might appear astonishing, were it not notorious, that on this passage among others is built the Romish doctrine of the necessity of confessing sins to a priest. As a specimen of *the way in which* it is deduced, I subjoin Cornelius-a-Lapide’s explanation “*One another.*” i.e. confess, man to man, like to like, brother to brother, namely to the priest, who though in office he be superior, yet by nature is equal, like in infirmity, the same in obligation of confessing.” Cajetan, on the contrary, denies that “sacramental confession” is here spoken of: here, as in so many other cases, the much-vaunted unity of Roman interpreters embracing the most opposite opinions. **The supplication of a righteous man** (i. e. of one who shews his faith by his works, see ch. ii. 24) **availeth much in its working** (i. e. worketh very effectually. Much doubt has arisen about the meaning and reference of this last term. It is usually taken as in A.V.,— “the effectual fervent prayer,”—as an epithet, setting forth its fervency. This interpretation however has not only, as Wiesinger confesses, New Test. usage against it, but can hardly be justified from the context, it being necessarily implied that the prayer of the righteous man is not a dead and formal one. Besides which, the force of the general sentence, “*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much,*” suffers much from the appending of a condition under which alone the sentence could be true).

17, 18.] Example of this effectual prayer, in the case of Elijah.

17.] Elijah was a man of like passions with us (this precedes, to obviate the objection that the greatness of Elijah, so far out of our reach, neutralizes the example for us weak and ordinary men. There is no contrast to the *just* man intended, but rather Elijah is an example of a just man), **and he prayed with prayer** (made it a special matter of prayer: not, *prayed earnestly*, as A.V., and others) **that it might not rain** (this fact is not even hinted at in the Old Test. history in 1 Kings xvii. ff.; nor the following one, that he prayed for rain at the end of the drought: though this latter may perhaps be implied in 1 Kings xviii. 42 ff.), **and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months** (so also Luke iv. 25: and in a Rabbinical work this, “In the thirteenth year of Ahab, a famine prevailed in Samaria for three years and a half.”) There is no real discrepancy here, as has been often assumed, with the account in 1 Kings: for as Benson has rightly observed, the words “*in the third year*” of 1 Kings xviii. 1 by no necessity refer to the duration of the famine, but most naturally date back to the removal of Elijah to Zarephath, xviii. 8 ff.; compare the same “many days” in ver. 15, where indeed a variation is “for a full year”): **and again he prayed** (see above), **and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit** (which she is accustomed to bear).

19, 20.] The importance and blessing of reclaiming an erring brother. This is very nearly connected with the foregoing; the duty of mutual advice and correction, with that of mutual confession and prayer.

19.] Brethren, if any among you be seduced (literally passive; and there is no reason why the passive signification should not be kept, especially when we remember our Lord’s warning, “*Take heed that no man deceive, seduce you*”) **from the truth** (not merely truth practical, of moral conduct, but that truth which is the subject of the *word* whereby our regeneration took place, ch. i. 18; the doctrine of Christ, spiritual and practical), **and one convert him** (turn him back to the truth); **know** (or, *let him know*, viz. the *converted man*—for his comfort, and for the encouragement of others to do the like by this proclamation of the fact), **that he who converteth** (not, ‘*has converted:*’ our English present, when connected with a future, exactly gives the meaning) **a sinner from the error of his way** (thus is the person converted more generally expressed than before; not only *him that has been seduced*, but any *sinner*) **shall save a soul from death** (in eternity: the future shews that the *salvation* spoken of is not contemporary with the *conversion*, but its ultimate result), **and shall cover a multitude of sins** (viz. by introducing the convert into that state of Christian faith, wherein all sins past, present, and future, are forgiven and done away. See 1 Pet. iv. 8, and for the expression, Ps. xxxi. 1; Neh. iv. 5. The word *sins*, following *sinners*, necessarily binds the reference to the converted, not the converters. It is not “*his sins*” [the ancient Syriac version so renders it], because the Apostle wishes to put in its most striking *abstract* light the good deed thus done. The objection that thus we should have a tautology,— the saving of the soul of the converted man, including the covering of his sins, is entirely obviated by this latter consideration. The idea that they are the sins of the converter is thus abhorrent from the context, as it is generally repugnant to apostolic

teaching. Compare, on the whole, 1 Pet. iv. 8).

1 PETER

Chapter 1

Chapter 4

Chapter 2

Chapter 5

Chapter 3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

1 Peter: Chapter 1

CHAP. I.]

1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING: corresponding generally with those of St. Paul's Epistles, designating however himself more briefly, and his readers more at length. **Peter** (the Greek form of the name Cephas, a stone, given him by our Lord, see John i. 43: in 2 Pet. i. 1 it is 'Symeon Peter'), **an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect strangers** (see Heb. xi. 13. **elect**, chosen of God to His adopted family in Christ) **of the dispersion** (i. e. belonging to the *Jewish* dispersion. This leading character of the readers of 1 Peter has been acknowledged generally: see testimonies in Introduction. At the same time, as there argued, there is no reason to exclude Gentile Christians from among them, as forming part of the Israel of God. Indeed, such readers are presupposed in the Epistle itself: compare ver. 14, ch. ii. 10, iv. 3) **of Pontus** (see Acts ii. 9, note), **Galatia** (see Introd to Gal. §ii.), **Cappadocia** (Acts, as above), **Asia** (not quite as in Acts ii. 9, xvi. 6, where Phrygia is distinguished from it: here it must be included), **and Bithynia** (Acts xvi. 7 note: and on the whole geographical extent embraced by the terms, and inferences to be gathered from their order of sequence, see Introduction), **according to foreknowledge** (this signifies not merely knowledge of their faith beforehand, as some interpret it, but counsel or fore-ordaining. "God causes election, and does not *discover* it only." See on ver. 20, where the signification 'fore-decreed' is necessary to the context) **of God the Father** (thus indicated, as leading on to the great mystery of the Holy Trinity in the work of our salvation) **in** (not "*through*," as A.V.: '*through*' would betoken the origin, and enduring pattern after which,—'*unto*,' the conditional and abiding element in which, and in signifies the result for which) **sanctification of the Spirit** (gen. subjective, or rather *efficient*, the Spirit being the worker of the sanctification), **unto** (*result as regards us*—the fruit which we are to bring forth, and the state into which we are to be brought) **obedience** (absolutely, Christian obedience, the obedience of faith, as in ver. 14) **and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ** (i. e. admission into and standing in that covenant, whose atoning medium is Christ's blood,—and mode of application, the sprinkling of that blood on the heart by faith. The allusion is to Exod. xxiv. 8, where the covenant was inaugurated by sprinkling the blood on the people. This was the only occasion on which the blood was thus sprinkled on persons: for on the great day of atonement, only the sacred vessels were thus sprinkled: So also in Heb. ix. 13. But we need not confine the virtue of the sprinkling to *admission into* the covenant. Doubtless its *purifying*

power, especially as connected with *obedience*, is also in the mind of the Apostle. The Death of Christ is not only, *as looking back on the past*, a propitiation for sin, thereby removing the obstacle which stood in the way of God's gracious purpose towards man,—but also, *looking forward to the future*, a capacitating of us for the participation in God's salvation: just as Israel, sin having been atoned for by the sacrifice itself, was admitted into the actual state of reconciliation by the sprinkling on them of the sacrificial blood. "By this description of the readers, an anticipation is given of the whole train of thought in the Epistle: the aim of which is to impress the blessed certainty of salvation, and with that, the obligations incurred by receiving God's gift," Harless); **grace and peace be multiplied unto you** (so, but more fully, in reff. 2 Pet.; Jude 1. "Peace is distinguished from grace, as a fruit, or effect, from its cause," Gerhard. "May your peace be multiplied" is quoted as a rabbinical salutation).

3–12.] The Apostle *begins*, much after the manner of St. Paul in the opening of his Epistles, *with giving thanks to God for the greatness of the blessings of salvation*; thus paving the way for the exhortations are to follow. And herein, he directs his readers' look, first, *forward into the future* [vv. 3–9]; then *backward into the past* [vv. 10–12].

3–5.] Thanksgiving for the living hope into which the Christian has been begotten.

3.] Blessed be (this particular word, which is not the same as that so rendered in Matt. xxi. 9 and parallels; xxiii. 39; xxv. 36; Luke i. 28, &c., is used in the New Test. of God only: and so almost always in the Old Test.) **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** (so verbatim Eph. i. 3, where see note), **who according to his much mercy** (compare "being rich in mercy," Eph. ii. 4) **begat us again** (as in ver. 23 and elsewhere in the New Test., where the idea, though not the word occurs,—spoken of the new birth from the state of nature to state of grace, the work of God the Spirit [ver. 2], by means of the word [ver. 23], in virtue of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice and of union with Him [vv. 2, 18: ch. ii. 24, iii. 18]) **unto** (either unto as aim and end, being equivalent to "that we might have," or *local*, unto, into; "so that we have." The latter is here preferable, seeing that hope is not the aim, but the condition, of the Christian life) **a living hope** (*living*, as connected with *begetting again*; it is a life of hope, a life in which hope is the energizing principle. This is better than to understand it as contrasting our hope with that of the hypocrite, which shall perish: as Leighton, in some of his most beautiful language. **Hope** is not to be understood of the *object of hope*, but of hope properly so called, subjectively. This hope of the Christian "has life in itself, gives life, and looks for life as its object," De Wette) **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead** (to what does

this **through** refer? Ecumenius says, "Whence hath it life? From Jesus Christ, who arose from the dead." Similarly Luther, Bengel, &c. But, while we retain distinctly the connexion of our *living* hope with the *life* of Him on whom it depends, it is much more natural to join this instrumental clause with the verb **begat**, as bringing in with it the whole clause, **us to a living hope**, by which it is defined. The resurrection of Christ, bringing in life and the gift of the life-giving Spirit, is that which penetrates the new birth into a living hope),

4.] **unto** (this **unto**, as the former one, depends on **begat us again**, and is co-ordinate to the other. It introduces the objective end to which our hope is directed. "During our pilgrimage, we have a living hope: when it is finished, that hope becomes the inheritance of the promise." Steinmeyer) **an inheritance** ("by **inheritance** [cf. ch. iii. 7, 9] is imported the whole fulness of blessings not seen, of which the Christian as a child of God [ver. 3] has expectation, see Gal. iv. 7. This inheritance is more closely defined, as *salvation* [vv. 5, 9], as *grace, grace of life* [ver. 13, ch. iii. 7], as *glory* [ch. v. 1], as *an unfading crown of glory* [ch. v. 4], or *the eternal glory of God* [ch. v. 10]. The simplest expression for that, which the Apostle calls **inheritance**, is on the one side the *grace of life* with its *glory*, on the other the *salvation of souls*. This **inheritance** is the full possession of that, which was promised to Abraham and all believers (Gen. xii. 3, see Gal. iii. 6 ff.) an inheritance, as much higher than that which fell to the children of Israel in the possession of Canaan, as the sonship of the regenerate, who have already received the *promise of the Spirit through faith* as a pledge of their *inheritance*, is higher than the sonship of Israel: compare Gal. iii. 18, 29; 1 Cor. vi. 9; Eph. v. 5; Heb. ix. 15." Wiesinger) **in corruptible** (not liable to decay. "We are here perishing among perishing things: the things are passing which we enjoy, and we are passing who enjoy them.... When death comes, that removes a man out of all his possessions to give place to another: therefore are these inheritances decaying and dying in relation to us, because we decay and die: and when a man dies, his inheritances, and honours, and all things here, are at an end in respect of him: yea we may say the world ends to him." Leighton), **undefiled** (Leighton quotes from Jerome, "The rich are either unrighteous, or the heirs of the unrighteous." "All possessions here are defiled and stained with many defects and failings: still somewhat wanting, some damp on them, or crack in them: fair houses, but sad cares flying about the gilded and ceiled roofs: stately and soft beds and a full table, but a sickly body and queasy stomach.... All possessions are stained with sin, either in acquiring or using them, and therefore they are called mammon of unrighteousness, Luke xvi. 9"), **and unfading** (in its beauty; which in all earthly things is passing and soon withered: see ver. 24. So that our inheritance is glorious in these three respects: it is in *substance*, incorruptible: in *purity*, undefiled: in *beauty*, unfading. Bengel has remarked that St. Peter loves accumulated synonyms: vv. 7, 8, 19: ch. v. 10), **reserved** (laid up, Col. i. 5) **in the heavens** ("that we may be sure it is safe," Calvin: also reflecting back on the epithets above, because all that is *there* is incorruptible and undefiled and unfading. The Greek interpreters make these words an argument against the millenarians: so Ecumenius, "If the inheritance is in the heavens, the millenarian restitution is fabulous") **for** (with a view to) **you** (turning again to his readers from the general statement of ver. 3),

5.] **who are being guarded** ("what avails it that salvation is laid up for us in heaven, if we are tossed about in the world as in a turbulent sea? What avails it that our salvation is kept in a tranquil harbour, if we are drifting among a thousand shipwrecks? The Apostle thus anticipates objections of this kind." Calvin. "The inheritance is reserved: the heirs are guarded: neither shall it fail them, nor they it." Bengel. "The word *kept* here is a military term. The saints when in danger, may know that as many as their perils, so many are their guards provided by God: thousands of thousands keep watch over them." Aretius) **in** (in, of the power in which, and by virtue of which, the *guard* is effectual: not, as some interpret, *in*, as in a fortress) **the power of God by** (the **power of God** was the efficient cause: now we come to the effective means) **faith** ("the causes of our preservation are two; 1. Supreme, the power of God: 2. Subordinate, faith.... Our faith lays hold upon this power, and this power strengthens faith, and so we are preserved." Leighton) **unto** (the end and limit of the *keeping*: compare the very similar expression in Gal. iii. 23, *we were kept in ward, shut up unto the faith about to be revealed*) **salvation** (*salvation*, though in itself a merely negative idea, involves in itself, and came to mean in the New Test., the positive setting in bliss of the people of God: see ver. 9; James i. 21, &c.) **ready to be** (stronger than *about to be*, Gal. iii. 23; Rom. viii. 18, ch. v. 1) **revealed** (see the two last cited places. The stress is, as Wiesinger well remarks, not the nearness of the revelation, but the fact of the salvation being ready to be revealed: not yet to be brought in and accomplished, but already complete, and only waiting God's time to be manifested) **in the last time** (not, as Bengel, last, as compared to the times of the Old Test., but absolutely, as in the expression, "*the last day.*" It is otherwise in Jude 18, which see).

6-9.] Joy of the Christian at the realization of this end of his faith.

6.] It has been much disputed whether this verse (as also ver. 8, see there) is to be taken of *present* joy, or of *future*. In the latter case the present verb in both places must be a categorical present, used of a future. And this sense seems to be sanctioned by ver. 8, in which he could hardly predicate of his readers, that they at the present time rejoiced *with joy unspeakable and already glorified*. To avoid this, those who suppose the whole to allude to the time present, and the realization of future bliss by faith, imagine the present verb, "*ye rejoice,*" to have a slight hortatory force, reminding them of their duty in the matter. This however again will hardly suit the very strong qualifying terms above quoted from ver. 8. On the whole, after consideration, I prefer the former interpretation, and the as-if-future sense of the verb "*rejoice*" in both places.

In which (i. e. in the last time: the **in** is temporal, bearing the same sense in the resumption, as it did at the end of ver. 5, from

which it is resumed. Such is our Apostle's manner, to resume, in proceeding further, the thing or person just mentioned, in the same sense as before: compare vv. 5, 8, 10) **ye rejoice** (the verb is a strong word, implying the external expression and exuberant triumph of joy: **ye exult**), **for a little time** (as in ch. v. 10) **at present** (this would, on the hypothesis of *ye rejoice* being a proper present, be superfluous) **if it must be so** (if it be God's will that it should be so: if is hypothetical, not affirmative. As Ecumenius says, "for all the saints are not in affliction") **having been afflicted** (this past participle, more than any thing, favours the as-if-future acceptance of the verb, "*ye rejoice*." looking back from the time of which exultation, the grief is regarded as passed away and gone. It carries with it, as indeed it is rendered in A. V., a slightly adversative sense,— "though ye were troubled," "troubled as ye were," or the like) **in** (not *through*, but the element and material of the *affliction*) **manifold temptations** (**temptations**, as in James i. 2, 12, trials, arising from whatever cause; here, mainly from persecution; see ch. iv. 12 ff., on the "fiery infliction which comes for your trial.") **manifold**: see James i. 2):

7.] that (end and aim of these temptations) **the proof** (see on James) **of your faith** (equivalent to *the fact of your faith being proved*, and so, by an easy transition, the result of that proof, the purified and proved faith itself), **more precious than gold** **which perisheth** (**more precious** is in apposition with **proof** above. No supply before "gold," such as 'of,' as in A. V., or 'that of,' is legitimate. It is not '*the proof*' which is precious, though the literal construction at first sight seems to be this, but the faith itself: see above), **yet is** (usually, habitually) **proved by fire** (the **yet** in this clause brings out this, that gold though perishable yet needs fire to try it—the inference lying in the background, how much more does your faith, which is being proved for eternity, not for mere temporary use, need a fiery trial?), **may be found** (finally and once for all, as the result of the judicial trial at that day) **unto** (having as its result) **praise and glory and honour** (*whose?* Here the matter treated of is the praise of the elect themselves. Some have pressed the meanings of the separate words: the **praise** being from the Judge, His "Well done, good servant:" **glory**, admission into His glory, ch. v. 1, 10: the **honour**, the dignity and personal honour thence accruing, ch. iii. 7. But perhaps, as in Rom. ii. 7, we should rather regard them here as cumulative) **in** (so literally: i.e. 'at the day of:' the element, in time, in which it shall be manifested) **the revelation of Jesus Christ** (i. e. His return, who is now withdrawn from our sight, but shall then appear again: and with His *revelation* shall come also the *revelation of the sons of God*, Rom. viii. 19; 1 John iii. 2):

8.] whom (it is in the manner of our Apostle to take up anew and with a fresh line of thought, a person or thing just mentioned: see above on ver. 6) **having not seen ye love** (now, at this present time): **im whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing** (with this word the *present* condition of believers ends, and with the next the then state again begins), **ye [then] rejoice** (present categoric, as before: **in whom** must be taken with **believing**, not with *ye rejoice*. The A. V. is ambiguous, it being undetermined to which of the two, "rejoicing" or "believe," **in whom** belongs) **with joy unspeakable** (ineffable, which cannot be spoken out, Rom. viii. 26) **and [already] glorified** (this word is the strongest testimony for the as-if-future sense which we have adopted and maintained for *ye rejoice*, both times. It fixes the reference of the verb to that time when hope shall have passed into enjoyment, and joy shall be crowned with glory. The meaning on the other interpretation is obliged to be weakened down to "joy bearing in itself glory," i.e. the high consciousness of glory. The A. V. "*full of glory*," is quite beside the meaning. It is no *quality of the joy* which is asserted, but a fact which has happened to it), **receiving** (the word here, as in other places where it occurs (see 2 Cor. v. 10; Eph. vi. 8; Col. iii. 25; ch. v. 4; 2 Pet. ii. 13), quite forbids the sense of "present realizing:" it **betokens** the *ultimate reception* of glory or condemnation from the Lord. Here it is 'receiving [present], as you then, in a blessed eternity, will be receiving') **the end of your faith** (that, to which your faith ultimately looked forward: see Rom. vi. 21, 22), **salvation of** (your) **souls** (the great inclusive description of future blessedness; the **soul** being the central personality of the man).

10–12.] *The weightiness of this salvation*, as having been the object of earnest *enquiry of prophets*, by whom it was announced, and even *of angels*.

10.] Concerning which salvation (its *time* especially, as explained below, but its *manner* and *issue* also) **sought earnestly and examined earnestly** (so literally) **prophets** (not *the prophets*; the terms, **prophets** and **angels**, are both times generic, to exalt the greatness of the *salvation*. What follows limits the assertion, and defines the prophets intended. So Bengel: "The omission of the article here gives sublimity to the discourse, for it draws off the reader from the limited consideration of individuals to regard the genus to which they belonged: so in ver. 12, *angels*"), **they who prophesied concerning the grace that was [destined] for you** (in matter of fact, in God's purposes it was *you*, *for whom* the salvation was destined, though you as individuals were not in *their* view): **searching** (the participle takes up again the two verbs, with a view to mark more definitely the object of their search, now about to be described) **at** (towards, with reference to) **what or what sort of** (what, as identifying, **what sort of**, as describing. "The former means, the very date itself: the latter, the kind of period, to be known by various events." Bengel) **season was declaring** (signifying, revealing) **the Spirit of Christ which was in them** (the Spirit of Christ, i.e. Christ's Spirit: the Spirit which Christ has and gives, being He who reveals all things relating to Christ and the purposes of the Father: see Matt. xi. 27; John xvi. 14, 15, which passages, though in their normal sense they apply to New Test. revelations, yet in their declarative and abstract truth regard the Spirit's office in all ages. See also Acts xvi. 7) **testifying beforehand the sufferings regarding** (spoken of with reference to; or, as before, 'destined for') **Christ** (it is disputed, whether this be meant of Christ individually, or of Christ mystically, including His Church. Our answer may be thus given. The expression is not indeed strictly parallel with that in Col. i. 24: see note there: but still the two are so far analogous that

they may throw light one on the other, In both, as in ch. ii. 21, iii. 18, iv. 1, 13, v. 1, and in many other places where Christ's sufferings are spoken of, **Christ** is used without *Jesus*, not thereby precluding the personal designation of our Lord, but still carrying into prominence the official and mediatorial: and on this latter account, if the context seem to require it, including also the wider mystical sense in which Christ's sufferings are those of the whole aggregate of His spiritual body. The question for us then is, Does the context here require this latter extended meaning? And to this we must answer decidedly in the negative. The "things which have been now reported unto you by them that preached the gospel unto you," are the contents of the gospel history, the sufferings and triumphs of Christ. And it was of these as appointed for Him as means of bringing in the grace which was appointed for you, that the prophets testified beforehand), **and the glories after these [sufferings]** (on these *glories*, see ch. iii. 18, 22, ver. 1. "The glory of the Resurrection: the glory of the Ascension: the glory of the last judgment and heavenly kingdom." Bengel. If it be asked what prophets are meant, we may reply, the prophets generally. Of one of them, who did prophesy of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories after them, viz. Daniel, we have it related, that he "understood by books the number of the years" destined for the desolations of Jerusalem. And our Lord declared that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which his disciples saw, and saw them not): **to whom** (taking up again *the prophets*) **it was revealed** (how are these words to be taken? Does **it was revealed** (1) correspond to "searching, &c." so as to signify that the revelation was the result of their search, or the answer to it? The difficulty in such a rendering would be, that in one instance only would this be true, viz. that of Daniel; and even in that, not strictly correspondent: whereas it is here predicated of the prophets generally. Most certainly it cannot be in any sense said of them, that the exact time of the fulfilment of their prophecies was revealed to them. Or does it (2) signify that just so much was revealed to them, as that their prophecies were not to be fulfilled in their own time, but in ours? This again would be objectionable, seeing *a*) that there would be nothing corresponding to it in prophetic history, with the sole exception of Daniel, as before: *b*) that it would rather indicate a stop and discouragement of their search, than its legitimate result. Add to this, that the cases in which St. Peter himself, in the Acts, cites the prophecies, shew how he intended this term "*it was revealed*" to be taken. E.g. he quotes Joel, Acts ii. 17, speaking of the things prophesied by him as to take place "*in the last days.*" he says of David, ver. 31, "*Seeing before, he spake concerning the Resurrection:*" and in iii. 24, he says, "*Moreover all the prophets from Samuel and those after, as many as spoke, proclaimed also these days.*" From these examples it would appear, that "*it was revealed*" here is not said of any result or consequence of their *search*, but of the general revelation made to them: that it is co-ordinate with, not subordinate to **searching**), **that** (the content and purport of the revelation) **not to themselves but to you they were ministering** (i. e. by announcing, foretelling) **the things** (in their previous announcement and foreshadowing) **which now have been declared** (literally, "*were declared.*") **now** embracing the New Test. period: but we in English cannot join '*were*' with '*now*') **unto you by means of those who preached the gospel to you by** (instrumental) **the Holy Spirit sent** (historic tense, referring distinctly to the day of Pentecost) **from heaven** (herein consists the great difference between prophet and evangelist: the former was the organ of the Spirit of Christ which was in him, the latter preached by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Still, both are one in design, and in the contents of their testimony. And both are here mentioned, to set before the readers their exceeding happiness, in being the favoured objects of the ministration of salvation by prophets and apostles alike), **which things** (viz. the things announced to you: not, as many, the future glories promised to us: see below) **angels** (generic, as "*prophets*" above: see there) **desire to look into** (literally, to stoop down and peer into, It embraces further still the excellence of the salvation revealed to us, that angels, for whom it is not designed as for us [Heb. ii. 16], long to pry into its mysteries. To the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10. Hofmann remarks,— "Angels have only the contrast between good and evil, without the power of conversion from sin to righteousness. Being then witnesses of such conversion to God, they long to penetrate the knowledge of the means by which it is brought about.... They themselves are placed outside the scheme of salvation: therefore it is said that they desire to look into the facts of the apostolic preaching").

13—CHAP. II. 10] General exhortations founded on the blessedness of the Christian state.

13.] FIRST EXHORTATION—to WATCHFULNESS and ENDURANCE of HOPE. **Wherefore** (i. e. because these things are so precious and wonderful, not only to men, but also to angels) **gird up** (the tense in the original conveys the sense of completeness and once-for-all nature of the action) **the loins of your mind** (the exhortation seems to be taken from our Lord's command, Luke xii. 35, where, as here, the girding up is a preparation for the coming of the Lord. On the figure, see Eph. vi. 14 ff.), **being sober** (Calvin explains it well: "He recommends not only temperance in meat and drink, but, more than this, spiritual sobriety—the putting a rein on all our senses, that they become not intoxicated with the allurements of this world"), **hope perfectly** (i. e. "without doubt or dejection, with full devotion of soul:" or, even better, "so, that nothing be wanting." The A.V., "*hope to the end,*" does not reach the full meaning) **for** (in the direction of) **the grace** (i. e. the great *gift* of grace, the crowning example of grace) **which is being brought** (A. V., "*is to be brought;*" not amiss, but not giving, what the present participle in the original expresses, the near impending of the event spoken of: 'which is even now bearing down on you') **unto you in the revelation of Jesus Christ** (the meaning of St. Peter's own words, identical with these, as applied to the revelation of the Lord at His second advent, ver. 7, seems to fix the meaning of the above words as here given, and to preclude the rendering of those who take the whole as referring to the present revelation of grace made by the Gospel, in which Jesus Christ is revealed).

14—21.] SECOND EXHORTATION—TO OBEDIENCE, AND HOLINESS, AND REVERENCE. This exhortation is

intimately connected with the former; but not therefore to be regarded as one and the same. Each of these is evolved regularly out of the last [see again ver. 22], but each is an advance onward through the cycle of Christian graces and dispositions.

14.] As children of obedience (compare “*children of wrath*,” Eph. ii. 3; “*children of light*,” ib. v. 8; and esp. “*the sons of disobedience*,” ib. v. 6; “*children of the curse*,” 2 Pet. ii. 14). This mode of expression must be referred to the more vivid way of regarding things prevalent among the Orientals, which treats intimate connexion, derivation, and dependence, even in spiritual matters, as the relation of a child or a son. ‘*Children of disobedience*’ are accordingly those who belong to ‘*disobedience*’ as a child to its mother, to whom disobedience is become a nature, a ruling disposition. Hence the student may learn to rise above all such silly and shallow interpretations as that “*children of obedience*” is a Hebraism for “*obedient children*;”—so A.V. The depths of the sacred tongue were given us to descend into, not to bridge over), **not conforming yourselves** (the A.V., well, “*not fashioning yourselves according to*;” but it would have been better to keep the same English for the word as is given in Rom. xii. 2, the only other place where it occurs) **to your lusts** (which were **formerly in your ignorance** (i. e. ignorance of things divine, even to the extent of heathenish alienation from God, which latter is most probably here pointed at. See Rom. i. 18 ff. This ignorance marks not only the period, but also the ground and element of these lusts prevailing in fashioning the life); **nay rather** (the word is stronger than merely ‘*but*’) **after the pattern of** (still carrying on the idea of *conformity*) **that Holy One** (the A.V. has given a mistaken and ungrammatical rendering of this clause) **who called you, be ye yourselves also** (the tense in the original sets forth the completeness with which this holiness is to be put on) **holy in all** (manner of, every instance of) **behaviour** (*conversation*, in the old sense of turning and walking about in life),

16.] because it is written (**because** gives the reason not only for the designation of God as the Holy One, but for the whole exhortation which precedes—for the duty of assimilation to Him in His Holiness), **Ye shall be holy, because I am holy** (see Matt. v. 48; Eph. v. 1; 1 John iii. 3).

17.] Further exhortation, in consideration of our close relation of children to God our Judge, *to reverence and godly fear*. **And if** (this **if**, as in Col. iii. 1, introduces an hypothesis with an understood background of fact: **If** [as is the case]...) **ye call upon as father** (not, as A.V., ‘*the Father*’) **Him who judgeth impartially** (see Acts x. 34; James ii. 1: there is not even an apparent inconsistency with the declaration that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, John v. 22: for this last fact of itself implies that the Father is *the Judge*, the fountain of judgment: as Didymus says here, “When the Son judgeth, it is the Father who judgeth”) **according to the work of each man** (on the *work* Bengel strikingly remarks, “Of every one man there shall be but one work, good, or bad.” See James i. 4; Gal. vi. 4).

every man’s, be he Jew or Gentile, high or low, rich or poor: thus by setting God’s just judgment above all alike, His Majesty, as inculcating godly fear, is enhanced), **behave** (see on *behaviour* above) **during the time of your sojourning** (see note, Heb. xi. 9. The Christian, who calls God his Father, is in exile, tarrying in a strange country, while here on earth) **in fear** (how, it is asked, is this, seeing that “there is no fear in love: for perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment” [1 John iv. 18]? Ecumenius answers, that the fear here recommended is not the *corrective* fear, leading to repentance, but the *perfected* fear, which accompanies the Christian through his whole course. And Leighton beautifully says, “This fear, is not cowardice: it doth not debase, but elevates the mind: for it drowns all lower fears, and begets true fortitude and courage to encounter all dangers for the sake of a good conscience and the obeying of God. The righteous is as bold as a lion, Prov. xxviii. 1. He dares do any thing, but offend God: and to dare to do that, is the greatest folly, and weakness, and baseness, in the world. From this fear have sprung all the generous resolutions, and patient sufferings of the saints and martyrs of God: because they durst not sin against Him, therefore they durst be imprisoned, and impoverished, and tortured, and die, for Him. Thus the prophet sets carnal and godly fear as opposite, and the one expelling the other, Isa. viii. 12, 13. And our Saviour, Luke xii. 4, ‘Fear not them which kill the body, but fear Him, &c.’ Fear not, but fear: and therefore fear, that you may not fear”):

18.] knowing (being aware: this argument enhances the duty of godly fear by the consideration of the-inestimable price at which they were redeemed. This consideration is urged through vv. 18–21) **that not** (emphatic) **with corruptible things, silver or gold, were ye redeemed** (bought out of, by the payment of a *ransom*, presently to be specified: see 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23; Gal. iii. 13) **out of your vain behaviour** (way of life, which, when past, left no fruit behind it) **delivered to you from your fathers** (“One Father alone is to be imitated,” says Bengel; “we find the same contrast in Matt. xxiii. 9.”) This again makes it probable that the persons here more especially addressed are Gentile Christians. The Apostle himself, a Jew, would hardly speak of the vain ungodly lives of Jews as delivered to them from their fathers, without more explanation), **but with precious blood, as of a lamb blameless and spotless** (see Exod. xii. 5; Levit. xxii. 20), **[even the blood] of Christ** (the other construction, adopted by the A.V., and many Commentators,—“*but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, &c.*,” is legitimate; but I prefer the above, as bringing forward the **precious blood** in contrast to the **corruptible things**, and then explaining the word **precious** by a climax, finding its highest point in **even of Christ**).

The question, with what particular lamb Christ is here compared, will be found discussed in the main on John i. 29. Our reply here however will be somewhat modified by the consideration, that the figure of buying out of the *vain way of life* seems to contain an allusion to the bringing up out of Egypt, and the word **foreordained**, which follows, to the taking up of the paschal lamb beforehand, Exod. xii. 3, 6. And thus I believe the reference here to be to the paschal lamb. “As Israel’s redemption

from Egypt required the blood of the paschal lamb, so the redemption of those brought out of heathendom required the blood of Christ, the predestination of whom from eternity is compared with the taking up of the lamb on the tenth day of the month.” Hofmann).

20.] The preciousness and completeness of this redemption is further enhanced by *God's foreordination* of it, and His *bringing it to glorious completion* in His due time. **Who** (viz. *Christ*) **hath been foreordained indeed** (see on ver. 2) before the **foundation of the world** (the same thought is foremost in the Apostle's speech in Acts ii. 23; iii, 18), **but manifested** (brought out of the *hiding-place* of God's purposes into the open *display* of Incarnation and historical world-fact. The same word occurs in ch. v. 4 of the yet future manifestation of Christ at His second coming) **at the end of the times** (compare Heb. i. 1, and note there. This *manifestation* of Christ marks *this* as the *end of the times*, and this last time shall only endure so long, as this *manifestation* requires) **for your sakes** (an additional and weighty intensification of their obligation) **who are through Him** (not only through His manifestation; but through Him personally, made to you all that He is made as the medium of your faith in God: the resurrection and glory being included) **believers in God** (a similar specification is found at ver. 4) **who raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory** (“that we are redeemed from our vain conversation, is owing to the blood of Christ; but that we have faith and hope in God, is brought about by God having raised Christ from the dead, and given Him glory.” Hofmann), **so that your faith and hope are** (not, as A.V., and others, “that your faith and hope *might be*; but simply announcing a matter of fact. Your faith rests on Christ's resurrection—it was God who raised Him: your hope, on Christ's glorification: it is God who has given Him that glory. Closely accordant with this is St. Peter's first public speech in the Acts, ii. 22 ff., where all that has happened to Christ is referred to God as the doer of it) **on** (resting on and in) **God**.

22–25.] THIRD EXHORTATION, *to LOVE OF ONE ANOTHER, from the consideration of their new birth by the word of God.*

22.] Having purified (i. e. “seeing that ye have purified:” the *participle* of the original carries with it an inferential force as to the exhortation, and besides, assumes that as a fact, to which it covertly exhorts. It is *moral* purification that is spoken of) **your souls** (the **souls**, as the centres of personality, though here described as purified by *the persons* themselves, yet are not so, except by a process in which the whole person is employed,—the habit of obedience) **in** (the course of: the region, in which the purification takes place) **your obedience of the truth** (“the truth” is that of the Gospel of Christ in its largest sense; not merely as Calvin, “the rule which the Lord prescribes to us in the Gospel:” [and **obedience of the truth** is nearly equivalent to “*obedience of [the] faith,*” Rom. i. 5 and elsewhere. Compare St. Peter's own saying, Acts xv. 9, “*purifying their hearts by the [or, their] faith*”), **unto** (“with a view to,” ‘in the direction of,’ it might be with or without intention: the legitimate tendency of that purification, which ought to have been going on in your souls, was toward) **unfeigned brotherly love** (love of Christians towards one another), **love one another from the heart earnestly** (the **heart** is the seat of the affections: let the love come straight and pure from thence, not short of it, from any secondary purpose as its origin. **Intently** would exactly give the sense of the adverb: with the energies on the stretch):

23.] *Ground of the exhortation*, carried up further than the act of *purifying* above, to the state of the new life of which that was an act, even to the beginning of that new life in their regeneration by the divine word. And the begetting cause of this new birth being God's living and imperishable word, from that fact come in new considerations, enforcing that pure love which belongs not to a transitory and shifting, but to an eternal and abiding state. **Being born again, not of** (out of, as origin) **corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by means of** (not “*out of,*” this time. The word of God is not the begetting principle itself, but only that by which the principle works: as it were the grain which is the vehicle of the mysterious germinating power. We are not regenerated *out of*, but *through*, or *by means of*, the word, But on the other hand, the word itself is no mere perishing vehicle; no mere sacramental symbol, lost in the using: but it lives by and with the divine principle of life which it conveys and expands, and abides for ever. The *power* of origination rests in God Himself, the Father, who begat us of his own will: the *means* of instrumentality move on and abide for ever) **the word of God, living and abiding** (that the two participles belong to *the word*, not to *God*, is decisively shewn by the sequel, where the abiding nature, not of God, but of the word of God, is set forth).

24.] Because (Scripture proof that the word of God lives and abides, while all human instruments of birth, being flesh, pass away) **all flesh is as** (*as* is not found in the Old Test. text) **grass, and all glory of it** (whatever blooms up from the flesh, as the flower from the grass) **as flower of grass.** **The grass was dried up** (the past tense; the fact being related as in a tale; so in James i. 11), **and the flower** [thereof] **fell away: but the word of the Lord** (in the Septuagint version, as in the Hebrew, *of our God:* changed here probably on account of the application which follows) **remaineth for ever.** **And** (literally, **but:** it applies what has gone before: the contrast being between the general truth and the particular identification) **this (word here spoken of) is the word which was preached to you** (literally, **which was evangelized unto you;** i.e. which was preached to you in the declaration of the Gospel. The logical inference to be drawn is,—“and consequently the word preached to you is imperishable and eternal, and demands of you that you earnestly and intently follow up that new life which by it has been implanted in you.” Hence the connexion of ch. iii. 1–3).

1 Peter: Chapter 2

CHAP. II.]

1–10.] Exhortations to nourish and perfect this new life, under the image (a) of newborn babes (1–3), (b) of God's spiritual temple and priesthood (4–10). Having laid aside (once for all) **therefore** (on the connexion, see above) **all** (manner of) **malice** (premeditated desire of doing evil) **and all guile** (see ver. 22, ch. iii. 10, and John i. 48; and below) **and hypocrisies** (guile is the abiding disposition, **hypocrisies** are the acts of personation and deception which are some of its manifestations), **and envies** (again embraced under *guile*, but not perhaps so closely connected with it. The guileless disposition knows not envy), **and all slanders** (2 Cor. xii. 20. Augustine says, “Malice is pleased with another’s harm: envy is tormented with another’s good: guile doubles the heart; flattery, the tongue: slander wounds the good fame”).

2.] as newborn babes (so the Rabbis called their converts and scholars), **long after the spiritual** (I thus render, for want of a better and more distinctive word. The original term is the same as that rendered *rational* (A. V. “reasonable”) in Rom. xii. 1: and its intent is, to distinguish the *milk* spoken of from mere *fleshy milk*, and to shew that it is spoken figuratively and spiritually: that milk of the soul, not of the body,—milk to be imbibed by the mental faculties. Our English is too poor in psychological distinctions, to be able to express it by any appropriate adjective: “*reasonable*” is decidedly wrong, as A. V. in Rom.; and ‘*of the word*,’ as A. V., here, after Beza, is just as bad) **guileless** (not, ‘*unadulterated*,’ in contrast to less pure human teachings: but, in contrast to “*guile*” above, ‘that is without guile,’ has no by-ends, no one purpose but to nourish benefit the soul) **milk** (not here in contrast, as in 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12, 13, to strong meat: but simply in reference to its nourishing qualities), **that on it ye may grow** (properly passive: be nourished up) **unto salvation** (the growth is the measure of the fulness of that—not only rescue from destruction, but—positive blessedness, which is implied in *salvation*: see on the word above, ch. i.

3.] if, that is (if so be expresses the same, viz. that the necessary condition of the above exhortation is assumed as having place in the readers), **ye (have) tasted** (the infant once put to the breast desires it again: the Apostle appeals to this their first taste as an incentive to subsequent ones) **that** (the formula is from the well-known and beautiful Ps. xxxiv.) **the Lord** (as Calvin observes, not simply *God* is here meant, but God as He is revealed to us in the person of Christ) **is good** (perhaps the simplest meaning, as applied to meats and drinks, is here intended. The Vulgate renders it *sweet*).

4, 5.] Exhortation to come to Christ the chosen stone, and be built up into a spiritual temple unto God. **To whom** (i. e. the Lord) **approaching** (*present*, representing the daily habit of the Christian life, not something to be done once for all. The word refers to the approach made by faith, when the Christian closely realizes the presence and seeks the communion of his Lord), **a** (or, *the*. Observe that this Apostle lays hold on the metaphor belonging to the very name which Christ gave to him, and teaches us all to become living stones after His example) **stone** (the allusion is to Ps. cxviii. 22; Isa. xxviii. 16. Observe that no “*as*” must be supplied, as is done in A. V.: Christ is the stone: we do not come to Him *as* we come to a stone) **living** (this points not only to the figure being realized in a higher department of being than its natural one, but also to the fact of the Lord being alive from the dead), **by men indeed rejected, but in the sight of God** (with God, God being judge) **chosen** (selected, chosen out), **had in honour** (see below, on ver. 6), **be ye also as living** (see above) **stones built up** (on the dispute whether the verb is indicative or imperative, see my Greek Test.) **a spiritual house** (equivalent to “*temple*,” 1 Cor. iii. 16; Eph. ii. 21: as before, the stones are called *living*, and the house *spiritual*, not merely to signify that they are not dead stones, and the house not a material one, but on account of the life which Christians derive from Christ, the living Stone, and of the service which they render in virtue of being a body dwelt in by the Holy Spirit) **for an holy priesthood** (abstract, office of priesthood, including in itself the individual priests. Being God’s spiritual temple, they form an holy priesthood to Him, approaching and serving before Him in virtue of that Living and Holy One, whose mystic Body they are, and in whom the Father is well pleased. And they need no other by whom to approach God: being all priests, they require not, nor admit of, any distinct body of men among themselves specially called priests, nearer to God than themselves. Nowhere is this more clearly declared by inference, than here) **to offer up** (no habitual offering, as in rite or festival, is meant, but the one, once-for-all devotion of the body, as in Rom. xii. 1, to God as His) **spiritual sacrifices** (compare especially Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Spiritual, because as the temple, as the priests, as the God, so the offering. It is this, rather than any distinction from the Old Test. sacrifices, that is pointed at) **acceptable to God through Jesus Christ** (these last words may be joined, either 1) with “*acceptable*,” or 2) with “*to offer up*.” This latter has for it the analogy of Heb. xiii. 15, “*By Him therefore let us offer, &c.*,” and is much to be preferred. The introduction of the words “*through Jesus Christ*” as a mere appendage of “*acceptable*” would not satisfy the weighty character of the words, nay, would seem to put them in the wrong place, seeing that not merely the acceptability, but the very existence, and possibility of offering of those sacrifices depends on the mediation of the great High Priest).

6.] The exhortation of the previous verses is substantiated in its form and its assertions by Old Test. prophecy. **Because** (i. e. the aforesaid is so, on the ground of Scripture) **it is contained in Scripture, Behold, I place in Zion a chief corner stone, chosen, had in honour: and he that believeth on Him** (or, ‘*it:*’ this addition is not in the passage cited) **shall not be ashamed.**

7, 8.] *Appropriation of the honour implied in the last clause to believers: and per contra. to unbelievers, of another and opposite effect of the exaltation of this corner-stone.* **Unto you then** (inference from the last words, “*he that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed*”) **is the honour** (belonging to the Stone itself, with which you are united in the building: the honour implied in the “*shall not be ashamed*,” said of those who believe on Him. It is altogether beside the purpose to understand ‘Christ,’ or ‘the Stone,’ as the subject, and render as A.V., “He is precious” making “*the honour*” predicate instead of subject) **who believe: but to the disobedient** (not, the *unbelieving*: see Heb. iii. 18, note. Unbelief

is the *root of disobedience*: but it is the manner of Scripture, to follow it out into disobedience, its invariable effect, when spoken of in contrast to faith. What follows is in the form of another quotation, or rather combination of quotations: the first from Ps. cxviii. 22), **the stone which the builders rejected, this has become for a** (has been made into a) **head corner stone** (this is true with regard to believers also: but to them it is grace and glory, to these it is terror and destruction), **and a stone of stumbling and rock of offence** (second quotation from Isa. viii. 14. This stumbling is not mere mental offence, which e.g. they take at the preaching of the Cross; but the “stumbling upon the dark mountains” of Jer. xiii. 16: see Prov. iv. 19; Dan. xi. 19:—the eternal disgrace and ruin which forms the contrast to “*honour*” above. See, on the “*rock of offence*,” Matt. xvi. 23: where we find that the very expression carries a reminiscence of Peter’s own days of unbelief when he was an offence,—he, the stone, *petros*,—to his Lord), **who stumble, being disobedient to the word** (thus, and not as A.V., is the construction), **for which** (thing, fact, viz., their whole moral course of delinquency and the *stumbling* at the end of it) **they were also** (besides that they reach it, there is another consideration) **appointed** (set where they are, or were; viz. by Him who set above [it is the same word in the original] the stone of stumbling).

9, 10.] Contrast, in a glorious *description of the office, privilege, and function, of the enlightened and adopted people of God.* **But ye** (emphatic) **are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood** (the expression is from the Septuagint version of Ex. xix. 6. Compare Rev. i. 6, and v. 10. In the New Test. church, these two elements, the kingship and the priesthood, are united in every individual believer, as in our great Head, Jesus Christ, who alone unites them in the Old Test. church; the two coexisting, but never except in the case of Melchizedek His foretype, united in the same Person), **an holy nation** (also from Exod. xix. 6, God’s declaration at Sinai respecting Israel), **a people for acquisition** (so literally: i.e. peculiarly God’s own, as interpreted by what follows in the place of Isaiah referred to, as well as here. There it stands, in the Septuagint version, “*my people whom I acquired for myself to shew forth my virtues*.” In the place of Exodus which was before quoted, ch. xix. 5, we read in the Septuagint version, “*ye shall be to me a peculiar (acquired) people from all the nations.*” In Acts xx. 28, “*the Church of God which He purchased by His own blood,*” the word rendered ‘*purchased*’ is ‘*acquired*,’ as here. See also Deut. vii. 6); **that ye may tell out the virtues** (i. e. gracious dealings, excellent and glorious attributes: see Isa. above, This use of the word “*virtues*” is common in Philo) **of Him** (God: the Father) **who called you out of darkness** (of ignorance, error, sin, misery) **to** (not exactly ‘*into*:’ the preposition gives more the aim of the call, than its local result: to, i.e. to attain unto and be partakers of: to walk in and by) **His wonderful light** (this expression here can hardly mean the light of our Christian life only; but must import that light of God’s own Presence and Being, after which our walking in light is to be fashioned: the light to which St. John alludes, when he says, *if we walk in the light, as He is in the light.* “It is wonderful,” says De Wette, “just as to one coming out of long darkness the light of day would be wonderful.” The figure of the corner-stone has not quite passed away from the Apostle’s mind: in the end of the prophecy concerning which he speaks, we read, Ps. cxviii, 23 [Matt. xxi. 42], “*This is the Lord’s doing, and it was wonderful in our eyes*”): **who** (contrast between their former and present states) **were once no people** (the Apostle is again citing, or rather clothing that which he has to write in, Old Test. words: see Hos. ii. 23), **but [are] now the people of God** (these words apply most properly to Gentile Christians, although spoken in the prophecy of Jews. St. Paul thus uses them, Rom. ix. 25; and it is not impossible that that passage may have been in St. Peter’s mind), **who were unpitied** (of God: the clauses here and above are not merely negatives, but contraries: not “*who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*,” as A.V., indicating a mere change of time in order of progress, but who were unpitied, objects of aversion and wrath), **but now have obtained compassion** (the past tense has a fine and delicate force which cannot be given in a version: who were men who [have received no pity], but now men who [received pity], viz. when God called you by Christ).

11—CHAP. IV. 6.] *Exhortations to walk christianly and worthily towards and among those without who speak and act in a hostile manner.* Hitherto we have seen them exhorted to walk worthily of their calling as distinguished from their own former walk: now the Apostle exhorts them to glorify God before an ungodly and persecuting world.

11, 12.] Ver. 11, negative, exhorts to *abstinence from fleshly lusts*; ver. 12, positive, to *cause the unconverted Gentiles around, by their fair Christian walk, to glorify God.* **Beloved** (as this word is only found once again in this Epistle, ch. iv. 12, we may apply to it Wiesinger’s remark, “The seldom our Apostle uses this endearing term, the weightier it is where it does occur as the opening of a hortatory discourse”), **I exhort you as sojourners** (see Eph. ii. 19 and note) **and strangers** (see on ch. i. 1. This primary and literal meaning of the word is probably the uppermost one here, seeing that the Apostle is speaking of behaviour among the Gentiles, Still, from the more general reference of this first exhortation, the other and wider reference, that the sons of God wherever they may be on earth, are strangers to the world, must not be left out of sight. These words, “*as sojourners and strangers*,” belong, not to “*I beseech you*,” as in the A.V., but to **abstain**, They form the ground why the

readers should abstain, not why the Writer should exhort) **to abstain from the carnal lusts** (see Eph. ii. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 18; Tit. ii. 12. Here, it is, from the context, the walking and acting in the indulgence of these lusts which the Apostle is forbidding. See them enumerated in Gal. v. 19–21), **the which** (this expression gathers up into a class the *lusts*, and asserts it of all of them, that they war against the soul: thus rendering a reason) **war** (see James iv. 1; Rom. vii. 23) **against the soul** (the man's personal immortal part, as opposed to his body, his *members* in which the *lusts war*, is held in suspension between influences from above and influences from beneath: drawn up and saved, or drawn down and ruined. And among its adversaries are these fleshly lusts, warring against it to its ruin);

12.] positive result of this abstinence, and its important fruits:—**having your behaviour among the Gentiles comely** (as over against the *vain behaviour* of the Gentiles, ch. i. 18. Compare ch. iii. 16), **that** (aim of the preceding) **in the matter in which** (not ‘*whereas*,’ as A.V. The sense is, “that that conduct, which was to them an occasion of speaking against you as evil-doers, may by your good works become to them an occasion of glorifying God.” And “*that, in which*,” will be in fact your whole Christian life) **they speak against you as evil-doers** (often the Christians would be compelled to diverge from heathen customs and even to break human laws, and thus would incur the imputation of malefactors), **they may, on the ground of your good works, being spectators of them** (contrast to the ignorance assumed below, ver. 15), **glorify God in [the] day of visitation** (i. e. the day when God visits,—Luke i. 68, 78; Acts xv. 14,—mankind with His offers of mercy and grace: our Lord says of Jerusalem, Luke xix. 44, “*Thou knewest not the day of thy visitation.*” The word has been variously understood: the Fathers generally, and some moderns, explain it as above: others that the day of *inquisition before earthly magistrates* is meant. Bede and others understand it of the day of judgment. But the former sense is far preferable on account of usage, and for its fitness in the context).

13–17.] Exhortation to subjection to secular rule.

13.] Be subjected (so literally: be in a condition of having been subjected) **to every human institution** (such, and not “*every human creature*,” as some hold. The latter would stultify what follows: for it is not to the king as a man, but to the king as a human institution, that we are to be subject. It is no objection to this command, that all powers are ordained of God: for that consideration does not come into notice in these words, but in those which follow, “*for the Lord's sake.*” *Here*, it is the *lower side* of such institutions, the fact of their being ordained and upheld by men, that is brought into sight) **for the Lord's sake** (i. e. Christ's: “*the Lord*” with St. Peter, except in Old Test. citations, is always our Lord. And here there is additional reason, for that He, the Head of all principality and power, is yet in us his members subject to them, until the day when all shall be put under His feet): **whether to king** (general,—but, from the nature of the case as regarded those to whom the Epistle is addressed, here the Roman Emperor) **as supereminent** (not ruled by any other human power), **or to governors** (of the provinces, sent by Caesar) **as to men sent** (*in the habit of being sent*,—sent from time to time) **through him** (*the king*, not *the Lord*, as some, and Calvin very positively. But there can be little doubt that he is wrong. For first the analogy of the clauses shews that the grounds of obedience in each case, all being alike *for the Lord's sake*, belong to the actually existing rights of power in that case. The king is supreme, in his own right: governors rule by delegation from the king. Then the right understanding of “*for the Lord's sake*,” as applying to all, forbids this view. For thus we should obey the king as *eminent*, no mention of the Lord being made, whereas rulers are to be obeyed as sent by the Lord) **for** (to bring about) **vengeance on evil-doers, and praise of well-doers.**

15.] For (ground of the submission enjoined: correlative with, but not going so far as, the

purpose announced in ver. 12) **so** (after this manner, in this direction and wise: viz. as follows) **is** (‘*se trouve*’) **the will** (thing willed, concrete result of the will) **of God, that doing good** (so literally, the participle carrying the reason with it: by doing good) **ye put to silence the ignorance** (not simply ignorance of this or that fact, but a state of lack of knowledge or understanding, habitual ignorance. This state is here introduced as speaking, “*having* [as Wiesinger] ever its mouth open rather than its eyes,” ready to cry out upon any mere appearance of things as misunderstood by it) **of the foolish men** (above designated; those viz. *who speak against you as evil-doers*: not, “*of foolish men*” in general, as A.V.).

16.] The connexion is somewhat doubtful. Chrysostom and others join **as free** with “*submit yourselves*,” above, ver. 13:—Bede, Luther, Calvin, and others, with the last clause, “*that with well doing, &c.*” ver. 15: Steiger, Huther, with the following, ver. 17. This latter seems quite untenable, as carrying no application on from ver. 16 to ver. 17. No one would think of pleading his freedom as an excuse for not honouring all, or for not loving the brethren, or for not fearing God: or indeed for not, in some sense, *honouring* the King. But in a matter of subjection, such *freedom* might be and often is made a cloke for disobedience. Connecting then *as free* with what has preceded, which of the other connexions are we to take? That with “*submit yourselves*” seems too distant: it may certainly be said that ver. 17 brings in again the general duty in its most simple form: but even thus we can hardly account for the parenthetical ver. 15, so unparenthetical in its aspect and construction. Whereas if we join “*as free*” to ver. 15, we obtain, as Wiesinger well argues, an explanation which that verse seems to need,—for it is almost a truism that we are to accomplish the *putting to silence* by *well doing*, unless some explanation be given of the particular circumstances under which this is to take place,—I regard then ver. 16 as an explanation of ver. 15. **As free** (children of God, His family and people, His kingly priesthood: not merely free from the law, or free from sin, or free from

earthly subjection, but generally and abstractedly free—Christ's freed-men) **and not as having your freedom [for] a veil of your evil intent** (of the evil intent which using your freedom as a veil would necessarily presuppose), **but as God's (emphatic) servants** (and therefore bound to submit yourselves to that which God ordains).

17.] A pithy general statement (see below) of the whole department of Christian duty of which the Apostle is now speaking: then a note of transition, by the three following commands, to the next paragraph, where he severs the general into the special duties. **Give honour to all men** (i. e. by the force of the original, to each man according as the case, which requires it, arises: "in every case render promptly every man's due," Rom. xiii. 7. So that the distinction between this and "*honour*" again expressed below is a clear one: see there. And by this force of the word used, this first precept assumes a place of general and wide-reaching reference, which then is severed by the three following commands into three great branches, before the relations of ordinary life are introduced ver. 18, with participial forms). **Love** (as your habit of mind and act) **the brotherhood** (the aggregate of the brethren), **fear God, honour** (both these latter as continuing habits, frames of mind and courses of action) **the king.**

18–25.] Exhortation to servants to be obedient to their masters.

18.] Ye servants (domestic servants: a milder designation than the common New Test. one of *slave*. Possibly, it may be here used to include the *freedmen* who still remained in their master's house), **in subjection** (the participle carries on, immediately, the "*Honour all men*" above; but also belongs, at a greater distance, to the whole of the last paragraph, as a general designation of the habitual conduct, in and by which they were to shew forth an honest conversation among the Gentiles) **in all fear** (this provides, by its wide generality, for the ease by and by to be specially commented on. **Fear**, not merely the reverence of an inferior, but the awe of one in subjection) **to your masters; not only to the good (kind) and considerate** (see note, Phil. iv. 5: those who make reasonable allowances, and exact no more), **but also to the perverse** (crooked, in deviating from right and justice, see Phil. ii. 15).

19, 20.] Reason for being the perverse: that it is well pleasing to God when we suffer for well-doing. For this is thankworthy (as in Luke vi. 32, where the very same word is used, "*If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye?*" i.e. what recognition at God's hand in the day when He will come, and His reward with Him? It is said of something, to do or suffer which is out of, beyond, the ordinary course of what might have been expected. The A.V. has hit the meaning very well), **if on account of consciousness of God** (realization in a man's inner being, of God's presence and relation to himself: so we have "*conscience of sins,*" Heb. x. 2) **any one endures** (as a superimposed burden, but here induced perhaps by the idea of subjection which is dominant throughout) **tribulations** (things which bring grief), **suffering wrongfully** (here emphatic, as carrying the transition to the next step of the argument).

20.] For (proof of the foregoing by assuming [interrogatively] the refutation of the contrary) **what kind of glory [is it]** (the word **glory** is perfectly general, and must not, as Bengel, be supplied with "*in God's sight.*" What credit is due...? Matt. v. 47), **if doing wrong and being buffeted** (the participles are in close logical connexion, and both of them describe enduring habit, not the occurrence merely of one such case. "When ye be bulleted for your faults," A.V., is somewhat too wide: "When ye do wrong and are buffeted for it," expresses the Greek more closely. *Buffeted* is here perhaps in the literal sense: receive blows, as was the wont with slaves), **ye shall endure it** (not, as De Wette, with only "the reluctant dull endurance of a criminal who cannot avoid his punishment:" this mars the hypothesis, which requires that the same kind of endurance should belong to both its sides, the only difference being in suffering justly and unjustly. So that "*endure*" must carry the sense of patient endurance: as A.V. "ye shall take it patiently")? **but if well-doing and suffering [for it]** (these last words are amply justified by the logical connexion of the participles, see above) **ye shall endure it [it is glory]** (with the reading adopted, it becomes necessary to supply, mentally at least, some such words): **for this is thankworthy** (see above; it is the same word as there, and never ought to have been altered by the A.V. to *acceptable*, which is quite another thing) **with** (in the estimation of God.

21.] For (proof that undeserved suffering is *thankworthy with God*, by the instance of Christ's sufferings, which were our example) **to this** (state, viz. the endurance of wrongful sufferings) **ye were called: because** (ground of the assertion) **Christ also** (the **also** applies to the words "*suffered for you,*" the words **for you** carrying with them the "*well-doing,*" as explained below, ver. 24) **suffered for you, leaving behind for you a copy** (a pattern to write or paint by: technically, these **patterns** were formulae given by writing-masters to their pupils, containing all the letters of the alphabet) **that ye should follow upon** (follow close upon, denoting close application to: the word is commonly used of following behind another) **His footsteps.**

22.] Further expansion of this example of Christ, making it plain that He *endured patiently in suffering for well-doing:—who never did* (never in a single instance) **sin** (the words are almost a citation from Isa. liii. 9, in one form of the Septuagint version) **nor yet** (climax: not only did He never sin in act, but not even...) **was guile ever found in His mouth:**

23.] who when reviled, reviled not again (a proof of his *patience*. Isa. liii. 7 is before the Apostle), **when suffering threatened not** (used not to threaten: denoting constant habit. The order is again that of climax: from *reproach to suffering*, from *not reproaching to not threatening*): **but** ('yea rather') **delivered [thein]** (see below) **up** (what? Most Commentators

supply “himself” [so A.V.], or “*his cause*,” both of which seem out of place, and hardly justified by the usage of the verb in the original. Rather would I supply an object out of the *being reviled and suffering*, foregoing, either, with Huther Wiesinger, “His reproaches and sufferings,” or, which seems to me better, perhaps not without reference to “Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do”) **to Him that judgeth** (whose office it is to judge) **righteously** (i. e. the Father: designated in ch. i. 17 as “*He that judgeth without respect of persons*.”) Calvin says well, “Those who indulge their exaction of vengeance, do not leave to God the office of Judge, but in a manner want to make Him their executioner”):

24.] who Himself (now the *well-doing* reaches its height. He was not only negatively innocent, ver. 22, but suffered in the pursuance of the noblest purpose of love, and that love *towards us*: by which fact His example is farther brought home and endeared to us) **bore our sins** (but in the pregnant sense of “bore to sacrifice,” “carried and offered up;” see notes on James ii. 21, and Levit. xiv. 20; Heb. vii. 27. It is a word belonging to *sacrifice*, and not to be dissociated from it. In Isa. liii. 12, [Heb. ix. 28,] we have the sense of bearing on Himself more prominent: and by that passage our rendering here must be regulated: always remembering that the other sense lies behind) **in His [own] body on the tree** (i. e. “took them to the tree and offered them up on it as an altar”); **that** (purpose of that great and crowning suffering of the Lord) **having died** (not, as some Commentators, “having passed away,” being removed to a distance, but literally, “having died”) **to our sins, we should live unto righteousness** (the same contrast is found, but with another image, of being freed from, and become servants to, in Rom. vi. 18. In ver. 11 there, where the same figure of death and life is used, it is *dead unto sin, but living unto God*, **by whose stripe** (the word signifies the weal left by a stripe. From Isa. liii. 5) **ye were healed.**

25.] For (justification of the last assertion by another allusion to Isa. liii.) **ye were straying like sheep: but ye have returned** (not, “have been converted”) **now unto the Shepherd** (compare ch. v. 4, and the prophecies in Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 24, also John x. 11,) **and Bishop** (the word *Episcopos* properly signifies overseer, or visitor: and there may be a reference to Ezek. xxxiv. 11, “Behold, I will seek out my sheep and visit them” [so the Septuagint, using the very word from which *Episcopos* is derived]. But the most likely account of the expression is, that the Apostle transfers the well-known name of the elders of the churches, *Episcopoi*, to the great Head of the Church, of whom they were all the servants and representatives. On the name and office, see notes, Acts xx. 17, 28; Phil. i. 1) **of your souls** (so in ch. i. 9, 22, and in ver. 11).

1 Peter: Chapter 3

CH. III.]

1–7.] Exhortations in regard to the married state: and (1–6) to wives: (7) to husbands.

1.] In like manner (i. e. after the same general principle, enounced in ch. ii. 13, as the *servants in their relation*), **wives** (as *servants*, ch. ii. 18, *husbands*, ver. 7, is vocative. This is decisively shewn by *your* below, as in ver. 7. The word signifies only *women*: but by the context it is shewn to mean *wives*), **[by being] in subjection to** (the participle, as in ch. ii. 18: carrying on the general command, Honour all men. Wives are to pay this honour, by being, &c.) **your own husbands** (*your own* gives point to the obligation, but is without any distinctive emphasis: see the parallel place, Eph. v. 22, and note), **that** (if we render strictly the future which follows, we must make this that in English, into *so that*) **even if** (*even if* assumes as possible, the apparently exceptional case which may seem to justify the wives’ disobedience) **any (husbands) are disobedient to the word** (in a state of unbelieving disobedience; most probably, though this is not directly nor necessarily assumed, heathens), **they shall be won** (converted to faith and obedience: made a gain for Christian love, and for Christ Himself. So Leighton: “A soul converted is gained to itself, gained to the pastor, or friend, or wife, or husband who sought it, and gained to Jesus Christ: added to His treasury, who thought not His own precious blood, too dear to lay out for this gain”) **without word** (without speech: without you, the wives, preaching to them, or exhorting them, but simply by your Christian behaviour. The rendering of the A.V., “*without the word*,” is precluded, on account of the general improbability of such a saying, seeing that faith is grounded on hearing, and hearing on the word of God. Besides which, the wives’ conversation, being a shewing forth of obedience to the word, could not be said to produce its effect *without the word*) **by means of the behaviour of their wives; when they have beheld your chaste behaviour** (*chaste*, in the largest sense, not with its proper reference only: modest and pure) **coupled with fear** (so the A.V., admirably: conducted led, maintained, in a spirit of reverence to your husbands, see Eph. v. 33).

3.] Of whom (the wives; you, who are addressed) **let [the adornment] be not the outward adornment of braiding of hair** (see 1 Tim. ii. 9), **and putting round** (the head, as diadems, or the arm, as bracelets, or the leg, as anklets, or the finger, as rings, or generally, hanging the body round with) **of golden ornaments, or of putting on of dresses** (“the sex which began first our engagement to the necessity of clothing, having still a peculiar propensity to be curious in that, to improve the necessity to an advantage”):

4.] but (rather let their adornment be) **the hidden man of the heart** (here it is not, as in Rom. ii. 29, merely the inner man as distinguished from the outer man, which unbelievers have as well as believers: and that for this reason, that the *hidden man* is

not here that which is *to be adorned*, but is itself the adornment: and consequently is of necessity the regenerate life itself in its freshness and beauty. And this is designated as being **of the heart**,—consisting in the heart, changed, and lovely with Christian affections and graces), **in** (standing in, as its condition and element) **the incorruptible [ornament] of the meek and quiet spirit** (“meek, as rising no disturbance itself: *quiet*, as bearing mildly disturbance from others. To the former quality ver. 5 refers; to the latter, ver. 6.” Bengel), **which** (viz. the meek and quiet spirit) **is in the sight of God** (who looks not at the appearance, but at the heart) **of great price** (the word is that used for costly ointment and raiment).

5.] For (enforcing of the same by example) **in this manner** (i. e. with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit) **formerly the holy women** (*holy*, as in Luke i. 70; Acts iii. 21; Eph. iii. 5; women of blessed note in the sacred history as servants of God) **also** (as well as you, if you obey), **who hoped in God** (i. e. whose hope was directed towards, and rested in, God), **adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands** (this clause describes the state in which the adornment was put on, to which it belonged: being thus in subjection, they were adorned with the meek and quiet spirit which belongs to it):

6.] as (e. g.) **Sarah obeyed** (the tense in the original indicates not so much the habit, as her whole course of obedience considered as a completed whole) **Abraham, calling him lord** (Gen. xviii. 12): **of whom ye have become** (i. e. by your implanting through faith into the family of faithful Abraham, It ought properly to be rendered *ye became*, referring back to the precise time when they were so made; but cannot be so expressed in English) **children, if** (i. e., as A.V. “as long as,” but better and clearer) **ye do good, and are not afraid of any sudden fear** (to what do these words allude? They appear to be a citation from Prov. iii. 25, where it is said to him that obeys the counsels of wisdom, “*Be not afraid of sudden fear, nor of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh.*” If this be so, the *fear* spoken of is not subjective, “with any amazement,” as A.V., but some external cause of terror, And such a meaning would suit very well with the context, in which as in ver. 14, the Apostle is often encouraging his readers to bear affliction and persecution cheerfully. So that we interpret it with Estius, “which while ye do, there is no cause to fear any evil: as, that of displeasing your husbands by your chaste and holy lives: lest they should treat you servilely if you shew yourselves ready to obey: for we know the sex is liable to vain fears, And even if you have unkind husbands, try to appease them rather by silence and patience, than by many words.” With regard to the much-disputed question whether by the preceding

injunction all ornament of dress is forbidden, or only the making such ornament *the adorning*, it may safely be left to the Christian wisdom of believing women, to be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, in this as in other similar matters. Within the limits of propriety and decorum, the common usage is the rule. There is sin in singularity, both as ministering to pride in ourselves, and as giving offence to others and discommending our holy religion. As Leighton well says, “There may be in some an affected pride in the meanness of apparels; and in others, nuder either neat or rich attire, a very humble unaffected mind...” Seneca says: “Great is he who enjoys his earthenware as if it were plate, and not less great is the man to whom all his plate is no more than earthenware”.

7.] Duty of husbands to their wives. Ye husbands, in like manner (in like manner, i.e., there is a certain *honour* due to the wife, as to the husband and the master before. This again must be connected with the general precept in ii. 17), **dwelling according to knowledge** (in an intelligent and reasonable manner, well aware of the *weakness* spoken of below) **with the feminine as with the weaker vessel** (some, as the A.V., join these words with *giving honour*. But this mars the parallelism and the sense. For the Apostle prescribes two things: 1) consideration for the wife, as of the weaker sex: 2) honour for the wife, as a fellow-heir of the grace of life), **giving** (apportioning) **honour as to those who are also** (besides being your wives) **fellow-inheritors** (with you) **of the grace of life** (i. e. God’s gracious gift of life eternal: ch. i. 4, 13 suffice to clear the meaning, the former explaining *inheritance*, the latter, *grace*): **in order that your prayers be not hindered.** The hindrance meant seems to be, that which would be occasioned by the man not giving his wife proper honour as a fellow-heir of the grace of life; in which case the peculiar promise of advantage in social united prayer would be lost: see Matt. xviii. 19. According to this view, the united prayers of man and wife are meant. And so most of the Commentators).

8, 9.] General summary exhortations to mutual forbearance and love. Finally, all [being] (the construction is still carried on from ch. ii. 17) **of one mind, sympathizing** (the meaning is not, as in A.V., confined to cases of sorrow: the “*rejoicing with them that do rejoice*” is also included), **loving the brethren, compassionate** (towards the afflicted), **humble-minded** (the word forms a note of transition to the next verse: humility being essential both to true gentleness of love and to true patience under injuries): **not giving back** (in deeds) **evil for evil** [to others,] **or reproach for reproach** (in words): **nay rather on the contrary, blessing** (others. The word *blessing*, in A.V., is liable to be, and generally is, mistaken for the substantive “*a blessing*,” whereas it is the participle, as in our text): **because to this end** (viz. that which follows) **ye were called** (by God), **that ye might inherit blessing** (it is not in order to inherit a blessing that we must bless; but because our portion is, blessing: and the reasoning is much as in Eph. iv. 32, “*forgiving one another, as God also in Christ forgave you*”).

10–12.] For (the above exhortations are impressed by a citation from Ps. xxxiv. 13–17. That the citation cannot apply directly to the last written words, is plain, by their necessarily referring to the future life, whereas the blessings promised in the Psalm as necessarily refer to the present. So that we must connect the citation mainly with the participle, “*blessing them*,” and if we take in the intermediate clause, it must be only secondarily, as connecting, generally, blessing with blessing) **he who**

desireth to love life (the difficulties of the citation can hardly be brought before the English reader, I have discussed them in my Greek Test.), **and to see** (reff.) **good days, let him refrain** (the Psalm proceeds in the second person, “*Refrain thy*”...) **his tongue** (first come the sins of the tongue, then those of the conduct) **from evil, and lips that they never speak** (referring to single occasions, or better perhaps, to the whole life considered as one fact) **deceit** (i. e. speak one thing and mean another): **moreover** (brings up a new particular, belonging to a different sphere of conduct) **let him turn away from** (in act, that is) **evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it** (because it is not always to be found, and when not immediately found, may require diligent pursuit: compare Heb. xii. 14, and St. Paul’s command, Rom. xii. 18, The ancient gloss is good: “let him search for peace as a thing hidden, and pursue it as a thing fugitive”).

12.] *The citation continued, and a reason given for the foregoing conditions of prosperity. Because the Oye of the Lord (Jehovah) are (directed in a favourable sense, for good) upon righteous men, and His ears (inclined) unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is (directed, in an unfavourable sense,—for wrath) upon men doing evil things.*

13—CHAP. IV. 6.] *Exhortation to right behaviour towards the world in persecutions which come upon them for righteousness’ sake* (13–17): and that by the example of Christ (18–22), whose suffering in the flesh, and by consequence whose purity and freedom from sin they are to imitate (iv. 1–6).

13.] And (connected with what preceded: seeing that God takes such care for the righteous, and that the result of that care will be a life worthy to be loved, and good days) **who is he that shall harm you, if ye be** (literally, by having become: but we cannot express this in English otherwise than by expressing its result, *ye be*) **emulous** (i. e. as in A.V. followers) the Rheims version has **emulators**, which if it were sufficiently English, would be better) **of that which is good?**

14.] Nay if even ye chance to suffer on account of righteousness (Augustine says, “Not *what*, but *why*, he suffers, makes the martyr.” **righteousness**, i.e. that right and holy living to which you devote yourselves, and which gives offence to the ungodly world. See our Lord’s saying, Matt. v. 10), **blessed are ye** (this, that is, makes no exception to none harming you, but rather is a notable example of it). **But** (“he now teaches how suffering is to be borne so as to keep this blessedness unmarrred,” Bengel. The words are almost verbatim from Isa. viii. 12, 13) **be not afraid with their terror** (not “afraid of,” as A.V. **terror is**, as in the place quoted, “neither fear ye their fear,” subjective. The command amounts to this, “be not affected in heart by the fear which they strive to inspire into you”), **nor be troubled** (“as the highest curse which the law threatens is a heart fearful and full of terror, Lev. xxvi. 36; Deut. xxviii. 65; so the highest good which Christ gained for us and offers us in the Gospel is a heart certified of the grace of God, and consequently tranquil in all adversities and dangers.” Gerhard): **nay, rather sanctify in your hearts** (in the Old Test. passage it is added, “and He shall (in the A.V. *let Him*) be your dread.” “This addition is not made here, but instead, *in your hearts*, to bring out that the sanctifying must be perfected in the inner parts of a man, and so keep him from all false fear. As if he would say, Care only for this, that your heart may be a temple of Christ, in which becoming honour may be given to Him as Lord; then will nothing further disturb you: you have in Him all that you can need.” Wiesinger) **Christ as Lord** (the expression “*the Lord of hosts himself*” in truth is changed in a Christian sense into **Christ as Lord**): **[being]** (so literally; continuing the same adjectival sentences as before) **ready always for** (i. e. to give) **an answer** (an apologetic justification, in the primitive Christian sense. This was most commonly given before official persons and on trial, but in the present case is expressly extended to every person and occasion) **to every man that asketh of you a reason** (a reasonable account) **concerning the hope that is in you** (the word *hope* is not put for the whole of the Christian’s faith, but is to be taken strictly. In persecution, it is his *hope* especially which is put to the trial), **but** (makes a contrast to the *readiness* just inculcated: ready, but not over ready; see Luther, below) **with meekness** (see above, on ver. 4) **and fear** (this fear is not the fear of God exclusively, nor that of men, but the aspect of the mind as regards both: proper respect for man, and humble reverence of God. The case supposed would generally occur when some one invested with authority asked a reason; and the complexion of the answer to be given is taken from that circumstance. On the injunction, Luther says, speaking from his own experience at Worms and elsewhere, “Then must ye not answer with proud words, and bring out the matter with a defiance and with violence as if ye would tear up trees, but with such fear and lowliness as if ye stood before God’s tribunal...so must thou stand in fear, and not rest on thine own strength, but on the word and promise of Christ,” Matt. x. 19 f.):

16.] having a good conscience (viz. when you make your apology: “seeing that words without practice have but small weight, therefore he joins to a profession of faith a good conscience.” Calvin. This is better, seeing that the same subject, that of behaviour under persecution, is afterwards carried on, ver. 17, than to regard these words as taking up the former part of ver. 15), **that in the matter in which** (see note on ch. ii. 12) **ye are spoken against** (the reading of the A.V., after many of our MSS., has come apparently from ch. ii. 12), **they who traduce your good conversation** (behaviour in life) in Christ (as Christians,—your whole life being *in Christ*, as its element: see 1 Cor. iv. 17; Col. ii. 6) **may be ashamed.**

17.] For (confirmation of the exhortation to a good conscience, above) **it is better** (we have had a similar argument in ch. ii. 19, 20, from which passage the sense of **better** here is made clear: there it is said of the suffering for well-doing, that it is *thankworthy*, that it is *glory*, that *unto this ye were called*) **to suffer [for]** (see ch. ii. 20, and the connexion as given there) **doing well, if the will of God should will [it so]** (Luther says beautifully, “Go thou forth in Faith and Love: cometh the Cross, then take it up; cometh it not, then seek it not”), **than [for] doing ill.**

18-22.] Establishment of the above position on the fact of Christ having Himself suffered, being righteous, and through death, even in death vanquishing the power of death, entered into His glory at God's right hand.

18.] Because (not ‘*for:*’ it does not only render *a reason*, but lays down *the reason* why Christian suffering for well-doing is blessed) **Christ also** (as well as yourselves if ye be so called as to suffer) **suffered for sins** (the thought is somewhat similar to that in ch. ii. 21, but the intent of it different: there, it was as an example *to us* that the sufferings of Christ were adduced: here, it is as a proof of the blessedness and advantage of suffering for well-doing, that proof being closely applied to us by the fact that that suffering was undertaken on our behalf, and that blessedness is our salvation. The words **for sins** I distinctly hold, with Wiesinger, to come in, as a point of comparison, between Christ and ourselves, under the **also**, against most Commentators. Considering St. Peter’s love of using the same term in two meanings, of which we have already had several examples, e.g. vv. 9, 14, 15, T have no hesitation in applying the *suffering for sins* the one time to Christ, the other to ourselves, though His suffering for sin, and ours, are two very different things. He, the sinless One, *suffered for sins*; as a sacrifice for sin, as a sinner, made sin for us, dying the death of a criminal: we, though not sinless, yet in *our well-doing*, are to suffer if God’s will so will it, *for sins*,—for sins which we are supposed to have committed, and as sinners. To miss this, is to miss one of the cardinal points of the comparison) **once** (“from this **once**, through the **also**,” as has been beautifully said, “a beam of comforting light falls on the sufferings of Christians.” He suffered *once*: His sufferings are summed up and passed away: He shall suffer no more. And we are suffering “*once*”: it shall be soon so thought of and looked back upon. For this reason doubtless is the word inserted); **a just person** (*just* is purely predicative: not as A.V. ‘*the just*,’ which again loses the point of comparison) **on behalf of unjust [persons]** (this again, though the resembling tints are beginning somewhat to fade off, is another point of comparison: He suffered, just, righteous, *for unjust ones*: He represented, He was offered for, the unjust, the unrighteous: and so we in our turn, though in a far less deep and proper meaning, when we, being *just* [ver. 12], suffer as *unjust*, though not in any propitiatory sense *for unjust*. We have similar uncertainty and play of meaning where the same subject is treated, Rom. vi. 10, 11; it is said that Christ “*died to sin*,” and “*liveth to God*;” and we are exhorted thus *to count ourselves dead to sin, and living to God*: where the two expressions, though they have a common meaning of small extent, are in their widest and most important references of necessity widely divergent), **that** (with this expression of *purpose* we leave the comparison, as far as suffering is concerned, returning to it presently for a moment with the fact of His being *put to death*, and pass up to the *blessedness* of His innocent suffering, and to that which makes it so glorious and precious to us, as the ground of all our blessedness in suffering) **He might bring us near to God** (“that He, Himself going to the Father, might bring us who had been alienated, justified, into heaven together with Himself, ver. 22, by the same steps as He trod, of humiliation and exaltation. From this word to ch. iv. 6, St. Peter unites together the course and procession of Christ and the faithful [in which course he himself also followed Christ, according to His prediction John xiii. 36], inserting also the unfaithfulness and punishment of some.” Bengel), **put to death** (this participial clause gives the manner of that bringing us near to God) **indeed in the flesh** (of this there can be no doubt, and in this assertion there is no difficulty. **in the flesh**, in this region, under these conditions, the death on the cross was inflicted: His flesh, which was living flesh before, became dead flesh: Christ Jesus, the entire complex Person, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, was put to death *in the flesh*), **but made alive [again] in the spirit** (here there may seem to be difficulty: but the difficulty will vanish, if we guide ourselves simply and carefully by the former clause. As regarded the flesh, the Lord was put to death; as regarded the spirit, He was brought to life. Tis flesh was the subject, recipient, vehicle, of inflicted death; His Spirit was the subject, recipient, vehicle, of restored life. But here let us beware, and proceed cautiously. What is asserted is not that the *flesh died* and the Spirit was *made alive*; but that as to the flesh the Lord died, as to the Spirit, He was made alive. He, the God-man Christ Jesus, body and soul, ceased to live in the flesh, began to live in the Spirit; ceased to live a fleshly mortal life, began to live a spiritual resurrection life. His own Spirit never died, as the next verse shews us. “This is the meaning, that Christ by His sufferings was taken from the life which is flesh and blood, as a man on earth, living, walking, and standing in flesh and blood...and He is now placed in another life and made alive according to the Spirit, has passed into a spiritual and supernatural life, which includes in itself the whole life which Christ now has in soul and body, so that he has no longer a fleshly but a spiritual body.” Luther. And Hofmann says, “It is the same who dies and the same who is again made alive, both times the whole Man Jesus, in body and soul. He ceases to live, in that *that*, which is to His Personality the medium of action, falls under death; and He begins again to live, in that He receives back this same for a medium of His action again. The life which fell under death was a fleshly life, that is, such a life as has its determination to the present condition of man’s nature, to the externality of its mundane connexion. The life which was won back is a spiritual life, that is, such a life as has its determination from the Spirit, in which consists our inner connexion with God.” It is impossible, throughout this difficult and most important passage, to report all the various shades of difference of opinion which even the greater expositors have given us. I shall indicate only those which are necessary to be mentioned as meanings to be distinguished from that which I advocate, or as errors likely to fall constantly under the eye of my readers. Of this latter class is the rendering of the A.V. here, “*by the Spirit*,” which is wrong both grammatically and theologically): **in which** (viz. in the spirit, according to which His Jew life was. *In which*, not *by which*: see below) **He also went and preached** (went, used of a local transference here, just as “*is gone*” [the same word], below in ver. 22; and **preached**, of a preaching good news, as in all other places of the New Test.) **to the spirits in prison** (the disembodied spirits, which were kept shut up [Jude 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4] in the place of the departed awaiting the final judgment: in Scheol, as the Jews called it); **which were once disobedient** (this clause is a secondary and dependent one, descriptive of the spirits intended: that they were those of men who were formerly disobedient), **when** (marks distinctively the time intended by

the word **once**) **the long-suffering of God was waiting** (and this marks the period of their disobedience, viz. those 120 years of Gen. vi. 3) **in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which** (by having entered into which) **a few persons, that is, eight souls** (individuals) **were saved** (from drowning) **by water** (not, “*into which a few, &c. got safe through the water,*” which was not the fact. The water is in the Apostle’s view, the *medium of saving*, inasmuch as it bore up the ark: see the next verse). So much for the interpretation of the detail of this passage; from which it will be seen that we have regarded it, in common with the majority of Commentators, as necessarily pointing to an event in our Lord’s redemptive agency which happened, as regards time, in the order of the context here: and that that event was, His going (whether between His death and resurrection, or after the latter, will be presently discussed) to the place of custody of departed spirits, and there preaching to those spirits, which were formerly disobedient when God’s long-suffering waited in the days of Noah. Thus far I conceive our passage stand committed: and I do not believe it possible to make it say less, or other, than this. What was the intent of that preaching, and what its effect, is not here revealed; the fact merely is stated. The statement of the fact, however, has been felt to be accompanied by such great difficulties, that other meanings have been sought for the passage than that which the words present at first sight. Expositors have endeavoured to remove the idea that the gospel was preached to the dead in Hades, either 1) by denying the reference to our Lord’s descent thither at all, or 2) by admitting that, but supposing it to have had another purpose. I give, following the classification in Huther’s note, an account of the principal upholders of these views. Under I., I place all those who deny any reference to Christ’s descent into Hades, distinguishing the minor differences between them as to what *preaching* is there indicated.

I. 1. Augustine, Bede, Thomas Aquinas, Lyra, Hammond, Beza, Sealiger, Leighton, &c., and recently Hofmann, maintain that the **preaching** mentioned was the preaching of righteousness *by Noah to his contemporaries*: that Noah thus preached not of himself, but by virtue of the Spirit of Christ inspiring him; and that thus his preaching was in fact a preaching by Christ in the Spirit. But this necessitates a forced interpretation of the words **in prison**; Augustine understanding by them, *in the darkness of ignorance as in a prison*: Beza, &c., that they *are now* in prison for their then unbelief. It must be evident to every unprejudiced reader, how alien such an interpretation is from the plain meaning and connexion of the words and clauses. Not a word is indicated by St. Peter on the very far-off lying allusion to the fact that the Spirit of Christ preached in Noah: not a word, here, on fact that Noah himself preached to his contemporaries. Again, the same *subject, Christ*, runs through the whole, without a hint, that we are dealing with historical matter of fact, in *some* of the terms, as “*suffered*,” “*put to death*,” “*made alive*,” and with recondite figure in *others*, as “*went and preached*.” Again, whether we take the *metaphorical prison* of Augustine, which I suppose will hardly find any advocates, or the *present* being in prison of Beza, &c., it cannot surely be doubted that we are equally putting force on the Apostle’s words, and that the **spirits in prison** must, be taken as describing the local condition of *the spirits at the time when the preaching took place*. Moreover, **went**, as compared with ver. 22 (which Hofmann gets most lamely over, by saying that it presents no greater difficulty than the statement that Christ accompanied the Israelites through the wilderness in 1 Cor. x. 4: to which we may answer, If this were a plain statement, involving such an application of the word, we might then discuss the intelligibility of it)—the expression, **were once disobedient**, marked off as not belonging to the same time as the *preaching*, shew, as plainly as words can shew, that we are reading of some act of Christ which He *then, at the time described, went and did, with reference to spirits who were, at some other time specified, in a certain state*. And, which has not been sufficiently noticed, a crowning objection to this view is the use of the word *spirits*, connecting [**wherein**, i.e. *in the spirit*] our Lord’s state with the state of those to whom He preached: a word only used of men when departed out of this life.

I. 2. Several Commentators, principally Socinian, but also Grotius and others, understand by **the spirits in prison** either the Gentiles, or the Jews (under the yoke of the law) and Gentiles (under the power of the devil) together, and by the word **preached**, the preaching of the Spirit of Christ by the Apostles. These expositors take the mention of the disobedient in Noah’s time to be merely by way of sample of the disobedient in all time, or, at least, in the time when the Apostle was writing. As Huther well says, “How this interpretation heaps on caprice upon caprice, need not be shewn.” I will add, that its supporters do not appear to attempt to justify it philologically, as indeed it is plain they cannot. Every word of every clause protests against it.

II. We now come to those who understand the passage of our Lord’s descent into Hades, but, offended by the idea of the possibility of salvation being opened to spirits of the disobedient kept awaiting judgment, diverge from one another and from the straightforward explanation.

II. 1. Many understand **the spirits in prison** of souls awaiting condemnation, but explain **preached** of announcing, not salvation, but condemnation. But, besides that this verb, as remarked above, has, as applied to Christ and His Apostles, but the one meaning of preaching the good tidings of Salvation,—besides the utter superfluity of such a “preaching” to spirits already reserved to damnation,—what a context would such a meaning give, in the midst of a passage intended to convey consolation and encouragement by the blessed consequences of Christ’s sufferings!

II. 2. Some of the Fathers, as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus,—the Schoolmen, Zwingle, Calvin, &c., explain **preached** rightly, of announcing salvation, but regard **the spirits in prison** as the spirits of the *just*, especially of the Old Test. saints. The most extraordinary instance of this class of interpreters is Calvin, who destroys his own explanation, by confessing that

the Greek will not bear it.

II. 3. Estius, Bellarmine, Luther, Peter Martyr, Bengel, &c., assume that the words refer, not to all the unbelievers of Noah's time, but only to those who repented at the last moment when the flood was upon them.

II. 4. Athanasius, Ambrose, Erasmus, Calvin, hold both kinds of preaching, the evangelic to the spirits of the just, the dammatory to those of the disobedient.

One or two singular interpretations do not fall under any of the above classes: e.g. Marcion maintained that the preaching of Christ was to those whom the Old Test. calls ungodly, but who were in reality better than the Old Test. saints; Clement of Alexandria, that they were the *just among the philosophers*, who were nevertheless imprisoned under idolatry.

It remains that we should enquire, whether this preaching to the imprisoned spirits by our Lord, took place between His death and His resurrection, or after the latter. The answer will very much depend on the sense which we give to the words **in which**. The argument which Wiesinger so much insists on, that the clauses must come in chronological sequence, will not determine for us; because **in which He also** might very well be a taking up again of **in the Spirit**, recapitulating some former act also done in the Spirit: "put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit,—that Spirit in which also, ere He was made alive with the full resurrection life, He&cc." And this I incline to think the sense of the passage: **in which** referring not to the complex resurrection life, but properly and strictly to the spirit, in which the Lord never ceased to be, even when His complex life of body and soul was dissolved. When again Wiesinger says that **went and preached** cannot be understood of the time intermediate, because in no case can we think of our Lord's state in death in dualistic wise, so that while His body was held by the bands of death, His Spirit should be carrying on the Messianic work,—I answer, why not? Surely the reply to the penitent thief implies a *going*, and in that going a joy and triumph sufficient to be the subject of a consoling promise at that terrible moment. And might not the reasoning be turned, with as much propriety? Might not we say that it is impossible to conceive of our Lord during that time as *other than* employed in the spirit in which He continued, not to exist merely, but to live? That, granted that His dying words imply a special delivering of his Spirit into the hands of his Father, and by consequence, a resting of his Spirit in those Hands in the death-state,—yet must we not conceive of His Spirit as going thither, where "the righteous souls are in the hand of God?" And if so, who shall place a limit to His power or will to communicate with any departed spirits of whatever character? So that, while I would not say that the conditions of the passage are not satisfied by the supposition the event happened after the Resurrection, I believe there can be no reason for saying that they are not, on the other hypothesis. And I own, that the **in which** also inclines me to this other. It seems most naturally to be taken as a resumptive explanation of **in the Spirit**, with a view to something (ver. 21) which is to follow; and the in, capable indeed of being otherwise explained, yet seems to favour this idea,—that the Lord was strictly speaking *in the Spirit*, when that happened which is related.

From all then which has been said, it will be gathered, that with the great majority of Commentators, ancient and modern, I understand these words to say, that our Lord, in His disembodied state, did go to the place of detention of departed spirits, and did there announce His work of redemption, preach salvation in fact, to the disembodied spirits of those who refused to obey the voice of God when the judgment of the flood was hanging over them. Why these rather than others are mentioned,—whether merely as a sample of the like gracious work on others, or for some special reason unimaginable by us, we cannot say. It is ours to deal with the plain words of Scripture, and to accept its revelations as far as vouchsafed to us. And they are vouchsafed to us to the utmost limit of legitimate inference from revealed facts. That inference every intelligent reader will draw from the fact here announced; it is not purgatory, it is not universal restitution; but it is one which throws blessed light on one of the darkest enigmas of the divine justice: the cases where the final doom seems infinitely out of proportion to the lapse which has incurred it. And as we cannot say to what other cases this *preaching* may have applied, so it would be presumption in us to limit its occurrence or its efficacy. The reason of mentioning here these sinners, above other sinners, appears to be, their connexion with the type of baptism which follows. If so, who shall say, that the blessed act was confined to them?

21, 22.] The persons and the things compared must be carefully borne in mind. The *few* in Noah's day were saved by water; we also are saved by water. The *antitype* to that water on which the ark floated, saving its inmates, is the water of baptism; but as ours is a spiritual, not a material rescue, so the *antitype* is not the washing of our flesh by that water,—the form in which it is applied to us, as the bearing up their ark was the form in which their water was applied to them,—but a far nobler thing, the clearness and purity of our inner consciousness towards God: and this saving power of the water of baptism in our ease is by virtue of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, into whose death and resurrection we are baptized. Thus by our very profession we are united to Him in sufferings as in glory. He through His innocent sufferings has glorified suffering and death, even in death working mercy, and now exalted as our Head above all principality and power. The course of thought is unusual, is startling, is mysterious; but it is not unaccountable, it is not arbitrary. From the mention of the spiritual nature of our Lord's resurrection life, arises the mention of His blessed employ even in that state of the pure spirit to which His sufferings brought Him: from that mention comes the connexion of a great type of that day of Noah with our share, by baptismal union with Christ, in His salvation and triumphs; by which thoughts the final point is reached, His utmost exaltation

through suffering, our union with and following of Him. Having said thus much on the whole connexion, we can now go into the details.

21.] Which (viz. *water*: not *baptism*, which does not come in till the end of the clause: nor, the whole fact announced in ver. 20. The construction is somewhat involved by the close connexion of the thing signifying and the thing signified. The *water* to which **which** refers is not the water of Noah's flood, but water, generally, the common term between the type and antitype), **the antitype [of that]** i.e. simply the *corresponding particular* in both cases: the word does not contain in itself any solution of the question which of the two, the *type* or that which is *antitype* to it, is the original: the same word, *antitype*, is used in Heb. ix. 24, where, from the context, the *type* is the primitive, the *antitype* the representative: here, from the context, it is *vice versa*: this need not however be expressed, but left to be understood), **is now saving** (the rescue not being as yet fully accomplished. We are as yet *being saved* by water) **you also** (as well as them. Then this assertion having been made, follows the parenthetical explanation, that the method of saving in the *antitype* is not material, as in the *type*), **even baptism** (not, *the water of baptism*: the parenthesis following is a kind of protest against such a rendering:—but, water, in the form of baptism, become to us baptism. *Water* is the common term: water saves in both cases. It saved them, being to them a means of floating their ark and bearing them harmless: it saves us, becoming to us baptism: and that baptism not material, but spiritual): **not putting away of the filth of the flesh** (i. e. “not fleshly putting away of filth.” It is possible that the Apostle may have special reference to the unavailing nature of the Jewish washings, as Justin Martyr says, “What was the profit of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body only? Be baptized in soul”), **but enquiry of a good conscience after God** (i. e. the seeking after God in a good and pure conscience, which is the aim and end of the Christian baptismal life. This is the sense of the Greek expression here, in the only other place where it occurs in Scripture, viz. 2 Kings xi. 7. On this view, the **enquiry of a good conscience** means,—the enquiry which a good conscience makes. Very various have been the interpretations. Some understand the *questions used in baptism*; others, the *request* of a good conscience; others, again, *prayer to God* for a good conscience. The objection to all these is, that they do not justify the expression as applied to the saving force of baptism; as indeed neither entirely does the meaning which I have given above: but where *all* explanations were unsatisfactory, I thought it best to adopt one which strictly keeps to the Scripture usage of the words, being at the same time full as good as any of the others in its contextual application. The rendering of the A.V., the *answer* of a good conscience, is entirely unjustifiable, in fact is a pure invention, the word bearing no such meaning),—**by means of the resurrection of Jesus Christ** (with what are these words to be joined? Grotius, with others, connects them with the immediately preceding. So also Hofmann, saying, “By means of the resurrection of Christ, as the removal of sin once for all for all mankind, it is, that in baptism the prayer for a good conscience is directed to God.” But as Wiesinger objects, it is surely allotting too insignificantly a part to these words, to make them merely assign the method in which the prayer is heard. Most Commentators have joined them with **saves**, regarding the intervening sentence as parenthetical. Thus taken, the words refer back to “*being made alive in the Spirit*” in ver. 18, conducting on the course of thought with regard to Christ, and to ourselves: His resurrection, and entrance into His kingdom, giving us, by Him, a living part in Him, and entrance also into His kingdom by means of His appointed sacrament of Holy Baptism, spiritually received):

22.] who is on the right hand of God (Ps. cx. 1), **having gone** (compare **went**, above, ver. 19) **to heaven** (i. e. into the place of angels and supramundane powers, but distinguished from them by being himself at God's right hand), **angels and authorities and powers** (the whole heavenly hierarchy, as in Col. ii. 10–15) **being subjected to Him**. And thus is announced the glorious completion of the result of Christ's voluntary and innocent sufferings: glorious for Himself, and glorious for us, who are by baptism united to Him. And now the practical inference for us follows.

1 Peter: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1–6.] Exhortation, after the forecited example of Christ's sufferings, to entire separation from the ungodly Gentile world. This passage closes the set of exhortations which began at ch. ii. 11, with reference to behaviour towards the heathen world around: and with ch. iv. 7, begins a new and concluding set, no longer regarding the world without. **Christ then having suffered in the flesh** (see on this above, ch. iii. 18. This conclusion takes up again the words “*Because Christ also suffered*” there, which led to the enlarging on the result of those His sufferings as regarded both Himself and us), **do ye also arm yourselves with** (put on as armour) **the same mind** (intent, resolution; viz., to suffer in the flesh, as He did. See this explanation justified in my Greek Test.); **because** (assigns a reason for the expression just used, **arm yourselves**: “and ye will need this arming, because, the course of suffering according to the flesh which ye have to undergo ending in an entire freedom from sin, your warfire with sin must be begun and carried on from this time forward”) **he that hath suffered according to the flesh is made to cease from sin** (he is, by the very fact of having thus suffered, brought to an end with sin—has no more to do with it: and by an inference, the suffering in the flesh, and the being made to cease from sin, are commensurate in their progress. On the sense, see Rom. vi. 7. Here too there is throughout a presupposition of our being united to the sufferings of Christ, not merely as regards *ourselves*, suffering in the flesh, but suffering by virtue of union with Him who suffered, and so divorced from all sin. That this sentence itself is general, and not to be understood *in itself* of Christ, is plain: equally plain that He is the person hinted at in the background, and with reference to whom the general truth is adduced. The general assertion itself, here and in Rom. vi. 7, rests on the fact that the flesh is the element of sin, and he that hath mortified it by suffering has

in the same proportion got rid of sin); **with a view** (depends on “*arm yourselves*,” the intermediate general sentence being parenthetical) **no longer by the lusts of men** (as your rule: what is called the normal dative: not as Wies., al., i.e. “*live unto righteousness*,” ch. ii. 24: cf. Rom. vi. 10–13: this live is a very different matter from *live* in those places. **men** put forward for contemptuous emphasis, as opposed to God, which gains more majesty by not being thus put forward. What the lusts are is shewn in ver. 3), **but by the will of God** (according to that which God wills, as your rule) **to live the rest of your time in the flesh** (compare ch. i. 17). **For** (follows: “I say, the rest of the time, for the past time surely, &c.”) **sufficient is the past time to have wrought out** (the word used, and its tense, imply that the course is closed and done, and looked back on as a standing and accomplished fact) **the will of the Gentiles** (that which the Gentiles would have you do. **The Gentiles**, used not of any national distinction, but of heathens as distinguished from Christians, shews that the majority of the readers of the Epistle had been Gentiles, among these *gentiles*, themselves), **walking as ye have done in lasciviousnesses** (plural, outbreaks of *lasciviousness*), **lusts** (here perhaps not general, as in ver. 2, but particular lusts of uncleanness), **wine-bibbings, revellings, drinking-bouts, and nefarious idolatries** (I may remark as against the view that this Epistle was written to Jews, that this passage cannot be explained on that supposition. The Jews certainly never went so far into Gentile abominations as to justify its assertions): **at which (wherein, viz. at your having done with such practices, implied above. The aim of this verse is, that they might not be moved by the perverse judgments concerning them of these men. They must give offence to their former companions: for this there is no help) they are astonished** (think it strange, as A.V.), **that you run not with them** (the idea is that of a multitude rushing on together) **to (the direction and purpose of the confluence) the same slough** (a sink, or slough, or puddle. On the whole the local meaning is to be preferred, on account of the figure in the previous verb) **of profligacy, speaking evil of you** (the early apologists testify abundantly to the fact, that the Christians were accused of all manner of crimes, and of haughtiness and hatred of their species): **who** (your blasphemers. The consideration is propounded for the comfort and stay of Christians unjustly slandered) **shall render account to Him that is ready to judge** (once for all, decisively) **living and dead. For** (assigns a reason for the judging *the dead* just mentioned) **to this end to dead men also** (as well as to *living*, which is the ordinary case: **and** carrying with it a climax,—‘even to the dead’) **was the gospel preached** (when, and by Whom, see below), **that they might indeed be judged according to men as regards the flesh, but might live on according to God as regards the spirit.**

In examining into the meaning of this difficult verse, one thing may be laid down at the outset, as certain on any sure principles of exposition; and thereby a whole class of interpretations removed out of our way. Seeing that **for** binds vv. 5 and 6 logically together, and that **to dead men**

also distinctly takes up the **to dead men** before in this logical connexion, all interpretations must be false, which do not give to the words **the dead** in ver. 6 the same meaning as **the dead** in ver. 5: i.e. that of *dead men*, literally and simply so called: men who have died and are in their graves. This at once rids us of all the Commentators who interpret this **second dead** of the *dead in trespasses and sins*, as well as those who to gain this meaning here, distort **dead** in ver. 5 from its constant reference in that connexion to mean the spiritually dead, or the Gentiles. A second principle which we may lay down is this: that **dead** in ver. 6 must be kept as wide in its *reference* as dead in ver. 5: i.e. that it must not be interpreted as applying merely to the blasphemers of the Christians who should have died before the judgment, or merely to such blasphemed Christians themselves, as shall have then died, or merely to the spirits in prison of ch. iii. 19, but must be treated as a general assertion in the literal meaning of the word. It is quite impossible to put before the English reader the discussion on the different interpretations which have been given, as it mainly turns on considerations of the construction of the sentence in the original, but I may just say this much, that dead cannot mean “*now dead*,” nor can **the gospel was preached** point to the time when the gospel was preached to them, before they died: nor again, can the Apostle’s view be to comfort his readers in persecution and slander, by the thought that bodily death would not exempt their adversaries from the divine judgment. The view here adopted is, the persons pointed at are those spirits in prison to whom our Lord went and preached, ch. iii. 19. Our Lord is ready to judge the dead; and with reason; for even they have not been without opportunity of receiving his gospel: as the example which was adduced in ch. iii. 19 shews. For this end the gospel was preached even to the dead,—that they might—not indeed escape the universal judgment on human sin, which is physical death,—but, **that they might be judged** [be in the state of the completed sentence on sin, which is death after the flesh] **according to [as] man as regards the flesh, but [notwithstanding] might live** [of a state to continue] **according to God** [a life with God, and divine] **as regards the spirit.** And this interpretation I adopt, believing it to be the only one which satisfies the conditions of the sentence: which justifies the **for** as accounting for the judging the **dead**: the **also**, as taking up, and bringing into prominence and climax the **dead**: the term **dead**, as used in precisely the same sense as in the last verse, and contemporary with the verb which governs it: the statement, that **the gospel was preached**, as grounded on a previously-announced fact, ch. iii. 19: the aim and end introduced by the **that**, which on this, and on no other rendering, receives meaning and perspicuity. And so, in the main, with minor deviations, the more accurate of the modern Commentators.

7-V. 11.] General exhortations with reference to behaviour within the Christian body, in contemplation of the approaching end. This portion of the Epistle falls into three sections: 7–11, *Christian and social duties*, in consideration of the end being at hand: 12–19, *Christian bearing of suffering*, in the same consideration: v. 1–11, *ecclesiastical and general mutual ministrations*: passing off into fervent *general exhortations and aspirations*.

7.] But (the connexion is close with what had gone before: the *being ready* of ver. 5 is in the Apostle's mind: and he passes, with it before him, from considerations external to the church, to those affecting its internal condition) **the end of all things is at hand** (on this being the constant expectation of the apostolic age, see Acts i. 7, note: 1 Thess. iv. 15, note): **be therefore of temperate mind** (see note on 1 Tim. ii. 9), **and be sober unto** (with a view to) **prayers**,

8.] above all things (not placing love above prayer, but because all social life and duty must presuppose love as its necessary bond and condition) **having your love towards one another intense** (sec ch. i. 22. He presupposes their love, and enjoins that it be fervent or intense): **because love covereth a multitude of sins** (from ref. Prov. x. 12, except that there it is "*all sins.*" As to the meaning, the words here are used in a different reference from that in St. James, where see note. Here it is the hiding of offences [both from one another and in God's sight: see below] by mutual forbearance and forgiveness, which is meant. This has been recently denied by De Wette and Huther, the former understanding the sins rather as those of the Christian body, which mutual love keeps back from being committed, and the latter not excluding the other meaning. They would understand the words, that love causes God to overlook a multitude of sins. This they do partly on account of the word *sins*, which they maintain cannot well be applied to the mutual offences of common life [see however Matt. xviii. 15], and partly on account of "because," which seems to indicate some stimulus by which Christian love is recommended. And doubtless there is something in this latter consideration, especially when we remember that the nearness of the divine judgment is a pressing motive throughout these exhortations. I do not see why we should not take the saying in its widest reference, understanding it primarily perhaps of forgiveness, but then also of that prevention of sin by kindness of word and deed, and also that intercession for sin in prayer, which are the constant fruits of fervent love. It is a truth from which we need not shrink, that every sin which love hides from man's sight, is hidden in God's sight also. There is but one efficient cause of the hiding of sin: but mutual love *applies* that cause: *draws the universal cover over the particular sin.* This meaning, as long as it is not perverted into the thought that love towards others covers a man's own sin by his merits, need not and should not be excluded):—**hospitable towards one another** (see Rom. xii. 13) **without murmuring** (see Phil. ii. 14, and note. The opposite to *murmuring* in hospitality is simple open-heartedness, Rom. xii. 8: the consequence of it, "hidden evil speaking, hateful reproaching with past favours," as Gerhard says here).

10.] And this is to be so, not merely in the interchange of this world's good offices, but also in the communication of the gifts of the Spirit, which are the common endowment of the whole body, individual Christians being only the stewards of them. **Each man even as** (in whatever quality and quantity: but the subsequent injunctions seem more to regard the quality than the quantity. It is otherwise in Eph. iv. 7; Rom. xii. 3. The **as** has no reference to the *manner* of reception) **he received a gift of grace** (see Rom. xii. 6 ff.; 1 Cor. xii. 4, 28; meaning, any one of the gifts known by that name), **to each other ministering it** (to the need of others; his store out of which he ministers being that gift thus bestowed upon him), **as** (being: or, as becometh: see ch. i. 14) **good stewards** (there is most likely a reference to our Lord's parable of the talents) **of the various** (or manifold: see this illustrated, 1 Cor. xii. 4; Matt. xxv. 15; Luke xix. 13) **grace of God.**

11.] And this both in speaking and acting. **If any one speaketh** (as a *prophet* or *teacher*, see 1 Cor. xii, 8, 10, where the several branches of this gift are laid out), **speaking** (as in the former construction) **as oracles** (not "the oracles;" the meaning is not, speaking in accord with Scripture, but, speaking what he does speak, as God's sayings, not his own: as a steward) **of God: if any one ministereth** (in Rom. xii, 8; 1 Cor. xii, 28, we have the several parts of this *ministry* laid out), [*ministering*] **as** (see above) **out of** (as his store and power of ministration)

the power (thus to minister) **which God bestoweth: that** (aim and end of all this as of every act both of the Christian community and of the Christian man) **in all things** (the fact that all things are referred to God, and done as of and to Him, is His being glorified in the Christian church) **God may be glorified through Jesus Christ** ("as all benefits descend to us from God through Christ, so also all ought to be referred to the glory of God through Christ." Gerhard), **to whom** (viz. to God, as the main subject of the foregoing, and also because the words **the glory** refer back to **may be glorified**. The case is very similar to Heb. xiii. 21, where see note. See similar doxologies, ch. v. 11; Rom. xi. 36; Eph. iii. 21) **is the glory and the might** (exactly so in Rev. i. 6; see also ib. v. 13) **to the ages of the ages** (i. e., for ever and ever, see note, 1 Tim. i. 17). **Amen** (is not a note of conclusion, but of strong emotion of heart).

12–19.] Exhortations (see summary above) *in reference to the trial of affliction which they were to undergo:* and that, in view of the end of things. The section falls into three parts: 1) vv. 12–13—these sufferings as participation in Christ's sufferings are to be rejoiced in, as in prospect of participation of His glory also: 2) 14–16—if really sufferings for Christ, the glory of Christ already rests on you: take care then that they *be verily* sufferings for Him: 3) 17, 18, these sufferings are a part of the coming judgment which begins at the house of God. Then ver. 19 concludes. This passage is no repetition of ch. iii. 13–iv. 6, which treated of their sufferings with reference to their inflictors: whereas this proceeds wholly on reference to a Christian's own inner hopes, and considerations within the church itself.

12, 13.] Beloved (so ch. ii. 11; here it begins an affectionate address, in which comfort and joy is about to be introduced), **be not astonished at** (see on ver. 4: think it not a thing alien from you, in which you are not at home. St. Peter himself was astonished, thought it strange at our Lord's sufferings, when he said, "*This shall not be to Thee*") **the passing through the fire**

(literally, *burning*: in its later use, smelting, trying of metal by fire) **which is taking place in your case for a trial to you, as if** (explanatory of the “be not astonished,” above) **some strange thing were happening unto you** (i. e., were falling by chance on you: opposed to what went before, “*taking place for your trial*;” i. e., done with a purpose, by One who knows how to serve that purpose): **but in as far as** (not “in that,” “*inasmuch as*,” A.V.) **ye are partakers with the sufferings of Christ** (i. e. have a share, in your own persons, of those sufferings which He personally bare: compare 2 Cor. iv. 10; Phil. iii. 10; Heb. xiii. 13, &c. It is not the sufferings of Christ mystical in His body the church [compare Col. i. 24] which are meant: in these the readers might bear their part, but could hardly be said *to have part*), **rejoice; that** (simply of the scope of that joy, as the preparation for what follows) **ye may also at** (in, i.e. “in the day or time not to be taken with the verb “*rejoice*,” as indicating that at which or because of which the joy takes place) **the revelation of His glory rejoice** (the “*rejoice*” before was spoken of the habit of life; now of the single event of that day) **exulting** (with exultation; because that former joy here is mixed with grief and sadness.)

14–16.] See the summary above, at ver. 12. **If ye are reproached in** (i. e., in the matter of, for) **the name of Christ** (see Matt. v. 11, from which the words are adopted, as also ch. iii. 14. The word there added, “*speaking falsely*,” comes below, vv. 15, 16. Bengel says, “People thought it a reproach to call any one a Christian, ver. 16.” But probably the reference is more general, and Calvin is right: “He makes mention of *reproaches* because they bring with them more bitterness than loss of goods, or even torments and pains of the body; there being nothing which so much breaks noble minds.” And **in the name of Christ** also must have a wider sense: on account of your confession of Christ in word and deed: compare Mark ix. 41), **blessed are ye** (ch. iii. 14: blessed, and that even now), **because the Spirit of glory and that of God** (the Apostle does not mean, by repeating the article, two different spirits, but identifies the same Spirit under two different denominations: the Spirit of glory, which is also the Spirit of God) **resteth upon you** (from Isa. xi. 2: on you, as on Him: compare also Numb. xi. 25, 26; 4 Kings ii. 15. It is possible that the clause which follows in the received text, may have fallen out by similarity of endings; but in judging of this as a likelihood, we must remember that not only the three great MSS. omit it, but so many of the ancient versions, as to make it very improbable that it has been thus overlooked: and its very appearance, to explain the words “*of glory*,” is against it).

15, 16.] *Negative and positive, resumptions and enlargements of the words, “in the name of Christ.”* In the name of Christ, I say:

15.] for let no one of you suffer (reproach or persecution: suffer in any way) **as** (being) **a murderer or malefactor** (as opposed to a *well-doer*, ch. iii. 17), **or as** (the repetition of “*as*” separates the following word from the foregoing, as belonging to a separate class) **a prier into other men’s matters.**

16.] But if (he suffer) **as** (being) a Christian (the word appears here, as in Acts xxvi. 28, to be used as carrying contempt, from the mouth of an adversary), **let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name** (viz. that of *Christian*: at, or in, the fact that he is counted worthy to suffer by such a name. This seems better than to take *name* as meaning “*behalf*,” A.V., *regard, matter*, as most Commentators).

17–19.] See summary at ver. 12. The thought which lies at the root, is this: all men must come under the judgment. of God. His own family He brings first under it, chastising them in this life: let then those who suffer for His sake glorify Him for it, as apprehending their part in His family, and as mindful of the terrible lot of those whom His judgment shall find impenitent and unchastised. It is this latter thought, the escape from the weight of God’s hand [ch. v. 6], and not the thought of the terrible vengeance which God will take on their persecutors, which is adduced as the second ground of comfort to the persecuted Christians.

17.] Because (grounds the *let him glorify*, and the whole behaviour implied in it) **it is the season** (now: “the time is come,” as A.V.) **of the judgment beginning at** (and proceeding onward from) **the house of God** (explained in the next clause to mean the church, the temple of living stones, the “*spiritual house*” of ch. ii. 5. The reference is to prophecies like Jer. xxv. 15 ff., especially ver. 29; xlix. 12; Ezek. ix. 6; Amos iii. 2. Wiesinger reminds us that it is hardly possible that the destruction of Jerusalem was *past*, when these words were written: if that had been so, it would hardly have been said, “*time for judgment to begin*”): **but if first** (it begin) **at us** (*who are the house of God*, see Heb. iii. 6. The argument, from the lesser to the greater, see expanded above. Compare our Lord’s question, Luke xxiii. 31, “*If they do these things in the case of the green tree, what must be done in the case of the dry?*”), **what [will be] the end of them that disobey the gospel of God** (the blessed tidings of the very God who is to judge them)?

18.] And (the question of the last verse is again repeated under a well-known form, taken from the Old Test., which however casts solemn, light on both members of the interrogation: explaining what is meant by judgment on God’s people, and also by the end of the disobedient. The citation is almost verbatim from the Septuagint version, departing from the Hebrew text, which is as the A.V., “Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner”) **if the righteous is** (is being: or rather perhaps the present spoken of that which *is to be*) **with difficulty saved** (on account of the sharpness of the trial, and his own weakness. See Rev. v. 4, 5. The word *scarcely* does not induce any *doubt* as to the issue,

only wonder: if we be *righteous* by faith in Christ, our salvation, however difficult and apparently impossible, is as certain as Christ's own triumph), **the ungodly** (the man who in his innermost heart cares not for God and turns not to Him) **and sinner** (he that is devoted to sin. The absence of a second article, and the singular verb, both shew, that the same person is meant by both), **where shall he appear** (so in Ps. i. 5: where shall he stand and find an abiding place in the judgment?)?

19.] Wherefore (general conclusion from vv. 17, 18. If the sufferings of Christians as Christians are a sign of God's favour towards them, in subjecting them to his judgments, with a view to their not perishing with the ungodly world, then have they every reason to trust Him in those sufferings, and to take comfort: continuing in that same well-doing which is their very element and condition) **let also them who suffer** (*also*, as well as all other persons) **according to** (in pursuit of, along the course of) **the will of God** (see on ch. iii. 17: here especially in reference to our ver. 17, seeing that it is God's will that judgment should begin at His house), **commit** (deliver [subjectively] into the hands of, and confidently leave) **their souls** (their personal safety and ultimate *salvation*, ver. 18) **in** (as clad in, accompanied with, subsisting and employed in) **well-doing** (as contrasted with the opposite characters in ver. 15. Huther says well: "This addition shews that the confident surrender to God is to be joined, not with careless indolence, but with active practice of good") **unto a faithful Creator** (in God being our *Creator*, without whom not a hair falls to the ground, we have an assurance that we are not overlooked by Him: in His being a *faithful* Creator, whose covenant truth is pledged to us, it is implied that we are within that covenant, suffering according to His will and as His children. This title of God must not be understood of the second creation in the new birth).

1 Peter: Chapter 5

CHAP. V. 1–11.] *Last and hortatory portion of the Epistle;* in which the word **well-doing**, ending (in the original) the former portion, is taken up and spread over various classes among the readers: thus vv. 1–4, he exhorts the *leaders of the church*; ver. 5, the *younger members* [see note there]; vv. 6–9, *all in common*. Then, vv. 10, 11, follows his general *parting wish and ascription of praise to God*.

1.] Elders therefore among you I exhort (the designation *elders* or *presbyters* here is evidently an official one [ver. 2], but at the same time reference to age is included: see ver. 5. The **therefore** takes up the above exhortation ch. iv. 19), **who am a fellow-elder** (with you: Bengel remarks, that "mutual exhortation among equals and colleagues is of great force"), **and witness of the sufferings of Christ** (not in the sense of Acts i. 8, 22, ii. 32, x. 39, &c.,—a witness to testify to by words,—nor as Heb. xii. 1; Acts xxii. 20; Rev. ii. 13, xvii. 6, a witness, in bearing about in his own person,—nor both of these together;—but in the sense of an *eye-witness*, on the ground of which his apostolic testimony rested: I who say to you, "*Christ suffered in the flesh*," say this of sufferings which my own eyes saw. Thus this clause links on the following exhortation to the preceding portion of the Epistle concerning Christian suffering, and also tends to justify the *therefore*), **who am also a partaker of the glory which is about to be revealed** (I prefer to take this as an allusion to our Lord's own words John xiii. 36, "*Thou shalt follow me afterwards*," rather than regard it as alluding to the Transfiguration, as some, or to the certainty that those who suffer with Him will be glorified with Him. As bearing that promise, he came to them with great weight of authority as an exhorter—having seen the sufferings of which he speaks, and being himself an heir of that glory to which he points onwards), —**tend** (or keep. It is the same word as in John xxi. 16 [not 15 and 17]: see note there) **the flock** (the verb includes in one word the various offices of a shepherd; the leading, feeding, heeding) **of God** (see Acts xx. 28. The similitude is among the commonest in Scripture: see Jer. iii. 15, xxiii. 1–4; Ezek. xxxiv. 2 ff.; John x. 11 ff.) **which is among you** (he orders them to feed the flock of God, not generally, nor ecumenically, but locally, as far as concerned that part of it found among them) **[overseeing]** (it) (this word, "*episcopountes*," has perhaps been removed for ecclesiastical reasons, for fear presbyters should be supposed to he, as they really were, *episcopoi*, bishops)] **not constrainedly** ("so, as men do who would be of some other profession if they could afford it, and are consequently idle and cold-hearted in their work"), **but willingly** (out of love to the great Shepherd, and to the flock. The addition, "*according to God*," is curious, and 'not easily accounted for. It certainly does not, as Huther says, clear up the thought, but rather obscures it. The expression is seldom found; and never in the sense here required); **nor yet** (brings in a climax each time) **with a view to base gain** (see Isa. lvi. 11; Jer. vi. 13, viii. 10; Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, &c.; and Titus i. 7), **but earnestly** (prompted by a desire not of gain, but of good to the flock;—rendy and enthusiastic, as [the illustration is Bede's] the children of Israel, and even the workmen, gave their services eagerly and gratuitously to build the tabernacle of old); **nor yet as lording it over** (using the rights of a *lord* for the diminution of the ruled and the exaltation of self. Christian rulers of the church are *set over the church* (1 Thess. v. 12; Rom. xii. 8], *leaders* [Luke xxii. 26], but not *lords over it* [Luke xxii. 25, 26]. One is their *lord*, and they are His *ministering servants*) **the portions [entrusted to you]** (so is the original word (*clerus*) understood by very many Commentators, and rightly, as is decided by the mention of *the flock* below. See this meaning defended in my Greek Test.), **but becoming patterns of the flock** (the tyrannizing could only apply to the portion over which their authority extended, but the good example would be seen and followed by the whole church: hence "*your portions*" in the prohibition, but "*the flock*" in the exhortation). **And [then] when the chief Shepherd** (see ch. ii, 25; Heb. xiii. 20: and compare Ezek. xxxiv. 15, 16, 23; Matt. xxv. 32) **is manifested** (used by St. Peter in a double reference, to Christ's first coming, and His second also: see ch. i. 20: so also by St. Paul, Col. iii. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16: by St. John, 1 John ii. 28, iii. 2, 5, 8. Here clearly of the second coming. It would not be plain, from this passage alone, whether St. Peter regarded

the coming of the Lord as likely to occur in the life of these his readers, or not; but as interpreted by the analogy of his other expressions on the same subject, it would appear that he did), **ye shall receive the amarantine** (the adjective formed from *amarantus*, the everlasting, or unfading, flower. It does not here mean *unfading*, but must be rendered strictly, *composed of that flower*: the word in ch. i. 4 is a different form) **crown** (reff.) **of His glory** (or, of glory: but I prefer the other. That we shall share his glory, is a point constantly insisted on by St. Peter: see ver. 1, ch. iv. 13, i. 7: and above all, ver. 10 below. This idea reaches its highest in St. John, with whom the inner unity of the divine life with the life of Christ is all in all. Compare especially 1 John iii. 2f).

5-7.] Exhortation to the younger, and to all, to humility and trust in God.

5.] In like manner (i. e. ‘*mutatis mutandis*,’ in your turn: see ch. iii. 7: with the same recognition of your position and duties), **ye younger, be subject to the elders** (in what sense are we to take “*younger*” and “*elders*” here? One part of our answer will be very clear: that “*elders*” must be in the same sense as above, viz., in its official historical sense of presbyters in the church. This being so, we have now some clue to the meaning of “*ye younger*:” viz. that it cannot mean younger in age merely, though this, as regarded *men*, would generally be so, but that as the name *elder* had an official sense, of superintendents of the church, so *younger* likewise, of those who were the ruled, the disciples of the *elders*. Thus taken, it will mean here, the rest of the church, as opposed to the *elders*). **Yea** (the A.V. happily thus gives the sense, i.e., Why should I go on giving these specific injunctions, when one will cover them all?), **all gird on humility one to another** (an allusion to our Lord’s action of girding Himself with a napkin in the servile ministration of washing the disciples’ feet: of which He himself said, that He had given them an example to do as He did. The impression made on St. Peter by this proof of his Master’s love is thus beautifully shewn. The verb rendered **gird on** is variously interpreted. Its derivation is from the string or band attached to a garment to tie it with): **because** (reason why you should gird on humility) **God** (the citation agrees verbatim with James iv. 6) **opposeth Himself to the proud** (this was a common saying even among the heathen moralists), **but giveth grace to the humble** (here in a subjective sense, the lowly-minded, those who by their humility are low).

6.] Humble yourselves therefore (the same spirit as before continues through this and the following verses: the *care* or *anxiety* here, and the *sufferings*, ver. 9, keeping in mind their persecutions and anxieties, as also does “*the strong hand*,” see below) **under the strong hand of God** (on the expression, see Exod. iii. 19. The strong hand of God is laid on the afflicted and suffering, and it is for them to acknowledge it in lowliness of mind), **that He may exalt you** (the Apostle refers to the often repeated saying of our Lord, Matt. xxiii. 13, Luke xiv. 11, xviii. 14. The same is also found in the Old Test. Ps. xviii. 27; Prov. xxix. 23) **in [the] time [appointed]** (this humility implies patience, waiting God’s time. The *time* need not necessarily be understood as Bengel of the end: it is more general: see “*in his times*,” 1 Tim. vi. 15):

7.] casting (once for all, by an act which includes the life) **all your anxiety** (‘the whole of;’ not, every anxiety as it arises: for none will arise if this transference has been effectually made. This again is an Old Test. citation, Ps. lv. 22. The expression shews that the anxiety was not a possible, but a present one; that the exhortation is addressed to men under sufferings. As to the word *anxiety*, we may remark, that it is the same root as that used in Matt. vi. 22, and signifies care by which the spirit is *divided*, part for God, part for unbelief, which is in fact an exalting self against Him) **upon Him, because** (seeing that: the justifying reason) **He careth** (this is not the same, nor a like word to that rendered *anxiety* above: and however much the run of the words to which we are accustomed is marred by the change, the two should in rendering be kept carefully distinct) **for (about) you.**

8, 9.] Other necessary exhortations under their afflictions; and now with reference to the great spiritual adversary, as before to God and their own hearts. (“Lest,” says an old gloss, “we should abuse, in the direction of our security, that consolation, that God careth for us, the Apostle forewarns us of the snares of Satan.”)

8.] Be sober (see chap. iv. 7, and Luke xxi, 34, 36. This sobriety of mind, as opposed to intoxication with anxieties of this life, is necessary to the *firm resistance*: only he who is sober stands firm), **be watchful** (can it be that Peter thought of his Lord’s “*Were ye thus unable to watch with me one hour*” on the fatal night when he denied Him?): **your adversary** (the omission of any casual particle makes the appeal livelier and more forcible, leaving the obvious connexion to be filled up by the reader) **the devil as a roaring lion** (“the devil is compared to a lion hungry and roaring for impatience of his hunger, because he insatiably seeks our destruction, and no prey satisfies him.” Gerhard) **walketh about** (compare Job i. 7, ii. 2), **seeking whom to devour** (namely, by assimilating to himself through commission of mortal sin):

9.] whom resist (see James iv. 7) **firm in the faith, knowing** (*being aware*: it is an encouragement against their giving way under Satan’s attacks, to remember that they do not stand alone against him; that others are not only sharers of their sufferings, but comrades in prayer and warfare against Satan) **that the very same sufferings are being accomplished** (their full measure attained, according to the will of God, and by the appointment of God) **in** (with reference to, in the case of) **your brotherhood in the world** (not said to direct attention to another brotherhood not in the world; but as identifying their state with yours: who, like yourselves, are in the world, and thence have, like yourselves, to expect such trials).

10, 11.] Final assurance of God's help and ultimate perfecting of them after and by means of these sufferings.

10.] But (however you may be able to apprehend the consolation which I have last propounded to you, one thing is sure: or as Bengel, "Do ye only watch, and resist the enemy: God will do the rest") **the God of all grace** (who is the Source of all spiritual help for every occasion), **who called you** (which was the first proof of His grace towards you) **unto** (with a view to; said for consolation. He who has begun grace with a view to glory, will not cut off grace till it be perfected in glory. See 1 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 14) **His eternal glory in Christ Jesus** (this, "*in Christ Jesus*" belongs to "called," which has since been defined by the words following it. Christ Jesus is the element in which that calling took place), **when ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself** (solemn and emphatic: "the Apostle shews that from the same Fountain of Grace comes both the first call to heavenly glory and the ultimate consummation of this benefit," Gerhard) **perfect [you]** ("that no defect remains in you," Bengel), **shall confirm** (establish you firmly, so "that nothing overthrow you," Bengel), **shall strengthen, shall ground [you]** (fix you as on a foundation, "that you may conquer all adverse force. A speech worthy of *Peter*, the Rock; he is confirming his brethren." See Luke xxii. 32, *Thou, when thou hast turned again, strengthen* (the same word as here) *thy brethren*: 2 Tim. ii. 19). **To Him** (again emphatic: "that they might not claim any praise and glory to themselves," Gerhard) **be** (i. e. *be ascribed*: or, as ch. iv. 11, *is*, i.e. is due) **the might** (which has been shewn in this perfecting, confirming, strengthening, grounding you, and in all that those words imply as their ultimate result,—of victory and glory) **to the ages of the ages. Amen.**

12–14] CONCLUSION

12.] By Silvanus the faithful brother (there seems to be no reason for distinguishing this Silvanus from the companion of St. Paul and Timothy, mentioned in 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 19, and known by the name of Silas in the Acts. See further in the Introduction), **as I reckon** (indicates the Apostle's judgment concerning Silvanus, given, not in any disparagement of him, nor indicating that he was not known to St. Peter, but as fortifying him, in his mission to the churches addressed, with the Apostle's recommendation, over and above the acquaintance which the readers may already have had with him), **I have written unto you** (these words "*unto you*" are taken by some, as the A.V., as dependent on "*faithful*," which is harsh, leaves the verb "*I have written*" without any object of address) **in** (literally, *by means of*—as my vehicle of conveying my meaning) **few words** (this may perhaps refer to some more copious instructions Silvanus was to give them by word of mouth: or may serve to fix their attention more pointedly on that which had been thus concisely said), **exhorting** (such in the main is the character of the Epistle) **and giving my testimony that this** (of which I have written to you; see below) **is the true grace** (as testified by the preaching of the Apostles to be covenanted and granted to them by God. This identification of the preached and written message with the true mind of God towards man, is not uncommon with our Apostle: e.g., ch. i. 12, 25 [ii. 10, 25]. The reason of this was not any difference, as some would have us believe, between the teachings of St. Peter and St. Paul, but the difficulty presented to the readers in the fact of the fiery trial of sufferings which they were passing through) **of God, in which stand ye** (the construction in the original is what is called *pregnant*; into which being admitted, stand in it. This is a short and earnest exhortation, containing in it the pith of what has been said by way of exhortation in the whole Epistle).

13.] She that is elected together with you in Babylon salutes you (*who, or what is this?* The great majority of Commentators understand it to mean a *sister congregation*, elect like yourselves, ch. i. 1. And this perhaps may be a legitimate interpretation. Still it seems hardly probable, that there should be joined together in the same sending of salutation, an *abstraction*, spoken of thus enigmatically, and a *man, Mark my son*, by name. No mention has occurred in the Epistle of the word *church*, to which reference might be made: if such reference be sought for, *the dispersion*, in ch. i. 1, is the only word suitable, and that could hardly be used of the congregation in any particular place. Finally, it seems to be required by the rules of analogy, that in an Epistle addressed to *elect strangers or sojourners*, individually, not aggregately, "*she that is elected together with them*," must be an individual person also. These considerations induce me to accede to the opinion of those, who recognize here the believing sister whom St. Peter *led about, being his wife*, 1 Cor. ix. 5: and to find, in the somewhat unusual periphrastic way of speaking of her, a confirmation of this view. Still, I own, the words "*in Babylon*" a little stagger me in this view. But it seems less forced than the other. On the question, *what Babylon* is intended, whether Rome, or the Chaldean capital, or some village in Egypt, see Introduction, §iv.), **and Mark my son** (perhaps, and so most have thought, the well-known Evangelist: perhaps the *actual son* of St. Peter, bearing this name. The fact of Peter taking refuge in the house of Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts xii. 2), casts hardly any weight on the side of the former interpretation: but it derives some probability from the circumstance that St. Mark is reported by Eusebius to have been the *follower and disciple and interpreter of Peter*, on the authority of Papias and Clement of Alexandria: and that Irenaeus reports the same. The word "*son*" is understood either spiritually or literally, according as one or other of the above views is taken).

14.] Salute one another in (as the medium of salutation) **a kiss of love** (see on Rom. xvi. 16, where, as every where except here, "*an holy kiss*" is the expression). **Peace be to you all that are in Christ** (the concluding blessing of St. Paul is usually *grace*, not *peace*: see [Rom. xvi. 24] 1 Cor. xvi. 23; 2 Cor. xiii. 13; Gal. vi. 18; Eph. vi. 24 [where however '*peace be to the brethren*,' &c. precedes]; Phil. iv. 23; Col. iv. 18; 1 Thess. v. 28; 2 Thess. iii. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Titus iii. 15: Philem. 25 [Heb. xiii. 25]. Gerhard says well that the formula came into use from the salutation of Christ after the

Resurrection. The blessing differs also from those in St. Paul, in the limitation implied by **you all that are in Christ**, whereas St. Paul has ever "*with you all.*" Here it is, "Peace to you, I mean, all that are, and in as far as they are, in Christ;" in union and communion with Him. "*That are in Christ*" is quite in St. Paul's manner: compare Rom. viii. 8; xvi. 7; 2 Cor. v. 17. See also our ch. iii. 16; v. 10).

2 PETER

Chapter 1

Chapter 3

Chapter 2

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

2 Peter: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING.

1.] **Syemeon** (the form as belonging to our Apostle, is found, besides here, only in Acts xv. 14. Its occurrence is at all events a testimony in favour of the independence of the second Epistle. It has not, in order to make the name uniform, been *adapted* to the first: which, considering that it *refers* to the first, is a note, however slight, on the side of its genuineness) **Peter a servant** (Rom. i. 1) **and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained** (not got for themselves) **like precious faith** (*faith*,—i. e. substance of truth believed: faith objective, not subjective,—*of equal value*: not, which confers equal right to God's kingdom, equal honour and glory. The A.V. has hit the meaning very happily by *like precious*. See 1 Pet. ii. 7) **with us** (apparently, in the first place, the Apostles: but more probably, in a wider sense, the Jewish Christians, with whom the Gentiles had been admitted into the same covenant, and the inheritance of the like precious promises) **in the righteousness of our God and [our] Saviour Jesus Christ** (first, concerning the words, **in the righteousness**. Some Commentators take *righteousness* for an attribute of God, and "*in*" as instrumental, by the righteousness, goodness, truth, of God: others understand it as the righteousness which God gives us, and Christ won for us, explaining "*in*" as *with* or *by*: but this is objectionable, seeing that righteousness comes by faith, not faith by righteousness. The best explanation seems to me that "*righteousness*" here betokens the righteous dealing of God, corresponding to His attribute of righteousness, as opposed to *respect of persons*, and that the words are to be taken in close connexion with the foregoing, "*in*" being used of the conditional element, in which the *obtaining like precious faith* is grounded: so that the sense is, in His righteousness, which makes no difference between the one party and the other, God has given to you the like precious faith, as to us. The objection made to this, that thus the Epistle must be regarded as written to Gentile Christians, is not valid, or proves too much: for at all events there must be two parties in view in the words "*like precious...with us*," whatever these parties be. Next, in the words, **of our God and [our] Saviour Jesus Christ**, I would interpret, as in Titus ii. 13 [where see note] **our God of the Father, and [our] Saviour Jesus Christ of the Son**. Here, there is the additional consideration in favour of this view, that the Two are distinguished most plainly in the next verse):

2.] Grace to **you and peace be multiplied** (so in 1 Pet. i. 2: but further specified here by what follows) **in** (as the vehicle, or conditional element of the multiplication) **the knowledge** (properly, full, or ripe knowledge: but this can hardly be given in English without too strong a phrase) **of God, and of Jesus our Lord** (every unusual expression, like **Jesus our Lord**, occurring only Rom. iv. 24, should be noticed as a morsel of evidence to the independence of the Epistle).

3–11.] *Exhortation to advance in the graces of the spiritual life*: introduced (vv. 3, 4) by a consideration of the rich bestowal from God of all things belonging to that life by the knowledge of Him, and the aim of His promises, viz. that we should partake in the divine nature.

3.] **Seeing that** (the connexion with the greeting which precedes must not be broken: it is characteristic of this Epistle, to dilate further when the sense seems to have come to a close) **His divine** (the word rendered **divine** is peculiar, in the New Test. to this Epistle) **power hath given us all things which are [requisite] for life and godliness** (this word **godliness** is a mark of the later apostolic period) **through** (by means of, as the medium of attainment: "the knowledge of God is the beginning of life, John xvii. 3." Calvin) **the knowledge** (the same word as above) **of Him that called us** (i. e. of God, who is ever the Caller in the New Test.: see e.g. I Pet. ii. 9) **by** (of the instrument) **His own glory and virtue** (*virtues* are predicated of God in 1 Pet. ii. 9. Both substantives belong to **God**, not to us: we must not render, as in A.V., "called us to glory and virtue," of which meaning there is not a trace in either of the readings. Bengel seems to give the meaning well, "To **glory** must be referred those attributes of God which are *natural*, to **virtue** those which are called *moral*: both are, in their inmost nature, one." See Gal. i. 15),

4.] **through which** (His attributes and energies) **He hath given to us** (not as A.V. "are given," passive) **the [or, His] greatest and precious promises** (not, *things promised*), **that by means of these** (promises: i.e. their fulfilment) **ye may become partakers of the divine nature** (i. e. of that holiness, and truth, and love, and, in a word, perfection, which dwells in God, and in you by God dwelling in you), **having escaped** (a note of matter of fact, bringing out in this case the negative side of the Christian Life, as the former clause did the positive:—'when ye have escaped') **from the corruption** (destruction of soul and body) **which is in the world in** (consisting in, as its element and ground) **lust** (Calvin says well: "This corruption he shews to be not in the elements which surround us, but in our own heart, because there reign the vicious and wicked affections, whose source and root he denotes by the word *lust*. This corruption then is so placed by him *in the world*, as to shew us that *the world is in ourselves*").

5-7.] Direct exhortation, consequent on vv. 3, 4, to progress in the spiritual life.

5.] And on this very account (the reason here being that stated in ver. 3, “*seeing that, &c.*,” above: so that this forms a sort of termination to that sentence. The A.V. ‘*beside this*’ is entirely at fault) **giving on your part** (literally, *introducing by the side of*: i.e. besides those precious promises on God’s part, bringing in on your part) **all diligence, furnish** (from the original meaning of the verb, to *provide expenses for a chorus*, it easily gets this of *furnishing forth*. And the construction and meaning of the following clauses is not as in the A.V., “*add to*” your faith, virtue, &c., but the word **in** is each time used of that which is assumed to be theirs, and the exhortation is, to take care that, in the exercise of that, the next step is developed), **in your faith** (Bengel remarks, “Faith is the gift of God: therefore we are not ordered to provide faith, but in our faith those fruits, seven of which are enumerated: faith leading the band, love closing it”) **virtue** (vest perhaps understood with Bengel as “strenuous tone and vigour of mind”); **and in your virtue, knowledge** (probably that practical discriminating knowledge, of which it is said Eph. v. 17, “*Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is*”);

6.] and in your knowledge, self-restraint (“*temperance*” is perhaps now too much used of one sort only of self-restraint, fully to express the word. The connexion is: let such discriminating knowledge not be without its fruit, of steady holding in hand of the passions and tempers); **and in your self-restraint, patient endurance** (in afflictions and trials); **and in your patient endurance, godliness** (i. e. it is not to be mere brute Stoical endurance, but united with God-fearing and God-trusting);

7.] and in your godliness, brotherly kindness (not suffering your godliness to be moroseness, nor a sullen solitary habit of life, but kind and generous and courteous); **and in your brotherly kindness, love** (universal kindness of thought, word, and act towards all: a catholic large-heartedness, not confining the spirit of *brotherly kindness* to *brethren* only, Matt. v. 46, 47. So that these two last correspond to the “*love for one another and to all*” of 1 Thess. iii. 12).

8, 9.] Reasons for the foregoing exhortations: 1) *positive*, the advantage of these Christian graces in bringing forth fruit towards the mature knowledge of Christ: 2) *negative*, the disadvantage of their absence from the character.

8.] For these things (the above-mentioned graces) **being in you** (by previous subsistence) **and multiplying** (not merely as A.V. “*abounding*”) **render you** (not the present tense for the future, but expressing the habitual character and function of these virtues) **not idle nor yet** (introduces a slight climax: a man may be in some sense not unfruitful, but yet unworkful) **unfruitful towards** (not “*in*” as A.V.: these virtues are all regarded as so many steps in advancing towards the *perfect knowledge* of Christ, which is the great complex end of the Christian life) **the perfect knowledge** (here, considering the place which it holds, it is well to give the full sense of this word, which is the same as in vv. 2, 3; not as in ver. 6) **of our Lord Jesus Christ** (in Him are hid, ethically as well as doctrinally, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: the knowledge of Him is the imitation of Him: for as it is true that hereafter the seeing Him as He is will ensure our being perfectly like Him, so it is true that here the only way in any degree increasingly to see Him as He is, is to become increasingly like Him. He only can declare Christ, who reflects Christ).

9.] For (*negative reason*: see above: and that, with reference not only to the exhortations of vv. 5, 6, 7, but by this **for** connected also with ver. 8: the advantage of the presence is great, for the disadvantage of the absence indicates no less than spiritual blindness and oblivion) **he to whom these are not present** (contrast to ver. 8) **is blind** (lacks discernment altogether of his own state as a member of Christ and inheritor of heaven), **short-sighted** (some interpret the word of not being able to see the heavenly things, which are distant, only earthly, which are close at hand. Perhaps, however, this is an interpretation more subtle than the Apostle’s meaning), **having incurred forgetfulness of the purification of his former sins** (i. e. of the fact of his ancient, pre-Christian, sins having been purged away in his baptism, This, and not the purification of the sins of the world, and of his among them, by the cross of Christ, is evidently the sense, by the very terms of the sentence. And thus almost all the Commentators.)

10, 11.] The exhortation is resumed, and further pressed, both on the preceding grounds, and on account of its blessed ultimate results, if followed.

10.] Wherefore the rather (*wherefore* referring to the two considerations urged in vv. 8, 9, and **the rather** making them reasons for increased zeal in complying with the exhortation), **brethren** (making the appeal more close and affectionate), **give diligence** (so the A.V. admirably) **to make** (properly, *to make for yourselves*: not to *make* absolutely; which lay beyond their power, but to *do it*, on their side, for their part. But the verb must not be explained away into a pure subjectivity, “*to make sure to yourselves*” it carries the reflective force, but only in so far as the act is and must be done for and as regards a man’s own self, the absolute and final determination resting with Another) **your calling and election** (i. e., as Grotius, “The calling which came to you by the Gospel, and the election which followed it, when you became the people of God.” Both these were God’s acts, ver. 3, and 1 Pet. i. 1, 2) **secure** (for both, in as far as we look on them from the lower side, not able to penetrate into the counsels of God, are insecure, unless established by holiness of life. In His foreknowledge and purpose, there is no insecurity,

no uncertainty: but in our vision and apprehension of them as they exist in and for us, much, until they are made secure in the way here pointed out): **for, doing these things** (because these are works done. And the participle is conditional, carrying with it an hypothesis: as A.V., ‘*if ye do these things*’), **ye shall never offend** (i. e. stumble and fall):

11.] for thus (i. e. *if ye do these things*) **shall be richly** (the adverb is not, as Huther says, surprising, but most natural and obvious with the verb, which is one of furnishing and ministering; therefore of quantity. The adverb belongs to the figure latent in the verb: and must therefore be interpreted in and with the interpretation of the verb: in which case it will indicate high degrees and fulness of glory) **furnished to you** (the verb seems expressly chosen in order to answer to that in ver. 5: “Furnish forth your own lives with these Christian graces, so shall be furnished to you, &c.”) **the (or, your) entrance** (the entrance which all Christians look for: not the fact of this entrance taking place, but the fact of its *being richly furnished*, or *ministered*, is that asserted) **into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

12–21.] *The above exhortations confirmed* by the consideration of the *certainty of the power* and announced *coming of Christ*, as shewn 1) by apostolic testimony, 2) by Old Test. prophecy.

12–15.] *The Apostle holds it necessary to remind them of this truth, and will do 80 up to his approaching end.*

12.] Wherefore (namely, because *the doing these things* is the only way to a rich participation in the blessings and glories of Christ’s kingdom) **I will be sure always to remind you concerning these things** (the things just now spoken of: in the widest sense: it does not merely take up the “*these things*” of ver. 10, nor merely refer to the kingdom of Christ and His coming), **though ye know them, and are confirmed** (firmly established) **in the truth which is present with you** (the words “*the present truth*,” A.V., give a wrong idea to the English reader: seeming to mean, the truth at present under notice. The meaning is, ‘which is [known and professed] among you’).

13.] But (notwithstanding this previously conceded fact, that you know and stand firm in the truth) **I think it right** (*why*, follows, ver. 14), **as long as I am in this tabernacle** (see for the sense 2 Cor. v. 1 ff.; and below), **to stir you up, in** (not, ‘*by*:’ *in*, as the medium in which I strive towards the stirring up, and in using which it has place. In an English *version*, the preposition is best omitted) **reminding** (the same phrase occurs in ch. iii. 1);

14.] knowing (as I do: reason for *thinking it meet*) **that rapid is** (see below. *is*, of that which is to be: the normal present) **the putting off** (the two figures, of a tabernacle or tent, and a garment, are intermingled, as in 2 Cor. v. 1 ff.) **of my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ declared unto me** (the allusion is to John xxi. 18 ff., where a swift and sharp death is announced to St. Peter by our risen Lord. And the sentence does not mean to say, as commonly understood, that he must *soon* put off his tabernacle, but that the putting off, whenever it did come, would be sudden and quick. Missing this point, some have imagined that some other special revelation to St. Peter is implied: and such revelations are related in tradition. But even if the adjective be understood to mean ‘*soon*,’ ‘*not far off*,’ no such inference need be drawn. For it might well be that advancing old age might lead the Apostle to the conclusion that the end prophesied to him could not be far off.

15.] Moreover I will endeavour that ye may on every occasion have it in your power after my decease (it is at least remarkable that, with the recollection of the scene on the mount of transfiguration floating in his mind, the Apostle should use so close together the words which were there also associated, viz. **tabernacle** and **decease** [*exodus*]: see Luke ix. 28 ff. The coincidence should not be forgotten in treating of the question of the genuineness of the Epistle) **to exercise the memory of these things.**

16–18.] *Corroboration of the certainty of the facts announced by apostolic eye-witness.*

16.] For (reason for the zeal which he had just predicated of himself) **not in pursuance of cunningly-devised fables** (such cunningly-devised fables would be the mythologies of the heathen, the cabalistic stories of the Jews; and these may be alluded to, and perhaps also the fables of the Gnostics, which could, it is true, only be in their infancy, but still might be pointed at by St. Peter, as by St. Paul in 1 Tim. i. 4, iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 4; Tit. i. 14) **did we make known unto you** (the writer of this Epistle, says De Wette, wishes to appear to stand in closer relation to his readers, than the writer of 1 Peter: see 1 Pet. i. 12. But why so? May not the same Apostle in one place mean the actual preachers who delivered the Gospel to them; in the other, the Apostles, who were its first witnesses? For observe, that first Epistle is addressed to certain definite churches; this, to all Christians generally. Or, again, why should it be regarded as absolutely impossible that the publication of some one or more of the existing Gospels may have taken place, and may be alluded to in these words?) **the power** (viz. that conferred on Him by the Father at His glorification, of which the following scene testified, and the actuality of which He himself asserted, when He said, Matt. xxviii. 18, *All power is given unto me in heaven and earth*: in the strength of which He will come to judge the world) **and coming** (i. e., as ever, second and glorious coming: not, as Erasmus and many others, His first coming) **of our Lord Jesus Christ, but [in virtue of] having been admitted** (the participle, as so often, renders the reason,—the enabling cause of the act) **eye-witnesses** (the word used is a technical term, used of those who were admitted to the highest degree of initiation in the Eleusinian mysteries: and, considering the occasion to which allusion is made, there seems no reason for

letting go altogether this reference here: “admitted as initiated spectators.” Still, in English, we have no other way of expressing this than as above, Any attempt to introduce the allusion would overcharge the language. The word “admitted” gives a faint hint of it) **of His majesty** (viz. on the occasion to be mentioned. The words must not be generalized, to reach to all occasions of such witnessing: but it is obvious that neither must the Transfiguration be regarded as standing altogether alone in such an assertion. It is indeed here that incident which marked, to the Apostle’s mind, most certainly the reality of Christ’s future glory: but it was not the only occasion when he had seen the exhibition of divine power by Him as a foretaste of his power at his return to judgment: compare John v. 25–28, with John xi. 40–44).

17.] For (justification of the above assertion that we were admitted witnesses of His majesty) **having received** (the construction is an interrupted one: so in the original) **from God the Father honour and glory** (honour, in the voice which spoke to him: glory, in the light which shone from Him), **when a voice was borne to Him** (the occurrence of a similar expression in 1 Pet. i. 13 is to be noticed) **of such a kind** (viz. is stated in what follows: “purporting as follows”) **by** (uttered by) **the sublime glory** (the words seem to be a way of designating God Himself. Others understand them of the bright cloud which overshadowed the company: others of the heaven: but the preposition **by**, in its only admissible meaning [see above], will not suit either interpretation), **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased** (the words are as in Matt. xvii. 5, where however we have “*in whom*” for “*on whom*,” and “*hear him*” is added. In Mark and Luke the words “*in whom I am well pleased*” are wanting: and in the critical text of St. Luke is, “*my chosen Son.*” It is worth notice, that the words are in an independent form here. **on whom** is what is culled a pregnant construction,—“on whom my pleasure has lighted and abides”).

18.] Substantiation of the personal testimony above adduced by reference to the fact. And this voice we (Apostles: Peter, James, and John) **heard borne from heaven** (not, as A. V. ungrammatically, “*this voice which came from heaven:*” we heard it borne, witnessed its coming, from heaven), **being with Him in the holy mount** (De Wette is partly right, when he says that this epithet “holy” shews a later view of the fact than that given us in the evangelistic narrative. The epithet would naturally arise when the Gospel history was known, as marking a place where a manifestation of this divine presence and glory had taken place. The place whereon Moses stood is said, in Exodus iii. 5, to be *holy ground*. So that really all we can infer from it is, that the history was assumed to be already well known: which is one entirely consistent with the probable date of the Epistle: see Introd. It is hardly necessary to refute Grotius’s idea, that Mount Sion is meant, and that the voice referred to is that related in John xii. 28).

19–21.] The same—i. e. the certainty of the coming of Christ, before spoken of,—is further confirmed by reference to Old Test. prophecy

19.] And we have more sure (i. e. hold more surely) **the prophetic word** (a double explanation is possible: 1) that the comparative alludes to what has gone before as its *reason*, as if it had been said, *Wherefore, or Now, or Henceforth* we have, &c.: i.e. ‘on account of this voice from heaven which we heard, we have firmer hold of, or esteem [possess] more sure, the prophetic word, as now having in our own ears begun its fulfilment.’ The great objection to such a view is, the omission of any such connecting particles as those above supplied. It is true the Apostle may have omitted them: but even supposing that, it is further against the view, that if such be the force of the comparative, the thought is not at all followed up in the ensuing verses, We come then to the other possible force of the comparative: 2) that it is used as comparing the prophetic word with something which has been mentioned before, as being firmer, more secure than that other. And if so, what is that other? The most obvious answer is, the voice from heaven: and this is at first sight confirmed by the consideration that one *word* would thus be compared with another. But then comes in the great difficulty. How could the Apostle designate the written word of God, inspired into and transmitted through men, as something firmer, more secure, than the uttered voice of God Himself? And our reply must be, that only in one sense can this be so, viz. as being of wider and larger reference, embracing not only a single testimony to Christ as that divine voice did, but “*the sufferings which were destined for Christ, and the glories that were to follow:*” as presenting a broader basis for the Christian’s trust, and not only one fact, however important. This is a modification of Huther’s view, which takes the comparison to be, that the testimony of the Transfiguration presented only the glory of Christ in the days of His flesh, whereas the prophetic word substantiates His future glory also. But this is insufficient, or rather is not strictly correct: for the Apostle clearly does regard the voice at the Transfiguration as a pledge of Christ’s future glory) **to which ye do well in paying attention, as to a candle** (the figure is taken from the lighting of a candle at night, and the imagery is as in Rom. xiii. 12) **shining in a dark place, until day shall dawn** (i. e. shall have dawned: the dawn coming in upon and putting an end to the state indicated above), **and the morning star shall rise in your hearts** (the dawn of the day is accompanied by the rising of the morning star).

It is not quite clear, *what time* is here pointed out by the “*until&c.*” Various meanings have been assigned. Some think that Old Test. times preceded the rising of the day star of the New Test. dispensation. But it is entirely against this view, that the present, *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed*, makes it necessary, as indeed does the whole context, that the time spoken of, which the “*until&c.*” is to put an end to, should be *present*. De Wette modifies this last view by saying, that this Old Test. darkness of the pre-Christian time still endures for those who have not yet embraced the Christian faith. But this would make the readers, who are said, ver. 12, to be *established in the truth which is present*, to be still unconverted to Christianity. Bede,

Calvin, &c., understand it of the glorious day which is to come when the Lord shall be manifested. Others, as Grotius, De Wette, Huther, &c., think that some state *in the readers themselves* is pointed at, which is to supervene upon their present less perfect state: Grotius interpreting it of their attainment of the gift of prophecy: De Wette, of their arriving at full conviction of the certainty of the coming of Christ: Huther, much the same, adding, "The writer distinguishes between two degrees of the Christian life: in the first, faith rests upon outward evidences, in the second, on inward revelations of the Spirit: in the first, each detail is believed separately as such: in the second, each is recognized as a necessary part of the whole. And hence the being in the former is naturally called a walking *in a dark place*, in the light of a *candle*, while the being in the latter is a walking in the light of the morning." And this latter I believe to be nearly the true account. That which refers the words to the time of the Lord's coming is objectionable, because thus 1) the time of the Christian's walk here, in which he is said to be light in the Lord, would, not comparatively, but absolutely, be described as a walking in darkness by the slender light of Old Test. prophecy: 2) the morning star arising *in men's hearts* is not a description which can apply to the Lord's coming. So that, whatever apparent analogy there may be with the comparison used in Rom. xiii. 11 ff, the matters treated of seem to be different. At the same time it may well be, that the Apostle should have mingled both ideas together as he wrote the words; seeing that even in our hearts the fulness of the spiritual day will not have arisen, until that time when we see face to face, and know even as God knew us):

20.] Caution as to interpretation of Old Testament prophecy: to be borne in mind, while taking heed to it. **This first knowing** (viz. what follows, introduced by "that:" *first*, as most important in applying yourselves to prophetic interpretation), **that no prophecy of Scripture (Scripture** most probably here imports the Old Test. only, from the whole cast of the passage) **comes of private interpretation** (how are these words to be understood? Two references seem to be possible: 1) *to us*, who try to understand written prophecies: 2) *to the prophets themselves*, as they spoke them. Of these the former, maintained by the Commentators, seems precluded by the context; the next verse assigning as a reason for the position in this, that the prophets spoke not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So we seem driven to the conclusion that the saying regards, not our interpretation of prophecy, but its *resolution*, of *interpretation by the prophets themselves*. So several Commentators: and De Wette, adding, that this is said to excuse the difficulty of the interpretation of prophecy, and to remove occasion of unbelief und scoffing [ch. iii. 3]. But as Huther well remarks, this last purpose is not only not indicated in the context, but is quite out of the question; the Apostle referring to prophecy not as difficult of interpretation, but as a candle shining in a dark place, nay, as being even more firm and secure than external proofs of the same truths. I believe Huther's view to be the true one: which arises from this consideration, that by the word **interpretation** we are not to understand the subsequent interpretation of a prophecy already given, but the intelligent apprehension of the meaning of the prophecy, out of which [but not *private* on the part of those by whom it is sent] the prophecy itself springs. So that the sense will be, that prophecy *springs not out of human interpretation*, i.e. is not a prognostication made by a man knowing what he means when he utters it: but&c. Thus, and thus alone, the whole context coheres).

21.] Reason of the above position. For prophecy was never (at any time) **sent after the will of man; but men spoke from God** (spoke as with the voice of, as emissaries from, God), **being borne** (borne along, carried onward, as a ship by the wind) **by the Holy Spirit.**

2 Peter: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1-22.] DESCRIPTION OF ERRONEOUS TEACHERS WHO SHOULD ARISE: THEIR UNGODLY PRACTICES, AND CERTAIN DESTRUCTION. On the close parallelism with Jude 4-19, see in Introduction. The fact will necessitate continual reference to that Epistle.

1.] Transition to the new subject. But (contrast to last verse) **there were false prophets also** (as well as the true prophets, just spoken of) **among the people** (of Israel. These words, more than any that have preceded, define the prophecies spoken of before as Old Test. prophecies), **as there shall be among you likewise false teachers** (teachers of falsehood), **the which** (of a class: not simply identifying the individuals) **shall introduce** (shall bring in by the side of that teaching which ye have received. There is 2 hint of secrecy and unobservedness, but not so strong as in A.V. "*shall privily bring in.*" It is stronger in Jude 4) **heresies** (rather in the sense in which we now understand the word, new and self-chosen doctrines, alien from the truth: not sects, as the Latin vulgate has it, which may be founded, but can hardly be said to be introduced) **of destruction** (whose end is destruction, Phil. iii, 19. The expression is not to be resolved as A.V. [after Beza, as usual] by an adjective, "*damnable heresies,*" as it thereby loses its meaning, merely conveying the writer's own judgment of condemnation), **and denying** (a remarkable word from St. Peter) **the Master** (compare Jude 4) **who bought them** (reff. No assertion of universal redemption can be plainer than this. Calvin passes it without a word. It may be noted that by the use of this particular description of Christ here, those heresies seem especially to be aimed at, which denied or explained away the virtue of the propitiatory sacrifice of our Lord, by which He has bought us to Himself), **bringing upon themselves swift** (not *speedy*, but sudden and unexpected) **destruction** (the same word as that used of the heresies above, and therefore to be rendered by the same word in English),

2.] And many shall follow after their licentiousnesses (the connexion of depraved moral conduct with erroneous doctrine was in the early ages of the church almost universal; see the Pastoral Epistles *passim*, and below vv. 18, 19. In Jude, the two are expressed co-ordinately: “*turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Master and our Saviour Jesus Christ*”), **on whose account** (*by reason of whom*, i.e. from the *licentious* ways of those who follow after the false teachers: for to these, and not to the false teachers themselves, is the “*whom*” most likely referable. It is those who, seeming to be in the way of truth, yet favour and follow false teachers, that cause most scandal to the way of truth itself) **the way of truth** (see Acts ix. 2; xix. 9, 23) **shall be evil spoken of** (“by those without, not knowing the difference between true and false Christians.” Bengel).

3.] And in (i. e. living in, girt about with, as their element, not as A.V. “*through*”) **covetousness with feigned speeches they will make gain of you** (these false teachers would care not for their sect, but for their gain): **for whom** (viz. the false teachers) **the sentence** (of God, decreeing their *destruction*) **from long since is not idle** (i. e. is working itself out, is living and in action), **and their destruction slumbereth not** (i. e. is awake, and ready to seize them: *destruction* being personified).

4–11.] Argument, enforced by three historical proofs, that God will assuredly punish these wicked persons.

4.] First historical proof: the punishment of the apostate angels. Compare Jude 6. **For** (connect with the position immediately preceding) **if God spared not angels having sinned** (how, is not here specified; but Jude, ver. 6, is more particular: see note there. It not as A.V. “that sinned;” but carries a reasoning force, giving the reason of *God’s not sparing them*: “for their sin”), **but casting them into hell** (literally, into **Tartarus**; the heathen name for hell, as Gehenna was the Jewish) **delivered [them] over** (here, as often, used with an implied idea of punishment) **to dens** (the other reading “*chains*,” has perhaps come from the parallel place in Jude, and would seem to suit the sense better: see there) **of darkness in custody** (literally “*being kept*.”) The readings are in great confusion, from the combined influence of the parallel place in Jude, and our ver. 9) **unto** (with a view to: or merely temporal, *until*: but this is not probable here, as the want of mention of the *Great Day*, as in Jude 6, removes all definite allusion to the *time* of the judgment) **judgment**;

5.] Second historical proof: the flood. (Wanting in Jude)—**and spared not the ancient world, but preserved** (here first comes in the idea of the preservation of the righteous, which is worked out further in the next verse) **Noah the eighth person** (i. e. with seven others: according to a well-known formula, constantly fond in Greek,) **preacher of righteousness** (the fact, that Noah was thus a preacher of [moral] righteousness to the depravity of his age, is found alluded to in Josephus: “But Noah, disgusted with their proceedings, and afflicted with their evil counsels, exhorted them to repentance in heart and life”), **bringing** (i. e. “when He brought,” or “and brought”) **the flood on the world of ungodly men**;

6.] Third historical proof: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jude 7. **And burning to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah condemned [them] to** (better than “*with*”) **overthrow** (*catastrophe*: the same word that is used in the Greek Septuagint version of the history in Genesis), **laying down an example** (see Jude 7) **of** (i. e. that which might shew forth the fate of) **those that should in after time live ungodly**;

7.] and rescued (the contrast, the deliverance of the righteous, is here brought out at more length. This contrast is wanting in Jude, where only the punitive dealings of God are treated) **righteous Lot** (*righteous*, as repeating the *righteousness* of ver. 5: see also again, ver. 8), **distressed** (*oppressed*, or *harassed beyond bearing*) **by the behaviour of the lawless** (men who cared not for rule nor for decency) **in licentiousness** (denoting the character of this behaviour or manner of life)

8.] Explanation of the word distressed, or vexed, For by sight and hearing the righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul day by day with their lawless deeds (not merely “*unlawful*,” as A.V., but utterly broken loose from law, lawless) **deeds** (the form of the sentence is peculiar: that being represented as a deliberate act of Lot on himself, which was in fact the impression made on him by the lawlessness around him. The same way of speaking is common among us, when we say that a man “distresses himself” at any occurrence: we have in Isa. lviii. 5 “a day for a man to afflict his soul”);

9.] (this is the latter part of the sentence, begun in ver. 4: see there) **the Lord knoweth how** (the expression indicates both the apprehension of the manner of the set, and the power to perform it) **to rescue godly [men] out of temptation** (as in 1 Pet. i. 6, where see note,—trials, persecutions, and the like), **and to reserve unrighteous [men] under punishment** (not as most, and A.V., “*to be punished*.” but as in ver. 4, actually in a penal state, and thus awaiting their final punishment)**to the day of judgment** (the great final doom):

10.] but chiefly (see Jude 8) **those who go after the flesh** (more general here than in Jude, where “*other*,” or “*strange flesh*,” defines the particular sin. Here, all following after unlawful carnal lusts is meant) **in lust of pollution** (lust, hankering after unlawful and polluting use of the flesh), **and despise lordship** (so in Jude 8, where see note). **Darers** (the construction suddenly alters to a description of the wicked persons who were the object in the former sentence), **selfwilled** (see note on Titus i. 7, where the word is explained), **they tremble not [when] speaking evil of** (railing at) **glories** (so literally: but what is meant by this, is somewhat doubtful: see on Jude. We might take the word here, as there also, in its widest sense, as any

dignities or glories, human or divine, were it not for the example there following).

11.] Whereas (i. e. “in cases where:” nearly the same as *whereas*) **angels, being greater [than they] in strength and might** (the participle “*being*” carries a slight reasoning force with it: “*being*,” i.e. “though they be:” and the thought shews forcibly the unbecomingness of their irreverence, seeing that even angels, who are so far above them, yet do not bring railing accusations against *glories*), **bring not against them** (viz. *glories, dignities*: in the interpretation, *bad angels*, fallen from their heavenly estate, but regarded here according to their essential condition as sons of glory. Compare Milton’s “excess of glory obscured,” as descriptive of Satan,—an expression probably taken from the study of the original text in this place or in Jude) **before the Lord** (“before the Lord the Judge, actually present, they are afraid, and abstain from judgment,” Bengel) **a railing judgment** (see Jude 9, in allusion to *railing at above*).

12–22.] Further description and denunciation of these persons.

12.] See Jude 10. In words this verse is very similar to that, but in meaning quite different: and this fact, so often occurring in the passage, strongly confirms the view of the common matter taken in the Introduction, viz., that it is a portion of the utterance of the Spirit used independently by the two inspired writers. See the separate sense of each, in the notes on each. **But** (contrast to the angels, just mentioned) **these, as irrational animals, born naturally for** (with a view to) **capture and destruction** (i. e. not to take and to destroy, but to be taken and destroyed), **speaking evil** (as they do) **in the matter of things which they know not, in their corruption** (in their practising, and following out, of this corruption to which they have devoted themselves) **shall even perish** (shall go on till they perish; not only being found in it, living in it, advancing in it, but going on also to its final issue, viz. eternal perdition),

13 a.] receiving as they shall [the] reward of unrighteousness (exactly as in ver. 15, wages or retribution for unrighteousness: the only difference being that Balaam followed its temporal wages, they shall receive its eternal);

13 b, 14.] imagining a pleasure delicate living for a day (the interpretations of these last words have been various. Some take them as meaning *day by day*, which seems unallowable. Some, as A.V., take them for “*in the daytime*,” as implying absence of all shame; but this would give a very lame and frigid sense, and is inconsistent with what is laid to the charge of these persons, which is not revelling or rioting, but delicate living, which those who practise carry on as much in the daytime as by night, being the habit of their lives. There can be little doubt that the true rendering is as the vulgate has it, and as we have given it, **which is but for a day; spots** (but “*rocks*:” see Jude 12, where see note) **and blemishes** (disgraces, disfigurements, causing shame), **luxuriating in their deceits** (i. e. as explained by Huther, in those things or materials of luxury, which they have fraudulently gotten, the abstract for the concrete. But, granting that interpretation as the words stand, there seems to be considerable doubt and difficulty about both reading und meaning, which can hardly be explained to the English reader. I may say that it arises from the confusion, here and in Jude, between *agapais*, love-feasts, and *aputais*, deceits. Here, the preponderance of MS. testimony is for the latter of these: in Jude, for the former. But it may be questioned whether *agapais*, love-feasts, was not the original reading here as well as there. And on this supposition, the meaning will be, that in their love-feasts [see on Jude] they find occasion of luxuriating and delicate living, while feasting with you) **while they feast with you** (this at all events refers to the love-feasts, whatever be read above. See on Jude), **having eyes full of an adulteress** (so literally: meaning that their prurient imagination has ever the forbidden image before it, as if they saw it with their eyes), **and that cannot be made to cease from sin** (see 1 Pet. iv. 1), **laying baits for unstable souls** (unfixed, not formed nor established in faith and the feature of piety), **having a heart practised in covetousness, children of curse** (i. e. as in 2 Thess. ii. 8; John xvii. 12, persons devoted to the curse, accursed. But the A.V., “*cursed children*,” does not give the meaning, “*children*” being used in the original simply with reference their origin, *the curse*),

15.] The last clauses, comprising our ver. 14, have no representatives in Jude. Now again the parallelism begins, see Jude 11: but the sentiment is more expanded here. **Which have forsaken the right way** (see Acts xiii. 10) **and are gone astray, following out the way of Balaam** (not merely figuratively, the way [of life], but literally, seeing that it was by a *journey* that Balaam displeased God: compare the frequent repetition of the word in Num. xxii. 23, and the words of the angel in ver. 32 there) **[the son] of Bosor** (*Bosor* seems to be a Galilean form, which [Matt. xxvi. 73] St. Peter would naturally use, of *Beor*, the name of Balaam’s father in Numbers), **who loved the wages of unrighteousness** (viz. which he vainly thought he might get by disobeying the command of God. See Bp. Butler’s masterly sermon on the character of Balaam, in his well-known volume), **but had a rebuke for his own iniquity** (what sort of a reproof is shewn below. If any force can be given to the insertion of *own*, it will be found in the fact that the reproof came from an animal which was part of his own substance: he himself furnished the conviction of his own iniquity, from the animal on which he rode): **a dumb beast of burden** (this expression is apparently used as synonymous with an *ass* in Matt. xxi. 5. If so, the universal practice of riding on the ass in Palestine must be regarded as the reason) **speaking in man’s voice hindered** (not in matter of fact, for Balaam went on his way: but subjectively, was hindering, i.e. tried to hinder: “*withstood*,” or as A.V. “*forbad*”) **the madness of the prophet** (a discrepancy has been discovered between this and the Mosaic account, seeing that it was the angel, and not the ass, from whom the rebuke came, the ass having merely deprecated ill-treatment at Balaam’s hands. But the Apostle evidently regards not so much the words of rebuke uttered, as the miraculous fact, as being the hindrance. It was enough to have prevented his

going onward, when the dumb animal on which he rode was gifted with speech to shew him his madness).

17, 18.] *Further designation of these false teachers, and justification of it.* Compare Jude 12, 13, which is here much abridged. **These are wells without water** (in Jude, *clouds* without water. The comparison, in both Epistles, is simply to that which may be expected to yield water, and yields none), **and mists driven along by a whirlwind, for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved** (see on Jude. It is obvious that no just charge of inappropriateness can be brought against our passage because this clause occurs in a different connexion from that in Jude. There it is said of wandering stars, here of driven clouds: of each, with equal appropriateness: darkness being predicable of clouds, as well as of stars extinguished).

18.] Justification of the description. **For, speaking great swelling things of vanity** (whose characteristic is **vanity**; as in the genitive “body of sin,” Rom. vi. 6, and the like) **they allure** (above, ver. 14) **in lusts** (“in,” or “with,” describes the state of the tempters, and the element in which their laying of enticing baits is situated) **by licentiousnesses** (these are the instrument, the bait itself) **of the flesh those who are scarcely** (with very little space, or, very little time, for such escape) **escaping from them who live in error** (i. e., those unhappy persons who are but just escaping from the influence of those who live in error [the heathen], are then laid hold of by these deceivers, enticing them with licentiousness), **promising them liberty** (these are the great swelling things which they speak; holding out a state of Christian liberty, which proves to be the bondage of corruption) **while they themselves are** (all the while) **slaves of corruption** (the same words occur together in Rom. viii. 21, which it is very likely St. Peter had in view: compare ch. iii. 15. They promise that liberty of the sons of God, being themselves in the bondage of corruption). **corruption** here means, moral decay of sin, ending in perdition): **for by what [ever] a man is overcome, by the same he is also enslaved** (compare John viii. 34; Rom. vi. 6. These passages were certainly in the Apostle’s mind).

20–22.] Further description of these deceivers, as apostates from Christ, and designation of their terrible state as such. **For if, having escaped** (it might seem at first sight as if the *escapers* of ver. 18 were meant: but on close inspection it is plain that this is not so, but that we are continuing the description of the *slaves of corruption*, viz. the deceivers themselves) **the pollutions of the world, in** (element and condition of their escape) **knowledge** (genuine and accurate knowledge: shewing that he is treating of men who have not been mere professors of spiritual grace, but real possessors of it) **of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** (expressed at length, to set forth more solemnly that from which they fall), **but having again become entangled in these, they are overcome, their last state is** (literally, **has become**: but we cannot say this in English, for we thereby convey an idea that it was not always so, but has undergone a change) **worse than the first** (the saying is our Lord’s own: see Matt. xii. 45 and the parallel in Luke).

21.] Reason of these last words. **For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness** (viz. the Christian life: *the way of truth*, as in ver. 2) **than, having known it, to turn back from** (out of, as out of a way) **the holy commandment** (the moral law of the gospel: here so designated, because it is of moral corruption that the Apostle is treating) **delivered to them** (compare Jude 3, “*the faith once [for all] delivered to the saints*”).

22.] Further description of their state by two proverbial expressions. **There hath happened to them that of the true proverb, The dog gone back** (i. e. “which has gone back”) **to his own vomit** (in ref. Prov. we have something very like this. It may seem however somewhat doubtful, whether the proverbs, as here cited, be meant to be taken from Scripture, or rather not both of them from the popular parlance): **and, The sow after washing to** (*gone back*, or *returned* is generally understood before *to*. But it seems better, with Huther, to understand the proverb as self-contained, and elliptical, as in “Sweets to the sweet:” so, “The washed sow to the mire”) **wallowing in the mire.**

2 Peter: Chapter 3

CHAP. III.] The general subject: THE CERTAINTY OF CHRIST’ S COMING ESTABLISHED AGAINST CERTAIN SCOFFERS WHO SHALL CALL IT INTO DOUBT. EXHORTATIONS are intermingled, and follow as a CONCLUSION.

1.] This Epistle now, beloved, a second (so literally) **write I unto you: in which Epistles** (the A.V. well, “*in both which:*” viz. this and the first) **I stir up your pure mind** (the original word signifies that aspect of the spiritual being of man, in which it is turned towards the outer world; his mind for business and other interests, guiding him in action, And this may be said to be **pure**, when, the will and affection being turned to God, it is not obscured by fleshly and selfish regards: the opposite being “*darkened in their mind*,” Eph. iv. 18. It seems impossible to reproduce in English these distinctions; we can only give them a general rendering, and leave all besides for explanatory notes) **in reminding** (see the same expression, ch i. 13); **that ye should remember the words spoken before by the holy prophets** (i. e. the Old Test. prophets, as referred to above, ch. i. 19 ff.), **and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour given by your apostles** (“*your Apostles*” as we call St. Paul *the Apostle of the Gentiles*. It is quite impossible that the common reading can stand,—having absolutely no authority: and difficult, even if it did, to render as the A.V. “*of us the Apostles*”):—**knowing this first** (Jude introduces the same prophetic fact with “*how that they told you*,” ver. 18), **that there shall come in the last of the days** (see note on Heb. i. 1. It slightly

differs from “*at the end of the days*,” as extending by the plural, the expression, though perhaps not the meaning, over a wider space: see Jude 18) **scoffers in [their] scoffing** (scoffers making use of scoffing: see Rev. xiv. 2, “*harpers harping with their harps*:” 2 Sam. xx. 22, “*the wise woman in her wisdom went unto all the people*. ”

On the sense, see Jude 18), **walking according to their own lusts** (so Jude 11 and 16, here combined), **and saying, Where is the promise of his coming** (implying that it is nowhere, has passed and disappeared: **His**, viz. of Christ: whose name would be understood as of course)? **for from the day when the fathers fell asleep, all things continue thus from the beginning of creation** (we cannot after **thus** supply “as they were,” as A.V.: **thus** simply referring to the present; as they are, as we now see them: and the words “*from the beginning of the creation*,” belonging only to the verb continue. This being so, we still have two predicatorial clauses belonging to the verb: “*since the fathers fell asleep*,” and “*from the beginning of the creation*. ” The way of explaining this must be, that the time of waiting for the promise necessarily dates from the death of the fathers, and the duration of things continuing as they are now extends back beyond the death of the fathers: so that the meaning will be, ever since the death of those to whom the promise was made, things have continued as we now see them [and as they have ever continued even before those fathers] from the beginning of creation. So that “*all things continue from the beginning of creation*,” is a general proposition applicable to all time: “*since the fathers fell asleep*,” the terminus, from which this general proposition is taken up and applied to the case in hand. And now we have cleared the way to enquiring, who are meant by **the fathers**. And the answer is plain: largely and generally, those to whom the promise was made: the same as are indicated Rom. ix. 5, “*of whom are the fathers*:” yet not exclusively these, but simultaneously with them any others who may be in the same category,—e. g. those who bear to the New Test. church the same relation as they to that of the Old Test. The assertion, as coming from the *scoffers*, must not be pressed to any particular date, but given that wide reference which would naturally be in the mind of one making such a general charge).

5–10.] *Refutations of this their scoffing inference.*

5–7.] *First refutation:* from the biblical *history of the creation*. **For** (i. e. they speak thus, because) **this** (viz. this fact which follows) **escapes them** (passes unnoticed by them) **of their own will** (i. e. they shut their eyes to this fact), **that the heavens were from old** (from the beginning of all things) **and the earth formed** (holding together, composed, subsisting; so the same Greek word in Col. i. 17, “*By him all things subsist*”) **out of water and by means of water (out of water**, because the waters that were under the firmament were gathered together into one place and the dry land appeared: and thus water was the material, *out of* which the earth was made: **by means of water**, because the waters above the firmament, being divided from the waters below the firmament, by furnishing moisture, and rain, and keeping moist the earth, are *the means by which* the earth *subsists*. This is the simplest rendering) **by the word of God** (not of its own will, nor by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms), **by means of which [two]** (viz. the waters under the firmament and the waters above the firmament: for in the flood [1] the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and [2] the windows of heaven were opened, Gen. vii. 11. See the other interpretations in my Greek Test.) **the then world** (i. e. the whole state of things then existing. The Apostle’s argument is, as against the assertors of the world’s endurance for ever, that it *has once been destroyed*, so that their assertion is thereby invalidated. The analogy is not exactly, but is sufficiently close: and **the world**, as an indefinite common term, takes in the *heavens and earth*, which were then instrumental in, and purified by, the destruction, if not altogether swept away by it. Nay, the analogy is closer than this: for just as Noah stepped out of the Ark on a new world, the face of the heavens clear, and the face of the earth renewed, so we look for a new heavens and earth [ver. 13], yet like these others constructed out of the materials of the old) **being inundated with water, perished** (see last note; not, *was annihilated*, but lost its then form and subsistence as a *world or order of things* [*cosmos*, the Greek for *world*, signifies both], and passed into a new state. Only thus does the verse come in logically as a contradiction to the saying of the scoffers, that *all things remain thus from the beginning of creation*):

7.] **but the new heavens and earth** (contrast to *the then world*: the postdiluvian visible world) **by His** (God’s: if the other reading [see margin] be taken, it must not be pressed to signify any one saying, but must refer generally to the prophetic word, which has announced that which comes to be mentioned) **word are treasured up** (perfect: “have been, and are still,” Kept in store, put by, against a certain time), **being kept** (present tense, denoting that it is only God’s constantly watchful Providence which holds together the present state of things till His time for ending it) **for fire against the day of judgment and perdition of impious men.**

8–10.] *Second contradiction* to the scoffers: *we are not to judge God*, in the *case of delay*, as we do men, seeing that His thoughts are not as our thoughts. **But let this one thing not escape you, beloved (this one**, as especially important: **escape you**, in allusion to ver. 5), **that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day** (the saying is the completion of that in Ps. xc., setting forth also in a wonderful way, that one day may be in God’s sight as productive of events as a millennium: in other words, when both clauses are considered, placing Him far above all human limits of time). **The Lord** (i. e. God, the Father, as so often in this and in the first Epistle) is **not tardy** (the verb signifies, not merely to *delay*, but to *be late*, beyond an appointed time; **slack**, as A.V.) **concerning his promise, as some** (viz. the scoffers in question, who are pointed at) **account** (His conduct) **tardiness: but He is long-suffering towards you** (the readers of the Epistle; not as a separate class, but as representing all; as shewn below), **not willing that any should perish, but (willing) that all should go**

forward to repentance.

10.] Assertion of the conclusion as against the scoffers—the certainty, suddenness, and effect of the day of the Lord. But (notwithstanding the delay) **the day of the Lord** (i. e. of God; see below, ver. 12) **shall** (or, will) **come** (this verb has the emphasis, as opposed to all the doubts of the scoffers. It is more than merely “shall come,” though no one word will give the exact force in English: “shall be here,” “shall be upon you”) **as a thief** (1 Thess. v. 2: from which place probably the expression is taken, as reference is made below to the Epistles of St. Paul); **in which the heavens shall pass away** (Matt. v. 18, xxiv. 34, 35; and Rev. xxi. 1) **with a rushing noise** (the word imports the rush of a bird, or of an arrow, or of any thing rapidly moving. Some understand it of the actual noise of the flames which shall consume the heavens: others, of the crash with which they shall fall), **and the heavenly bodies** (the word signifies, according to Bede, *the four elements*, fire, air, earth, and water: but he is obliged to modify the meaning of the verb, inasmuch as fire cannot dissolve or consume fire: according to Bengel, *the sun, moon, and stars*, defending it by this word being often used in that sense by the fathers. And, considering that this clause, on account of the **but**, followed presently by **also** when we come to speak of the earth, necessarily belongs to the heavens,—considering also that the mention of the heavenly bodies as affected by the great Day is constant in Scripture, compare Matt. xxiv. 29; Isa. xiii. 9, 10, xxiv. 23, xxxiv. 4, &c., I should be inclined on the whole to accept this interpretation) **being scorched up** (the word signifies, to suffer from excessive heat: to be in a burning fever) **shall be dissolved** (not literally, *melt*: in ver. 12, the word is a different one), **and the earth and the works in it** (this may mean either the works of men, buildings and the like,—or, the works of the Creator: perhaps both of these combined, “the works of nature and art,” Bengel) **shall be burned up.** **11–18.] EXHORTATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE APPROACH OF THE DAY OF GOD.**

11–13.] In direct reference to what has just been said, *waiting and eager expectation is enjoined.*

11.] These things being thus to be dissolved (i. e., this heaven and earth which surround us. According to the reading in the text, there is no particle of inference: but the inference is all the more vivid

thus: viz. in the manner just described. The original *may* mean, *being in course of dissolution*: but the other rendering is more probable), **what manner of men** (not interrogative, but exclamatory) **ought ye to be** (when the event comes: the verb here rendered **be** seems to imply some fact supervening upon the previously existing state, **in holy behaviours and pieties** (so literally; the plurals marking the holy behaviour and piety in all its different forms and examples) **looking for and hastening** (the older Commentators mostly supplied “unto” after **hastening**. So the A.V.; but there seems no reason for this. The meaning is most probably transitive, to: “hasten,” “urge on:” which T agree with De Wette in adopting, and in understanding as he does, “They hasten it by perfecting, in repentance and holiness, the work of the Gospel, and thus diminishing the need of the ‘long-suffering’ ver. 9,” to which the delay of that day is owing. Huther’s objection to this is not difficult to answer. It is true, that the delay or hastening of that day is not man’s matter but God’s: but it is not uncommon Scripture to attribute to *us* those divine acts, or abstinences from acting, which are really and in their depth, God’s own. Thus we read, that “He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief,” Matt. xiii. 58, compared with Mark vi. 5, 6: thus repeatedly of man’s striving with, hindering, quenching, God’s Holy Spirit) **the advent** (elsewhere commonly used of person, and most usually of the presence or advent of the Lord Himself) **of the day of God** (the same as “*the day of the Lord*” above), **by reason of which** (viz. which *day*; or, but not so well, which *coming*, on account of, for the sake of, which) **the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the heavenly bodies being scorched up are to be melted** (in the original, present, importing destiny: see above on ver. 11. De Wette thinks the meaning is not to be literally pressed, as if the *heavenly bodies* were a solid mass which would actually liquefy: but why not? The same liquefaction has actually taken place in the crust of the earth wherever

the central fires have acted on it. All our igneous rocks have been in a liquid state: why should not that day, in its purifying process, produce a similar effect on the earth again, and on her cognate planets, if they are to be included?

In this recapitulation, the Apostle mentions that part only of the destruction of that day which concerns the *heavens*: arguing from the greater to the less. The similarity to Isa. xxxiv. 4 can hardly escape notice, “*All the host of heaven shall be dissolved.*” See also Micah i. 4).

13.] The positive result of that day as regards the church. But (contrast to the destructive effects of the day lately dwelt, on: not “*nevertheless*,” as A.V.. which looks as if the two effects were in antagonism, and the earth were to *be annihilated*, of which idea there is no trace. The flood did not annihilate the earth, but changed it; and as the new earth was the consequence of the flood, so the final new heavens and earth shall be of the fire) **according to His** (God’s) **promise** (viz., that written in Isa. xxxii. 16) **we** (no stress, as is almost unavoidable in the A.V. “*Nevertheless we, according to his promise:*” there is no personal pronoun expressed in the Greek, nor is the distinction drawn between us and any other class of persons) **expect new heavens and a new earth, in which** (heavens and earth, plural) **righteousness dwelleth** (as before: Isa., compare also Isa. lxv. 25).

14.] Exhortation founded on this expectation. Wherefore, beloved, expecting (as ye do) **these things, be earnest** (not the

daily habit so much, as the one great life-effort which shall accomplish the end, is in the Apostle's mind) **to be found** (at His coming. This word shews plainly enough that a personal coming of the Lord, as in ver. 4, is in the view of the Apostle throughout, as connected with the proceedings of the great Day. The form of expression reminds us forcibly of Matt. xxii. 11ff.) **spotless and blameless** (compare 2 Cor. vi. 3, viii. 20; also the contrast, above, ch. ii. 13. From the connexion there with a feast, it seems very probable that in both passages the parable of the wedding garment was floating before the Apostle's mind) **in His sight** (so, and not, "by Him," or "of Him," as A.V., must we render) **in peace** (second predicate after the verb **to be found**: the *spotlessness* and *blamelessness* were with reference to God; this, in reference to your own state and lot: in peace *among yourselves*, in peace *with yourselves*, in peace *for yourselves*, with God. But perhaps an expression so familiar to the Eastern tongue as "*in peace*," may have an onward as well as a present meaning, as in "*go in peace*:" and be taken of that eternal peace, of which all earthly peace is but a feeble foretaste): **and account the long-suffering of our Lord (our Lord,** thus expressed, is hardly to be dissevered from Him who is expressly thus named below, ver. 18. And if so, then, throughout this weighty passage, the Lord Jesus is invested with the full attributes of Deity. It is He who waits and is long-suffering. He, in His union and coequality with the Father, who ruleth all things after the counsel of His own will) **salvation** (contrast to those who count His delay to be *slackness*, ver. 9): **even as also** (besides myself) **our beloved brother** (this term is probably used in a closer sense than as merely signifying fellow-Christian: our beloved fellow-Apostle) **Paul according to the wisdom given to him** (see 1 Cor. iii. 10. Also Gal. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 2, 7, 8; Col. i. 25) **wrote to you** (What? Where? to whom? By some the reply to the first has been found in the preceding clause, "*that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation*:" which, in sense, is almost identical with Rom. ii. 4, "*the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance*." But surely the reference is too narrow to satisfy what follows here, *speaking in them concerning these things*, where the reference must be to *the things*, which we Christians *look for*, viz., to the coming of the day of the Lord. Thus then we should interpret the particular reference to be to some particular passage in which St. Paul had exhorted to readiness in expectation of that day, and the more general reference, ver. 16, of the frequent mention of that day in his other Epistles. In searching then 2) for some passage which may fulfil the above condition, it seems to me that we need not go beyond the earliest Epistle of St. Paul, viz. 1 Thessalonians. There, in ch. iv. 13—v. 11, we have a passage on this very point, and the more satisfactory, because St. Peter seems, in our ver. 10, to have had 1 Thess. v. 2 before his mind, And as to 3) the expression **to you**, there seems no need to press it as identifying any particular church, seeing that this our Epistle is addressed to all Christians alike: see ch. i. 1. AH that follows from this **to you** is what may also be gathered from ver. 16, that our Epistle belongs to a date when the Pauline Epistles were no longer the property only of the churches to which they were written, but were dispersed through, and considered to belong to, the whole Christian Church. What date that is, I have discussed in the Introduction. There have been very various opinions as to the passage and Epistle meant: some think it to be the Epistle to the Hebrews,

on account of ch. ix. 26 ff., x. 25, 37 (see on these in the Introd. to the Hebrews, §i. par. 6): others, the Epistles to the Corinthians, especially 1 Cor. i. 7–9, finding an allusion to 1 Cor. ii. 1 ff. in the words "*according to the wisdom given to him*:" others, the Epistles to the Galatians,

Ephesians, Colossians, being addressed

to Asia Minor churches, as they hold this to be: others, referring the words "*in peace*" to the difference between

Paul and Peter, the Epistle to the Galatians: others, some Epistle which has not come down to us); **as also in all (his, but not expressed: in all Epistles which he writes**, leaving room for the possibility that the number of those Epistles was not complete, but still being added to) **Epistles, speaking in them** (as he does) **of these things** (viz. the coming of our Lord, and the end of the world), **in which** (Epistles, if the feminine relative be read: if the masculine

[or neuter], "*in which sayings of his*:" not, "*in which things*," "*in which subjects*," as some have rendered by of escape from the supposed difficulty: for the pronoun is correlative with *the other scriptures*, and must therefore designate some writings previously mentioned: or else the sentence is stultified) **are some things difficult to understand** (De Wette especially refers to 2 Thess. ii. 1 ff.: and it is not improbable that this may have been particularly in the Apostles mind. See note on 2 Tim. ii. 18), **which the ignorant**

(unintelligent, uninformed: this want of intelligence may arise from many causes: but the misunderstanding of difficult Scriptures

is common to the unintelligent in general) **and unstable** (those who, wanting firm foundation and anchorage, waver and drift about with every wind of doctrine. Such persons are stirred from their Christian

stability by every apparent difficulty are rendered anxious and perplexed by hard texts: and showing more anxiety to interpret them somehow, than to wait upon God for their solution, rush upon erroneous and dangerous ways of interpretation) **distort**

(the verb means, properly, to twist with a handscrew or windlass. Hence to torment with the *screw*: and then figuratively,

to distort, pervert, strain, in meaning)

as also the other Scriptures (or, the other passages of Scripture having reference

to this great subject. Whichever be understood, it is plain 1) that by these words St. Paul's Epistles are reckoned among the Christian Scriptures: 2) that, there were at this time besides those Epistles, other writings holding a similar place, known as "scriptures;" probably, at least, the three Gospels [and Acts?], and some of the earlier written catholic Epistles. That by **the other Scriptures** should be meant the Old Test. Scriptures, is not probable: these would have been more fully designated than by being placed in the same category with the inspired writings of recent or living men), **to** (as a contribution to—towards,—so as to help towards) **their own perdition.** 17, 18.] *Concluding exhortations:* conveyed first in the form of a caution (ver. 17), then in that of a positive exhortation to increase in grace and wisdom. **Ye therefore, beloved, knowing** (as ye do) **beforehand** (viz the whole announcement of which this chapter has been full: the certainty that such false teachers will arise, and the course which they will take), **take heed** (be on your guard) **lest being led away together with** (it is a remarkable coincidence, that St. Peter, well acquainted as he was with St. Paul's writings, should have written this word, which is the very one used by that Apostle [Gal. ii. 13] of Barnabas, at Antioch, when he *was led away together* with the hypocrisy of Peter and the other Jews) **the error** (not, *the deceit*, active, deceiving others: but the aberration, wandering out of the right way, so as to follow it, and become partakers with it) **of the lawless ye fall from your own stedfastness** (contrast to the "unstable" above: see note there): **but** (contrast to the fall just predicated as possible) **grow** (not only do not *fall from stedfastness*, but be so firmly rooted as to throw out branches and yield increase. "The only condition of perseverance is, continual increase," Calvin) **in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** (the genitive, **of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**, belongs to both **grace** and **knowledge**. The common rendering, "*in grace and in the knowledge of..*," would have been otherwise expressed in the original. Taken as above, the genitive stands in somewhat different relation to the two words **grace** and **knowledge**. As regards **grace**, it is a subjective genitive:—the grace of which Christ is the author and bestower; of which it is said, "*grace came by Jesus Christ.*" as regards **knowledge**, it is an objective genitive,—the knowledge of which Christ is the object). *Concluding doxology:* "a hymn to Christ as to God," as Pliny in his famous letter to Trajan. **To Him [be, or is] the glory** (*the glory*—i. e. all glory that is rendered: the sum total of glory) **both now and to the day of eternity** (so literally: the day which shall dawn at the end of time, and being eternal, itself know no end: "all eternity in one day," as Estius says). **Amen** (compare Jude 25).

1 JOHN

Chapter 1

Chapter 4

Chapter 2

Chapter 5

Chapter 3

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

1 John: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1-4.] INTRODUCTION: THE PERSONAL AUTHORITY OF THE WRITER, AND OBJECTS OF THE EPISTLE.—This Epistle does not begin with an *address*, properly so called. But there is in this sentence the latent form of an address: the “*unto you*” of ver. 3, and the wish “*that our joy maybe full,*” answering (see note) to the more usual *greeting*, seem to shew that what follows is an Epistle, not a treatise.

The construction of these verses is difficult, and has been variously given. The simplest view, and that generally adopted, is, that in ver. 1 a sentence is begun, which is broken off by the parenthetical ver. 2 inserted to explain ver. 1, and carried on again in ver. 3, some words being, for the sake of perspicuity, recited again from ver. 1. The smaller clauses, &c., are co-ordinate with each other. So that the sentence and construction flow smoothly and regularly.

That which was (not, ‘*took place*’) **from the beginning** (not synonymous with “*in the beginning*,” though in the depth of its meaning it is virtually the same. It sets before us the prior limit, but without meaning strictly to define it as such exclusively. The interpretation, “*Since the beginning of the Gospel,*” is connected with the misunderstanding of the whole passage by the Socinian interpreters, and cannot stand for a moment when we consider the context with ver. 2, and the use of this term by St. John when applied Christ or to supernatural beings: see ch. ii. 13, 14, iii. 8; John viii. 44. Wherever he uses it of the preaching of the Gospel it is definitely marked as bearing that meaning: compare ch. ii. 7, 24, iii. 11. On the meaning of this clause see below), **that which we have heard** (the perfect tense extends the reference of the verb from the beginning, and that which the Apostle might have heard concerning Christ, e.g. from John the Baptist, down to the time when he was writing: regards his hearing as a finished and abiding possession), **that which we have seen with our eyes** (the same is true again. The seeing as well as the hearing is a finished and abiding possession. The clauses rise in climax: seeing is more than hearing: **with our eyes** emphasizes the fact of eye-witness), **that which we looked upon** (now, the tense is altered: because the Evangelist comes from speaking of the closed testimony which abode with him as a whole, to that of the senses actually exercised at the time when Christ was on earth. Notice the climax again: *to look upon* is more than *to see*: so Beza here: “which I saw with these eyes, and that not once, nor by the way, but which I earnestly and thoroughly contemplated.” See more below), **and our hands handled** (“a reference has been supposed to John xx. 20, 27: Luke xxiv. 39. But there is no need for it. Surely no *proof* is wanted, that John, who lay on the bosom of our Lord, and was beloved by Him, had touched his Lord with his hands.” Fritzsche. These words are not for a moment to be explained away: they are literal matter of fact, and form one of the strongest proofs that what is said, is said of no other than the personal incarnate Son of God) **concerning the Word of life** (the *construction* seems to be this: **concerning** depends strictly upon the verb **heard**, loosely upon the other clauses. The explanation turns wholly upon the sense which we assign to the words the **Word of life**: and here there has been great diversity among commentators. This diversity may be gathered under two heads: those who make the **Word** the personal Word, who *is life*, and those who make it the account, or preaching, or doctrine, *concerning life*. Of this latter number are, for the most part, Socinus and his school, and some few other expositors. ‘The former includes Augustine, Bede, Calvin [gives both], Beza, Luther, Bengel, &c. And as these words are the keystone of the sentence, it will be well to set out the interpretation once for all. I regard then the **Word of life** as the designation of our Lord Himself. He is the **Word**, and is the **Word of life**, this genitive, *of life*, being one of apposition, as He describes Himself, as being the *Life*, John xi. 25, xiv. 6,—*the Bread of life*, vi. 35, 48: the *Light of life*, viii. 12: compare also, i. 4. This being so, the things mentioned

that which,—that which,—that which,—are all matters concerning, belonging to, regarding, Himself, the Lord of Life: all together predicated of Him by the **concerning**, which more properly belongs to the one verb **heard** [notice that in ver. 5, where the nature of the *message* is stated, this alone, of all these verbs, repeated].

That which was from the beginning is His eternal pre-existence and inherent Life and Glory with the Father: this is what, in a sense slightly, though but slightly, differing from the

common one, may be said to have been **from the beginning concerning the Word of life:** that which was inherent indeed in Him, but by *beg announced* to you, takes the form of being *concerning* Him; His well-known character and attribute. **That which we have heard, and that which we have seen with our eyes**, hold a middle place between the eternal and pre-existent and the material and human things *concerning the Word of life*; the hearing of the ear embracing all the teaching of the Lord respecting *that which was from the beginning*, and the seeing of the eye taking in both His glory, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, and ‘the human Body which He assumed, with all its actions and sufferings: compare John xix. 35. Then, still lingering on the combined testimony to His pre-existent glory and His human presence in the flesh, he adds, **that which we looked upon**, which *contemplation*, as He Himself tells through the human into the divine, John i. 14, besides its earnest and

diligent observation of His human life. Finally, he comes down to that which though the most direct and palpable proof for human testimony, is yet the lowest, as being only material' and sensuous, that which our **hands handled**, All this concerning Him, who is *the Word of life*, is recapitulated again in ver. 3 under its two great heads, **that which we have seen and heard, we declare unto you also**. Lücke has very fairly stated, and refuted, the Socinian view which makes **that which** to be the teaching of Jesus from the beginning of **His** official life onwards, and **the Word of life**, as in ch. ii. 7, to mean, *the word which ye heard*: rightly stating the fatal and crucial obstacle to this view to consist in the words, **our hands handled**, which none of its advocates can in any way get over). And the Life (i. e. the Lord Himself who is the Life: compare John i. 4, *In Him was Life.*) This verse is parenthetical, taking up the last clause, and indeed the whole sense, of ver. 1, and showing how the testimony there predicated became possible) **was manifested** (from being invisible, became visible), **and we have seen [it], and bear witness [of it], and declare** (this verb does not, either here or below, refer to the declaration in this present Epistle: it is the general declaration, in word and writing, of which the **write** we below, ver. 4, is the special portion at present employed) **to you that life which is eternal, the which** ("that very before-mentioned life, which was with the Father") **was with the Father** (see on John i. 1, 'The preposition implies not juxtaposition only, but relation: hardly however, as some here, *love*: at the same time it sets forth plainly the distinction of Persons), and was manifested to us (here the parenthesis ends, and the construction of ver. 1 is resumed. But on account of the distance at which that verse now stands, the leading particulars of its sense are recapitulated): **that which we have heard and seen we declare to you also** (this **also** here seems to give to the Epistle the character of being addressed to some special circle of Christian readers, beyond those addressed at the conclusion of the Gospel, ch. xx. 31, or we may take it as indicating "you, who did not hear, nor see, nor handle with your hands the Word of life." But the other is more likely), **in order that ye also** (see above) **may have fellowship with us** (*with us*, the Apostles and eye-witnesses: being bound in faith and love to them, as they were to Christ): **and indeed** (the thought rises to the immeasurably more solemn and glorious character of the second fellowship as compared with the first: as if it were, "and this *fellowship with us* will not stop here? for we are but your admitters into another and a higher fellowship") **our fellowship is with the Father and with** (observe the repeated with, distinguishing the Personality, while the very fact of the *fellowship* with Both unites the Two in the Godhead, It is not, fellowship with God and us, but with us, whose fellowship is with God, the Father and the Son) **His Son Jesus Christ** (the personal and the Messianic Names are united, as in John i. 17, where He is first mentioned, as here. 'The question has been sometimes asked, why we have not here, "*and with the Holy Ghost?*" 'The answer to which is not, as Lucke, because the divine Personality of the Holy Ghost was not found in the apostolic mode of thought, but because, the blessed Spirit being God dwelling in man, though we may be said to have "*the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,*" 2 Cor. xiii. 13,—we would hardly be said to have "*fellowship with the Holy Ghost*"), **And these things** (i. e. this whole Epistle: not, the foregoing, nor, the immediately following) **we write, that our** (our, i.e. of *us and of you*: not, *of us*, as distinguished from *you*) **joy may be fall** (the joy spoken of is the whole complex of the Christian life here and hereafter: its, whole sum is, JOY. As Diisterdieck beautifully says, "The peace of reconciliation, the blessed consciousness of sonship, the happy growth in holiness, the bright prospect of future completion and glory,—all these are but simple details of that 'which in all its length and breadth is embraced by one word, Eternal Life, the real possession of which is the immediate source of joy. We have joy, Christ's joy, because are blessed, because we have Life itself in Christ.' It has been noticed before, that this verse fills the place of the *greeting* so common in the opening of Epistles, and gives an epistolary character to what follows).

5—II. 28.] FIRST PART OF THE EPISTLE: the message, that *if we would have fellowship with Him who is Light, we must walk in light, keeping His commandments*. See the discussion on the division of the Epistle, in the Introduction.

5.] In each of these divisions, the first verse contains the ground-tone of the whole. And so here—**GOD IS LIGHT.—And** (serves to introduce the new subject) **the message which we have heard from Him** (viz. from Christ), **and announce to you** (Diisterdieck remarks, that St. John seems every where to observe the distinction between the two verbs, to *announce* and to *declare*), **is this: that God is light** (not, us Luther, "a light:" **light** is purely predicative, indicating the essence of God: just as when it is said in ch. iv. 8, "*God is love.*" There it is true the predicate is purely ethical, and thus literal, when used of God who is a Spirit, whereas here, *light* being a material, not an ethical object, some amount of figurative meaning must be conceded. But of all material objects, light is that which most easily passes into an ethical predicate without even the process, in our thought, of interpretation. It unites in itself purity and clearness and beauty and glory, as no other material object does: it is the condition of all material life and growth and joy. And the application to God of such a predicate requires no transference. He is Light, and the Fountain of Light material and light ethical. In the one world, darkness is the absence of light: in the other, darkness, untruthfulness, deceit, falsehood, is the absence of God. They who are in communion with God, and walk with God, are of the light, and walk in the light), **and there is not in Him any darkness at all** (it is according to the manner of St. John, to strengthen an affirmation by the emphatic negation of its opposite; compare ver. 8: ch. ii. 4, 10, 27, &c. Of the ethical darkness here denied, the Scholiast says, "for neither is there ignorance, nor deceit, nor sin, nor death." 'The Greek expositors ask the question respecting this message, "And where did he hear this?"—and answer it, From Christ Himself, who said, "I am the **Light** of the world."

'Their reply is right, but their reference to those words of our Lord is wrong. It was *from Christ Himself*: viz. from the whole revelation, in doings and sufferings and sayings, of Him who was the brightness of the glory of the Father. With that revelation those His words admirably and exactly coincided: but they were not the source of the message, referring as they did

specially to Himself, and not directly to the Father. In His whole life on earth, and in the testimony of His Spirit, He declared Him. So that this message is the result of the whole complex of ver. 1).

6.] *None can have fellowship with Him who walk in darkness.* If we say (the hypothesis is not assumed,—*If we say, as we do:”—but is purely hypothetical, “say who will and when he will.” ‘The first person plural gives to the sayings a more general form, precluding any from escaping from the inference: at the same time that by including himself in the hypothesis, the Apostle descends to the level of his readers, thus giving to his exhortations the “come,” and not “go,” which ever wins men’s hearts the most) **that we have fellowship with Him** (see on ver. 3. “Communion with God is the very innermost essence of all true Christian life.” Huther), **and walk in the darkness (walk,** as so often in the New Test. of the whole being and moving and turning in the world: as Bengel, “by inward or outward action, whithersoever we turn ourselves; the *light*, the *darkness*, mark off the two more distinctly than could be done without the articles, as two existing separate ethical regions, the God and no-God regions of spiritual being), we lie (our assertion is a false one) **and do not the truth** (this clause is not a mere repetition, in a negative form, of the preceding “*we lie*:” but is an independent proposition, answering to “*and walk in the darkness*,” and asserting that all such walking in darkness is a not-doing of the truth. Christ is “the Truth;” and all doing the Truth is of Him, and of those who are in union with Him. So that the truth is objective, not as “*truth*” alone it be, subjective, and imports “God’s truth,” Eph. iv. 21. We may observe how closely the teaching here as to *light* and *truth* resembles that in iv. v. See also John iii. 21)

7.] (is not merely the contrasted hypothesis to ver. 6, but together with that contains a further unfolding of the subject): **but if we walk in the light** (this walking in the light is explained by what follows, as *He is in the light*, and by the end of the sentence, which gives the result of so walking,—viz. fellowship&c, See Eph. v. 8 ff. for the ethical details) **as He (God) is in the light** (because the Christian is made *partaker of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i, 4. **is in the light** is parallel with “*is light*” above, ver. 5. is, as of Him who is eternal and fixed; **we walk**, as of us who are of time, moving onward: so Bede, “The distinction of words is to be noted; he says that God is in the light, but that *we ought to walk* in the light. For the righteous walk in the light, when, giving themselves to the working of good deeds, they advance towards perfection:” see note on ch. ii, 6: **the light** is the element in which God dwelleth: compare 1 Tim. vi. 16. Notice that this walking in the light, as He is in the light, no mere imitation of God, but is an identity in the essential element of our daily walk with the essential element of God’s eternal being: not imitation, but coincidence and identity of the very atmosphere of life), **we have fellowship with one another** (these words are to be taken in their plain literal sense, and refer, not to our communion with God, which is assumed in our walking in the light as He is in the light, but to our mutual communion with one another by all having the same ground-element of life, viz. the light of the Lord, Isa. ii. 5. There is evidently an allusion to ver. 3, and as there fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ is expressed, so here it lies in the background, but need not be supplied. De Wette’s remark is most true; Christian communion is then only real, when it is communion with God), **and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin** (in order to understand rightly this important sentence, we must fix definitely two or three points regarding its connexion and construction. First then, and connects it, as an additional result of our walking in the light, as He is in the light, with the words *we have fellowship one with another*: just as in ch. iii. 10, end, and *he that loveth not his brother*. Consequently, the proposition contained in it cannot be the *ground* of the former one, that “if we walk, &c., ve fellowship, &c.” but follows as&co-ordinate result with the fact, of our having fellowship. Secondly, **cleanseth** is the present tense, and must be kept to its *present* meaning. This consideration precludes all meanings which make it refer to the past effect of the Atonement on us, either absolutely, by its having happened, or as applied to us in Baptism. Thirdly, the *sense of cleanseth* must be accurately ascertained, and strictly kept to. In 9, “*to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” is plainly distinguished from “*to forgive us our sins*:” distinguished, as a further process: as, in a word, sanctification distinct from justification. ‘This meaning then, however much it may be supposed that’ justification is implied or presupposed, must be held fast here. Fourthly, the *sense of the blood of Jesus* must be also clearly defined. ‘The expression is an objective one, not a subjective: is spoken of that which is the objective cause from without, of our being cleansed from all sin. And this is the material Blood of Jesus the personal Redeemer, shed on the cross as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sin of the world. So we have the same Blood said in Col. i. 20 to be the great medium of pacification between God and the world: so in Eph. i. 7, to be the means of our *redemption*: so in Heb. ix. 14, which approaches Very nearly to our passage, to *cleanse [here]* our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. In all these places, and similar ones, whatever application to ourselves by faith or otherwise may lie in the background, it is not that which is *spoken of*, but the Blood of Christ itself, as the actual objective cause, once for all, of our reconciliation and sanctification, These considerations remove much of the difficulty and possible misunderstanding of the sentence. Thus understood, it will mean, that this our walking in light, itself necessarily grounded in communion with the Father and the Son, will bring about, that whatever sins we may still be betrayed into by the infirmity of our nature and the malice of the devil, from them the Blood of Jesus purifies us day by day. Observe, not, the *application* of that Blood: for we are speaking of a state of faith and holiness, in which that blood is continually applied: the *walking in the light is, in fact, the application*; is that which, as a subjective conditional element, makes that Blood of Christ’s cross to he to us a means of purifying from all sin.—The whole doctrine of this verse is fully and admirable set forth in Dusterdieck. The sum of what he says may be thus stated. St. John, in accord with the other Apostles, sets forth the Death and Blood of Christ in two different aspects: 1) as the one sin-offering for the world, in which sense we are justified by the application of the blood of Christ by faith, His satisfaction being imputed to us. 2) as a victory over Sin itself, His blood being the purifying medium, whereby we gradually, being already justified, become pure and clean from all sin. And this application of Christ’s blood is

made by the Spirit which dwelleth in us. ‘The former of these asserts the imputed righteousness of Christ put on us in justification: the latter, the inherent righteousness of Christ, wrought in us gradually in sanctification. And it is of this latter that he here is treating. Compare next verse).

8—II. 2.] *Unfolding of the idea of purification from sin by” the blood of Christ in connexion with our walking in light.* This last is adduced in one of its plainest and simplest consequences, viz. the recognition of all that is yet darkness in us, in the confession of our sins. “If thou hast confessed thyself a sinner, the truth is in thee: for truth itself is light. Thy life is not yet all light, because there are yet sins in it: but nevertheless thou hast begun to be illuminated, because there is in thee confession of sins.” The light that is in us convicts the darkness, and we, no longer loving or desiring to sin, have, by means of the propitiatory and sanctifying blood of Christ, both full forgiveness of and sure purification from all our sins. But the true test of this state of communion with and knowledge of God is, the keeping of His commandments [ii. 36], the walking as Christ walked: and this test is concentrated and summed up in its one crucial application, viz. to the law of love [ii. 7–11]

8.] If we say that we have not sin (i. e. in the course and abiding of our walking in light: if we maintain that we are pure and free from all stain of sin. St. John is writing to persons whose sins have been forgiven them [ii. 12], and therefore necessarily the present tense [**we have**] refers not to any previous state of sinful life before conversion, but to their now existing state and the sins to which they are liable in that state. And in thus referring, it takes up the conclusion of the last verse, in which the onward cleansing power of the sanctifying blood of Christ was asserted: as if it were said this state of needing cleansing from all present sin is veritably that of all of us: and our recognition and confession of it is the very first essential of walking in light), **we are deceiving ourselves** (causing ourselves to err from the straight and true way), **and the truth** (God’s truth, objective) **is not in us** (has not subjective place in us. That truth respecting God’s holiness and our own sinfulness, which is the very first spark of light within, has no place in us at all).

9.] If we confess our sins (it is evident, from the whole sense of the passage, which has regard to our walling in light and in the truth, that no mere outward lip-confession is here meant, nor on the other hand any mere being aware within ourselves of sin, but the union of the two, an external spoken confession springing from genuine inward contrition. As evident is it, that the confession here spoken of is not confined to confession to God, but embraces all our utterances on the subject, to one another as well as to Him; compare James v. 16: and see more below) **He** (God the Father; not, Christ, though this may at first sight seem probable from ver. 7 and ch. ii. 1. God is the chief subject through the whole passage: compare “*God is light,*” ver. 5: “with Him,” ver. 6; “He,” mud “His Son,” in ver. 7. “It is ever God’s truth [1 Cor. 9, 10, 13; 2 Cor. i. 18; 1 Thess. v. 24] and righteousness (John xvii 25 Rom. iii. 25; Rev. xvi. 5] that are concerned in, and vindicated by, our redemption)

is faithful and just (His being faithful and just does not’ depend on our confessing our sins: He had both these attributes before, and will ever continue to have them: but by confessing our sins, we cast ourselves on, we approach and put to the proof for ourselves, and shall find operative in our case, in the *forgiving* and *cleansing*, those His attributes of faithfulness and&c. On the former of these adjectives, **faithful**, almost all Commentators agree. It is, faithful to His plighted word and promise: see the citations above.—The latter, just, has not been so unanimously interpreted ‘The idea of *God’s* justice seeming strange here, where the remission of and purification from sin is in question, some Commentators have endeavoured to give the word the sense of *good, merciful*: or, which amounts to the same, *fair, favourably*

disposed. But Lucke has shewn, that in none of the Old Test. passages which are cited to substantiate these meanings, have they really place; but in all, righteousness, justice, is the fundamental idea, and the context only makes it mean justice in this or in that direction. See note on Matt. 19. ‘The meaning then being **just**, we have still to decide between several different views as to what particular phase of the divine justice is meant. Some understand that God’s justice has been satisfied in Christ, and thus the application of that satisfaction to us if we confess our sins, is an act of divine justice: is due to us in Christ. But this is plainly too much to be extracted from our verse. In Rom. iii. 26, where this is asserted, the reason is given, and all is fully explained: whereas here the ellipsis would be most harsh and unprecedented and thus to fill it up would amount to an introduction into the context of an idea which is altogether foreign to it. The correct view seems to be, that *just* as well as *faithful* here is an attribute strictly to be kept to that which is predicated of it under the circumstances, without entering upon reasons external to the context. God is *faithful*, to His promise: is *just*, in His dealing: and both attributes’ operate in the forgiveness of sins to the penitent, now and hereafter; and in cleansing them from all unrighteousness, The laws of His spiritual kingdom require this: by those laws He acts in holy and infinite justice. His promises announced it, and to those promises

He is faithful; but then those promises were themselves made only in accordance with His nature, who is holy, just, and true. In the background lie all the details of redemption; but they are not here in this verse: only the simple fact of God’s justice is adduced) **to forgive us our sins** (not “so as to forgive, &c.,” but “that He may forgive, &c.” His doing so is in accordance with, and therefore as with Him all facts are purposed, is in pursuance of, furthers the object of, **His faithfulness** and justice, “So that **He is faithful and just**; in order that He may,&.” With regard to the particular mentioned, the forgiveness of our sins here means the continued remission of the guilt of each committed sin, which is the special promise and just act of God under the Gospel covenant: see Heb, x. 14, 18), **and cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (the explanation. of the sense, see above.

Here unrighteousness is used, in reference to the word “*righteous*,” above, as corresponding to *sins*” in ver. 7, The divine *righteousness* is revealed in God’s law: every transgression then of that law is of its nature and essence an unrighteousness, as contrary to that *righteousness*. The two verbs, **forgive** and **cleanse**, imply in the original, that the purpose of the faithfulness and justice of God is to do each as one great complex act—to justify and to sanctify wholly and entirely.

10.] Not a mere repetition, but a confirmation and intensification of ver. 8. This verse is related to ver. 9, as ver. 8 is to ver. 7).

If we say that we have not sinned (if we deny, that is, the fact of our commission of sins in our Christian state. The perfect tense, so far from removing the time to that before conversion, brings it down to the present: had it been “*that we sinned not*,” it might have had that signification. **we have not sinned** answers in time to “*we have no sin*” the one representing the state as existing, the other the sum of sinful acts which have gone to make it up), **we make him** (God, see above) **a liar** (this is the climax, gradually reached through the words “*we lie*,” ver. 6, and “*we deceive ourselves*,” ver. 8. And it is justified by the uniform assertion of God both in the Old and New Testament that all men are sinners, which we thus falsify as far as in us lies), **and His word is not in us**

His word may be interpreted generally,—“that which He saith.” “God hath said, ‘Thou hast sinned: to deny that, is a crime. God’s word truly accuses us, and by our contradiction of it, is driven from our hearts.’ Bengel. is not in us, as in John v. 38, **has no abiding place in, within, us:** is something heard by the ear, and external to us, but not finding place among the thoughts and maxims of our heart and life. God declares that to be true which we assume to be untrue. It is evident, that to understand the *Old Testament* by *His word*, is to miss the connexion, seeing that it is of the sins of *Christians* that St. John is treating, to whom *His word* has become a far higher revelation of His will, viz. that given by Christ, and brought home to the heart by His indwelling Spirit. ‘This final revelation of God includes the Old and ‘New Testament, and all other manifestations of His will to us: and it is this as a whole which we reject and thrust from us, if we say at any time that we have not sinned, for its united testimony proclaims the contrary).

1 John: Chapter 2

CHAP. II. 1.] The connexion is thus given by Augustine: “Lest perchance he might ‘seem to have given impunity to sins, by saying, ‘He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,’ and men should say to themselves, ‘Let us sin: let us fearlessly do what we will, Christ cleanseth us:’—he takes from thee false security, and puts in useful fear.” “Thou art disposed to be falsely secure: be thou watchful and careful; for He is faithful and just, that He may remit us our sins, and that thou mayest always be displeased with thyself, and mayest be continually changed even unto perfection. What then follows? ‘My little children, &c.’ But then perhaps sin after all, from human imperfection, supervenes, What then? Shall this lead to desperation Listen, ‘If any man have sinned,’ he says, &c.” See more below. But there is more in the connexion than this. It is not corrective only of a possible mistake, but it is progressive—a further step taken in the direction of unfolding the great theme of this part of the Epistle, enounced in ch. i. 5. The first step for those walking in the light of God was, that they should confess their sins: the next and consequent one, that they should forsake them, and, agreeably to their new nature, keep His commandments. This verse introduces that further unfolding of our subject, which is continued, and especially pressed as regards the one great commandment of love, in our vv. 3–11.

1.] **My little children** (the diminutive expresses tender affection perhaps also is used in reference to his age and long standing as a father in Christ. There is a beautiful legend in Eusebius, where St. John calls back to him a young man who had gone astray with the words, “*Why fliest thou from me, my child, me, thine own father?*”), **these things write I unto you, that ye may sin not [at all]** (implying the absence not only of the habit, but of any single acts of sin. **these things I write**, not, *that which follows*; nor, both the preceding and the following: but the preceding only, viz. the concluding verses 8–10 of the former chapter, not in their details merely, but in their whole connexion. The object of writing that passage was, to bring about in them the forsaking of sin. ‘The very announcement there made, that if we confess our sins He in His faithfulness and righteousness will *cleanse us from all sin*, sufficiently substantiates What the Apostle here says, without bringing out too strongly the contemplation of a supposed misunderstanding on the part of the readers. ‘To do this is to miss the deeper connexion in which these words stand to the great whole in its harmony, and to give instead only an apparent and superficial one. The reference of this exhortation to the *unconverted* among them, and rendering “*that ye abide not in sin*,” maintained by Socinus and his followers, need only be mentioned to be refuted. The past tense “*have sinned*,” may serve to shew its utter untenability). **And if any man have sinned** (have committed an act of sin: still speaking of those spots of sin which owing to the infirmity of the flesh remain even in those who are walking in the light. By this there is not any doubt, expressed that all do occasionally sin, but the hypothesis is made, as ever by this formula, purely and generally. The resumption of the first person immediately, makes it evident that the hypothesis is in fact realized in us all), **we have an Advocate with** (towards, as _pleading in His presence) **the Father, Jesus Christ** (the principal word requiring elucidation here is **Advocate** (Paraclete). There are two classes of interpretations of it, which, as already remarked [on John xiv. 16], by no means exclude one another. Of these, that one which may be summed up under the meaning “COMFORTER,” has already been treated, on John, in the place quoted. With the other we have now to deal. ADVOCATE is the commoner sense of the word, and that which it

certainly bears here. There is no discrepancy between this passage, where the Son is our **Paraclete**, and John xiv. 16, where the Holy Spirit is called by the same name: rather is there the closest accordance, seeing that there our Lord says He will pray the Father and He will send us “**another**

Paraclete:” He himself, the Son of God, being thus asserted to hold this office in the first place, and the Holy Spirit to be His Substitute in His absence) [**being**] **righteous** (“in that He is righteous,” as a contrast to “*if any man sin.*” In a strict rendering, this force should be kept, and pointed out in explanation: in an English version, it is hardly possible to render it otherwise than our translators have done, “the righteous,” though it is not absolutely correct. “The righteousness of Christ stands on our side: for God’s righteousness is, in Jesus Christ, ours.” Luther):

2.] and He is a propitiation (the word implies that Christ has, as our sin-offering, reconciled God and us by nothing else but by His voluntary death as a sacrifice: has by this averted God’s wrath from us. According to the constant usage of Scripture, God is in so far *propitious* in regard to the sins of men, as He suffers His *mercy* to prevail instead of his *wrath*. See Septuagint in 2 Chron. vi. 25, 27; Jer. xxxviii. [xxxii.] 34, xlivi. [36], 3; Numb. xiv. 18 ff.) **for** (concerning, i.e. in behalf of) **our sins: yet not for ours only, but also for the whole world** (in the latter clause there is an ellipsis very common in ordinary speech in every language: “*for the whole world*” is equivalent to “for the sins of the whole world.” “As broad as the sin extends, so broad the propitiation.” Bengel. But, this has been misunderstood or evaded by many interpreters. Cyril and Ecumenius explain **our** to refer to the Jews, **of the whole world** to the Gentiles. And many others, taking the former in its true sense, yet limit the latter, not being able to take in the true doctrine of universal redemption. So Bede, holding that **our** applied to those then living, **of the whole world** to those that were to come after. But this unworthy and evasive view is opposed by the whole mass of evangelical expositors.—The reason of the insertion of the particular here, is well given by Luther: “It is a patent fact that thou too art a part of the whole world: so that thine heart cannot deceive itself and think, The Lord died for Peter and Paul, but not for me”).

3–11.] This communion with God consists, secondly, in keeping His commandments, and especially the commandment to love one another. No new division of the Epistle begins: ver. 3 is closely joined to ch. i. 5, 6, which introduced the first conditional passage, i. 7—ii. 2. The great test of communion with God, walking in the light, first requires that we confess our sins: next requires that we keep His commandments. **And in this** (so literally:

this is the conditional element: in this is placed, on this depends, our knowledge.

In ch. iii. 24 [see below], the **in this** is resumed by the words, “*By His Spirit which He hath given us*”) **we know** (from time to time, from day to day) **that we have the knowledge of him** (have acquired and retain that knowledge: this *knowledge* is not, as some make it, the *love* of God, as neither of course is it mere theoretical knowledge: but is that inner and living acquaintance which springs out of unity of heart and affection), **if** (the token, that we have the knowledge of Him, is present, *if*, i.e. it being assumed that) **we keep** (as a habit, from time to time, these **commandments** being necessarily

prescriptions regarding circumstances as they arise) **His commandments** (first as to the expression. St. John never uses the word “*law*” for the rule of Christian

obedience: this word is reserved for the Mosaic law, John i. 17, 46, and, in all, fifteen times in the Gospel: but almost always *commandments*,—sometimes the *word of God* or of *Christ*, John viii. 52 f.; xiv. 23 f.; xvii. 6, our ver. 5. And as a verb he always uses “*to keep*,” very seldom “*to do*; and *to keep* preserves its peculiar meaning of *watching*, guarding as some precious thing, “observing to keep.” Next, *whose commandments?* The older expositors for the most part refer “*Him*,” “*His*,” “*in Him*,” verses 3–6, to Christ. Most modern Commentators understand these pronouns throughout of God, and the second “*He*” in ver. 6, of Christ. That this latter is the right understanding of the terms, is supposed to be shewn by the substitution (?) in ver. 5 of the words “*of God*” for “*His*,” and its taking up again by “*in Him*” in ver. 6, followed

by “*even as He walked.*” But of this I am by no means thoroughly persuaded:

see note, ver. 6).

4.] Assertion, parallel with ch. i. 8, of the futility of pretending to the knowledge of God where this test is not fulfilled. **The man saying, I have the knowledge of Him** (see above), **and not keeping His commandments, is a liar** (answers to *we deceive ourselves*, ch. i. 8), **and in this man the truth is not** (see above on ch. i. 8, where the words are the same):

5.] assertion of the other alternative, not put as before, but, as usual, carried further and differently expressed: *an opposition with an accession*, as Grotius calls it):—**but whoso keepeth His word** (synonymous with *His commandments*, considered as a whole: on the mode of expression, see above), **of a truth in him is the love of God perfected** (why should this transition be made from knowledge to love? Love presupposes knowledge, and is a further step in the same *fellowship* with God: not indeed that the former step is passed through and done with, but that true knowledge and love increase together, and the

former is the measure of the latter, just as keeping God's commandments is the test and measure of true knowledge of Him. And thus in the final and perfect ideal, the two are coincident: the perfect observation of His commandments is the perfection of love to Him. It is manifest, from what has been said, that this **love of God** must be our love towards God, not His love towards us). **In this** (in the fact of our progress towards this ideal state of perfection of obedience and therefore of love:)—thus assured that the germ of the state is in us and unfolding) **we know that we are in Him** (this completes the logical period which began in ver. 3, by reasserting that verse, carrying however that assertion yet deeper, by substituting “*we are in Him*” for “*we have the knowledge of Him*.” This “being in Him” is in fact the Christian life in its central depth of *fellowship*

with God and with one another: the spiritual truth corresponding to the physical one enunciated by St. Paul, Acts xvii. 28, “In Him we live, and move, and have our being”).

6.] The state of being in Him is carried forward a step further by the expression “abide in Him:” and the way is prepared, by what follows, for the coming exhortation vv. 7–11, to walk in love. **The man saying that he abideth in Him** (God, as above) **ought** (see *reff.*) The obligation is grounded on the profession, being one of consistency with it: not on the *abiding*, which would imply that which follows, as matter of necessity), **even as He** (Christ) **walked** (during His life upon earth: see below), **himself also thus to walk** (not any one particular of Christ's walk upon earth is here pointed at, but the whole of His life of holiness and purity and love. This latter, as including all the rest, is most in the Apostle's mind. So in Eph. v. 1, 2, where St. Paul exhorts us to be followers of God, he adds, “*and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us.*” Luther simply but appositely remarks, that it is not Christ's walking on the sea, but His ordinary walk, that we are called on here to imitate).

7–11.] The commandment of Love. The context see below. **Beloved, I write not to you a new commandment, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard** (on the right understanding of this verse, very much depends. The great question is, To what commandment does he refer? Does he point forward to the commandment of brotherly love, in ver. 9, or back to that of walking as Christ walked, in ver. 6? One or other of these views has generally been taken decidedly and exclusively of the other. But this exclusive reference is apparently wrong, and a compromise may be found more agreeable to the ethical habits of thought of the Apostle, and to the context of the passage. This context requires, 1) that we maintain a logical connexion between ver. 6 and ver. 7, as indicated by the *duty* urged in the one, and the *commandment* alleged in the other: and 2) that we maintain the like logical connexion between ver. 8 and ver. 9, as indicated by the figure common to them both, of the darkness and the light. Now, of these, 1) is neglected by those who understand the *commandment* barely as the law of love: 2) is neglected by those who understand it barely of following Christ's example. The former make ver. 7 spring out of no contextual development: the latter treat similarly ver. 9. And the true view is to be found as thus indicated: the walk of Christ, which is our example, is essentially and completely summed up in one word, Love: and so the command, to walk as He walked, essentially and completely resolves itself into the law of brotherly love: for this last, taken in all its depth, includes not one special detail in a holy Christian life, but the whole of that life itself. Taking then this view, how are we to interpret in detail? What is **new?** what is **old?** what is **from the beginning?** For these clearly all hang together. If *from the beginning* is to signify ‘from the beginning of Old Test. revelation, or ‘from the beginning of God's testimony in man's conscience,’ we seem to be doing violence to the simple mode of address which is prevalent in our Apostle's style. The terms “*ye had*” and “*ye heard*,” especially the latter, will hardly bear interpreting of the remote forefathers of the readers, as on this hypothesis they must, but require to be confined to the readers themselves. And if so, the meaning of *from the beginning* is fixed to be, from the beginning of the Christian lives, from the time when they *heard the word*. Then as to *new*, and *old*, the explanation will be simple enough. The command to love one another cannot be said to be new, for it forms a part of the *word which ye heard*, nay, is the very sum and centre of that *word*: but again, it may be said to be new, inasmuch as it ever assumes new freshness as the Christian life unfolds, as the old darkness is more and more cleared away and the true light shineth: in that light we see light; in the light of Him who maketh all things new.

That the *commandment* as such refers to the Law of love, thus indeed connected with Christ's example here, but still to the law of love and no other, is plain from the whole usage of the Apostle; compare especially 2 John 4–6, where the very same train of thought occurs as here, the *walking in truth* being equivalent to *walking in light* here, being followed up by “*even as we received commandment from the Father*,” and that commandment being characterized, as here,—“*not as though I wrote unto thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning.*” and finally being stated to be “*that we love one another.*” Indeed the whole process of that passage from this point is most instructive as to our present, one: “*And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments: this is the commandment even as ye heard from the beginning that ye may walk in it.*” where the same complex of the whole Christian walk is included in the one idea of love, and *love* identified with walking according to His commandments. Again in ch. iii. 11, the same formula is used in speaking of the law of love—“*This is the commandment which ye heard from the beginning, that we love one another.*” compare also ch. iv. 21, v. 3, iii. 22–24: again ch. iii. 14, iv. 16, John xiii. 35; ch. v. 1, 2, John xv. 10. To recapitulate: on the interpretation here adopted, the **commandment** is the command to walk as Christ walked, passing, as the context advances, into the law of love. This **commandment** is no **new one, but an old one**, seeing that they had it **from the beginning**, from the beginning of their faith, and it was in fact the sum of the word which they **heard**.

8.] Again (this takes up and contravenes what has been as yet said: as if it had been “in another view of the subject....”) **a new commandment write I unto you** (“new,” in that it was first promulgated with Christianity and unknown before: not, in that he now renews, and impresses it anew on them. The meaning above given agrees well both with the context and with St. John’s habit of thought, as well as with matter of fact, and our Lord’s own words, John xiii. 34, xv. 12. “When I stand at the point of time indicated by the term ‘from the beginning,’ and look forwards on the Christian life of the readers, the commandment appears a one long known; the readers have known it from the beginning as an essential commandment, they have had it as long as they have been Christians: on the other hand, if I look backward on the life of the readers before that beginning, whether they were before that Jews or Gentiles, this same commandment of necessity appears as a new one, essentially Christian, first beginning for the readers with that beginning; for even for the Jewish Christians the command of brotherly love is a new one, seeing that it is ordained *in imitation of Christ*, John xiii. 34”), **which** (thing, viz. the fact that the commandment is a new one: see below) **is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is passing away** (not, as A.V., “*past:*” the verb is *present*), **and the true light is now shining** i.e. the commandment *is a new one*, and this is true both in [the case of] Him [Christ] and in [the case of] you: because [in you] the darkness is passing away, and [in Him] the true light is shining: therefore on both accounts the command is a *new one*: new as regards you, because you are newly come from darkness into light: new as regards Him, because He uttered it when He came into the world to lighten every man, and began that shining which even now continues.

9, 10.] We now come to the *enunciation of the law of brotherly love*, and in a form resembling that used in ch. i. 8, 10: and in ver. 4, 5. First is asserted the incompatibility of living in hatred and walking in the light: then the identity of walking in love and walking in the light: then lastly as a contrast to the last, the same fact with regard to hatred and the darkness, and the blinding effect on him who walks in it. The *light* is as before, the light of Christ, now partially shining, but one day to be fully revealed: the *darkness* is the darkness of this present world, now passing away). **He that saith that he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness until now** (Düsterdieck has very properly protested against the softening down of this hate into “loving too little, neglecting, not cultivating,” &c. “Nothing,” he says, “can be more shallow and weak as compared with the ethics of the whole Scripture. All the truth, depth, and power of Christian ethics rests on the contrast so distinctly insisted on by St. John. On the one side is God, on the other the world: here is life, there is death [ch. iii. 14]: here, love; there, hate, i.e. murder [ch. iii. 14 ff.], there is no medium. In the space between, is nothing. Life may as yet be merely elementary and fragmentary. Love may be as yet weak and poor, but still, life in God and its necessary demonstration in love is present really and truly, and the word of our Lord is true, ‘He that is not against me is with me,’ Luke ix. 50: and on the other side, the life according to the flesh, the attachment to the world, and the necessary action of this selfishness by means of hatred, may be much hidden, may be craftily covered and with splendid outer surface; but in the secret depth of the man, there where spring the real fountains of his moral life, is not God but the world; the man is yet in death, and can consequently love nothing but himself and must hate his brother: and then that other word of the Lord is true, ‘He that is not for me is against me,’ Luke xi. 23. For a man can only be either for or against Christ, and consequently can only have either love or hate towards his brother.” Bengel says well, on ver. 11, “An immediate opposition: where there is not love, there is hate: for the heart is not empty” It has been questioned, who is meant by **his brother**. It seems plain that the expression here is not the same as “*his neighbour*,” seeing that St. John is writing to Christians, and treating of their *fellowship with one another*. On the other hand, if we are to restrict the meaning to Christian brotherhood, it is plain that we cannot understand strictly *his brother* in verses 9, 11, seeing that the man there spoken of is in reality not a Christian at all. So that either we must enlarge the sense of *brother*, or suppose some impropriety of language in the use of, the term in these verses, so that it might mean, him who ought to be loved by him as a Christian brother, supposing himself to be really a Christian. This difficulty does not seem to have struck any of the Commentators: but it is one which certainly will not allow us to confine the term to its utmost strictness of meaning. **even until now**, i.e. *up to this moment*: notwithstanding any apparent change which may have taken place in him when he passed into the ranks of nominal Christians).

10.] He that loveth his brother abideth in the light (i. e. the continuance of the habit of brotherly love is a measure of and a guarantee for his continuance in that light whose great command is Love), **and there is none occasion of stumbling in him** (so A.V., excellently. For it is clear by the parallel in ver. 11, that this is what is meant, and not, as the original words will also bear, that he gives no occasion of stumbling to others. Compare John xi. 9, 10, which is in more than one respect the key-text here. For it also explains the apparently difficult term **in him**, occurring as it does there in ver. 10, “*but if any one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.*” The light, and the darkness, by which we walk safely, or stumble, are within ourselves; admitted into us by the eye, whose singleness fills the whole body with light).

11.] But (whereas) **he that hateth his brother** (see above) **is in the darkness** (has never come out of it: corresponds to “*abideth in the light*” above: denotes his state, whereas “*walketh*” indicates more his outward acts), **and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not where he goeth, because the darkness blinded** (it is a matter of old standing: “*blinded*,” and not “*hath blinded*,” because it is no new effect of a state into which he has lately come, but the long past work of a state which is supposed to be gone by and is not) **his eyes.**

12–14.] *Threefold address to the readers, accompanied by a threefold reason for writing to them; all repeated by way of parallelism, with some variations and enlargements.* On the connexion and explanation of these verses, it may be observed,

1) that we have three classes of readers, denoted the first time by *little children, fathers, young men*, and the second time by *children, fathers, young men*. 2) that all three are addressed the first time in the present, “*I write*,” the second time in the past, “*I wrote*,” or “have written.” 3) that while to the *fathers* and *young men* the same words are each time used [to the latter with an addition the second time], the *little children* and *children* are differently addressed. The first question arising is, what do these three classes import, and how are they to be distributed among the readers? It is obvious that the chief difficulty here is with *little children* and *children*, the words for which in the original are not only different in degree, but also radically. The former word is used by our Apostle once with “*my*,” ch. ii. 1, and five times without “*my*:” ch. ii. 28, iii. 18, iv. 4, v. 21; but always as importing the whole of his readers: and once it is reported by him as used by our Lord, also in a general address to all His disciples, John xiii. 33. *Children* is used by him similarly in our ver. 18, and reported by him as used by our Lord in a general address, John xxi. 5. These facts make it very probable that both the words are here used as general designations of all the readers, and not as a designation of any particular class among them. And this is made more probable, by the fact that if *little children* and *children* did point out the children among them, properly or spiritually so called, the rank of classes would be different from that which would occur to any writer, viz. neither according to ascending age nor to descending, but children, fathers, young men. We seem then to have made it highly probable that *little children* and *children* address all the readers alike. Now if we lay any stress on the third circumstance above mentioned, that *little children* and *children* are differently addressed, and not so *fathers* and *young men*, and endeavour therefrom to deduce any distinction between *little children* and *children* in the age or qualities expressed by them, I conceive that we shall establish nothing satisfactory. If a reason for this variation of address is to be discovered, it must be sought in the parallelism of the passage. With these preliminary remarks, we come to the details. **I write unto you, little children** (see above), **because your sins have been (perfect) forgiven you for the sake of His (Christ's) name** (*Jesus Christ*, the Saviour, the anointed One, bringing to mind all the work wrought out by Him for us, and all the acceptance of that work by the Father: so that it may be well said that on account of, for the sake of, that Name which the Father hath given Him, which is above every name, our sins are forgiven). **13.] I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him that was** (compare ch. i. 1) **from the beginning** i.e. in St. John's usage of speech, Christ; see ch. i. 1 and notes). **I write unto you, young men, because ye have conquered the wicked one** (the proper attribute of youth is, to carry on the active parts of life,—if soldiers, to be engaged in all active service:

that of age, to contemplate, and arrive at sound and matured knowledge. The latter have conquered as well, but the burden and heat of their struggle is past. The **wicked one** is he in whom, in whose power, the whole world lieth, ch. v. 19; John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11: the *devil*, who deceives from the beginning, John viii. 44; ch. iii. 8, 10, 12: whose works Christ came into the world to destroy, ch. iii. 8. He is conquered once and for all, by those who have passed from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, to communion with the Father and the Son, ch. v. 18. Whatever conflict remains for them afterwards, is with a baffled and conquered enemy: is a *keeping them* [from the wicked one], ch. v. 18, which *keeping* [see note there], owing to their whole life being led in communion with the Father and Son, is in fact a *being kept*, John xvii. 15.—He now repeats (see above) the three classes, but with some variations and additions in his reasons

for writing to each, and with the past tense, *I have written*, instead of the present, *I write*. With respect to the possible reason for this change of tense, see note in my Greek Testament. Probably he refers, in both expressions, to the whole of this present Epistle. **I wrote (or, have written) to you, children** (by *children*, all the readers are meant: see above), **because ye know the Father** (the very word *children* reminds of *father*: and the relation is close between this and that which is said before, that their sins are forgiven for Christ's name's sake. They are received thus by adoption

into God's family, and He is become *their* reconciled Father, as He is the Father of Him through whom they have received their adoption: and one of the first evidences of dawning intelligence in a child is the recognition of its father. But this knowledge of the Father does not precede, nay, it presupposes, communion

with the Son: for none knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him, Matt. xi. 27).

14.] I wrote (or, have written) to you, fathers, because ye know Him that was from the beginning (verbatim as before: to shew perhaps in strong light the great truth of John xvii. 3, that the whole sun of Christian ripeness and experience is, this knowledge of “*Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send.*” Bengel gives another reason,—that no more is added, because the *fathers*, to whom the clause is addressed, needed not more to be said). **I wrote to you, young men, because ye are strong** (strong in fight: so in Heb. xi. 34; Luke xi. 21), **and the word of God abideth in you** (i. e. the whole announcement of the good news of the gospel in Christ has found entrance into your hearts and an abiding place there, and there dwells and works), **and ye have conquered the wicked one** (see above).

15–17.] Dehortation from the love of the world. The preceding designation of the different classes has been, as so frequently in St. John, their ideal designation, in the perfection of their several states of Christian life: and now, as so often, he brings that ideal state to bear on real temptations and duties. The love of the Father, the abiding in Him by His word abiding in them, the victory over him in whom “*the whole world lieth*,”—these particulars have been enounced: and though there may be a more apparent reason why the young should have this dehortation addressed to them, and more apparent allusion to the words “*ye have conquered the wicked one*” in the bringing out of the “*world*,” yet there can be no doubt that it is to *all* that this address is

made. All are in the world, and as long as they are, are in danger of being betrayed by the senses to cleave to the things present and seen, to the forgetfulness of those which are absent and unseen. This general reference is shewn by the “*If any man*” which follows.

15.] Love not the world (what is **the world**, in the diction of St. John? And what does he import by **loving the world**? When we read John iii. 16, “*God so loved the world*,” &c. are we to understand the same thing by the words as here? and if not, are both [viz. *the world* and love] taken in a different sense, or if one only, *which*? It would seem that the *world* in both cases is the same, the *love* is different. In John iii. 16 it is the love of divine compassion and creative and redeeming mercy: here, it is the love of selfish desire, cherishing avarice or pride. But then recurs our question, What is *the world*? And it is no easy one to answer. If 1) we reply so as to make it *personal*, we are met at once by the difficulty of “*the things in the world*,” from which we cannot escape by saying that these are as below, “*the lust, &c.*” for none can be said to *love* the lust, but the *lust* is the *love*. Hence some have been led to take these three, *the lust of the flesh*, *the lust of the eyes*, *the vain-glory of life*, as put for the things desired, and the material of the *vain glory*. But this manifestly will not hold, owing to the opposition in ver. 17 between “*the world and the lust thereof*” on the one hand, and “*he that doeth the will of God*” on the other, which evidently requires that its first member should be personal as well as its second. And this last will be a weighty reason also against 2) taking *the world* as merely *material*, the present order of things, in so far as it is alien from God. We are thus brought to a point, for our understanding of the term, intermediate between personal and material. But then our question is, which of the two is to take the first place? Is *the world* the world of matter, including the men who dwell in it, or is it the world of man, including matter as subordinate to man? If the former, we seem in danger of falling into a dualism, in which God and the world of matter should be set over against one another as independent existences: for thus the evil one, the *ruler of the world*, and his spiritual agents would themselves be included in the *world*, and adjuncts to the world of matter: a mode of thought which nowhere appears in the apostolic writings. We are thus narrowed to our other alternative, that of understanding *the world* as of human persons, including the inferior ranks of created being, and the mass of inanimate matter which they inhabit. Let us see whether this view will meet the necessities of our text and of similar passages. Thus understood, the *world* was constituted at first in Adam, well-pleasing to God and obedient to Him: it was man’s world, and in man it is summed up: and in man it fell from God’s light into the darkness of selfish pursuits and *worldly lusts*, in and by which man, who should be rising through his cosmic corporeal nature to God, has become materialized in spirit and dragged down so as to be worldly and sensual, and like him who has led him astray, and who now, having thus subjected man’s nature by temptation, has become the *ruler of the world*. And thus the *world* is “*man and man’s world*,” in his and its fall from God. It was this world which God loved, in its enmity to Him, with the holy love of Redemption: it is this world which we are not to love, in its alienation from Him, with the selfish love of participation. And this *world* is spoken of sometimes as personal, sometimes as material, according to the context in which it occurs. To give but a few decisive examples: of the purely personal sense, John xv. 18, “*If the world hateth you, &c.*,” followed by “*If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also*,” where the singular is broken up into the individual persons: of the purely material, John xi. 9, “*If any one walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he beholdeth the light of this world*.” And in passages like the present, these two senses alternate with and interpenetrate one another: e.g. in the term “*the things in the world*,” the *world* is apparently material and local: in the opposition which follows, between the love of the world and the love of the Father, the personal meaning begins to be evident: in what follows, “*all that is in the world*,” which at first sight seems material, is explained by “*the lust of the flesh, &c.*” which are the subjective desires of the “*things in the world*,” not the things themselves: then, finally, in ver. 17, where “*the world and the lust thereof*,” is opposed to “*he that doeth the will of God*,” it is plain that we have passed, by the transition in the last verse, from the material to the personal sense altogether. This account may serve to explain that which has given so much trouble to Commentators here, the question whether *lust* is not put for the thing itself which is desired: the fact being that, the *world* including the material world in the men, the *lusts*, which are in the men, are in the *world*, as well as the things of which they are the desires, and which are in their turn included in them), **nor yet** (not merely meaning “*nor*;” but carrying with it an exclusive and disjunctive force, implying that what follows is not identical with what went before. That was spoken of the world itself, the totality: “have no love for this present world as such.” But an escape from this prohibition might be sought by men who would deny in the abstract the charge of worldly-mindedness, but devoted themselves to some one object of those followed by worldly men: so that it is necessary to add, after “Love not the world,”—“no, nor any thing in it”) **the things in the world** (explained above: here, the objects after which the ungodly world’s *lust* reaches out, and on which its *vain-glory* is founded). **If any man** (see on the same expression above, ver. 1) **love the world, the love of the Father** (i. e. love to the Father, as opposed to his love to the world) **is not in him**.

16.] Gives a reason for the assertion in ver. 15: viz. the entire separation from one another of the world and God. In order to understand clearly the following, it is necessary to define strictly the things mentioned, and to lay down explicitly the apposition between “*all that is in the world*,” and the three particulars which follow as included in that category. This can only be rightly done by bearing in mind what was said before,—that, as the world is summed up in man, both those objective material things which are properly *the things in the world*, and those inward subjectivities which are in man and grounded on his worldly state, are regarded as being in **the world**, and these pass into, and are almost interchanged with, one another. Now here, the three things spoken of as examples of *the things in the world* are all purely subjective—“*lust*,”—“*lust*,”—“*vain-glory*.” But they are subjectivities having their ground in the objectivities of the ungodly world: the first *lust* springs out of (see below) the *flesh*, the human nature unrenewed by God: the second resides in that sense which takes note of outward

things and so is inflamed by them: and the “*life*,” is that belonging to *vain-glory*, the manner of life of worldly men among one another, whereby pride as to display and pomp is cherished. Now each one of these three is included in, and includes in itself, love to the world: and he that loves the world falls into, walks after, becomes part of, these lusts, and this *vain-glory*, which is not of the Father but of the world. Loving the things of the world, he becomes *conformed* to the world, and following the lusts and pride which are in the world, he himself becomes one of the things in the world. **Because every thing that is in the world** (namely, or for instance), **the lust of the flesh (of the flesh** is not an objective gen., so that the words should mean, “lust after the flesh,” i. e. impure desire: this they include, but far more. The genitive is subjective, the flesh being that wherein the lust dwells, as in Gal. v. 16, Eph. ii. 3, 2 Pet. ii. 18, Rom. i. 24: see also Rom. vi. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 2), **and the lust of the eyes** (subjective genitive, as before: the lust which the eye begets by seeing), **and the vain-glory of life** (the *vain-glorious* is one who lays claim to credit or glory which is not his own: see notes on Rom. i. 30 [where the rendering is, “*boasters*”] and James iv. 16. **life**, i. e. men’s way or course of life. This life comprehends in it the means of living, and fashion of living,—table, furniture, equipage, income, rank; and the *vain-glory* arising out of these is that *vain-glorious* pride, which is so common

in the rich and fashionable), **is not of** (springs not from, has not as its source: see below) **the Father** (this name is again used for God, in reference to *little children* and *children above*), **but is of the world** (has its origin from the world. It is necessary, in opposition to all such interpretations

as that of Socinus, “i. e. *is very discrepant from those things which God by Christ has ordered us to follow after*,” to lay down very distinctly St. John’s limits of thought and speech in this matter. “Through our whole Epistle,” says Düsterdieck [see especially ch. ii. 29, iii. 7 ff., iv. 2 ff., 7 ff., v. 1 ff.], “runs the view, which also is manifest in the Gospel of St. John, that only the mind which *springs from God* is directed to God. He who is born of God, loves God, knows God [ch. ii. 3 ff.], does God’s will. God Himself,

who first loved us, viz. in Christ His incarnate Son, begot in us that love which of moral necessity returns again to the Father, and of like necessity embraces our brethren also. This love is hated by the world, because it springs not from the world. It depends not on the world, any more than that perverted love which springs from the world and is directed towards the world, the lust of the flesh, &c., can be directed to the Father, or to God’s children. So that St. John grasps in reality down to the very foundations of the moral life, when he reminds his readers of the essentially distinct origin of the love of the world, and the love of God. The inmost kernel of the matter is hereby laid bare, and with it a glimpse is given of the whole process of the love of the world and the love of God, even to the end; and this end is now set forth expressly with extraordinary power:” viz. in the next verse).

17] **And the world is passing away, and the lust of it** (**of it** is subjective again; not objective, “*the lust after it*,” but as in ver. 16: **the lust thereof** summing up in one the three which are there mentioned. **is passing away**, as in ver. 8: not declaring merely an attribute, that it is the quality of the world and its lust to pass away,—but a matter of fact, that it is even now in act so to pass. See on 1 Cor. vii. 31. It is no objection to this, that the **abideth**, which is opposed to this “*is passing away*,” contains, not a matter of fact, but a qualitative predication. This is made necessary by the words “*for ever*” which that clause contains): **but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever** (in this latter member of the contrast, we have a clearly personal agent introduced: and therefore, as above remarked, we may expect that the former member also will have a like personal reference. But this expectation must not be pushed *too far*: seeing that in the *world*, the ungodly men, who are in all their desires and thoughts of the *world*, are included. They and their lusts belong to, are part of, depend on, a world which is passing away. On the other hand, eternal fixity and duration belongs only to that order of things, and to those men, who are in entire accordance with the will of God. And among these is *he that doeth that will*, which is [see vv. 3–6] the true proof and following out of love towards Him. As God Himself is eternal, so is all that is in communion with Him: and this are they who believe in Him and love Him, and do His will), 18–28.] **WARNING AGAINST ANTICHRISTS AND FALSE TEACHERS** (vv. 18–23): **AND EXHORTATION TO ABIDE IN 23–28**). The place which this portion holds will be best seen by: shortly recapitulating. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness;” that [ch. i. 5] is the ground-tone of this whole division of the Epistle. In ch. i. 5—ii. 11, the Apostle shews wherein the believer’s walking in light consists. At ver. 12, his style takes at once a hortatory turn. In his addresses to the various classes of his readers, the tone of warning is slightly struck by “*ye have overcome the wicked one*.” if indeed the whole form of assertion of an ideal state in each case do not of itself carry a delicate shade of warning. Hence the transition is easy to actual warning. And this in vv. 15–17 begins by general dehortation from the love of the world as excluding the love of God, and now proceeds by caution against those in the world who would rob them of Him by whom alone walking in the light of God is made both possible and actual to us. The note of transition from the last verses is “*it is the last time*,” here taking up the term “*is passing away*.” The world is passing away: and those temptations and conflicts of which ye have heard as belonging to its last period, are now upon you: those adversaries who would endanger your abiding in Him and being found in Him at His coming.

18.] **Children** (as before, addressed not to any one class, but to all the readers), **it is the last time** (what is exactly the Apostle’s meaning by these words? Clearly, *in some sense or other*, that it is the last period of the world. For we must at once

repudiate such views as that of Bengel, who, strange to say, seems to understand it as “*the last part of John’s own life-time*,” and that of Steinhofer, who explains it to be John’s own time as the *close of the apostolic age*: and even more decidedly that of Ecumenius, that the *last* is to be interpreted the *worst*, as when we say, *the last degree of misery*, for all other reasons, and on account of the saying 2 Tim. iii. 1, “*In the last days there shall come grievous times.*”

These then being cleared away, we come to the view of Grotius and others; that, when spoken of to Jews, *the last time* is that close upon the destruction of the Jewish polity; proceeding to interpret the *antichrists* to be the many false Christs who arose in that period, and *Antichrist himself* to be the chief of them, Barchochebas. But two sufficient replies may be given to this view. First, that thus these false Messiahs of the Jews must have gone forth **from us**, i.e. from the Christian Church, which they did not. Secondly, what would the approximation of the destruction of Jerusalem, viewed merely as a Jewish event [which it must be, on the hypothesis here, as the word **last** would only be true as addressed to Jews], have to do with the subject of our Epistle?

And thus we have arrived at the views of those who recognize here the last age of the world, but are anxious to get rid of the idea that the Apostle, in thus speaking, regarded the coming of the Lord as near at hand, and endeavour to give some meaning to the expression which shall preclude this [to them] objectionable notion. Among these may be mentioned Calvin, and many of the elder Commentators, who understand the *latter dispensation*: the time from Christ’s advent in the flesh to His coming to judgment. But, apart, from considerations of the unfitness of such an idea in the context, in which the term “*passing away*,” vv. 8, 17,—and our ver. 28, shew that it is the coming of the Lord which is before the mind of the Apostle,—this objection is fatal to it: that manifestly not this whole period itself, but some time within its limits is meant, from the nature of the sign given below, *whence we know, &c.* If the whole Christian dispensation were intended by *the last time*, it would not be stated as a sign of its presence, that already there were many antichrists, but rather that already He was come who is to be the final revelation of the Father. The circumstance of there being already many antichrists, corresponds with a prophecy delivered by our Lord, not of the general character of the whole of the last dispensation, but of the particular character of the time preceding *the end*, to which prophecy and to which time the Apostle here beyond question alludes.

I believe that if we are to deal ingenuously both with words and with facts, we must understand the Apostle to be speaking, as any one in any subsequent age of the Church might have spoken, and as we may speak now, of his time as being the last time, seeing that the signs of the last time were rife in it. How long it may please God to prolong this *last time*, how long to permit the signs to continue which demonstrate each age of the church to have this character, is a question to which it was not given to him, and is not given to us, to reply. To him indeed many prophetic visions were given, and have been recorded for us; but what is their plain and unmistakable import, will only then be known, when it becomes necessary for the churches to see clearly the signs of His coming): **and even as ye heard** (in our preaching when ye received the Gospel) **that antichrist cometh** (the present tense of ordained fixity: “*is to come.*” But who, and what, is *Antichrist*? As far as the meaning of the word is concerned, it may mean, either 1) one who stands *against* Christ, or 2) one who stands *instead of* Christ. The latter meaning is strenuously maintained here by Grotius, who holds that our Antichrist here has nothing to do with the *adversary (anti-keimenos)* of St. Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 3: that being one who *professes himself an enemy to God*, whereas this is one who *makes himself Christ*: understanding this and what follows [see above} of the *false Christs* prophesied of by our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 5, 24. This he defends by analogy of words similarly compounded with anti-, which furnishes many examples of this sense of *substitution* for another. But, seeing that the other meaning, *the adversary of Christ*, is also upheld by abundant precedents of the same kind,—it is clear that we cannot solve the doubt by philology alone, but must take into account other considerations. And first among these comes the fact, that St. John, who was acquainted with the form *pseudo-christ*, using as he does *pseudo-prophet*, ch. iv. 1, never uses it, but always,—ch. iv. 3, 2 John 7,—this word *Antichrist*. Is it not hence probable that he intended to signify, not a *false Christ*, but an *anti-christ*? Next, we may fairly allege the ancient interpretations, as shewing how Greeks themselves understood the word. In these we do not find a vestige of the meaning “*a substitute for Christ*” being attached to the term, but every where they interpret *Antichrist* by *an enemy to Christ*.

Taking then *Antichrist* for Christ’s adversary, I would refer to the disquisition and summary of opinions in the Introduction on 2 Thess. ii. 1 ff., where the reasons which have induced me to expect a personal Antichrist are given in full: as are also the indications furnished by prophecy, and by the history of the church and the world, as to his probable character and work), **even now there have arisen many antichrists** (what are we to understand the Apostle as saying? Is this fact alleged as a presumption that the Antichrist is *near*, these *many antichrists* prefiguring and heralding him,—or as a proof that he is *come*, being in fact the aggregate of these? The question is an important one, as affecting that of a personal or collective antichrist. And the first thing to be noticed in answering it is, that these *many antichrists* are explained by the Apostle himself, ver. 22, f., to be deniers of the Father and the Son: i.e. of the Son: and even more explicitly, ch. iv. 3, deniers that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Here, however, this latter point is not yet brought out: here it is as *liars* that we hear of them: as *deniers of the truth*, which Truth is Jesus Christ, the Son of God: as not having the Spirit which is truth and no lie, ver. 27. They are said to have gone forth from the Christian church, but not to have been *of us*, as their spirit is *not of God*, ch. iv. 3. They are *antichrists*; their spirit is the *spirit of antichrist*, ch. iv. 3, of which the readers had heard that it should come, and it was in the world already. From much of this it might at first sight appear as if these *antichrists* in their aggregate formed **the Antichrist**. But a nearer inspection will convince us that this cannot be so. [The] *Christ* and [the] *Antichrist* stand over against one another, and

analogy requires that if the one be personal, the other should be also. And in ch. iv. 3 we ‘are not told that merely the spirit is of *Antichrist*, but [in the original] that it is of **the Antichrist**, the personal reference being still kept. Again, we have “*cometh*,” the present future of prophetic fixity, in both places, here and in ch. iv. 3, set against “*there have arisen*” and “*it is:*” and the verb itself, in its prophetic sense, one regularly used of Christ, as here of antichrist. So that our only refuge in order to consistent interpretation here, is to regard these *many Antichrists*, clothed with the attributes and having the spirit of *the Antichrist*, as being his forerunners in the sense of 2 Thess. ii, 7, “*for the mystery of iniquity already worketh:*” meaning, as I have explained at length in the summary referred to above, that the antichristian principle was then, as it is now, and will be in every age, working, realizing, and concentrating itself from time to time, in evil men and evil books and evil days, but awaiting its final development

and consummation in [*the*] *Antichrists*, who shall personally appear before the coming of the Lord. In St. John’s time, these *many Antichrists* were to be seen in the early heretical teachers whose false and corrupting doctrine and practice was beginning to trouble the church): **from whence we know that it is the last time** (these words are a formal statement of the connexion between the first, and second members of the foregoing sentence,

which without them it would be left, for the reader to supply in his mind).

19.] These Antichrists are designated as having been formerly attached to the Christian church, but never really members of it. They had not that communion with the Father and the Son in which the communion of Christians with one another really consists, inasmuch as they deny the Father and the Son. **They went out from among us, but they were not of us** (did not really belong to us, as neither had they their origin among us); **for if they had been of us they would have remained with us** (the A.V. inserts “*no doubt*,” as representing an erroneous rendering of the Vulgate Latin, which has here misled our translators. See in my Greek Test. The sense is, if they had ats belonged to our number, had been true servants of Christ, they would have endured, and would not have become *antichrists*: their very becoming so proves the unreality of their Christian profession. This point is now brought out in what follows): **but** (the ellipsis [see marginal note: not expressed in the original] is variously supplied: by “*they went out*,” as in text, from above: by “*this was done*,” or “*God doeth this*.”) All these in fact come to the same, provided that we keep the simple sense of the *purpose* implied, which must necessitate a *doer*; and that doer, God, So that it will be better, as the divine purpose must be understood in the depth of the meaning, whatever be supplied, to take the simplest supplement, viz. “*they went out*,” which is already the expressed verb of the sentence), **in order that they may be made manifest, that all are not of us** (the meaning is, that by their example it may be made manifest that all [who are among us] are not of us. The rendering of the A. V., “that they were not all of us,” leaves open the inevitable conclusion that *some of them are of us*. The Apostle makes their *manifestation* the proof not that *they* were not of us, but that *all* are not of us, viz. all who are commonly found among us.

It is not my intention to go into the question as to the dogmatic consequences which have been deduced from this verse. The Apostle is probably speaking here not dogmatically, but ethically. If there is a necessity in the inference, **they would have remained**, it is a “voluntary necessity. We must take these words, ver. 19, in intimate connexion with the enunciation of this whole portion of the Epistle, ch. i. 5–7. The object of this portion is, ch. i. 3, that ye may have fellowship with us, in that we have fellowship with the Father and the Son. This aim penetrates all the exhortation, ii. 19–28. This fellowship depends on the walking in light, i.e. on knowledge of the truth as regards ourselves and God, and love to God and the brethren. He who departs from the truth, he who loves not God and the brethren, belongs not to this fellowship, and shews that he belongs not to it. If he had belonged to it, he would have held fast his walk in the light, as shewn by these indications. This is the human side, on which our passage regards the act and fact. There is also a divine side. They who attain eternal life are given by the Father to the Son, and no man can come to the Son except the Father draw him [John vi. 37, 44, 65, xvii. 6], and such are kept by God [ib. xvii. 11]; but also we read that they believe on on the Son, receive the word of the Son, and keep themselves [John vi. 40 xvii. 6 f., i. 12, James i. 27]. And so again on the other side, they who remain at last excluded from eternal life, are thus excluded not only by God’s decree but by their own evil choice and will. The words cited above, John vi. 65, were spoken by our Lord with direct reference to the traitor Judas: but on the other hand St. John gives notices of the ethical development of Judas, which leave no doubt that his depravity went hand in hand with God’s judgment on him. Judas was covetous: his heart was inclined to mammon: hence he understood not the love of Mary when she anointed Jesus with her precious ointment: he grudged his Lord this token of love: he could not abide with Christ, because he shut his heart through greed, through love of the world, against the love of Christ: for the knowledge of the Lord, faith in Him, fellowship with Him, are all summed up in Love. Thus we see that in the rejection, as in the acceptance of eternal life, the two factors, God’s will and man’s will, are to be regarded in their ethical connexion only. In order to that knowledge of God, which is eternal life, man must be *taught* of God [John vi. 45]: but man must also *learn* of God. And the more St. John sets forth the essential nature of this knowledge of God and Jesus Christ as *ethical*, the more does he recognize, in putting forward God’s will in the matter, man’s will also. Christ is the Saviour of the whole world, ch. ii. 2, iv. 14. But in the personal appropriation of this universal salvation, not all really take it to themselves,—and many, who have taken it, fall away again, because they do not keep the grace given, do not abide in Christ, do not walk in the light. This last is by no means denied by St. John when he says, “If they had been of us, they would have remained with us.” The words set forth an ideal similar to that in ch. ii, 5, iii. 9, v. 18. As in no one of those places can the Apostle possibly mean, that a true believer, one really born of God, has perfect love to God and cannot sin [for

what then would ch. ii. 1 mean?],—so neither here can he mean that whoever once inwardly and truly belongs to the communion of believers cannot by any possibility fall from it).

20, 21.]"The Apostle puts them in mind, in an apologetic form, of the truth which they as Christians possessed, and the very possession of which, not the contrary, was his reason for thus writing to them. This reminiscence carries at the same time with it the force of an exhortation, as so many of the ideal statements on Christian perfection in our Epistle. What they *have* in the ideal depth of their Christian life, that they ought to have in living and working reality. **And** (the copulative conjunction here denotes only the passage to a new particular, without distinctly marking its adversative relation to the last) **ye** (expressed in the original as emphatic: see above) **have an anointing** (the word signifies properly the oil or ointment with which the anointing takes place, not the act itself of anointing. For this we have in English no word adequate to the necessity of the passage: "unguent" is the nearest approach, but is still inadequate. On the meaning, see below) **from the Holy One** (viz. from Christ, the *righteous* One of our ver. 1, the *pure* One of ch. iii. 3, the *holy* One of Acts iii. 14, and *holy One of God* of John vi. 69: see also Rev. iii. 18), where the Laodicean church is counselled to buy of *Christ*, "eye-salve to **anoint thine eyes that thou mayest see**"), and **know all things** (or, according to another reading of some old MSS., "ye all know [this].") But this seems not so appropriate to the context. The full and perfect knowledge of Christian truth is the ideal completion of those who have this anointing. This of course must not be understood as actually predicated of these readers: but the expression explains itself as referring to all things needful for right action in the matter under consideration: all things that belong to this matter. Some understand, all things necessary to Christian life and godliness. But now the question recurs, What is this **anointing**, and what leads the Apostle to use this peculiar expression here? The reply to the latter question is probably, as Bengel, "that it is introduced by the sound and derivation of the words *Christ* and *antichrist* which he has just been using." *Christ* is the **anointed** one, *Christos*: the anointing itself being *chrisma*. The Apostle sets his readers, as anointed of God, over against the antichrists, the enemies of the anointed of God. Then as to the nature of the *anointing*, we can hardly fail to be right in interpreting it of the *Holy Ghost*. For "Christ received the Holy Ghost without measure (John ii. 34): on Him the Holy Ghost abode (i. 33): *God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost* (Acts x. 38). Christ baptizeth with the Holy Ghost (John i. 38): He sends the Holy Ghost, who takes of His and shews it to believers (John xv. 26, xvi. 14, Acts ii. 33). And seeing that the Son hath all which the Father hath, the Father is said to send forth the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of His children (Gal. iv. 6: compare Eph. iii. 16, Phil. i. 19, 2 Cor. iii. 17ff.), and this, at the prayer, in the name, through the mediation, of the Son (John xiv. 16, xvi. 7 f.): the Father anoints believers by giving them His Spirit (2 Cor. i. 21 f.), as He has anointed the Son with the Holy Ghost. And hence the Spirit, which we have received, is the token that we are in the Father (ch. iii. 24), and in the Son (ii. 27), that we are children of God (Rom. viii. 14 ff., Gal. iv. 6). The Holy Ghost teaches the faithful the truth and keeps them in that truth, in the knowledge of which have eternal life, having thereby the Father and the Son." Düsterdieck. This anointing, by virtue of which they are *Christ's* and the *Father's*, and without which a man is none of Christ's (Rom. viii. 14, 9), in respect of which they are *Christs*, or anointed ones, the *antichrists* attack in its very root, and would rob them of, thereby severing them from the Son and from the Father: from light and truth and life. And this very anointing is the means and weapon' whereby they must be detected and resisted).

21.] I did not write to you (it may refer either to what has immediately preceded, or to the whole Epistle: here probably to the immediately preceding) **because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth** (i. e. coupling the fact of your knowledge of the truth with the fact that no lie is of the truth, I wrote to supply the link between these two, to point out to you the lie and the liar, that you might at once act on that your knowledge of the truth, and not listen to them that deceive you).

22.] Who is the liar (the question passes from the abstract, *the lie*, to the concrete, *the liar*, the utterer of the lie. Who is he that is guilty of the lie? The Apostle proceeds to identify this utterer of the *lie* of which he has just spoken. We have a similar question in ch. v. 4, 5: where after describing the victory that overcometh the world, he rejoins, *Who is he that conquereth the world, &c.*, as here. Some have neglected the article altogether; so the A.V.; others have given it merely the force of pointing out a liar remarkable above others. But there can be little doubt that it refers, as above, to the preceding *lie*), **but** (literally, "if not") **he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ** (literally, "*denieth [to the effect] that Jesus is not the Christ*")? **This** (the *liar* just described) **is the antichrist** (on the personal interpretation, see above, ver. 18. **the antichrist** is obviously here used not as predicing the one person in whom the character shall be finally and centrally realized, but as setting forth identity of character with him, and participation in the same development of the antichristian principle. Something of the kind must be understood, whichever way antichrist be taken, collective or personal), **who denieth the Father and the Son** (it is implied then, that the denying Jesus to be the Christ, is equivalent to denying the Father and the Son. And this the Apostle carefully asserts in the next verse).

23.) Every one that denieth the Son, neither hath he the Father (not only hath he denied the Son, but he cannot hold, possess, the Father): **he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also.** As nearly the whole of this Epistle, so especially such an assertion as this, formed a battle-field for the old rationalists. Some of the early Commentators and Fathers imagining that *Jewish* error was indicated by the denying that Jesus is the Christ, the idea has been again taken up by Semler, and others, and pressed in the anti-trinitarian interest. The Socinians and semi-Socinians all evade the Apostle's

words by inadequate or far-fetched interpretations, understanding the expressions

in this verse, of not obeying the teaching, not following the example, &c., of the Son, and by consequence of the Father. But the deeper and truer meaning of the Apostle's words has been recognized by all the better Commentators,

with some variations from one another.

While some mark perhaps too precisely the doctrinal character of the words, others make their force consist too much in an ideal and economical relation

between the divine Persons. Still all are agreed, that that which is spoken of is the revelation of the Father by the Son only, and that he who rejects this in its fulness rejects all that can be known of the real essence and nature of the Father Himself. "The antichrists denied that Jesus, the definite Person whom the Apostles

had seen, heard, and handled, is the Christ. In whatever sense this denial is to be taken,—the Apostle speaks merely of the fact, as known to the readers;—at all events, there is involved in it a denial of the Son of God; because it is only as the incarnate Son of God [ch. iv. 2], that Jesus is the Christ. And in the denial of the Son is involved necessarily the denial of the Father,

since the Father cannot be known without the Son, and the Father cannot be perceived, believed on, loved, by any man, without the Son, or otherwise than through the Son, i.e. the Son manifested in the flesh, the Christ, which is, Jesus. So that in St. John's development of the argument

there are three essentially connected points: denial of the Christ, of the Son, of the Father. The middle link of the chain, the denial of the Son of God, shews how the denial of the Father is of necessity involved in the denial of Christ. And the cogency of this proof is made yet more stringent by another equally unavoidable process of argument. The antichristian false doctrine consists mainly in a negation, in the denying of the fundamental Christian truth, that Jesus is the Christ. But in this is involved the denial of the essence of the Son as well as of the Father, and again in this denial is involved the losing, the virtual *not-having* of the Son and of the Father. In the sense of St. John, we may say, taking the first and last steps of his argument and leaving out the intervening ones: *He who denieth that Jesus is the Christ, hath not the Father*. And this necessary connexion between denying and not having, is perfectly clear, the moment we understand the ethical character, the living realism, of St. John's way of regarding the subject. As (ver. 23) we cannot separate the knowledge and confession of the Christ, the Son, the Father, from the *having*, the real possession of, the practical fellowship with, the actual remaining in, the Son and the Father, so conversely, together with the denial is necessarily given the *not-having*; together with the loss of the truth of the knowledge, the loss of the life which consists in that knowledge (John xvii. 3). In such a connexion, the *confession* of the truth is as essential on the one side, as the *denial* on the other. Each is the necessary manifestation of the belief or unbelief hidden in the heart. And this *confession* is not to be understood of the 'confession of heart, voice, and life,' as Bede calls it, but only, as ch. i. 9, of the confession of the mouth (Rom. x. 10, see John xii. 42). It is parallel with *bringing a doctrine*, 2 John 7, 10; and indicates the definite utterance of the doctrine which was made known by the apostolic preaching, ver. 24."

Düsterdieck.

24, 25.] Exhortation to perseverance in the truth delivered to them, and statement of the promise connected with it: connected with the foregoing by the *confessing*, as involving a *hearing*: see the concluding sentence of Düsterdieck above.

24.] Ye (so literally, the *ye* standing alone, serving to mark more distinctly the change of person: see below also, on ver. 27), —**let that which ye heard from the beginning, abide in you** (the truth respecting the Father and the Son once heard is regarded as a seed, dropt in and abiding in the man. **from the beginning**, necessarily bound here to the subjects of *the hearing*, just as it is necessarily bound in ch. i. 1, to the subject of "was," means, "from the time when ye began to be instructed in the first rudiments of the Gospel"). **If that which ye heard from the beginning abide** ("shall have abode") **in you, ye also** (on your part. If it abide in you, ye too shall abide...) **shall abide in the Son and in the Father** (here again the rationalizing Commentators have endeavoured to explain away the close personal relation and immanence in God expressed by the Apostle's words. But here as every where else, they entirely miss the sense. He in whom abides the message of life in Christ which he has heard, not only has received the tidings of that life, but is transformed into the likeness of Him whose seed he has taken into him: is become a new creation: and the element in which and by which he lives and acts is even He in whom and by whom this new life comes, even Christ the Son of God. And thus living in the Son, he lives in the Father also: for Christ the Son of God is the manifestation and effulgence of the Father, himself abiding ever in the Father, as His people abide in Him. See the same truth declared, John vi. 56; xv. 1 ff.: xvii. 23 [Eph. iii. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 17]).

25.] And the promise (the preceding, **shall abide**, naturally carried the mind onwards into the future. The result of that abiding will be the fulfilment, not only in partial present possession, but in complete future accomplishment, of Christ's promise to us. This taking up again and explaining of something expressed [see ch. iii. 23, v. 11] or implied [see ch. i. 5, iv. 21, v. 14] before, is often found in our Apostle's style) **which He himself** (Christ) **promised unto us** (in many passages of the

Gospel: e.g. iii. 15: iv. 14; vi. 40, 47, 57; xi. 25, 26; xvii. 2, 3), **is this, [even] eternal life.**

26, 27.] Conclusion of the section concerning antichrist.

26.] These things I wrote to you concerning them that deceive you (**these things**, the whole since ver. 18. The present tense, **deceive**, describes the occupation, the endeavour, of the antichrists: what result it had had, is not expressed: some result seems implied by ver. 19).

27.] And you (the same sudden prominence given to the persons addressed as in ver. 24: again setting his believing readers in marked contrast to the deceivers just mentioned),—**the anointing which ye received from Him** (Christ, ver. 25: see above, ver. 20: as also on *the anointing*) **abideth in you** (“this indicative,” says Bengel, “has a subtle force of exhortation, as in 2 Tim. iii. 14”), **and** (i. e. and therefore) **ye have no need that any one teach you** (the Apostle’s assertions here are so many delicate exhortations, veiled under the declaration of their true ideal state of unction with the Holy Spirit who guides into all truth. If that unction were abiding in them in all its fulness, they would have no need for his or any other teaching. And in what is said, he does not indeed say that it is not abiding in them; but the contrary, thus reminding them what their real state is) **but** (contrast to the *having no need*, &c.) **as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things** (this *teaching concerning all things* is parallel to *leading into all the truth*, Jon xvi. 13. On the different ways of taking the following words, which can hardly be set before the English reader, see my Greek Test.),—**and is true, and is not a lie** (*what* is true, and not a lie? the anointing itself, or that which it teaches about all things? Necessarily, I believe, from the construction,

the former. And this is quite correspondent

to the fact that the Spirit who is this anointing, is the Spirit of Truth [John xiv. 17], and therefore leads into all truth [ib. xvi. 13]. As Düsterdock remarks, “The *anointing* which abides in and teaches believers is essentially true, is not a lie, and hence nothing can come from it which is a lie”),—**and even as He** (or, *it?* so A.V. and others: but the change to the past tense seems necessarily to refer to Christ as the subject,—the *Holy One* from whom the *anointing* came, and who is ever in the Writer’s mind, a subject ever ready to be supplied) **taught you, abide in Him** (or, “in *it?*” or, in that which it teaches? Neither of these: for the “*abide in Him*” is immediately after repeated, and the reference of “*Him*” fixed, by what follows, to be to Christ).

28.] Conclusion of this part of the Epistle: forming also a transition to the next part: see below. **And now** (by this the preceding considerations are linked on to the exhortation regarding present practice which follows), **little children** (the affectionate repetition of this appellation binds this on to ver. 18, and to ver. 17), **abide in Him** (“a repetition of the precept with a tender appellation, to declare his paternal love toward them.” **Him**, i.e. Christ: as before, ver. 27: but here even more decidedly): **in order that if He should be manifested** (in case of His second coming taking place), **we** (observe that he changes to the communicative way of speaking. This was not a matter in which Apostle and converts, teacher and hearer, were separate: but one in which all had a share: viz. the Christian hope of standing before the Lord with joy at His coming) **may have confidence, and may not shrink with shame from Him** (the preposition **from**, which is in the original, and is not to be evaded, as in A.V., expresses the flying from His presence, which the shame would suggest. “He who has not abode *in* the Lord, will flee *from* Him with shame and confusion when He appears.” Düsterd) **at His coming** (Bengel remarks, “He seems to have written this Epistle before the Apocalypse, in which His coming is put off longer”).

II. 29—V. 5.] THE SECOND GREAT DIVISION OF THE EPISTLE: *the doing of righteousness, the sign of new birth from God: the opposite, the sign of not being of God.* This main subject, enunciated in ver. 29, is carried onward throughout, and more especially with reference to brotherly love, which is the great and obvious example of likeness to God, and its absence the most decisive proof of alienation from Him. The various subdivisions see, as the exposition proceeds.

II. 29—III. 3.] Connected with the principle enounced ii. 29, is its obvious *application to ourselves, as children of God.* Hoping as we do to be entirely like Christ at His appearing, each one of us, in pursuance of this hope, is even now approximating to this perfect likeness by purifying himself even as He is pure.

29.] If ye know (appeal to their recognition of the divine character as that which he describes it) **that He is righteous** (of whom is this said? If of Christ, as seems most natural, after “*in Him*” and “*from Him*” preceding, we find a difficulty in the words “*is born of Him*” below, seeing that, we are never said to be born anew of *Christ*, but always of God [through Christ], ch. iii. 1, 9; iv. 7; v. 1, 4, 18, &c. If on the other hand they are said of God, “it seems strange that after a change of reference from the preceding “*Him*,” another subject should be expressed in ch. iii. 1 by the words “*the Father*.” In consequence of these difficulties, some have referred **he is righteous** to Christ, and *of*

Him to God; which cannot well be. It would be possible, doubtless, to understand the whole of Christ, without change of subject from ver. 28; and to leave the words **is born of Him** as we find them. If it occurs nowhere else in reference to Christ, there is in it nothing abhorrent from our Christian ideas. And in St. John’s sense of the intimate union between the Father and

Son, he who is born of the Father might be said to be born of the Son also. But after all, the other view, which is that of most ancient expositors, must, I apprehend, be adopted. The analogy of the passage, as shewn in ch. iii. 1, 2, 9, 10, fixes the words **is born of Him** to birth from God: and the absence in the original of a new expressed subject in the words *is*

righteous must be accounted for by remembering that this verse, as ch. i. 5, is the opening, and general statement, of a new section of the Epistle. And the essential unity of the Father and the Son comes in on this side also: so that the judgment alluded to ver. 28, which shall be executed by the Son, being judgment committed to Him by the Father, brings to mind the justice and righteousness in which that judgment is founded): **ye know that also every one who doeth righteousness** (literally, **the righteousness**, i.e. the righteousness which is implied in the word “*righteous*” above: if it were not too strong, we might almost say, “that righteousness;” the article showing that there is no other. **doeth**, for all righteousness is energetic: it springs out of holiness, truth, love), **is born** (hath been begotten) **of Him** (God: see above: *for the righteous begetteth righteous progeny*. The inference here must be carefully kept to the Apostle’s words and obvious sense. And those require that we should understand it thus: God is *righteous*. This is our axiom, from which we set out, And if so, then the *source of* righteousness. When therefore a man doeth righteousness, *we know*, we apprehend, we collect, from our previous knowledge of these truths, that the source of his righteousness is God: that in consequence he has acquired by new birth from God, that righteousness which he had not by nature. We argue from his *doing righteousness* to his *having been begotten of God*. And the right apprehension of this is the more important because the whole mass of Socinian and Pelagian Commentators have reversed the members of the argument, and made it conclude that *doing righteousness* is the condition, on our part, of *becoming a child of God*. And the Roman-Catholic expositors, while they avoid this error, yet go equally wrong, in understanding “*hath been begotten*” not as the statement of a past and abiding fact, but as the ground of a confidence as to the future).

1 John: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1–10.] *The true and distinguishing signs of the children of God and the children of the devil.*

1–3.] The foundation and source of all righteousness in us is, the essential righteousness of God. All our doing of righteousness is a mere sign that He has begotten us anew—that we are His children. And what great things are contained in this name—how precious treasures of faith, of hope, of love! On this thought the Apostle now enters. He places the whole glory of the children of God before his readers. The being righteous as He is righteous, is the token of that new birth, and the measure of the life which began with it: the striving to perfect and mature this token, to fill up this measure, is an additional proof that a man is of God.

1.] Behold (as in John i. 29; xix. 5, does not express the Writer’s own astonishment, but directs the attention of those who are addressed. But there immediately follows upon us, the communicative address, so that in fact the Apostle does in a manner include himself among those addressed in **behold**), **what manner of** (including “how great,” “how free,” “how precious”—in fact, all the particulars which are afterwards brought out respecting this love: see ver. 16, ch. iv. 9, 16) **love** (is **love** here, joined as it is with the verb “*hath bestowed*,” literally *love itself*, or does it import some gift, bestowal, or fruit of love? There seems no necessity for diverting the word from its proper meaning. As in ch. iv. 9, the proof of the love is that which is imported, not by the love itself, but by the verb joined with it; as by “*was manifested*” there, so by “*hath bestowed*” here) **the Father** (spoken here not, as some think, of God in general, the whole three Persons in the blessed Trinity, but personally, of the Father, as distinguished from the Son, in whom we have received our adoption) **hath given** (see above) **unto us, that** (how is **that** here to be taken? is it to be kept to its strong sense, indicating that our being called the children of God is the *purpose* of that gift of love just spoken of, or does it, as so often in St. John, introduce the *purport* of that love, stated in the form of an end to be gained by its manifestation? Lücke and others keep the strong telic sense. “What great love,” says Lücke, “hath the Father shewn us [viz. in sending His Son, ch. iv. 10], in order to make us children of God!” But the objection to this is, that thus a proof of the divine Love is hinted at in our verse which is not, expanded, but is left to be gathered from elsewhere: and the purpose introduced by **that** becomes the secondary and remote subject of the sentence, whereas, from the idea of **children of God** taking up the preceding idea of *birth from God*, and being again taken up in ver. 2, it is evidently the primary subject. The other meaning is taken by the ancient Greek expositors; “what manner of love... resulting in, proved by, our being, &c.” The effect of the love, that at which it is aimed in its immediate bestowal, is, that we should be called children of God: its ultimate purpose is another thing. See vv. 11, 23, where we have the same construction) **we should be called children of God** (why has the Apostle rather used **should be called** than “*should be?*” Probably to bring forward the title, the reality of which, notwithstanding its non-recognition by the world, he is about to assert immediately). **And WE ARE [so]: for this cause the world doth not know** (apprehend, recognize) **us; because it did not know Him** (viz. Christ.—The insertion of the words, **and we are so**, appears to serve the purpose of bringing out the reality of the state conferred upon us with this title, in spite of any non-recognition of it by the unbelieving world. This clause is of the highest possible significance. On its assertion depends the **therefore** which follows: and we ARE God’s children: for *this very reason*, because we bear not the name only but the essence, the world knows us not: and then, as a reason for this ignorance following on this reality of our derivation from Him,—because it knew Him not. The reality of a believer’s sonship of God, and his non-recognition by the

world, are thus necessarily connected together. But Whom did the world not know, and when? **Him** here, by the very requirements of the logic of the passage, must be the Father, who not being recognized, neither are His children; Augustine and others understand *Christ*. But this can only be, if we understand that the world rejected that revelation of the Father which was made by Christ His Son. And if we introduce this element, we disturb the strictness of the argument. It is the world's ignorance of God, considered as one great act of non-recognition, disobedience, rebellion, hate, which makes them incapable of recognizing, loving, sympathizing with, those who are veritably children of God: compare ch. v. 1).

2.] Beloved, now are we children of God (the world recognizes ns not: but our sonship is real: none the less real, that we ourselves know not our future condition in all its manifestation. So that the next member of the sentence is introduced not with a "but," but with an "and:" the two are not contrasted, but simply put in juxtaposition as components of our present state, We are really sons of God, even *now*: and we look [this very word "*now*" suggesting a future] for an inheritance in virtue of that sonship: it has not been yet manifested of what sort that inheritance shall be: thus much we know, &c. Such seems to be the simple connexion, without any adversative particles expressed or understood), **and it never yet was manifested** (on any occasion: such is the force of the tense in the original. And the verb, as so often in St. John, and as in the next sentence, does not mean, made manifest to *knowledge* or *anticipation*,—for that it is, as asserted below: but, shewn forth *in actuality*, come to its manifestation) **what we shall be** (understand, in virtue of this our state of sons of God: to what new development or condition this already existing fact will lead. But we must take care not to fall into Grotius's error, "in what manner we are to be the sons of God:" for as Calovius rightly remarks, "there are no degrees of sonship:" we are as truly, and in the same sense, children of God now, as we shall be then: but now [Gal. iv. 1] we are children waiting for an unknown inheritance—then we shall be children in full possession of that inheritance, And hence, from the reality and identity of that sonship, come what follows,—our certain knowledge, even in this absence of manifestation in detail, that our future condition will consist in likeness to Him). **We know** (no contrast, though "but" is required to fill out our English idiom: see above: what we know of this *what we shall be*, is this. There is not even a *correction* of the preceding: the connexion is simply, "This future condition of ours hath never yet appeared: thus much we know of it.") **we know**, as always, of certain, well-assured cognition) that, if it were manifested (viz. the "*what we shall be*," this verb takes up again the former one. So most of the ancients and moderns. On the other hand, Bede, Calvin, Beza [and the A.V.: Tyndale and Cranmer had "it"], and others, supply "*He*," understanding *Christ*: appealing to St. John's well-known usage which we have in ch. ii. 28, and below in our ver. 5. But it may be replied, that in the former case the subject was plainly suggested by the preceding words "*in Him*," in the latter actually expressed: whereas here the reference of the verb is no less plainly given by the preceding verb, here again repeated. Besides which, "*He*," in ver. 5, clearly shews that the divine subject of these verses is not Christ but the Father), **we shall be** (taken up again from above, and the emphatic **like Him** corresponding exactly to **what** above) **like Him** (*God*: see below), **because** (this connecting particle must be kept firm to its causal meaning, and all the difficulties of the sentence met thus, not by explaining it away. Nor does it express merely the *mode* of the transformation, as Lyra. Still less must we with Calvin and others reverse the causal connexion, and make the seeing Him as He is merely a proof that we shall be like Him. Whatever consequences it may entail, it is certain that the proposition introduced by *because* contains the real essential cause and ground of that which it follows) **we shall see Him** (*God*: see below) **as He is** (with St. John, the recognition and knowledge of God is ever no mere cognition, but the measure of the spiritual life: he who has it, possesses God, has the Father and the Son: becomes more and more like God, having His seed in him. So that the full and perfect accomplishment of this knowledge in the actual fruition of God Himself must of necessity bring with it entire likeness to God. And this is the part of the future lot of the sons of God which is certain. Because we shall see Him as He is,—which is taken for granted as a Christian axiom,—it of necessity follows that we shall be entirely like Him: ethically like Him: we shall behold, as Ecumenins says, "the just, the just One—the pure, the pure One." The difficulty, that no man can see God, is not in reality contained here, any more than it is in our Lord's "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *see* God." The word, however understood, has for its limit, that no created eye even in the glorified body can behold the Creator: that beyond its keenest search there will be glory and perfection baffling and dazzling it: but this incapacity does not prevent the vision, as far as it can reach, being clear and unclouded: being, to the utmost extent of which our glorified nature is capable, *as He is*—a true and not a false vision of God. And if it be again objected that we seem to be thus confounding the ethical sight of God which is the measure of our likeness to God, with corporeal sight of Him in the resurrection body, I answer that in the realm where our thoughts are now employed, I cannot appreciate that distinction between ethical and corporeal. We are speaking of things which eye hath not seen, nor mind conceived: what a *spiritual body* may imply, our ideas now do not enable us to conceive: but I suppose it must at all events be a body, all of whose senses are spiritually conditioned and attuned: that what *physical capacities* are to our bodies here, *spiritual capacities* will be there: and feeling this, however little I may know of the details of the great fact, it removes from me all insuperable difficulty as to the words "*we shall see Him as He is.*" "I know that in my flesh I shall see God," may not be the right expression in Job, but it is the expression of my hopes as a son of God: it is the one expression of a hope in which all other hopes culminate and centre. And every son of God knows, that for it ever to be fulfilled, he must be growing onward in likeness to Him, pure, even up into His purity: for in His light only shall we see light).

One point only must be noticed before passing onward; the fact that several of the great interpreters understand **Him** both times of *Christ*. This has partly of course been occasioned by their supplying Christ as a subject to the verb "*shall appear*," or "*shall be manifested*," above. Augustine has one of his most beautiful passages, explaining how at Christ's appearing, the impious shall see only *the form of a servant*, but we *the form of God*. The whole view, however, does not satisfy the

requirements of the passage. It is the *children of God* who are addressed: and the topic of exhortation is, that they be righteous as God their Father is righteous).

3.] And every one that hath this hope (viz. that of being like Him hereafter) **on Him** (i. e. rested and grounded on God. In God, and grounded on His promises, is all our hope), **purifieth himself** (these words are not to be taken in any Pelagian sense, as if a man could of himself purify himself: “apart from me,” says our Lord, “ye can do nothing.” John xv. 5. The man who purifies himself has this hope resting upon God. This mere fact implies a will to purify himself, not out of, nor independent of, this hope, but ever stirred up by, and accompanying it. So that the will is not his own, sprung out of his own nature, but the result of his Christian state, in which God also ministers to him the power to carry out that will in self-purification, See 2 Cor. vii. 1, which is remarkably parallel: and 1 Pet. i. 21, 22. The idea is much the same as that in ch. i. 9: it is entire purification, not merely from unchastity, but from all defilement of flesh and spirit), **even as He is pure** (Who is intended by **He**? Clearly below in ver. 5, Christ, from the facts of the case. But is it as clear here? Almost all the modern Commentators assume it, and the inference is upheld by a first view of ch. ii. 6, where much the same expression is used, and used of Christ. But there are some weighty considerations against the view. First, it is the *Father*, of whom it is written, “Be ye holy, for [or as] I am holy,” 1 Pet. i. 15, 16, Levit. xi. 44, xix. 2: compare also Matt. v. 48. Secondly, it would be very harsh thus to introduce a new subject, in the face of this Scripture usage. Thirdly, it would be against the whole spirit of the context: in which sonship of God and likeness to God are joined together, and the hopes belonging to the state are made motives for the duty. Fourthly, if it be asserted that Christ is our Pattern, in whom we see the Father’s purity shewn forth; I answer that this would be perfectly intelligible, if allusion was made, as in ch. ii. 6, to some historical manifestation in our Lord’s life: but being as it is in the present tense, it refers to the essential divine attribute of purity: and if so, then to that attribute in any inherence in the Father. For these reasons and others which may be seen in my Greek Testament, I would interpret **He** here of the Father, in whom essentially abides this perfection of purity, and after continual increase of likeness to whom his sons, having the ultimate hope of being completely like Him, will be striving. In ver. 5, the case is otherwise: see there, and also on ver. 7).

4-10] The irreconcilability of sin with the work of redemption, with communion with Christ, and with being born of God. The difficulty has been, to mark distinctly the connexion with the foregoing. In order to discover this, we must go back to the theme of the whole section of the Epistle, in ch. ii, 29: “If God is righteous, then every one that doeth righteousness, is born of Him.” Hitherto the positive side of this position has been illustrated: the inseparability of birth-from-God and likeness-to-God. Now, the Apostle comes to treat its negative side: the incompatibility of sin with birth-from-God. And this he deals with essentially and in the ideal, as always. The whole is in the closest connexion with the foregoing, and is developed step by step with the minutest precision, as will be seen in the exegesis.

4.] In this verse we have verse 3 taken ap from the opposite side. There, God’s essential purity formed a law, according to which the child of God having hope of ultimate complete likeness to Him, purifies himself. Here we have it declared that the sinner goes counter to [this and all other] law: indeed the two terms, sin and lawlessness, are synonymous and convertible. **Every one that committeth sin, also committeth transgression-of-law: and sin** (abstract and in general) **is transgression-of-law** (abstract and in general). The assertion amounts to the identification of the terms, and the **is** amounts to “is equivalent to.”

This being so, *what is it exactly that our verse asserts* respecting these two things, sin, and transgression-of-law? First and obviously, no appropriation must be made, in this verse and throughout this passage, of the word **sin** to *one kind* of sin, whether it be mortal sin as distinguished from venial [so the Roman-Catholic expositors], or notorious and unrepented sins, or sins against brotherly love [as Luther, and Augustine]. The assertions are all perfectly general, and regard, in the true root and ideal, every sin whatever. Every sin whatever then is a transgression of God’s law: as indeed its very name in Greek implies: *to sin* being to *miss a mark*, and the mark being that will of God which is the *law* and *aim* to him who “doeth the will of God,” ch. ii. 17).

5.] Additional argument for the incompatibility of sin with the life of God’s children: that He, Christ, in and by whom we have this adoption (John i. 12), and by being in whose likeness alone we can be perfectly like God, was manifested to take away all sins, being Himself sinless. **And ye know** (the Apostle assumes it as known by those who had an anointing from the Holy One and knew all things ch. ii. 20) **that He** (now clearly Christ, from the context, which [see above on ver. 3] can alone decide the reference in each case) **was manifested** (viz. by His appearing in the flesh, and all that He openly and visibly did and taught in it, or may be known, by the Spirit, to have done and taught) **in order that He may [might] take away** (in the original, “take away by one act and entirely.” The meaning, “*take away*,” and not “*bear*,” is necessitated here by the context. Sin is altogether alien from Christ. He became incarnate that He might blot it out: He has no stain of it on Himself, If we render the word “*bear*,” this coherence is lost. Of course this fact is in the background, that He took them away by bearing them Himself: but it is not brought out, only the antagonism between Him and sin. See, on the word, the note on John i. 29) **sins** (*all* sins, not merely certain sins. The object of His manifestation is stated not only categorically, but definitively. Compare the striking parallel, Heb. ix. 26): **and in Him sin is not** (as His work, in being manifested, was, altogether to take away sin, so likewise is He himself free from all spot of sin. On the perversions and misunderstandings of this verse by the rationalists, and by Calvin, see in my Greek Test.).

6.] The connexion see above. **Every one that abideth in Him** (this expression is not to be weakened down by any rationalistic interpretation a *s believing in Christ, or being joined in love to Christ.* This a man might be to an earthly friend: but could not be said to *abide in him.* See the sense expanded in the note on ch. ii. 24. Nothing short of personal immanence in the personal Christ will satisfy the words: a living because He lives, and as receiving of His fulness) **sinneth not** (nor again is this to be tamed down, as has been done by far more and better interpreters than in the last case, by making it mean “does not persist in sin,” so Luther, “does not allow sin to reign over him,”—so the Socinians and semi-Socinians. Against all such the plain words of the Apostle must be held fast, and explained by the analogy of his way of speaking throughout the Epistle of the ideal reality of the life of God and the life of sin as absolutely excluding one another. This all the best and deepest Commentators have felt: so Augustine and Bede, saying, “In so far as he abideth in Him, he sinneth not.” The two are incompatible: and in so far as a man is found in the one, he is thereby separated from the other. In the child of God i the hatred of sin; in the child of the devil the love of it; and every act done in virtue of either state or as belonging to either, is done purely on one side or purely on the other. If the child of God falls into sin, it is an act against nature, deadly to life, hardly endured, and bringing bitter repentance: it is as the taking of a poison, which if it be not corrected by its antidote, will sap the very springs of life. So that there is no real contradiction to ch. i, 8–10, ii. 2, where this very falling into sin of the child of God is asserted and the remedy prescribed. The real difficulty of our verse is in that which follows); **every one that sinneth hath not seen** (so literally: see below) **Him, neither hath known Him** (here it seems to be said that the act of sinning not only *so far* excludes from the life in God and Christ, but proves that that life *has never existed* in the person so sinning. That this cannot be the meaning of the Apostle, is evident from such passages as i. 8–10, ii. 2, and indeed from the whole tenor of the Epistle, in which the words, “*now are we children of God,*” occur in combination with

“*let no one deceive you,*” and the like: whereas if the above view were correct, the very fact of *being deceived* not only would cause them to cease from being *children of God*, but would prove that they never had been such. If then this cannot be so, what meaning are we to put upon the words? First observe the tense in which the verbs stand in the original. They are perfects, almost equivalent to our English present, by which I have accordingly rendered them. And the meaning will be, that the cutting off by an act of sin of the sight and knowledge of Christ, shews, and shews in proportion as it prevails, unreality in that sight and knowledge. See the force of the tense discussed in my Greek Testament.

As regards the relation of the words themselves, **seeth** and **knoweth**; some hold that there is no perceptible difference: but that the latter word fixes and specifies the necessarily figurative meaning of the former. Lücke would understand “*seeing*” of knowledge obtained by historical information, which matures and completes itself into “*knowing.*” But this seems hardly according to St. John’s practice, who uses “*seeing*” either of bodily sight [John i. 18, 1 John i. 1, &c., &c.],—or of an intuitive immediate vision of divine things, such as Christ has of the Father and heavenly things [John iii. 11, 32, vi. 46, viii. 38],—or of spiritual intuition gained by knowledge of Christ and the divine life [John xiv. 7, 9; 3 John 11]: and there can be little doubt that this last is the meaning here: and thus **neither** will retain its proper exclusive and climacteric force: *seeing* is a further step than *knowing:* a realization of Christ’s personality and of the existence of heavenly things which is the result of spiritual knowledge: and thus the sinner “*hath not seen Him, nor yet, nor even, known Him*”).

7, 8.] *The contrast is again stated*, and introduced by a solemn warning not to be misled respecting it: and, as usually in St. John’s repetitions, a new feature is brought in, which the following verses take up and further treat: viz. *that the devil is the source of such practices of sin.*

7.] **Little children, let no one deceive you** (it does not seem that any particular false teacher is here in St. John’s views but he alludes to all who would sever ethical likeness to God from the Christian life): **he that doeth righteousness** (the righteousness spoken of is but one, and God’s: the righteousness which is righteous, even as He (here apparently, God, notwithstanding the apparent parallel of “*Jesus Christ the righteous*” in ch. ii, 2: for we are by this saying, as by that in ver. 3, —where see note,—referred back to the great Source of our spiritual birth, ch. ii. 29, and our likeness to Him insisted on) **is righteous.**

This verse has absolutely nothing to do with the sense which the Roman-Catholic expositors have endeavoured to extract from it, that good works make us righteous before God. This is altogether to invert the proposition of the Apostle, who is reasoning, not from the fact of doing good works to the conclusion that a man is righteous, but from the hypothesis of a man’s being a child of God, born of Him and like Him, to the necessity of his purifying himself and doing righteousness. And in doing this, he ascribes the *doing righteousness* to its source, and the *doing sin* to its source: the one man is of God, the other is of the devil. As Luther well says, “Good works of piety do not make a good pious man, but a good pious man does good pious works.... Fruits grow from the tree, not the tree from fruits.”

8.] *Contrast to ver. 7.* He that doeth sin is of the devil (notice first “*he that doeth* [not, as the A.V. most unfortunately, ‘committeth’] sin,” as indicative not so much of individual acts as of a state, corresponding to “*he that doeth righteousness.*” And then the words, *is of the devil*, must not be rationalized away, as is done by those who deny the personal existence of the devil. It is the distinct opposite correlative of “*is of God*” [ver. 10, &c.], and implies a personal root and agency, just as much

as that other does. But again, it does not imply any physical dualism on the part of the Apostle, "The devil made no one, begat no one, created no one," says Augustine here; "but he who imitates the devil, as if born of him, becomes a son of the devil, by imitation, not by birth. All sinners are born of the devil, in so far as they are sinners. Adam was made by God: but when he consented to the devil, he was born of the devil, and begat all such as he himself was." But be it observed, that we have here no such expression as "*hath been begotten of the devil*," but only, *is* of the devil. In the case of the children of God, there is a definite time, known to Him, when they passed from death unto life [ch. ii. 29; iii. 14; v. 11; John i. 12; iii. 3 ff.; v. 24, &c.]: from which their new life unto God dates: but there is no such point in the life of those who are the children of the devil; no regeneration from beneath corresponding to that from above: the natural life of men is not changed by seed of the devil as it is by seed of God. Rather may we say, that in those who are of the devil this latter change has never taken place. Since sin has come to reign in the world by man's sin, our natural birth, which is properly and essentially a birth from God, a creation by the eternal Word, has become a birth from the devil: so that it is, as Bengel expresses it, "a, corruption, not a generation:" and there is no trace of a physical dualism in St. John's doctrine: nay, the idea is at once precluded by the fact, that according to the Apostle [John i. 12] those who are children of God have become so from having been children of the devil): **because the devil sinneth from the beginning** ('sinned in the beginning, and has never ceased to sin since.' But the question meets us, what is **from the beginning**? Bede and others understand it of the beginning of all creation. Many Commentators, to avoid all chance of dualism, make it mean not from the time of his creation, but from that of his fall, understanding it of the beginning of *our world*. But again, others suppose the term to mark the beginning of the devil's own apostacy: so Bengel, &c. And lastly, others again take it to mean, "from the time when any began to sin." And this seems, when we compare John viii. 44, to be the true interpretation. He has ever been the depositary, as it were, of the thought and the life of sin: the tempter to sin: the fountain out of which sin has come, as God is the fountain out of which has come righteousness. See on this subject, my Sermons on Divine Love, Serm. v. pp. 68 ff, "the First Sinner"). **To this end was the Son of God manifested** (viz. in His incarnation, pregnant with all its consequences), **that He might destroy** (do away, break up, pull down: the word is used of a building, or a law, or an organized whole) **the works of the devil** (what are these? Clearly, in the first place, works whereof the devil is the *author*: not merely *devilish works*. And then, are we to include in the list not only sins, which manifestly belong to it, but also the consequences of sin—pain, sorrow, death? The *fact* would be true if we did: for Christ hath abolished death [2 Tim. i. 10]. But the context seems to require that we should at all events keep death and the results of sin in the background, as no mention is made of them here, and sinful works are clearly in the Apostle's mind. These works the whole *manifestation* of Christ went directly to nullify: more especially His Death, in which His power over Satan reached its highest point,—the bruising of His heel, in which He bruised the Enemy's head:—for it was in that, that He won for us that acceptance which is sealed by His glorification, and in virtue of which the Holy Spirit is given us, of whose work in us it is said that we "*by the Spirit mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body.*" Rom. viii. 13).

9, 10.] *The contrast taken up again*, and from the converse: he that is born of God cannot sin: he that does not righteousness, is not of God: i.e. is a child of the devil. Then we have the usual new particular, to give the transition note to that which is to follow,—including in this last category him that loveth not his brother. **Every one that is begotten of God, doeth not sin** (the meaning of this declaration has been treated of above, ver. 6. Here we meet it in its barest and plainest form—the two states, being begotten of God, and sin, absolutely excluding one another), **because His seed abideth in him** (i. e. because that new principle of life from which his new life has unfolded, which was God's seed deposited in him, abides growing there, and precludes the development of the old sinful nature. Some of the ancients understood it of the *word* of God, as in the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii, 3 ff. This last interpretation has been impugned by all the moderns, but I cannot see that they have made good their objection: the force of which amounts to this; that the word of God is not so much the *Seed*, as the *means whereby the begetting to the new life takes place*. But whether we regard the generation of plants, or animal procreation, which latter is more in question here, what words can more accurately describe the office of the seed than these? and what is the word of God but the continually abiding and working seed of the new life, in the child of God? Nay, it seems to be that exactly of which we are in search: not the Holy Spirit, the personal agent; not the power of the new life, the thing begotten; but just that which intervenes between the two, the word, the utterance of God—dropped into the soul of man, taking it up by divine power into itself, and developing the new life continually. This is in the most precise and satisfactory sense the *seed of God*: and on this all Scripture symbolism is agreed: compare 1 Pet. i. 23, James i. 18. In fact the very passage which is the key to this, is John v. 38, "*Ye have not His word abiding in you.*" Nor should any exception have been taken to the comparison with the parable of the Sower, for though the attendant circumstances of generation are different, the analogy is the same); **and he cannot sin** (no explaining away of this declaration must be attempted, as is done by Cornelius-a-lapide, who understands it of *deadly sin*; by Augustine and Bede, who confine the *to sin* to the violation of brotherly love. The Apostle is speaking not only of the ideal, but of the real state of those born of God: drawing the strongest possible contrast between the life of God and the life of sin, as excluding one another absolutely. And there is no contradiction between what is here said and ch. i. 8, 9; nay, rather that passage shews, by the strong desire to be cleansed from all sin, which it assumes, the same incompatibility as is here insisted on), **because he hath been begotten of God** (almost all the expositors, from the first times until now, make this **because** more or less represent *in as far as, or as long as*. It is true, the Apostle does not say, "*he cannot sin because he was born*

of God:" this would testify to a past fact, once for all occurring, without any reference to its present permanence: but he has said because he is [**hath been and continues**] **born**,—because he *has abiding in him* that his birth from God. So that the

above-cited explanation, though falling far short of the real meaning, has at least a feeling after the truth of the Apostle's assertion in it. The abiding force of this divine generation in a man, excludes sin: where sin enters, that force does not abide: the *having been born* is in danger of becoming a mere fact in the past, instead of a fact in the present: a lost life, instead of a living life. And so all such passages as this, instead of testifying, as Calvin would have this one do, to the doctrine of final perseverance of the regenerate, do in fact bear witness to the very opposite: viz., that, as the Church of England teaches, we need God's special grace every day to keep us in the state of salvation, from which every act and thought of sin puts us in peril of falling away.

Before leaving this important passage, I must quote Düsterdieck's concluding remarks. "The difference between the older and more modern expositors lies in this, that the former are more anxious to moderate the details of the Apostle's sentiment, and to tone down his assertion, to the actual life of Christians, while the moderns recognize the full precision of the text as it stands, but then remind us that the ideal truth of the principle announced by St. John continually, so to speak, floats above the actual life of believers as their role and aim, and that, in so far, the Apostle's saying finds in such actual life only a relative fulfilment. None however of all the expositors, who in any way has recognized the ideal character of St. John's view, has overlooked the fact, that even in the actual life of all that are born of God there is something which in fall verity answers to the ideal words, 'they cannot sin.' The children of God, in whom the divine seed of their eternal life abides, have, in reality, a holy privilege,—they sin not, and they cannot sin, just in proportion as the new divine life, unconditionally opposed to all sin, and manifesting itself in godlike righteousness, is present and abides in them. Expositors of all theological tendencies, in all times, point to this, that the new life of believers, veritably begotten by regeneration from God, is simply incompatible with sin;—the life which essentially alienates the spirit from all sin, fills it with an irreconcilable hate against every sin, and urges it to an unceasing conflict against all unrighteousness. Luther excellently says, that a child of God in this conflict receives indeed wounds daily, but never throws away his arms or makes peace with his deadly foe. Sin is ever active, but no longer dominant: the normal direction of life's energies in the believer is against sin, is an absence of sin, a no-will-to-sin and a no-power-to-sin. He that is born of God has become, from being a servant of sin, a servant of righteousness: according to the divine seed remaining in him, or, as St. Paul says, according to the inner man [Rom. vii. 15 ff.], he will, and he can work only that which is like God,—righteousness, though the flesh, not yet fully mortified, rebels and sins: so that even in and by the power of the new life sin must be ever confessed, forgiveness received [ch. i. 8 ff.], the temptation of the evil one avoided and overcome [v. 18], and self-purification and sanctification carried on").

10.] *The continuation of the former argument:* with the insertion, in the latter half, of the new particular which is to form the argument of the next section. But this latter half belongs not only to that next section, but to this as well: its assertion "*whosoever doeth not righteousness, &c.,*" is requisite for the *g* out fully of the assertion, "*In this, &c.*" which at the same time looks

3812 backward and forward: backward, for the children of God have already been designated by the absence of sin, ver. 9: forward, for the children of the devil are designated below by the presence of sin in the second half of the verse. **In this** (fact, circumstance: *in* better than *by this*, which the idea that this is the *only* sign) **are manifest** (it has been asked, *to whom?* Some say to God's unerring eye alone. True, in the full and deep truth of the saying: but surely in degree and proportion to those whom the unction from the Holy One enables to know all things: in proportion as sin is manifested, or hatred and avoidance of sin is manifested, in a character. And the especial sign which follows, the sin of hate, is one which is plainly open to men's eyes, at least in its ordinary manifestations) **the children of God and the children of the devil** (see these expressions explained and vindicated from the charge of dualism, above, ver. 8. Compare John viii. 44, Acts xiii. 10. Socinus remarks well, "From the Apostle's words it may clearly enough be collected, that between the sons of God and the sons of the devil there are none intermediate"): **every one that doeth not righteousness** (see ch. ii. 29) **is not of God** (is not a child of God), **and he that loveth not his brother** (see below, these words pointing on to the next section).

11–24.] Of *brotherly love*, as the sum and essence of *righteousness*: as Christ's command [ver. 11]: whereas in the world there is hate [12, 13]: bound up with life, as hate with death [14, 15]: finding its great pattern in Christ [16]; to be testified not in word only but in deed [17, 18]; as the ground of confidence toward God and the granting of our prayers to Him, being obedience to His will [19–22]; which obedience consists in faith and love [23], and is testified to by the witness of His Spirit [24].

Before entering on ver. 11, the latter half of ver. 10 must be considered, as belonging properly, in its sense, to this section, though in arrangement inseparable from the last. The "and," which binds on the additional particular in the last clause, serves, as in ver. 5, to co-ordinate that clause with the foregoing: not in this case as excluded from the forementioned category, but as one in particular, taken out from among the general category, and put into a co-ordinate position with it. And it is thus put, as being the most eminent, and most of the nature of a summary, and criterion, of the rest, of any of those graces which are necessarily involved in *righteousness*. Augustine beautifully says, "Love alone distinguishes between the children of God and the children of the devil. All may sign themselves with the sign of cross of Christ: all may answer Amen: all may sing Halleluia: all may be baptized, may enter churches, may build the walls of the same: but the children of God are not distinguished from the children of the devil, except by Love." And this love, thus constituted into the great test and

touchstone, is necessarily the family love of brother for brother within the limits of those who are begotten of God. Universal love to man is a Christian grace—but it is not that here spoken of: it neither answers the description of the “*message*” given in ver. 11, nor corresponds to the context here in general, the drift of which is that a test of our belonging to God’s family is our love towards His children, who are our brethren in that family: cf. ch. v. 1 ff. But, while there can be no doubt that this is the right understanding of the brotherly love here insisted on, we incur at once a formal difficulty in applying this meaning to the negative or exclusive side of the test. He who does not love his brother, has in strict fact *no brother to love*, for he is not a child of God at all. Hence we must understand, strictly speaking, “*his brother*” in this case as importing his hypothetical brother: him who would be, were he himself a true child of God, a brother, and, if so, necessarily beloved. That this love does not exist in him, demonstrates him not to be of God’s family.

11.] Because (proof that absence of love of the brethren excludes from God’s family) **the message which ye heard from the beginning** (the announcement which from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel was made to you. The term **message** is not here equivalent to *command*, though that which is cited is a commandment: but it is a *command* conveyed in words and by messengers, and thus become a *message*) **is this, that we love one another.**

12, 13.] See summary above: *example of the first instance of the world’s hate*, by way of contrast.

12.] Not as Cain was, of the wicked one, and slew his brother (the construction is elliptic: but nothing need be supplied as in A.V. In the words **was of the wicked one** we have a resumption of the expression “*is of the devil*” from above, ver. 8: the word **wicked** being used probably on account of his being *of the wicked one* following. Observe, “his works were wicked” is the inference from that great proof which he gave of it by killing his brother: as is also the reason given in what follows: see below. So that here the assertion of his being of the wicked one is, aa above, strictly ethical, and in no way physical or dualistic: “Cain was the son not of God but of the devil, *not by generation*, but by imitation and suggestion.” Cornelius-a-lapide). **And for what reason slew he him? because his [own] works were wicked, and those of his brother righteous** (it has caused some difficulty, that no mention of this ethical difference is made in the narrative in Genesis. It has been supposed that the Apostle gathers it from God’s differing acceptance of the offerings of the two: others have culled the ethical characters of the two the *previous* occasion, whereas the immediately exciting cause was the deduction from acknowledged facts, of the murder. But properly considered, the Apostle’s assertion here is only a *proximate* occasion. Cain murdered his brother: therefore he hated him: and hate belongs to the children of the evil one,—classes him at once among those whose works are evil, and who hate those who, like Abel, are testified to [Heb. xi. 4] that they are of the children of God who work righteousness. Whatever might be the exciting occasion of the murder, this lay at the root—the hatred which the children of the devil ever bear to the children of God).

13.] The connexion with ver. 12 is close: the world (the children of the devil) began so, and will ever go on as it began. **Marvel not, brethren, if** (*no doubt* is expressed by this *if*. The hypothesis is set forth as actually fulfilled) **the world hateth you** (this verse is in close sequence on the example just given: Cain being taken as the prototype and exemplar of such hate).

14, 15.] See summary above, on ver. 11. The connexion with the foregoing is very close. We learnt from ver. 10, that the love of the brethren is that which makes manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. And now again, having spoken of the hate of the world as a thing to be looked for, the Apostle brings up this sign as one tending to comfort the child of God, and shew him that, notwithstanding the world’s hate, he has more to rejoice at than to fear from the fact: he is in life, they in death. **We** (emphatic: we whom the world hates: we, as set over against the world) **know** (see above, ver. 2: of *certain* knowledge) **that we have passed over out of death into life** (in the original it is, **out of the death into the life—the death**, which reigns over the unregenerate: *the life*, which is revealed in Christ), **because** (gives the ground and cause, not of the *having passed over*, but of the *knowledge* of having passed over) **we love the brethren** (here distinctly, our Christian brethren: the term being that well-known one by which the body of Christians was represented. For the Romanist and Socinian distortions of this verse, curiously running into one, see note in my Greek Test. It may conduce to a right estimate of the doctrines of men and churches, and put younger Scripture students on their guard, to see the concurrent habits and tendencies of interpreters apparently so opposite. When Pilate and Herod are friends, we know what work is in hand. But as a conclusion, I will quote the clear and faithful exposition of a greater and better man: “What do we know? that we have passed from death into life. Whence have we this knowledge? because we love the brethren. Let no one interrogate a man: let every one have recourse to his own heart: if he find there brotherly love, he may be sure that he has passed from death into life. He stands already on the right hand: let it not trouble him that as yet his glory is hidden; when the Lord shall come, then shall he appear in glory. For he is growing, but as yet in winter: the root grows, but the branches are as it were dried up: within is the sap which grows, within are the leaves of trees, within are fruits, but they wait for summer”); **he that loveth not** (there is this time no qualifying object, as “*his brother*:” the absence of love from the character is the sign spoken of), **abideth in death** (as before, “*in the death*:” in that realm of death, in which all men are by nature. Here again the absence of love is not the reason, why he remains in death; but the sign of his so remaining, The “*passing over*” has not passed upon him. The words have no reference to *future* death, any further than as he who is and abides in death can but end in death: we may notice that he does not say, he who loveth not shall come into death, as if he were speaking concerning eternal punishment, awaiting sinners in the future: but he says, “*he who loveth not abideth in death.*” Bede).

15.] Every one that hateth his brother is a manslayer (in these words, (1) “*he that loveth not,*” which preceded, is taken up by **every one that hateth**: shewing that the two are identical: the living spirit of man being incapable of a state of indifference: that he who has banished brotherly love has in fact abandoned himself to the rule of the opposite state. In the ethical depth of the Apostle’s view, love and hate, like light and darkness, life and death, necessarily succeed, as well as necessarily exclude, one another. He who has not the one of necessity has the other in each case. (2) he who hates his brother is stated to be a *manslayer*. The example given, ver. 12, shewed the true and normal result of hate: and again in the Apostle’s ethical depth of view, as in our Lord’s own [Matt. v. 21 ff, 27 fi.], he who falls under a state, falls under the normal results of that state carried out to its issue. If a hater be not a murderer, the reason does not lie in his hate, but in his *lack of hate*. “Whom we hate, we wish destroyed,” says Calvin. Some would make a *manslayer* mean, a destroyer of *his own soul*. But this, as well as the view that it is the murder of his brother’s *soul* which is intended, by provoking him to anger and discord,—errs by pressing the reference to the example of Cain above. Some again would interpret it by a reference to John viii. 44, understood as pointing to the ruin of Adam by the Tempter. But as Düsterdieck remarks, far rather should we say that this passage throws back a light on that passage, and makes it likely that the case of Cain, and not that of Adam, is *there referred to*; **and ye know that every manslayer hath not** (is without the possession of) **eternal life abiding in him** (**ye know**, viz. by your own knowledge of what is patent and axiomatic in itself. We must not fall into the error of referring the saying to the *future lot* of the murderer: it regards his present state, and is another way of saying that he “*abideth in death,*” ver. 14. Eternal life, which abides in God’s children, which is the living growth of the seed of God in them, is evidenced by love: if the very crown and issue of hate, homicide, be present, it is utterly impossible that this germ of life can be coexistent with it; can be firmly implanted and abiding [see John v. 38] in the man).

16–18.] Description and enforcement of true love. The Apostle has hitherto shewn that brotherly love is the truest test as between the children of God and the children of the devil. But, that no one may deceive himself or be deceived by others, it is now necessary to lay down, what is true and Christian love.

16.] Example of true love in Christ, and enforcement of it on us. **In this** (see above, ver. 10, and note, ch. ii, 3) **we have the know-ledge of** (“we have arrived at and possess the apprehension of:” knowledge, as an act of the understanding proceeding on intellectual grounds. Here however it is used entirely within the sphere of the Christian of union with Christ. None can understand true love as shewn in this its highest example, but he who is one with Christ, and has felt and does feel that love of His in its power on himself. See note on ch. ii. 8) **love** (i. e. what love is: the nature of love true and genuine: that perfection of love, which we are commanding. So most of the Commentators. Some have held to the insertion of the words “*of God*” (as A.V.) after **love**, which has hardly any authority. But there can be but little doubt that the other is the right view. The love of God to us is not that which would, *as such*, be adduced as a pattern to us of brotherly love; it is true that in the depth of the matter, all true love is love after that pattern: but in a passage so logically bound together it is much more probable that the term common to the two, Christ and ourselves, would be, not divine love, which as such is peculiar to Him, but love itself simply, that of which He has given the great example which we are to follow), **that He** (Christ, as the words beyond question shew) **laid down His life for us** (i. e. *died*: not as Grotius, who in all the places where it occurs maintains that it is only to *expose life to danger*, which would entirely enervate the Apostle’s saying here. The term **for us** carries in it and behind it all that we know of the nature of the death which is spoken of: but the vicariousness and atoning power of Christ’s death are not here in consideration: it is looked on here as the greatest possible proof of love, us in John xv, 13): **and we** (emphatic: we on our part as followers of Christ) **ought on behalf of the brethren to lay down our lives** (*on lives*, Socinus says well: “He says not, that we ought to lay down our ‘*life*,’ as if one were bound to die for many, but, our *lives*, because each ought to die for each.” The Apostle states the duty generally; and thus stated it is clear enough. As Christ did in pursuance of His love, so ought we to do in pursuance of ours, bound as we are to Him not by the mere force of an outward example, but by the power of an inward life. But naturally and necessarily the precept finds its aeration only in those cases where our Heavenly Father’s will sets the offering of such a sacrifice in the course and pursuance of our brotherly love, which He has ordained).

17.] But (“by the adversative connexion of ver. 17 with ver. 16 the Apostle marks the passage from the greater, which is justly demanded of us, to the lesser, the violation of which is all the more a transgression of the law just prescribed” Düsterdieck) **whosoever hath the world’s sustenance, and beholdeth** (the Greek word gives more than “*seeth*,” which would imply only the casual sight: it is the standing and looking on as a spectator: so that it ever involves not the eye only, but the mind also, in the sight: it is to *contemplate*, not simply to *see*. St. John is very fond of this word, and wherever it occurs, this its meaning may be more or less traced. There is then in this unmerciful man not merely the being aware of, but the deliberate contemplation of the distress of his brother) **his brother having need, and shutteth up** (the shutting is then and there done, as the result of the contemplation: not a mere constitutional hardness of heart, but an act of exclusion from sympathy following deliberately on the beholding of his brother’s distress) **bis bowels** (i. e. his heart, the seat of compassion: as so often in the New Test., this expression carries the idea of *turning away* from him. As Düsterdiek remarks, the fact that a man shuts up his heart against his brother, includes in it the fact that that brother is excluded *from* the heart thus shut up), **how** (can it be that? as in ch. iv. 20) **doth the love of God** (i. e. from the very express filling out of the thought in ch. iv. 20, “*love to God;*” not God’s love to us. See also ch. ii. 5, where we have the same expression and reference to the love of God being in a man. The context indeed here might seem, as the mention of Christ’s love to us as so immediately preceded, to require the

other meaning:

or at least, that of “the love whereof God hath set us a pattern:” and accordingly both these have been held. But I see not how we can escape the force of the passages above cited) **abide in him** (Lücke and Düsterdieck are disposed to lay a stress on the word **abide** here, thereby opening a door for the view that the love of God may indeed be in him in some sense, but not as a firm abiding principle; that at all events at the moment when he thus shuts up his bowels of compassion, it is not *abiding* in him. But this world seem to violate the ideal strictness of the Apostle’s teaching, and the true sense rather to be, “How can we think of such an one as at all possessing the love of God in any proper sense?” giving thus much emphasis to the word **abide**.

Here again, as above in the case of the duty of laying down life for a brother, many questions of casuistry have been raised as to the nature and extent of the duty of almsgiving, on which it is impossible to enter here. The safest answers to them all will be found in the Christian conscience enlightened by the Holy Spirit, guiding the Christian heart warmed by the living presence of Christ)?

18.] Exhortation to true brotherly love: following naturally on the example of the want of it given in the last verse. **Little children, let us not love with word, nor yet with tongue, but** (let us love) **in deed and truth** (there is some little difficulty in assigning these words their several places in the contrast. Notice first, that the two former, **with word** and **with tongue**, simply relate to the *instrument*, whereas the two latter are introduced by the preposition *in*, denoting the element in which. The trae account of the arrangement seems to be, that the usual contrast of *word* and *deed* is more sharply defined by the explanatory terms, *tongue* and *truth*: **with the tongue** giving, by making the mere bodily member the instrument, more precisely the idea of absence of truth than even **with word**, and **in truth** more definitely the idea of its presence than even **in deed**. As connected with the exhortation in this verse, I may cite the tradition reported by Jerome in his Commentary on Gal. vi. 10: “The blessed John, the Evangelist, living on at Ephesus into extreme old age, and being with difficulty borne by the hands of his disciples to church, when he could not sustain his utterance for more words, used to say no more at each meeting than this: ‘Little children, love one another.’ At last his disciples and the brethren who were present, being wearied at hearing always the same words, said, ‘Master, why dost thou always go on saying this?’ The answer was worthy of St. John: ‘Because it is the Lord’s command; and if this only be done, it is enough’”).

19–24.] See the summary at ver. 11. *The blessed effects of trae brotherly love as a test of the Christian state.*

19, 20.] [And] in this (see above, v. 1v0, 16. It here refers to what had gone before: viz. to the fulfilment of the exhortation in ver. 18, as the future shews: “*which thing if we do....*”) **we shall know** (on the *future*, see above. It is the result consequent on the ful ment of the condition implied in **herein**) **that we are of the truth** (“i. e.,” says Œcumениus, “in the fact of our loving not with word, but in deed and in truth: because he who one thing and does another, not in his deed being consonant to his profession, is a liar and not true.” But, true as this is, and self-evident, it does not reach the depth of the meaning of, have our source from. To be in **the truth**, is a different matter from to be truthful or true men, Estius *approaches* the meaning, understanding **the truth** to be the truth of God in His promises, and so are **of the truth** to mean “are of the number of the elect.” Bede’s interpretation, “**of the truth**, which is **God**,” in which Calvin and others agree, is nearer still: but had the Apostle intended this, he surely would have written “*of God*.” The Lutheran commentators have come nearer still, making **the truth** to be *the word of truth* by which we are begotten anew unto God. But why stop at that which after all is *itself of* the truth? why not mount up to the Truth itself, that pure and objective Truth which is the common substratum and essential quality of the Spirit Himself, of the Word, of those who are born of the Word by the Spirit?), **and shall persuade our hearts before him** (i. e. and in and by this same sign, shall still the questionings of our hearts before God, by the assurance that we are His true children. St. John uses **the heart** for the innermost seat of our feelings and passions: of alarm [John xiv. 1, 27], of mourning [xvi. 6], of joy [xvi. 22]. It was into the *heart* of Judas that the devil put the intent of betraying the Lord [xiii. 2]: and the *heart* here is the inward judge of the man,—whose office is, so to say, promoted by the conscience, accusing or else excusing [Rom. ii, 15]. Then, as to **shall persuade**, there is no need to give to the verb any unusual meaning. It does not mean “quiet” or “assure,” except in so far as its ordinary import, “persuade,” takes this tinge from the context.

It must be plain from what has been said, that the future, **shall persuade**, is not, on account of the words “**before Him**,” to be taken as referring to the future day of judgment, as some have done. In ch. iv, 17, which is in some respects parallel with this, that day is expressly named: whereas in our passage, an equally clear indication is given, by the parallelism of the two future verbs, “*shall know*” and “*shall persuade*,” that no such reference is intended. **before Him** is not, at His appearing, but, *in His sight*, as placed before His all-seeing eye.

20.] takes up this matter of the persuading our hearts before God, and shews its true importance and rationale. This is carried on in the following verses, but is here and in ver. 21 placed as its ground. If our heart, *before Him*, judges us unfavourably—we favourably still: if our heart condemn us not, again *before Him*, judging and seeing in the light of His countenance, then we know that we are at one with Him, and those consequences follow, which are set forth in ver. 22. The many difficulties which occur in *rendering* this verse cannot be presented to the mere English reader. They will be found discussed in my Greek Test. The context appears to stand thus. The Apostle in ver. 19 has said that by the presence of genuine love we shall know

that we are of the truth, and shall persuade our hearts in God's presence. He then proceeds to enlarge on this *persuading* our hearts *in general*. If our heart condemn us, what does it import? If our heart acquit us, what? The *condemnation*, and *acquittal*, are plainly and necessarily *opposed*, both in hypothesis and in result. If the consolatory view of ver. 20 is taken,—as softening our self-condemnation by the comforting thought of God's greatness and infinite mercy,—then the general result of vv. 20, 21 will be, whether our heart condemn us or not, we have comfort and assurance: and then what would be the import of our *persuading* our hearts at all? But on the other interpretation, the condemnatory sense of ver. 20—as intensifying our self-condemnation by the thought that the cause of it is God, knowing more of our sin than we do—then, taken with some modifications, all will be clear, I say, taken with some modifications: because the sense has been much obscured by the mistake of introducing the particular case treated in ver. 18 into the general statements of vv. 20, 21. It is not, If our heart condemn us *for want of brotherly love*: but this test is dropped, and the general subject of the testimony of our hearts is entered upon. Thus we get the context and rendering, as follows): **because** (as if it were said, and this *persuading*

our hearts before Him is for us a vital matter, seeing that condemnation and acquittal by our own hearts bring each such a weighty conclusion with it) **if our heart condemn us, it is because** (our self condemnation is founded on the fact, that) **God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things** (i. e. the condemning testimony of our conscience is not alone, but is a token of One sitting above our conscience and greater than our conscience: because our conscience is but the faint echo of His voice who knoweth all things: if it condemn us, how much more He? and therefore this persuading, for which this verse renders a reason, becomes a thing of inestimable import, and one which we cannot neglect, seeing that the absence of it is an index to our standing condemned of God. And then, having given the reason why the *condemnation* should be set at rest by the *persuasion*, he goes on to give the blessed results of the *persuasion* itself in vv. 21, 22).

21.] Beloved (there is no adversative particle, because this address throws up the contrast quite strongly enough, as introducing the very matter on which the context lays the emphasis, viz., the *persuading our hearts*), **if our heart condemn us not, we have confidence towards God** (said generally; not with direct reference to that which follows ver. 22, which indeed is one form of this confidence: see ch. v. 14, where the connexion is similar. The confidence here spoken of is of course present, not future in the day of judgment. **towards God**, i.e., with reference to God: but more than that: to God-ward, in our aspect as turned towards and looking to God.

It must be remembered that the words are said in the full light of the reality of the Christian state,—where the heart is awakened and enlightened, and the testimony of the Spirit is active: where the heart's own deceit does not come into consideration as a disturbing element),

22.] and (such another “*and*” as that in verse 10 above, where, after the general statement, “*and*” introduced the particular instance in which the general truth was carried forward. So here: By dwelling and walking in love, we can alone gain that approval of our conscience as God's children, which brings real confidence in Him and real intercommunion in prayer, which is a result and proof of that confidence) **whatsoever wo ask, we receive** (present: not put for future, as Grotius thinks. The Apostle is setting forth actual matter of fact) **from Him** (these words must be taken in all their simplicity, without capricious and arbitrary limitations. Like all the sayings of St. John, they proceed on the ideal truth of the Christian state. “The child of God,” as Huther says, “asks for nothing which is against the will of its Father”), **because** (ground of the above *receiving*) **we keep His commandments, and do the things which are pleasing in His sight** (on the last expression [and parallelism] see Exod. xv. 26; also Deut. vi. 18, xii. 25, Ezra x. 11, Isa. xxxviii. 3. It is added, not as explanatory of *keeping His commandments*, but to connect with His granting our prayers, since our lives are in accord with His good pleasure. This however brings us to the theological difficulty of our verse, wherein it would seem at first sight as if the granting of our prayers by God depended, as its meritorious efficient, on our keeping of His commandments and doing that which pleases Him. And so some of the Roman-Catholic expositors here. But both here and elsewhere the solution of the difficulty is very easy, if separated from the party words of theology, and viewed in the light of Scripture itself. Out of Christ, there are no good works at all: entrance into Christ is not won nor merited by them. In Christ, every work done of faith is good and is pleasing to God. The doing of such works is the working of the life of Christ in us: they are its sign, they its fruits: they are not of us, but of it and of Him. They are the measure of our Christian life: according to their abundance, so is our access to God, so is our reward from God: for they are the steps of our likeness to God, Whatever is attributed to them as an efficient cause, is attributed not to us, but to Him whose fruits they are, *Because* Christ is thus manifested in us, God hears our prayers, which He only hears for Christ's sake: *because* His Spirit works thus abundantly in us, He listens to our prayer, which in that measure has become the voice of His Spirit. So that no degree of efficacy attributed to the good works of the child of God need surprise us: it is God recognizing, God vindicating, God multiplying, God glorifying, His own work in us. So that when, e.g., Cornelius-a-lapide says, “It is congruous, and the congruous reward of obedience and reconciliation (friendship), that if man does the will of God, God in His turn should do the will of man,” all we can reply is that such a duality, such a reciprocity, does not exist for Christians: we are *in God*, He in us: and this St. John continually insists on. We have no claim *from without*: He works in us to do of His good pleasure: and the works which He works, which we work, manifest before Him, and before all, that we are His children. The assertion, “*whatsoever we ask, we receive*,” I reserve to be treated of on ch. v. 14, 15, where it is set forth more in detail).

23.] Summing up of all these commandments in one: faith in Christ, and brotherly love according to Christ's command. And (see "and" similarly used, ch. i. 5, ii. 17, iii. 3) **His commandment** ("he mentions," says Bede, "but one commandment, and then subjoins two, faith and love, as being inseparable the one from the other. For we cannot love one another rightly without the faith of Christ, nor can we truly believe in the name of Jesus Christ without love") **is this, That we should believe the name** (this unusual expression is well explained by Calvin and Beza,—the word "name" has reference to the preaching of Him; so that to believe His Name is, to believe the Gospel message concerning Him, and Him as living in it, in all His fulness) **of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as He gave us commandment** (it seems natural, with the generality of Commentators, to understand Christ as intended by **He**, and by the commandment, John xiii. 34, xv. 12, xvi. 17).

24a.] General return, with reference to what has been said in the last verses, *to the great key-note of the Epistle, abide in Him*, with which the former part of it concluded, ch. ii. 28. This keeping of His (God's) commandments is the abiding in God: this of which brotherly love is the first and most illustrious example and summary. So that the exhortation given at the beginning of this portion of the Epistle is still in the Apostle's mind, as again ch. iv. 15, 16, and v. 20; see also ch. ii. 6, iii. 6, 9. **And he that keepeth His (God's) commandments, abideth in Him (God), and He (God) in him** (some hold that **He** and **Him** are to be referred to Christ. And no doubt they would be perfectly true, and according to our Lord's own words, when thus applied: see John xiv. 15, xv. 5 ff. Still, from the context [see below], it is better to refer them to the chief subject, viz. to God. In the sense, the difference is not important. It is one of the most difficult questions in the explanation of this most difficult of Epistles, to assign such expressions as the present definitely to their precise personal object).

24 b.] And of one part of this mutual indwelling there is *a sign and token*, given us by God Himself, viz. *the Holy Spirit*. By the mention of the Spirit, the Apostle makes these words the note of transition to the subject of the neat section, ch. iv. 1–6, which is parenthetical, of the discerning of true and false spirits, and after which the main subject of brotherly love is resumed again. **And in this we** (all the children of God; not, as the Roman-Catholic expositors, the Apostles, or the apostolic church, only) **know that He abideth in us, from** (or **by**—out of the fact) **the Spirit which He gave us** (not, *hath given*, as A.V. The giving here took place at a certain time, by a definite act, viz. on the day of Pentecost, when the Father bestowed the Holy Spirit on the Church. And this word **gave** is one sign that the whole is to be referred to the Father: seeing that our Lord says, "*I will pray the Father; and He shall give you another Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,*" John xiv. 16, This indwelling Spirit of God is to the child of God the spring and source of his spiritual life, the sure token of his sonship, Rom. 14, 15, Gal. iv. 6, and of his union with God in Christ).

1 John: Chapter 4

CHAP. IV. 1–6.] Warning against, and criteria whereby to distinguish, false teaching. This passage takes up again, with reference to this portion of the Epistle, the similar warning given in the former portion, ch. ii. 18 ff. It is intimately connected with what has immediately preceded. By brotherly love we are to know that we are of the truth, iii. 19,—and the token that He abideth in us is to be the Spirit which He gave us. This Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, it becomes then all-important for us to be able to distinguish, and not to be led astray by any false spirits pretending to his character and office. Such false spirits there are, which are not of God, but of the world, which make up that spirit of antichrist, of which prophecy had already spoken.

1.] Beloved (so ver. 7, and ch. iii. 2, 21, marking a transition to a subject on which the Apostle affectionately bespeaks their earnest attention), **believe not every spirit** (this expression, as also, "*the spirits*," indicating plurality of spirits, we to be explained by the fact that both the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error speak by the spirits of men who are their organs. So we have, in reference to prophecy, 1 Cor. xiv. 32, "*The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.*" By the nature of the testimony of the human spirits, we shall know whether they are of God or not; whether they are organs of the *spirit of truth*, or of the *spirit of error*. It will be observed that this interpretation of "*every spirit*," and the Apostle's way of speaking, rest on the assumption of there being One Spirit of Truth, from God, and one spirit of error, from the world; as opposed to all rationalizing interpretations, and also to all figurative understanding of the word. It is not the men themselves, but their spirits as the vehicles of God's Spirit or the spirit of antichrist, that are in question), but try the spirits (this *trying* is enjoined not on the *church by her prelates*, as the Roman-Catholic expositors, but on all believers, as even some of them reluctantly admit: and the test is one of plain matter of fact, of which any one can be judge. The Church by her rulers is the authoritative assertor of the result of this *trial* in the shape of official adoption or rejection, but only as moved by her component faithful members, according to whose sense those her formularies are drawn, of which her authorities are the exponents) **whether they are of God** (bear the character of an origin from Him): **because** (ground for the necessity of this trial) **many false-prophets** (called "many anti-christs," ch. ii. 18: prophets, not as foretelling future things, but as the mouthpieces of the spirit which inspires them. Compare 2 Pet. ii. 1, where the New Test. false teachers are called "*false teachers*," and compared to the Old Test. "*false prophets*") **are gone forth** (viz, from him who sent them: even as Jesus Himself is said, John viii. 42, xiii. 8, xvi. 27, 28, to have *come forth* from God. Or we may take it as in ch. ii. 19, *went out from us*,—from the Church: but the other is more likely) **into the world** (compare John xvi. 38, which tends to fix the meaning of the words "*are gone forth*" above).

2, 3a.] Test, whereby the spirits are to be tried. **In this** (see above, ch. iii. 10, &c.) **ye know** (apprehend, recognize) **the Spirit**

of God (the Holy Spirit, present, inspiring, and working in men's spirits): **Every spirit which confesseth** (the action is attributed to the spirit, which really is that of the man by the spirit. The confession is necessarily, from the context here, not the genuine and ascertained agreement of lips and life, but the outward and open profession of faith: see 2 John 7–10, where *bringing this doctrine* is its equivalent) **Jesus Christ come in the flesh** (not equivalent to, as A.V., “*that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.*” If it were, the confession, or the preaching, would be simply of the fact enounced: whereas in each case it is the PERSON who is the object, or primary predicate: the participle carrying the attributive, or secondary predicate. This is abundantly shewn here, by the adversative clause, where it is simply “*not confessing Jesus.*” The confession required is, “*Jesus Christ come in the flesh.*” This perfect gives the present endurance of a past historical fact. The words imply the pre-existence and incarnation by their very terms: but they do not assert these doctrines, only the verity of our Lord’s human nature), **is of God** (has its origin and inspiration from Him by His Spirit).

3 a.] conversely: **and every spirit which does not confess** (literally, by the form of the clause, “*refuseth to confess*”) **Jesus** (in the complex of all that He is and has become, involved as it is in His having come in the flesh), **is not of God.**

3 b.] This has been already virtually explained on ch. ii. 18. **And this is the [spirit] of antichrist** (so nearly all the Commentators supply the ellipsis, and rightly) **[of] which ye have heard** (the reference is not to ch. ii. 18, but to the course of their Christian instruction in which this had been taught them) **that it cometh** (the present used as so often of that, which is a thing fixed and determined, without any reference to time: “*that it should come*” of the A.V. is in sense very good, but does not quite suit the perfect “*ye have heard,*” which seems grammatically in English to require “*that it shall come:*” “*that it must come*” would perhaps be better), **and now it is in the world already** (viz., in the person of these *false prophets*, who are its organs).

4.] Ye (so we had **ye**, ch. ii. 24, 27: his readers clearly and sharply set against the antichristian teachers) **are of God, little children** (thus he ever speaks to his readers, as being children of God, see ch. iii. 1 ff., 13 ff., 19, 24, &c.), **and have overcome** (there need not be any evading or softening of this perfect: see ch. ii. 14. It is faith outrunning sight: the victory is certain in Him who said, “*I have overcome the world,*” John xvi. end. The ground of this assurance follows) **them** (the false prophets, thus identified with antichrist), **because greater is He [that is] in you than he [that is] in the world.**

He [that is] in you is most naturally understood of GOD, seeing that “*ye are of God*” preceded; for he who is “*of God*” has God dwelling in him. Though, as Dürsterdieck remarks, it matters not much whether we take it thus, or of the indwelling of God by His Spirit, or of the life of Christ in believers.

he [that is] in the world is the devil, the prince of this world. Having said this, he proceeds in the next verse to identify these false prophets with the *world* of which he has spoken.

5.] They are of the world (this description is not ethical merely, but betokens the origin and source of that which they are and teach, as “*ye are of God*” did on the other side. That origin and source is the world, unregenerate human nature, ruled over and possessed by the devil, the prince of this world): **for this cause they speak of** (not *concerning*, but of, as *out of and from*; the material of what the say being worldly, Bengel) **the world, and the world heareth them** (loving as it does its own, who are of it, John xv. 18, from which our verse is mainly taken: see also John viii. 47, xviii. 37).

6.] contrast. We (emphatic, as opposed to them; but who are meant? The Apostles and their companions in the ministry, or all believers? Or again, all teachers of God’s truth, the Apostles included? It is hardly likely that the wider meaning has place here, seeing that 1) he has before said “*ye are of God,*” and 2) he is here opposing one set of *teachers* to another. On the other hand, it is not likely that he should confine what is said to the Apostles only: such as are mentioned with praise in 3 John 5–8 would surely be included) **are of God** (see above): **he that knoweth** (apprehendeth: hath any faculty for the knowledge of. The Apostle sets **him that knoweth God** in the place of *him that is of God*, as belonging more immediately to the matter in hand, the hearing, and receiving more knowledge. This *knowing God*, the apprehension and recognition of God, is the peculiar property of God’s children, not any natural faculty in which one unrenewed man differs from another) **God heareth us: he who is not of God doth not hear us** (here we must remember carefully, what the context is, and what its purpose. The Apostle is giving a test to distinguish, not the children of God from those who are not children of God, but the spirit of truth from the spirit of error, as is clear from the words following. And this he does by saying that in the case of the teachers of the truth, they are heard and received by those who apprehend God, but refused by those who are not of God. It is evident then that these two terms here, “*he that knoweth God,*” and “*he that is not of God,*” represent two patent, matters of fact,—two classes open and patent to all: one of them identical with the *world* above: the other consisting of those of whom it is said above, “*Ye know the Father*”... “*ye know Him that is from the beginning,*” ch. ii. 13, 14. How these two classes are what they are, it is, not the purpose of this passage to set forth, nor need we here enquire: we have elsewhere tests to distinguish them, ch. iii. 9, 10, and have there gone into that other question. We have a striking parallel, in fact the key to these words, in the saying of our Lord to Pilate, John xviii. 37). **From this** (viz., not the whole foregoing train of circumstances; nor, those tests proposed in vv. 2, 3: but the facts set forth in vv. 5, 6: the reception of the false teachers by the world: the reception of the true teachers by those that apprehend God, and their rejection by those who are not of God. ‘The same point is touched by our

Lord in John x. 8, “*but the sheep did not hear them*”) **we know** (in this unemphatic first person the Apostle includes his readers: we, all God’s children. **know, distinguish, recognize**, as so often) **the Spirit of truth** (the Spirit that cometh of God and teacheth truth) **and the spirit of error** (the spirit that cometh of the devil, teaching lies and seducing men into error see ch. i, 8, ii, 26).

7-21.] The Apostle again takes up his exhortations to brotherly love, but this time in nearer and deeper connexion with our birth from God, and knowledge of Him who is Himself Love, vv. 7, 8. This last fact he proves by what God has done for us in and by His Son, vv. 9-16: and establishes the necessary connexion between love to God and love to man, vv. 17-21.

The passage is in connexion with what went before, but by links at first sight not very apparent. The great theme of the whole was enounced ch. ii. 29. The consideration of that has passed into the consideration of that righteousness in its highest and purest form of love, which has been recommended, and grounded on His love to us, in ch. iii. 11-18, where the testimony of our hearts came in, and was explained—the great test of His presence in us being the gift of His Spirit, iii. ult. Then from the necessity of distinguishing and being sure of that His Spirit, have been inserted the foregoing tests and cautions respecting truth and error. And now he returns to the main subject. *The knoweth God, is and hath been begotten of God*, the taking up again of God’s love to us in Christ at ver. 9 from ch. iii. 16, the reiteration of the testimony of the Spirit in ver. 13, all serve to shew that we are reading no collection of spiritual apophthegms, but a close and connected argument, though not in an ordinary style.

7, 8.] **Beloved** (as before, marks the fervency and affection of the Apostle turning to his readers with another solemn exhortation. Here the word is especially appropriate, seeing that his own heart is full of that love which he is enjoining), **let us love one another: because** (he at once rests the exhortation on the deepest ground) **love** (abstract, in the widest sense, as the following words shew) **is from God** (has its origin and source in God: He is the well-spring and centre of all love); **and every one that loveth** (there is no need to supply an object after loveth, as God is supplied in the Alexandrine MS., and “*his brother*” in some later versions: indeed to do so would be to narrow the general sense of the Apostle’s saying: all love is from God: every one that loveth, taking the word of course in its pure ideal sense in which the assertion follows from the former), **hath been begotten of God** (has truly received within him that new spiritual life which is of God: see note on ch. ii. 29), **and knoweth** (in his daily walk and habit, recognizes and is acquainted with God: by virtue of that his divine birth and life) **God:**

8.] (*Contrast*, but with some remarkable variations) **he that loveth not** (general, as before: no object: he that hath not love in him) **hath never known God** (hath not once known: has never had in him even the beginnings of knowledge of God. So that the past tense makes a far stronger contrast than the present, “*knoweth not*,” would. That is excluded, and much more); **because** (reason why he who loveth not, can never have known God) **God is love** (love is the very essence, not merely an attribute, of God. It is co-essential with Him: He is all love, love is all of Him: he who has not love, has not God).

It is not the place here to enter on the theological import of this weighty and wonderful sentence. It will be found set forth in the first of my Sermons on Divine Love, Quebec Chapel Sermons, vol. iii,

But it may be necessary to put in a caution against all inadequate and shallow explanations of the saying: such as that of Grotius (after Socirus), “*God is full of love*.” Benson, “*God is the most benevolent of all beings: full of love to all His creatures*.” Whitby, “*The Apostle intends not to express what God is in his essence... but what He is in demonstration of Himself, shewing great philanthropy to men*.” Hammond, “*God is made up of love and kindness to mankind*.” Calvin, “*This it is which is His nature, to love men:... he is not speaking of God’s essence, but merely teaching, what He is felt to be by us, &c. &c.* In all these,—in the two last by supplying an object, “*men*,” which is not in the sacred text, the whole force of the axiom as it stands in the Apostle’s argument is lost. Unless be is speaking of the essential being of God, of what relevance is it, to say that he that loveth not never knew God, because “*God is love*?” Put for these last words, “*God is loving*,” and we get at once a fallacy: He that loveth not never knew what love is: God is loving: but what would follow? that in as far as God is loving, he never knew Him: but he may have known Him in as far as He is just, or powerful. But take the proposition, **God is love**, of God’s essential being,—as a strict definition of God, and the argumentation will be strict: He that loveth not never knew love: God is love [the terms are co-essential and co-extensive]: therefore he who loveth not never knew God).

9, 10.] *Proof of this* as far as we are concerned, in God’s sending His Son to save us. **In this** (viz. which follows) **the love of God was manifested in regard to us** (these words, **in regard to us**, must be taken with the verb, not with the love of God. Many have thus wrongly connected it, and in consequence have been compelled to distort the **in regard to** into “*towards*:” so Luther, &c., and the A.V. Connected then with the verb, it must not be taken as equivalent to “*towards*,” but as “*in*,” i.e. “*in the matter of*,” in regard of: see ver. 16 below: the manifestation not being made *to us* as its spectators, but in our persons and cases, as its “*material*.” **us**, i.e. believers in general), **that God hath sent** (perfect tense. The manifestation is regarded as one act, done implicitly when God sent His Son: but the sending is regarded in its present abiding effects, which have changed all things since it took place) **His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him** (no words can be plainer than these, and need less explanation to any one acquainted with St. John. The endeavours of the old rationalists, Socinus, Grotius, &c., to escape from the assertion of Christ’s pre-existence, by substituting **for into the world**, “*to the*

world," for **only begotten**, "*dearly beloved*," &c., may be seen in Düsterdieck. He well remarks, "Such expositors may naturally be expected to give an answer to the 'question, how a Christ so understood could be our life [ver. 9], our atonement [ver. 10], or our salvation [ver. 14].'"

The two emphatic words in the sentence are **only-begotten** and **live**. This was the proof, that SUCH a son of God was sent, that we might **LIVE**).

10.] *The same proof particularized* in its highest and noblest point, the atonement: and at the same time this brought out, that the love manifested by it was all on God's side, none on ours: was love to us when we were enemies, Rom. v. 8, and therefore all the greater. Ch. iii. 16 is very similar: except that there it is Christ's personal love to us: here the Father's, in sending His Son. **In this is love** ('in this case,' 'in this matter,' 'herein,' *is, 'is found,' 'exists,'* Love; in the abstract. 'This interpretation is necessary, on account of the disjunction which follows. If the word love meant, the love of God just spoken of, then it would be irrelevant to subjoin that this love was not our love to Him but His to us), **not that we loved God** (the verb refers to an indefinite time past—no act of love of ours to God at any time done furnishes this example of love, but an act of His towards us, It is not the *nature* of our love to God, as contrasted with His to us, of which the clause treats, but the non-existence of the one love as set against the historical manifestation of the other. Again that "He loved us, though we did not love Him," is so far in the words as it is given by the context [see above], but is not the meaning of the words themselves), but **that He loved us** (referring again to an *act* of Love, which is now specified), and (prove this love in that He) **sent His Son a propitiation** (see on ch. ii. 2) **for** (see *ibid.*) **our sins** (His death being therein implied, by which that propitiation was wrought, Eph. i. 7: and that, God's giving His own Son to death for us, being the greatest and crowning act of divine Love).

11.] Application to ourselves of this example, as a motive to brotherly love. Strictly parallel with the latter part of ch. iii. 16, where the same ethical inference is drawn with regard to the example of Christ Himself. **Beloved** (the Apostle's usual introduction of a fervent and solemn address, vv. 1, 7, al.), **if** (this **if** with an indicative, stating a fact, is very difficult to give exactly in English. It is not on the one hand any expression on uncertainty: but neither on the other is it exactly equivalent to "since," or "seeing that." We may call it a certainty put in the shape of a doubt, that the hearer's mind may grasp the certainty for itself, not take it from the speaker. "If [it be true that]..." is perhaps the nearest English filling up of the sense) **God so loved us** (*so* namely as detailed in ver. 10, which, and which alone, is pointed at), **we also ought to love one another** (the **also** does not belong to the **ought**, but purely to the **we**,— "we, on our side." But on what does the obligation, asserted in **we ought**, rest? Clearly, on that relation to God and one another implied by being children of God, which runs through all this section of the Epistle. If we are of God, that love which is in Him, and which He is, will be in us, will make us like Him, causing us to love those who are begotten of Him, ch. v. 1, 2. And of this love, our apprehension of His Love to us will be the motive and the measure).

12.] God hath no one ever beheld (what is the connexion of these words, so suddenly and startlingly introduced? It is evident that ver. 12 is connected with ver. 11, by the words "*if we love one another*," taking up again "*we ought to love one another*." But it is also evident that it is connected with ver. 13 by the words "*abideth in us*," &c. And it is further plain, that these words, **God hath no one ever beheld**, must have some close reference to *loving one another*, seeing that they stand between those words in ver. 11, and the resumption of them in ver. 12.

Now on examining ver. 11, we find an unexpected substitution, "*if God so loved us, we also ought to love* (not God, but) **one another**." Why so? Here, ver. 20 will guide us to an answer, if rightly used. Not, because we *cannot* love God whom we have not seen: but because the exponents of God, whom we have not seen, are our brethren, whom we do see. And the Apostle, in substituting "*one another*," does not for a moment drop or set aside the higher, "*God*," but in fact leads up to it, by putting its lower and visible objects before us. And then ver. 12 comes in as an explanation, an apology as it were, for this substitution, in the following manner: **Love one another**, I say: for the love to God, which is our duty, is love towards one whom we have never seen, and cannot exist in us [as ver. 20] unless by and with its lower degrees as manifested towards our brethren whom we have seen. By our love to them are we to know, how far we have love to Him: if that be present, He dwelleth in us, and "*the love of Him is perfected in us.*" And thus [see below] the way is prepared for vv. 15, 16, which take up and bring to a conclusion the reasoning): **if we love one another, God abideth in us** (for the reason already stated in ver. 8, and restated in immediate connexion with this very matter in ver. 16, that God is Love, and every one that loveth is born of God, knows God, abides in God and God in him), **and** (simply the copula) **the love of Him** (as in ch. ii. 5, where we had the same expression, our *love to Him*, not, as some explain it, *His love to us*. This is evident, not merely from ii. 5, but from the context here: see it explained above, and remember that it is our love to God which is here the subject, as evinced by our love to our brethren. This is further shewn by the recurrence of the same expression in ver. 17, "*Herein is love perfected with us,*" and ver. 18, "*he that feareth is not made perfect in love.*" And so the majority of Commentators) is **perfected** (see note ch. ii. 5. Here, as there, it signifies, has reached its full maturity: the *loving one another* being the token and measure of it) **in us** (keep the primary and obvious sense, "*in us*," "*within us*," as in ch. ii. 5).

13.] In this we know that we are abiding in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit (nearly repeated from ch. ii. 24. But why introduced here? In the former verse, the *fact* of His abiding in us was assured to us, if we love one

another. Of this fact, when thus loving, we need a token. Him we cannot see: has He given us any testimony of His presence in us? He has given us such a testimony, in making us partakers of His Holy Spirit. This fact it is to which the Apostle here calls our attention, as proving not the external fact of the sending of the Son [ver. 14], but one within ourselves,—the indwelling of God in us, and our abiding in Him. It is obvious that all inferences from the expression “*given us of His Spirit*” against the personality of the Holy Ghost are quite beside the purpose: compare Acts ii. 17 with Joel iii. 1. We each dwelling of one and the same personal Spirit, but each according to our measure, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 11. One only had the Spirit without measure, in all His fulness: even Christ; John iii. 34. And the presence of the Holy Spirit is most aptly adduced here where love is in question, His first fruit being love, and His presence being tested by His fruits).

14, 15, 16.] The connexion seems to be this: the inward evidence of God's abiding in us and we in Him, is, the gift of His Spirit. But this is not the only evidence nor the only test which we have: This internal evidence is accompanied by, nay, is itself made possible [see ver. 19] by, our recognition of the Father's love in sending His Son as our Saviour: which last is a fact, testified by human evidence. This recognition of God's love is a condition of abiding in Him and He in us: in a word, is the *abiding in love*, which is equivalent to abiding in Him. **And we** (this **we**, emphatic, brings up in sharp relief the apostolic body, whom Christ appointed His witnesses, John xv. 27, Acts i. 8 The assertion is of the same kind as that in ch. i. 1) **have beheld** (with our eyes: the same word, and in the same sense, as in John i. 32) **and do testify that the Father hath sent** (do testify, not merely to the historical fact as a thing past, but to its abiding influence as implied by the words, “*Saviour of the world*” below: that the Father sent the Son, and that the Son is the Saviour of the world) **the Son** (better here than “*His Son:*” **the Father and the Son** are here used as theological terms) **as Saviour of the world** (**the world** here, as in ch. ii, 2, John iii, 16, in its widest sense: no evasion of this sense, such as the “*elect in all nations,*” is to be endured).

15.] And recognition of this fact is a condition and proof of the life of God. **Whosoever confesseth** (the same remark holds good of this confessing, as before with regard to denying, ch ii. 28: viz., that we must not bring into it more than the Apostle intends by it: it is not the “confession of the *life*” which is here spoken of, but that of the lips only. Of course it would be self-evident that, this is taken by the Apostle as ruling the life; but simply as a matter of course, Me speaks of the ideal realized) **that Jesus is the Son of God** (i. e. receives the testimony in the last verse as true), **God abideth in him, and he in God.**

16.] a) **And we** (not now the apostolic body only, but communicative; the Apostle and his readers. This is evident and necessary, because on the other view the words “*in regard to us,*” which follow, interpreted as they must necessarily be of the *same persons*, would fit on awkwardly to the repeated general proposition with which the verse concludes) **have known and have believed** (the two roots which lie at the ground of **confession, knowledge and faith**, are in St. John's language most intimately connected. “True faith is, according to St. John, a faith of knowledge and experience: true knowledge is a knowledge of faith’ Lücke. See John vi. 69) **the love which God hath in regard to us** (literally *in us, in our case*, as above, ver. 9: not “towards us,” as Beza [and A.V.], Luther, &c.), b) **God is Love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God [abideth] in him** (this is the solemn and formal restatement of that which has been the ground-tone of the whole since ver. 7. And here, as there, *Tove* is in its widest abstract sense. Its two principal manifestations are, love to God, and love to one another: but this saying is of Love absolute).

17, 18.] These verses, which are parallel with ch. iii. 19–21, set forth the confidence with which perfect love shall endow the believer in the great day of judgment. **Herein love perfected with us** (for the meaning of **herein**, see below. **Love**, not, as Luther and others, *God's love to us*: this is forbidden by the whole context: our verse is introduced by “*he that abideth in love,*” and continued by “*there is no fear in love:*” it is love dwelling and advancing to perfection in us. And again, not love to God merely, nor love to our brethren merely; these are concrete manifestations of it: but love itself in the abstract—the principle of love, as throughout this passage. This sense of *love* will point out that of **with us**, which belongs not to the word *love*, but to the verb, as in ver. 12. Love is considered as planted in us; its degrees of increase take place **with us**—not merely “*chez nous,*” *in us*, but as *concerned with us*; in a sense somewhat similar to that in “*magnified His mercy with her,*” Luke i, 58. See 2 John 2, where however the idea of *dwelling with* is more brought out than here), **that we have confidence in the day of judgment** (that gives not the purpose of the *perfecting of love*, but the explanation of “*herein:*” “in this love is perfected in us, viz, that we, &c.” The confidence which we shall have in that day, and which we have even now by anticipation of that day, is the perfection of our love; grounded on the consideration [*because even as He is, &c.*] which follows: casting out fear, which cannot consist with perfect love, ver. 18): **because even as He** (Christ, see below) **is, we also are in this world** (this is the reason or ground of our confidence: that we, as we now are in the world, are like Christ: and in the background lies the thought, He will not, in that day, condemn those who are like Himself. In these words, the sense must be gained by keeping strictly to the tenses and grammatical construction: not “*as He was in the world,*” as some, changing the tense. And when we have adhered to tense and grammar, wherein is the likeness spoken of to be found? Clearly, by what has been above said, not in our trials and persecutions. Nor by our being not of the world as He is not of the world: nor in that we, as sons of adoption through Him, are beloved of God, even as He is beloved: nor, in that we live in Love, as He lives in Love: but in that we are *righteous as He is righteous*, ch. ii. 29, iii. 3 ff., 10, 22: this being evinced by our abiding in Love. St. John does not say that Love is perfected in confidence in us, because we resemble Christ in Love; but he refers to the fundamental truth on which our Love itself rests, and says; because we are absolutely like Christ, because we are in Christ Himself, because He lives in us, for without this there cannot be likeness to Him; in a word, because we are, in that communion with

Christ which we are assured of by our likeness to Him in righteousness, children

of God, therefore our love brings with it also full confidence. Essentially, the reason here rendered for our confidence in the day of judgment is the same as that given ch. iii. 21 f. for another kind of confidence, viz., that we keep His commandments. This also betokens the righteousness of which Christ is the essential exemplar, and which is a necessary attribute of those who through Christ are children of God),

18.] Confidence in (or as understood, as to) that terrible day presupposes the absence of fear: and this casting out of fear is the very work of love, which in its perfect state cannot coexist with fear.—**Fear** (abstract and general) **existeth not in love** (abstract and general also, as in ver. 17: not “*God's love to us;*” nor “*brotherly love*”), **nay perfect** (see on ver. 17) **love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment** (see below): **but he that feareth hath not been perfected in [his] love.** The points here to be noticed are,

1) the emphatic **existeth not**, which is better rendered as above, than “there is no fear in love,” in order to keep **fear**, which is the subject in the Greek, also the subject in. the English:

2) **nay**, or “*but:*” which is not here the mere adversative after a negative clause, in which case it would refer to something in which fear *is*, e.g. “*fear existeth not in love, but existeth in hatred*?” but it is the stronger adversative, implying “nay far otherwise:” so far from it, that...

3) the argument, which is, *a)* that nothing having torment can consist with perfect love: *b)* that, fear is in us by nature, and needs *casting out* in order to its absence.

4) the meaning of *hath torment*. Does *torment* mean *merely* pain, or pain as the result of *punishment*? This last is certainly the sense, both from the usage of the word, and from the context, in which the day of judgment is before us. Fear, by anticipating punishment, has it even now; bears about a foretaste of it and so partakes of it.

5) the last clause, “*he that feareth is not made perfect in love,*” is intimately connected with what follows [see on ver. 14] as well as with what went before. The **and** [in the original, **but:** see rendering above] is adversative to the whole preceding sentence, and mainly to the idea of perfect love therein expressed.

As regards the absence of fear from the love of the Christian believer, it has been well observed by Œumenius, that there are two kinds of godly fear, one which afflicts men with a sense of their evil deeds and dread of God’s anger, and which is not abiding: and the other, of which it is said, “The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever,” Ps. xix. and which is free from this kind of terror. And Bengel says in his brief pointed manner, “The condition of men is various: without fear and love alike: with fear and without love: with fear and love: without fear and with love.”

19.] I am sorry to be obliged here to differ from the best modern Commentators, and some of the older ones, in holding firmly that **we love**, indicative, is right, and not “*let us love,*” imperative [either of which would satisfy the original word]. This I do not merely on account of the expressed and emphatic **we**, though that would be a strong point in the absence of a stronger, but on account of the context, which appears to me to be broken by the imperative. He that feareth is not perfect in love. Our love [abstract, not specified whether to God or our brother] is brought about by, conditioned by, depends upon, His love to us first; it is only a sense off that which can bring about our love: and if so, then from the very nature of things it is void of terror, and full of confidence, as springing out of a sense of His love to us. Nor only so: our being new begotten in love is not only the effect of *a sense of* His past love, but is the effect of that love itself: **We** (emphatic—one side of the antithesis) **love** (most Commentators supply “*Him*” or “*one another*,” but unnecessarily. It is of all love that he is speaking; of love in its root and ideal), **because He** (God: see the parallel, ver. 10) **first loved us** (viz. in the sending of His Son).

20.] The connexion is most close: and the error great of those who have made a new section begin here. This *love* is sal, necessarily manifested in *both* of great departments of its exercise. Love, living and working in the heart as a principle, will fix first upon objects at hand and seen: those objects being natural objects for it to fix on, How then can a man love God, the highest object of love, who is removed from his sight, and at the same time refuse to love his brother, bearing the mark of a child of God, before his eyes from day to day? Put in a brief form, the argument, as connected with the last verse, is this: His love has begotten *us* anew in love: in this *us* are included our brethren, objects of our daily sight: if therefore we do not love them, we do not love Him. **If any say** (“have said;” i.e. at any time: the saying once, rather than the habit, is the hypothesis), **I love God, and hate** (present tense, of habit) **his brother, he is a liar: for** (here again the argument needs supplying from our common sense, which tells us that sight is an incentive towards love) **he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen** (perfect tense, implying,—and continues to feel the influence of that sight. We do not say “I have seen him” of the dead, but of the living only), **cannot love God whom he hath not seen** (At. John does not say that there is no love without sight; nor that we love all we see better than any thing we do not see: his argument rests on a deeper and truer position: viz, on that assumed in the term **his brother**, which carries with it the consideration that he of whom it is said is begotten of God. Both

terms, **his brother**, and **God**, are used within the limits of the Christian life, of which that is true, which is unfolded ch. v. 1, that this *brother*, as begotten of God, is a necessary object of love to one that loves Him that begat him. *Here*, a lower step of the same argument is taken; but without this eat truth, lying beneath the word *brother*, it would carry no conviction with it).

21.] And besides this argument from common sense, there is another most powerful one, which the Apostle here adds: “How lovest thou Him, whose commandment thou hatest?” as Augustine says. **And this commandment we have from Him** (God: not, Christ: see below), **that he who loveth God, love also his brother** (where have we this commandment? In the great summary of the law, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,... and thy neighbour as thyself so often cited by our Lord: see Matt. xxii. 37–39),

1 John: Chapter 5

CHAP. V. 1.] And who is our brother? and why does this name carry with it such an obligation to love? These questions, in closest connexion with the last verse, the Apostle answers in this, **Every one that believeth that Jesus is the Christ hath been begotten of God** (to whom do these words apply? from what follows, in the verb **hath been [or, is] begotten** is taken up by **him that is begotten**, to the brother whom we are to love as a necessary accompaniment of our loving God. But most Commentators assume that it is of *ourselves* that this is said: *our birth of God depends on and is in closest union with our faith*, ch. iii. 23. Then the connexion between this and the following clause must be made by filling up an ellipsis, “and if begotten of God we love God.” But this is far-fetched; and, as has been above shewn implicitly, alien from the context, the object of which is to point out who those are whom we are bound to love, if we love God. Then having made this predication of all the children of God, “*every one that believeth, &c.*,” he, as so frequently, takes it up again below, ver. 4, with ‘a more general reference, and dwells on our faith as the principle which overcomes the world: see there): **and every one who loveth him that begat** (these words take up again the former, “*if any say, I love God*,” ch. iv. 20), **loveth also him that is begotten of him** (viz. the brother of whom the former clause spoke: not, as Augustine and others, Christ, the Son of God. As Calvin says, “Under this singular number he designates all the faithful. It is an argument drawn from the common order of nature”).

2.] And indeed so inseparable are the two, that, as before, iv. 20, our love to our brethren was made a sign and necessary condition of our love to God, so conversely, our love to God, ascertained by our keeping His commandments, is itself the measure of our love to the children of God. Either of the two being found to be present, the presence of the other follows. **In this we know that we love the children of God** (this, **the children of God**, takes up again, “*him that is begotten of him*” of the preceding verse), **when** (indefinite; “in every case where”) **we love God, and do His commandments** (this adjunct is made, as the following verse shews, in order to introduce an equivalent to *loving God*, by which its presence may be judged).

3.] **For** (explaining the connexion of the two preceding clauses) **the love of God is this** (consists in this), **that** (explanatory: what he means by this) **we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not grievous** (the reason, why they are not grievous, is given in the next verse. Almost all the Commentators refer to Matt. xi. 86, “*My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*” This declaration, that His commandments are not grievous, has, as did ch. iii. 9, furnished some of the Roman-Catholic Commentators with an opportunity of characterizing very severely the Protestant position, that none can keep God’s commandments. But here, as there, the reply is obvious and easy. The course of the Apostle’s argument here, as introduced in the next verse by **because**, substantiates this fact, that His commandments are not grievous, by shewing that all who are born of God are standing in and upon the victory which their faith has obtained over the world. In this victorious state, and in as far as they have advanced into it, in other words in proportion as the divine life is developed and dominant in them, do they find those commandments not grievous. If this state, in its ideality, were realized in them, there would be no difficulty for them in God’s commandments: it is because, and in so far as, sin is still reigning in their mortal bodies, and their wills are unsubdued to God’s will, that any grievousness, any burden, remains in keeping those commandments),

4.] **because** (reason, why His commandments are not grievous) **all that is begotten of God** (the neuter is here used as gathering together in one, under the category of “begotten of God,” the “we” implied in the last verses) **conquereth** (of habit: simply predicated of the category, “*all that is born of God*”) **the world** (the kingdom of evil under its prince the devil, God’s adversary. The argument then is th The commandments of God are not grievous: for, although in keeping them there is ever a conflict, yet that conflict issues in universal victory: the whole mass of the born of God conquer the world: therefore none of us need contemplate failure, or faint under his struggle as a hard one): **and the victory which [hath] conquered the world is this, our faith** (the identification of the victory with the faith which it, is a concise and emphatic way of linking the two inseparably together, so that wherever there is faith there is victory. And this is further expressed by the past tense here; by which it is signified that the victory is already won: see ch. ii. 13, iv. 4).

5.] If it be asked, How does our faith overcome the world? this verse furnishes the answer; because it brings us into union with Jesus Christ the Son of God, making us as He is, and partakers of His victory, John xvi. 33, Through this belief we are born again as sons of God; we have Him in us, One greater than he who is in the world, ch. iv. 4. And this conclusion is put in the form of a triumphant question: What other person can do it? Who that believes this, can fail to do it? **Who is he that**

conquereth the world, except he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? By comparing ver. 1 a, we find 1) that “*the Christ*” there answers to “*the Son of God*” here; 2) that by the combination, of the two verses, we get the proposition of ver. 4a.

6–21.] THE THIRD AND LAST DIVISION OF THE EPISTLE. This portion falls naturally into two parts: vv. 6–13, and vv. 14–21: the former of which treats of the concluding part of the argument, and the latter forms the close of the Epistle.

6–13.] As in the former portions, our communion with God who is light [i. 5 ff.] was treated, and our birth in righteousness from God who is righteous [ii. 29 ff.], by faith in Jesus the Son of God,—so now we have another most important element of the Christian life set before us: the testimony to it arising from that life itself: *the witness of the spiritual life to its own reality*. This witness rests not on apostolic testimony alone, but on the Holy Spirit, which the believer has in himself [ver. 10], and which is God’s testimony respecting His Son [vv. 9, 10], and our assurance that we have eternal life [ver. 13].

There is hardly a passage in the New Test. which has given rise to more variety of interpretation: certainly none which [on account of the apparent importance of the words interpolated after ver. 7] has been the field of so much critical controversy. Complete accounts of both the exposit and the criticism will be found in the recent monographs on the Epistle: more especially in that of Düsterdieck.

6.] This (viz. the Person spoken of in the last verse; Jesus. This, which is maintained by most Commentators, is denied by Knapp and Huther, who refer this to “*the Son of God*:” “The Son of God is he, &c.:” making the proposition assert, the identity of the Son of God with the historical Jesus, not the converse. ‘This Huther supports on two grounds: 1) that the fact that Jesus came by water and blood needed no proof even to Heretics: 2) that on the ordinary interpretation the following words, “*Jesus Christ*,” become altogether superfluous. But to these it is easily replied, 1) that although the fact might be confessed, that was not confessed to which the fact bore testimony, viz. that Jesus who came in the flesh was the Son of God: 2) that the appositional clause, “*Jesus Christ*,” is by no means superfluous, being only a solemn reassertion of our Lord’s Person and Office as testified by these signs. The main objection to Huther’s view is, that, as well stated by Düsterdieck, it makes the coming by water and blood, which, by the context, is evidently in the Apostle’s argument, a substantiating consideration, to be merely an exceptional one: “this Son of God is Jesus the Christ, *though* He came by water and blood.” Therefore the other interpretation must stand fast) **is he that came by water and blood** (came refers not to the Lord’s birth in the flesh, but to His open manifestation of himself before the world. See above, on ch. iv. 2.

The preposition **by**, which passes into “*in*” in the next sentence, is thereby explained to bear its very usual sense of *through* or *by means of*, as said of that which accompanies, as the medium through which, or the element in which. ‘The very same phrases, “*by blood*,” and “*in blood*,” are used of our Lord in Heb. ix. 12, 25, which chapter is the best of all comments on this difficult expression.

by water and blood has been very variously understood. Two canons of interpretation have been laid down by Düsterdieck, and may safely be adopted: 1) “Water” and “blood” must point both to some purely historical facts in the life of our Lord on earth, and to some still present witnesses for Christ: and 2) they must not be interpreted symbolically, but understood of something so real and powerful, as that by them God’s testimony is given to believers, and eternal life assured to them. These canons at once exclude all figurative interpretations, such as that of Socinus und his school, in which *water* stands for the purity and innocence of the life and doctrine of Christ, Heb. x. 22, Eph. v. 26,—and *blood* for the death of Christ as His testimony of Himself.

Düsterdieck observes that it is remarkable that the best Roman-Catholic expositor, Estius [whose commentary is unfortunately broken off at this verse], does not, as some have done, interpret **blood** of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, but puts together *water* and *blood*, as Calvin and Luther. So that, as Düsterdieck proceeds to say, the great leaders of the three schools of theology have had the tact to see that which their less skilled followers have missed seeing,—that *blood* cannot by any means be understood of the Lord’s Supper, as has been done by many.

The next point which comes before us is to enquire whether at. all, or how far, our passage is connected with John xix. 34? It occurs here, because many Commentators have seen in the incident there related a miraculous symbolizing of the two sacraments, and in this passage an allusion to that incident. To deny all such allusion seems against probability. The Apostle could hardly both here and in that place lay such evident stress on the water and blood together, without having in his mind some link connecting this place and that. The idea that we have here nothing more than a reference to the fact of John xix. 34, is against our 2nd canon above: but that John xix. 34 and this refer to the same fundamental truth, is I conceive hardly to be doubted.

It rests now then that we enquire into the meaning of each expression. On the first, **blood**, there cannot surely be much uncertainty. The blood of His Cross must, by all Scripture analogy, be that intended. The pouring out of this blood was the completion of the baptism which He had to be baptized with, Mark x. 28, 29, Luke xii. 50. And if this is so, to what can the

term **water** be referred so simply, as to that baptism with water, which inaugurated the Lord's ministry? It might indeed be said, that the baptism which He instituted for His followers, better satisfies the test of our 2nd canon, that viz. of being an abiding testimony in the Christian Church. But to this there lies the objection, that as *blood* signifies something which happened to Christ Himself, so must *water* likewise, at least primarily, whatever permanent testimony such event may have left in the Christian Church. And thus some modern Commentators have taken it; as uniting the historical fact of the Lord's baptism with the ordinance of baptism, grounded on it, and abiding in the Christian Church. Düsterdieck refuses to accept this view, denying that our Lord's baptism was any proof or testimony of His Messiahship, and understanding water of the ordinance of baptism only. But surely we are not right in interpreting the words "*He that came by water,*" *He that ordained baptism:* nor in giving the two, *blood* and *water*, an entirely different reference. For his endeavour to escape from this by making the former represent not Christ's death but His blood, applied to us, cannot be accepted, as giving a "non-natural" sense to the words "*he that came by blood*" likewise.

All this being considered, it seems impossible to avoid giving both to *blood* and *water* the combined senses above indicated, and believing that such were before the Apostle's mind. They represent,—the **water**, the baptism of water which the Lord Himself underwent and instituted for His followers,—the **blood**, the baptism of blood which He Himself underwent, and instituted for His followers. And it is equally impossible to sever from these words the historical accompaniments and associations which arise on their mention. The Lord's baptism, of itself, was indeed rather a result than a proof of His Messiahship: but in it, taking St. John's account only, a testimony to His divine Sonship was given, by which the Baptist knew Him to be the Son of God: "*I have seen, and have borne witness, that this is the Son of God,*" are his words, John i. 34; and when that blood was poured from His "riven side," he that saw it again uses the same formula, "*he that hath seen it hath borne witness.*" It cannot be that the word **witness** being thus referred to two definite points of our Lord's life, should not apply to these two, connected as they are with water and blood here mentioned, and associated by St. John himself with the remarkable word **hath borne witness** (ver. 9) in the perfect tense, of an abiding witness in both cases.

But these past facts in the Lord's life are this abiding testimony to us, by virtue of the permanent application to us of their cleansing and atoning power. And thus both our canons are satisfied, which certainly is not the case in Düsterdieck's interpretation, though they were laid down by himself), **Jesus Christ** (see above on **this**, In all the places where St. John uses this Name, it has a solemn meaning, and is by the emphasis thus thrown on the official designation of our Lord, nearly equivalent to "*Jesus the Christ.*" Compare John i. 17, xvii. 3: 1 John i. 3, 7, ii. 1, iii. 23, iv. 2, v. 20: 2 John 3, 7): **not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood (in,** see above on **by**. The sense of the two is there shewn to be closely allied, in giving rather the "element in which," **by**, the medium through which. The definite article before each word shews that they are well-known and solemn ideas. It is inserted not as matter of course, but as giving solemnity.

But why has the Apostle added this sentence? It has been thought that it is to give Christ the preference over Moses, who came only by water (1 Cor. x. 2), and Aaron, who came only by blood (of sacrifice), whereas Christ united both. But this is too far-fetched. Another opinion again regards the words as directed against those who despised the Cross of Christ (1 Cor. i. 23): but a more definite explanation than this is required. And those can hardly be wrong, who find it in such words as those of the Baptist in John i. 25, "*I baptize with (in) water, but there standeth one among you whom ye know not.*" compare the emphatic repetitions below, ver. 31, "*I came baptizing with (in) water;*" and ver. 38, "*He that sent me to baptize with (in) water.*" The baptism of Jesus was not one of water only, but one of blood,—"*behold the Lamb of God*"—and something more than that which follows in the next clause): **and the Spirit is that which witnesseth, because the Spirit is the truth** (that is, as explained by the next verse, the Spirit is an additional witness, besides those already mentioned to the Messiahship of Jesus, and in that, to the eternal life which God has given us in Him. Some have thought that **because** should be "that:" the same Greek word signifying both these. But it is not to the fact that the Spirit is the truth, that the Spirit gives witness: but it is the fact that He is the truth, which makes Him so weighty a witness; which makes the giving of witness so especially His office.

Very various however have been the meanings here given to **the Spirit**. One view understands, the spirit of our Lord, which He when dying commended into His Father's hands, Another, explaining *water and blood* of the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, sees in **the Spirit**, in connexion with John xx. 22 ff., a third Sacrament of *absolution*, Others regard it as equivalent to *the spiritual man*, i.e. St. John himself. Others again regard it as equivalent to God—and the occasion of the testimony to be the Resurrection, when our Lord rose with Divine power. The Socinian Commentators interpret it of the divine power by which Christ wrought His miracles. But this, as well as Bede's interpretation, that the Spirit which descended on the Lord at His baptism is meant, inasmuch as it testified to His being the true Son of God, fails, in giving no *present abiding* testimony such as the context requires. Others again understand by it the ministry of the word. Most of these understand **the Spirit** here and in ver. 8 differently. But nothing can be plainer than that we must not alter the meaning, where the word **for** binds together the sentences so closely.

The above interpretations failing to give any satisfactory account of the text, we recur to the simple and obvious meaning, *the Holy Spirit*. And it seems fully to satisfy all the requirements of the passage. The Holy Spirit is He, who testifies of Christ [John xv. 26], who glorifies Him, and shews of the things which belong to Him [John xvi. 14]. It is by the possession of Him that we know that we have Christ [ch. iii, 24], And the following clause, "*because the Spirit is the Truth,*" exactly agrees with

this. He is the absolute truth [John xiv. 17, xv. 26], leading into all the truth [John xvi. 13 f.]. And in this consists the all-importance and the infallibility of His witness).

7.] “John here renders a reason why he spoke not of the Spirit only, who has the chief authority in this matter, but also of the water and the blood, because in them also there is no small credit due to testimony, and the ternary number is in case of witnesses the most complete.” Grotius. **For** (that this, and not “*because*,” is the correct English reading, see my Greek Test.) **those who bear witness are three** (the three are considered as living and speaking witnesses; hence we have the masculine form in the original. By being *three*, they fulfil the requirements of the Law as to full testimony: Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15: Matt. xviii. 16, 2 Cor. xiii. 1), **the Spirit, and the water, and the blood** (now, the Spirit is put first: and not without reason. The Spirit is, of the three, the only living and active witness, properly speaking: besides, the water and the blood are no witnesses without Him, whereas He is independent of them, testifying both in the und out of them), **and the three concur in one** (contribute to one and the same result: viz. the truth that Jesus is the Christ, and that we have life in Him. And this their one testimony is given by the purification in the water of baptism into His name, John iii. 5: by the continual cleansing from all sin which we enjoy in and by His atoning blood: by the inward witness of His Spirit, which He hath given us).

The question of the genuineness of the words read in the received text at the end of ver. 7 is discussed, as far as external grounds are concerned, in the Digest in my Greek Test.; and it may there be seen, that unless pure caprice is to be followed in the criticism of the sacred text, *there is not the shadow of a reason for supposing them genuine*. Even the supposed citations of them in early Latin Fathers have now, on closer examination, disappeared.—Something remains to be said on internal grounds, on which we have full right to enter, now that the other is secured. And on these grounds it must appear, on any fair and unprejudiced consideration, that the words are 1) alien from the context: 2) in themselves incoherent, and betraying another hand than the Apostle’s. For 1) the context, as above explained, is employed in setting forth the reality of the substance of the faith which overcomes the world. even of our eternal life in Jesus the Son of God. And this is shewn by a threefold testimony, subsisting in the revelation of the Lord Himself, and subsisting in us His people. And this testimony is the water of baptism, the blood of atonement, the Spirit of truth, concurrent in their witness to the one fact that He is the Son of God, and that we have eternal life in Him. Now *between two steps* of this argument,—not as a mere analogy referred to at its conclusion,—insert the words “for there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one,” and who can fail to see, unless prejudice have blinded his eyes, that the context is disturbed by the introduction of an irrelevant matter? Consequently, Bengel, one of the most strenuous upholders of the words, is obliged tamely to take refuge in the transposition of vv. 7 and 8 (which was perhaps the original form of its insertion in the vulgate), so as to bring into treatment the matter in hand, before the illustration of it is introduced. But even suppose this could be done; what kind of illustration is it? What is it to which our attention is directed? Apparently the mere fact of the triplicity of testimony: for there is not the remotest analogy between the terms in the one case and those in the other: the very order of them, differing as it does in the two cases, shews this. Is this triplicity a fact worthy of such a comparison? And then, what is the testimony in heaven? Is it borne to men? Certainly not: for God hath no man seen, as He is there: His only-begotten Son hath declared Hiiin to us on earth, where all testimony affecting us must be borne. Is it a testimony to angels? Possibly: but what has this to do with the matter in hand? And then, again, what but an unworthy play on words can it be called, to adduce the fact of **oneness** on the one side, the essential unity of the ever blessed Godhead, and on the other the concurrence in testifying to one fact,—as correspondent, to one another? Does not this betray itself as the fancy of a patristic gloss, in the days when such analogies and comparisons were the sport of every theological writer? And 2) the very’ words betray themselves. “*The Father*” and “*the Word*” are never combined by St. John, but always *the Father* and *the Son*. The very apology of Bengel, “the appellative, *the Word*, is most appropriate to *testimony*,” may serve to shew how utterly weak he must have felt the cause to be.

The best conclusion to the whole subject is found in the remark of Bengel himself on another occasion of the practice reprobated, of which he himself furnishes here so striking an instance: “They exhibit a mischievous zeal in the Lord’s quarrels, who bring themselves to reason thus, ‘This text is convenient for my doctrine and argument; therefore I will constrain myself to believe it genuine, and will obstinately defend it, and all that can be scraped together on its behalf.’ But the Truth needs not false supports, resting much better on itself alone.” As the results of critical enquiry now stand, we may safely affirm, that no reasonable man, acquainted with the facts, can again defend, the genuineness of these words. If any do defend them, it is the charitable conclusion that he speaks in ignorance. The real mischief is, that the ignorant in high places allow themselves to use the strong language of authority, and thus become the chief enemies of truth. A sketch of the principal particulars of the dispute and of the books relating to it is given in Horne’s Introduction, vol. iv. pp. 355–388.

9.] An argument *from the less to the greater*, grounded on the practice of mankind, by which it is shewn that God’s testimony must be by all means believed by us. **If we** (mankind in general; all reasonable men) **receive** (as we *do*: receive with approval; *accept*) **the testimony of men** (generic; **the testimony**, i.e. in any given ease. No special testimony need be thought of, as touching this present case: the proposition is general), **the testimony of God is greater** (supply in the argument, “and therefore much more ought we to receive that.”) The testimony of God here spoken of is not any particular testimony, as the prophecies concerning Christ, or the testimony of the Baptist and other eye-witnesses to Him, or the Prophets, the Baptist, Martyrs, and Apostles: it is general, as is the testimony of men with which it is compared. The particular testimony pointed at

by the general proposition is introduced in the following words): **for** (see above at the beginning of ver. 7. Here there is an ellipsis: “and this maxim applies in the case before us, because”) **the testimony of God is this, that He hath borne testimony concerning His Son** (i. e. the testimony of God to which the argument applies is this, the fact. that He hath borne testimony to His Son).

10–12.] The perfect tense, “*hath Borne witness*,” in ver. 9, shewed that the testimony spoken of is not merely an historical one, such for instance as Matt. iii. 17, which God *bore witness* to, but one abiding and present. And these verses explain to us what that testimony is. **He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony** (just spoken of; the testimony *of God*) **in him** (i. e. in himself. The two readings do not differ in sense. The object of the divine testimony being, to produce faith in Christ, the Apostle takes him in whom it has wrought this its effect, one who habitually believes in the Son of God, and says of such an one that he possesses the testimony in himself. What it is, he does not plainly say till below, ver. 11. But easily enough here we can synthetically put together and conjecture of what testimony it is that he is speaking: the Spirit by whom we are born again to eternal Life, the water of baptism by which the new birth is brought to pass in us by the power of the Holy Ghost [John iii. 5, Titus iii. 5], the Blood of Jesus by which we have reconciliation with God, and purification from our sins [ch. i. 7, ii. 2], and eternal life [John vi. 53 ff.],—these three all contribute to and make up our faith in Christ, and so compose that testimony, which the Apostle designates in ver. 11 by the shorter term which comprehends them all): **he that believeth not God** (St. John, as so frequently, proceeds to put his proposition in the strongest light by bringing out the opposite to it. The *believing* simply is wholly different from “*believing on*” above. That is the resting trust of faith: this the mere first step of giving credit to a witness. And thus it is tacitly assumed that one who does not believe in the Son of God, gives no credit to God Himself) **hath made Him a liar** (perfect tense, because the state of discredit implies a definite rejection still continuing. On the expression, see ch. i, 10), **because he**

hath not believed in (here, not only, hath not credited, though that was the more shameful rejection of God’s word: but now the *full* rejection—the refusal to *believe in*, cast himself on God’s testimony) **the testimony which God hath testified concerning His Son.**

11.] *Wherein this testimony consists.* **And the testimony** (just spoken of) **is this, that** (consists in this, namely, that....) **God gave** (not, as A.V., “*hath given*.” This is of especial importance here, where not the endurance of a state, but the fact of the gift having been once made, is brought out. The present assurance of our possessing this gift follows in the next clause, and in ver. 12) **to us** (not *decreed*, or *promised*, but gave, absolutely) **eternal life, and** (this clause does not depend on “*this is the witness, that...*” but ranges with that clause: “*this is the witness, &c.; and this life is, &c.*”) **this life is in His Son** (is in Him essentially [John i. 4, xi. 25, xiv. 6], bodily [Col. ii. 9], energetically [2 Tim. i. 10]. Here again, as ever in this Epistle, we have to guard against the evasive and rationalistic interpretations of the Socinians, that “the reason of our getting eternal life from God is found in Jesus Himself” [so Socinus]: that in is put for “*by*,” and is for “*happens*” [so Grotius]).

12.] Conclusion of the whole argument from ver. 6: dependent on the last clause of ver. 11, and carrying it on a step further, even to the absolute identity as matter of possession for the believer, of the Son of God, and eternal life. **He that hath the Son, hath the life: he that hath not the Son of God, the life hath he not.** First notice the diction and arrangement, on which Bengel has well remarked, “The verse has two members: in the former ‘*of God*’ is not added, for the faithful know the Son: in the other, it is added, that unbelievers may know how great a thing they lose.”

Next, the **having the Son** must not be explained away, with Grotius, by “*keeping the words which the Father committed to the Son,*” nor **having life**, with the same, by “*having a certain right to eternal life.*” The **having the Son** is the possession of Christ by faith, testified by the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and the **having the life** is the actually possessing it, not indeed in its most glorious development, but in all its reality and vitality.

Thirdly, it must be remarked that the question as to whether eternal salvation is altogether confined to those who in the fullest sense have the Son [to the exclusion, e.g., of those who have never heard of Him], does not belong here, but must be entertained on other grounds, See note on 1 Pet. iii. 19.

13.] This verse seems, as John xx. 30 f., like an anticipatory close of the Epistle: and its terms appear to correspond to those used in ch. i. 4. This view is far more probable, than that it should refer only to what has occurred since ver. 6, as ch. ii. 26 to ver. 18 ff. there: or only to vv. 11, 12. Still less likely is it that the concluding portion of the Epistle *begins* with this verse, as some have thought. **These things wrote I to you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, [to you] that believe in the name of the Son of God** (the two readings come, in the sense, to much the same. If that in the A.V. be followed, then the words “*that ye may believe*” must be interpreted “*that ye may continue to believe*”).

14–21.] CLOSE OF THE EPISTLE. The link which binds this passage to ver. 13 is the word **confidence**, taken up again from the *knowledge* spoken of in that verse, This *confidence* is the very energizing of our spiritual life: and its most notable and ordinary exercise is in communion with God in prayer, for ourselves or for our brethren, vv. 14–17. Then vv. 18–20 continue the explanation of the “sin unto death” and the “sin not unto death,” by setting forth the state of believers as contrasted with

that of the world, and the truth of our eternal life as consisting in this, Then with a pregnant caution, ver. 21, the Apostle closes his Epistle.

14, 15.] *The believer's confidence as shewn in prayer.* **And the confidence which we have towards Him** (which follows as a matter of immediate inference from the fact of our spiritual life: see ch. iii. 19–21) **is this, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us** (this confidence may be shewn in various ways, including prayer as one, ch. iii. 22. And that one, of prayer, is alone chosen to be insisted on here).

Him and **His will** must by all analogy be referred to the Father, not to the Son, by whom we have access to the Father. See especially ch. ii. 21, 22.

The truth that God hears all our prayers, has been explained on ch. iii. 22. The condition here attached, that the request be **according to His will**, is in fact limitation within the reality of the Christian life, i.e. in St. John's way of speaking according to the true ideal. For God's will is that to which our glorious Head himself submitted himself, and which rules the whole course of the Christian life for our good and His glory: and he who in prayer or otherwise tends against God's will is thereby, and in so far, transgressing the bounds of his life in God: see James iv. 3. By the continual feeling of submission to His will, joined with continual increase in knowledge of that will, our prayers will be both chastened, and directed aright. If we knew His will thorough! and submitted to it heartily, it would be impossible for us to ask any thing, for the spirit or for the body, which He should not hear and perform. And it is this ideal state, as always, which the Apostle has in view. In this view he goes still further in the next verse).

15.] And if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask (i. e. our every petition: the condition is omitted this time, as being supposed to be fulfilled), **we know that we have the petitions** (i. e. the things which form the subject of the petitions) **which we have asked from Him** (notice the present, **we have**, combined with the perfect, **we have asked**. The perfect reaches through all our past prayers to this moment. All these we **have**: not one of them is lost: He has heard, He has answered them all: we know that we have them in the truest sense, in possession).

16, 17.] Join together the confidence concerning prayer just expressed, and the all-essential Christian principle of brotherly love, and we have following as matter of course, the duty, and the practice, of intercession for an erring brother. And of this, with a certain not strictly defined limitation, these verses treat. **If any man see** (on any occasion: “*shall have seen*”) **his brother** (as throughout the Epistle, to be taken in the stricter sense: not any neighbour, but his Christian brother, one born of God as he is himself) **sinning** (this present participle is not merely predicative, but graphic, as describing the ‘brother’ actually in the act and under the bondage of the sin in question) **a sin not unto death** (see below), **he shall ask** (the future conveys not merely a permission to ask, “it shall be lawful for him to ask,”—but a command, taking for granted the thing enjoined as that which is to happen), **and shall give him life** (viz. the *asker* shall give: not, as many have understood it, *God* shall give him life, though of course this is so in reality: but the words mean, he, interceding for his brother, shall be the means of bestowing life on him. This bestowal of life by intercessory prayer, is not to be minutely enquired into, whether it is to be accompanied with fraternal rebuke,—whether it consists in the giving to the sinner a repentant heart, but taken as put by the Apostle, in all its simplicity and breadth. *Life*, viz. the restoration of that divine life from which by any act of sin he was indeed in peril and indeed in process of falling, but his sin was not an actual fall) **for them that sin not unto death** (the clause takes up and emphatically repeats the hypothesis before made, viz., that the sin of the brother is not unto death. It does so in the plural, because the **him** before being indefinite, all such cases are now collected in a class: “shall give this life, I repeat, to those who sin not unto death”). **There is a sin unto death: concerning it I do not say that he should make request** (leaving for the present the great question, I will touch the minor points in this verse. First, it necessarily by the conditions of the context involves what is equivalent to a prohibition. This has been denied by many Commentators. “Ask if thou wilt, but in uncertainty of obtaining,” says Cornelius-a-lapide. And it is equally denied, without the same implied meaning being given, by many others: some of these, as Neander, thinking it implied, that prayer may be made, though the obtaining of it will be difficult,—others, as De Wette, that it will be in vain, others, as Huther, that St. John simply says such a case was not within his view in making the above command. And most of even these who have recognized the prohibition, strive to soften it, saying, as e.g. Lyra, that though “we are not to pray for the condemned,” yet we may pray for such a sinner, “that he may sin less, and so be less condemned in hell;” or as Bengel, “God willeth not that the godly should pray in vain, Deut. iii. 26. If therefore one who has committed mortal sin is brought back to life, it is from the mere divine purpose, reserved from us.” Calvin indeed holds fast the prohibition in all its strictness, but only in extreme cases: adding, “But, seeing that this happens most rarely, and God, commanding the immense riches of His grace, commands us to be merciful after His example: we must pass upon any man the judgment of eternal death, but rather charity should induce us to hope well of him. But if the desperate impiety of some looks to us hardly short of a pointing it out by the finger of the Lord God, it is not for us to contend with the just judgment of God, or desire to be more merciful than He is.”

Certainly this seems, reserving the question as to the nature of the sin, the right view of the words, **I say not**. By an express command in the other case, and then as express an exclusion of this case from that command, nothing short of an implied prohibition can be conveyed.

The second point here relates to the difference between **ask** and **make request**. The *Greek* word represented by the former is more of the petition of *the inferior*, as of the conquered, or of the guilty: that re-represented by the latter is more general, of the request of *the equal*, or of one who has a right. Our Lord never uses the former of His own requests to God, but always the latter. And this difference is of importance here. The **asking** for a sin not unto death is a humble and trusting petition in the direction of God's will, and prompted by brotherly love: the other, the **making request** for a sin unto death, would be, it is implied, an act savouring of presumption—a prescribing to God, in a matter which lies out of the bounds of our brotherly yearning [for notice, the hypothesis that a man sees a *brother* sin a sin unto death is not adduced in words, because such a sinner would not truly be a brother, but thereby demonstrated never to have deserved that name: see ch. ii. 19], how He shall inflict and withhold His righteous judgments.

And these latter considerations bring us close to the question as to the nature of the sin unto death. It would be impossible to enumerate or even classify the opinions which have been given on the subject. Düsterdieck has devoted many pages to such a classification and discussion. I can do no more than point out the canons of interpretation, and some of the principal divergencies. But before doing so, ver. 17 must come under consideration).

17.] **All unrighteousness is sin** (in the words **all unrighteousness** we have a reminiscence of ch. i. 9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from **all unrighteousness**,” and also, but not so directly, of ch. iii. 4, which is virtually the converse proposition to this. Here the Apostle seems to say, in explanation of what he has just written, “SIN is a large word, comprehending all unrighteousness whatever: whether of God's children, or of aliens from Him.” The thoughts which have been brought into these words,—that *unrighteousness* is a mild word, meant to express that every slight trip of the good Christian falls under the category of sin, and so. there may be a sin not unto death,—or, on the other hand, that it is a strong word, as Grotius says, “he calls unrighteousness not every ignorance or sudden fall into sin, but sin committed either with deliberation, or with space given for deliberation,”—or thirdly, as Beza, that “all sins are so far equal, that even the least thought of the least sin deserves eternal death a thousand times over,” and “that all sins are of themselves deadly,”—are equally far from the meaning of the words, whose import is, as above, to account for there being a sin not unto death as well as a sin unto death); **and there is a sin not unto death** (not having death for its issue: within the limit of that *unrighteousness*, from all of which God cleanseth all those who confess their sins, ch. i. 9).

Our first canon of interpretation of the *sin unto death* and the *sin not unto death* is this: that *the death and the life of the passage must correspond*. The former cannot be bodily death, while the latter is eternal and spiritual life. This clears away at once all those Commentators who understand the sin unto death to be one for which bodily death is the punishment, either by human law generally, or by sickness inflicted by God; or of which there will be no end till the death of the sinner, which Bede thinks possible, and Lyra adopts. This last is evidently absurd, for how is a man to know whether this will be so or not?

Our second canon will be, that this sin unto death being thus a sin leading to eternal death, being no further explained to the readers here, must be presumed as *meant to be understood by what the Evangelist has elsewhere laid down* concerning the possession of life and death. Now we have from him a definition immediately preceding this, in ver. 12. “*He that hath the Son hath life: he that hath not the Son of God, the life hath he not.*” And we may safely say that the words **unto death** here are to be understood as meaning, “involving the loss of *this life* which men have only by union with the Son of God.” And this meaning they must have, not by implication only, which would be the case if any obstinate and determined sin were meant, which would be a sign of the fact of severance from the life which is in Christ [see iii. 14, 15, where the inference is of this kind], but directly and essentially, i.e. in respect of that very sin which is pointed at by them. Now against this canon are all those interpretations, far too numerous to mention, which make *any* atrocious and obstinate sin to be that intended. It is obvious that our limits are thus confined to *abnegation of Christ*, not as inferred by its fruits otherwise shewn, but as the act of sin itself. And so, with various shades of difference as to the putting forth in detail, most of the best Commentators both ancient and modern.

Our third canon will help us to decide, within the above limits, what especial sin is intended. And it is, that by the very analogy of the context, it must be *not a state of sin, but an appreciable ACT of sin*, seeing that that which is opposed to it *in the same kind*, as being not unto death, is described by “*if any man see his brother sinning, &c.*” So that all interpretations which make it to be a *state of apostacy*, do not reach the matter of detail which is before the Apostle's mind.

In enquiring what this is, we must be guided by the analogy of what St. John says elsewhere. *Our state* being that of life in Jesus Christ, there are those who have gone out from us, not being of us, ch. ii. 19, who are called “*antichrists*,” who not only “have not” Christ, but are Christ's enemies, denying the Father and the Son [ii. 22], whom we are not even to receive into our houses nor to greet [2 John 10, 11]. These seem to be the persons pointed at here, and this the sin: viz. the denial that Jesus is the Christ, the incarnate Son of God. This alone of all sins bears upon it the stamp of severance from Him who is the Life itself. As the confession of Christ, with the mouth and in the heart, is salvation unto life [Rom. x. 9], so denial of Christ with the mouth and in the heart, is sin unto death. This alone of all the proposed solutions seems to satisfy all the canons above laid down. For in it, the life cast away and the death incurred strictly correspond: it strictly corresponds to what St. John has

elsewhere said concerning life and death, and derives its explanation from those other passages, especially from the foregoing ver. 12: and it is an appreciable act of sin, one against which the readers have been before repeatedly cautioned [ch. ii. 18 ff., iv. 1 ff., v. 5, 11, 12]. And further, it is in exact accordance with other passages of Scripture which seem to point at a sin similarly distinguished above others: viz. Matt. xii. 31 ff., and, so far as the circumstances there dealt with allow common ground, with the more ethical passages, Heb. vi. 4 ff., x. 25 ff. In the former case, the Scribes and Pharisees were resisting the Holy Ghost [Acts vii. 51], who was manifesting God in the flesh in the Person and work of Christ. For them the Lord Himself does not pray (Luke xxiii, 34): they knew what they did: they went out from God's people and were not of them: receiving and repudiating the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the Messiahship of Jesus.

18–20.] *Three solemn maxims* of the Epistle regarding sin and the children of God and the world, and our eternal life in Christ, are repeated as a close of the teaching of the Apostle. Ver. 18 seems to be not without reference to what has just been said concerning sin. In actual life, even our brethren, even we ourselves, born of God, shall sin, not unto death, and require brotherly intercession: but in the depth and truth of the Christian life, sin is altogether absent. It is the world, not knowing God, which lies under the power of the wicked one: God's new-begotten children he cannot touch: they are in and they know the True One, and in Him have eternal life. These maxims are introduced with a thrice-repeated **we knew**, the expression of full persuasion and free confidence. They form a triumphant repetition of and anticipation of the attainment of the purpose expressed in ver. 13, “*that ye may know that ye have eternal life.*”

18.] We know that every one who is born of God, sinneth not (see on ch. iii. 9, from which place our words are almost repeated. As explained there and in our summary of these verses, there is no real inconsistency with what has been just said. And that there is none, the second member of the verse shews): **but he that hath been born of God** (literally, he that **was born** of God. The perfect tense expresses more the enduring abidance of his heavenly birth, and fits better the *habitual* meaning of the words **sinneth not**: the mere past tense calling attention to the historical fact of his having been born of God, fits better the fact that the wicked one toucheth him not, that divine birth having severed his connexion with the prince of this world and of evil), **it keepeth him** (“*it*,” viz. the divine birth, pointed at in the words **born of God**). It is this, and not the fact of his own watchfulness, which preserves him from the touch of the wicked one: as in ch. iii. 9, where the same is importred by “*his seed abideth in him.*” The rationalistic Commentators insist on the reading, “*he keepeth himself,*” as shewing, as Socinus, “that he himself does and contributes something;” and the orthodox Commentators have but a lame apology to offer. Düsterdieck compares “*purifieth himself,*” ch. iii. 3. But the reference there is wholly different—viz. to a gradual and earnest striving after an ideal model; whereas here the **keeping** must be, by the very nature of the case, so far complete, that the wicked one cannot approach: and whose self-guarding can ensure this even for a day? Compare John xvii. 15, “*that thou shouldest keep them from the evil,*” which is decisive), **and the wicked one** (Satan) **doth not touch him** (of course the words must not be understood as saying that he is not tried with *temptation* by the evil one: but imply that, as the Prince of this world had nothing in our blessed Lord, even so on His faithful ones who live by His life, the Tempter has no point d' appui, by virtue of that their birth, by which they are as He is, “The malignant one approaches them,” says Bengel, “*as a fly the candle,* —but hurts them not, nor even touches them”).

19.] Application of that which is said ver. 18, to the Apostle and his readers: and that, in entire separation from the wicked one, the ruling spirit of this present world. **We know** (see summary above) **that we** (not emphatic. It is not the object now to bring out a contrast, but to reassert solemnly these great axioms of the Christian life) **are of God** (i. e. born of God: identifying us with those spoken of ver. 18), **and the whole world lieth in the wicked one** (this second member of the sentence does not depend on the preceding *that*, but like those of vv. 18, 20, is an independent proposition. **the wicked one**, not “wickedness,” as A.V.: the neuter sense can hardly stand after ch. ii. 13, 14, iii. 8, 10, 14 compared: iv. 4: John xvii. 14 f, and above all after the preceding verse here. In this unusual term, **lieth in**, the idea *in the power of*, and the local idea, seen to be combined. *The wicked one* is as it were the inclusive abiding-place and representative of all his, as, in the expressions “*in the Lord,*” “*in Christ,*” “*in Christ Jesus,*” “*we are in the true One,*” ver. 20, the Lord is of His, And while we are *from God*, implying a birth and a proceeding forth and a change of state, the *world*, all the rest of mankind, *lieth in the wicked one*, remains where it was, in, and in the power of, *the wicked one*. Some Commentators have been anxious to avoid inconsistency with such passages as ch. ii. 2, iv. 14, and would therefore give **the world** a different meaning here. But there is no inconsistency whatever. Had not Christ become a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, were He not the Saviour of the whole world, none could ever come out of the world and believe on Him; but as it is, they who do believe on Him, come out and are separated from the world: so that our proposition here remains strictly true: the *world* is the negation of faith in Him, and as such lies in the wicked one, His adversary).

20.] Yet another **we know:** and that in general, as summing up all, the certainty to us of the Son of God having come, and given us the knowledge of God, and of our being in Him: and the formal inclusion, in this one fact, of knowledge of the true God here, and life everlasting hereafter. **Moreover** (closes off and sums up all, This not being seen, it has been altered to “*and,*” as there appeared to be no contrast with the preceding) **we know that the Son of God is come** (the incarnation, and work, and abiding presence, of the Son of God, is to us a living fact. HE IS HERE—all is full of Him—“*the Master is come, and calleth for thee*”), **and hath given** (it is the Son of God who is to us the bestower of this knowledge, see ver. 13: it is He who is here at the end of the Epistle made prominent, as it is He who is to us eternal life, and he who hath Him hath the Father) **to us [an]**

understanding (by **understanding** is meant the divinely empowered inner sense by which we judge of things divine. It is not the wisdom or judgment *itself*, but the faculty capable of attaining to it. Compare John i. 12, 18, xvii. 2 f., 6 f., 25 f., 2 Cor. iv. 6, Eph. i. 18), **that we know** (**that we know** must bear a sort of pregnant sense, of a purpose accomplished or at least secured) **the true One** (i. e. God: compare John xvii. 3, “*that they may know Thee the only true God.*” The adjective **true** is not subjective, but objective, in the sense of *genuine*, in distinction from every fictitious god. And thus the way is prepared for the warning against all false gods, ver. 21); **and we are** (again, as in vv. 18, 19, this second member is an independent proposition, not dependent on the “*that*”) **in** (see above, on “*lieth in,*” ver. 19) **the true One** (viz. God, as above), **in His Son Jesus Christ** (i. e. by virtue of our being in His Son Jesus Christ: this second **in** is not in apposition with, but explanatory of the former). **This** (viz. God the Father: **the true One**, who has been twice spoken of see below) **is the true God, and eternal life.** There has been great controversy, carried on principally from doctrinal interests, respecting the reference of the word **this**: whether it is to be understood as above, or of His Son Jesus Christ, just mentioned. The Fathers who were engaged against Arian error, and most of the orthodox expositors since, regarding the passage as a precious testimony for the Godhead of the Son, have maintained this latter view, rather doctrinally than exegetically. One of the principal Socinianizing expositors, even Episcopins, takes this view, not being able to bear the caprice and tortuousness of the Socinian exegesis. The opposite doctrinal interest has led many of those who deny this application. To these have succeeded another set of expositors with whom not doctrinal but exegetical considerations have been paramount.

The grounds on which the application to Christ is rested are mainly the following: 1) that the pronoun **this** most naturally refers to the last-mentioned substantive: 2) that **eternal life**, as a predicate, more naturally belongs to the Son than to the Father: 3) that the sentence, if understood of God the Father, would be aimless, and tautological. But to these it has been well and decisively answered by Lücke and Düsterdieck, 1) that “*this*” more than once in St. John belongs not to the nearest, substantive, but to the principal one in the foregoing sentence, e.g. in ch. ii, 22 and in 2 John 7: and that the subject of the whole here has been the Father, who is the true One of the last verse, and the Son is referred back to Him as “**His Son,**” thereby keeping *Him*, as the primary subject, before the mind. 2) that as little can “*eternal life*” be an actual predicate of Christ as of the Father. He is indeed “*the life,*” ch. i, 2, but not “**eternal life.**” Such an expression used predicatively, leads us to look for some expression of our Lord's, or for some meaning w not appear on the surface to guide us. And such an expression leading to such a meaning we have in John xvii. 3, “*This is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send.*” He is eternal life in Himself, as being the fount and origin of it: He is it to us, seeing that to know Him is to possess it. I own I cannot see, after this saying of our Lord with the words, **Thee the only true God**, how any one can imagine that the same Apostle can have had in these words any other reference than, that which is given in those. 3) this charge is altogether inaccurate. As referred to the Father, there is in it no tautology and no aimlessness. It serves to identify the “*true One*” mentioned before, in a solemn manner, and leads on to the concluding warning against false gods. As in another place the Apostle intensifies the non-possession of the Son by including in it the alienation from the Father also, so here at the close of all, the *true God*, the fount of *eternal life*, is put before us as the ultimate aim and end, to be approached *in His Son*, but Himself the one Father both of Him and of us who live through Him.

21.] Parting warning against idols. Little children (he parts from them with his warmest and most affectionate word of address), **keep yourselves from idols** (or more literally, **from the idols**, viz. which are about you. The **idol** is properly a figure of an *imaginary deity*,—while an *image*, or *likeness*, is that of some real person or thing made into an object of worship. See Rom. i. 23, 1 Cor. x. 19, xii. 2, and especially 1 Thess. i. 9, where, as here, “*the living and true God*” is opposed to *idols*. And there seems no justification for the departing from the plain literal sense in this place. All around the Christian Church was heathenism: the born of God, and they that were lying in the wicked one, were the only two classes: those who went out of one, went into the other: God's children are thus then finally warned of the consequence of letting go the only true God, in whom they can only abide by abiding in His Son Jesus Christ, in these solemn terms,—to leave on their minds a wholesome terror of any the least deviation from the truth of God, seeing into what relapse it would plunge them).

2 JOHN

Chapter 1

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

2 John: Chapter 1

I. 1–3.] ADDRESS AND GREETING. **The elder** (the Apostle, known by this name: see Introd., “On the writer of the Epistle”) **to the** (not, an: see Introd., “To whom the Epistle was written”) **elect lady** (see Introd., *ibid.*) **and to her children, whom** (this **whom**, masculine plural in the original, probably embraces the whole, mother and children of both sexes: see 3 John 1) **I love in truth** (not merely, in reality: but in truth, such truth’ being the result, as stated below, of *the truth* of the Gospel abiding in him. See 1 John iii. 18, and note on iii. 19); **and not I alone, but also all who know the truth** (there is no need to limit this **all** to all dwelling in or near the abode of the Writer, or to all who were personally acquainted with those addressed: it is a general expression: the communion of love is as wide as the communion of faith);

2.] **on account of the truth** (objective: God’s truth revealed in His Son, see 1 John ii. 4), **which abideth in us, and shall be with us for ever** (see John xiv. 16, 17. These words are a reminiscence of our Lord’s words there, *abideth with you, and shall be in you*. The future is not the expression of a wish, as some have supposed; but of confidence, as that also which follows, which takes its tinge and form from this):

3.] **there shall be with us** (by the **us** the Apostle includes *himself* in the greeting, as he had before done in the introductory clauses. **shall be**, again, not a wish: see above: we inst of necessity connect this second shall be with the first. But the very fact of a greeting being conveyed, must somewhat modify the absolute future sense, and introduce something of the votive character. It is as Bengel, “wish with its affirmation”—a wish expressed by a confident assertion of, its fulfilment) **grace, mercy, peace** (Trench says well, “*Grace* has reference to the *sins* of men, *mercy* to their *misery*. God’s *grace*, His free grace and gift, is extended to men as they are guilty: His *mercy* is extended to them as they are miserable.” And thus *grace* always comes first, because guilt must be done away, before misery can be assuaged. *Peace* is the whole sum and substance of the possession and enjoyment of God’s grace and mercy: see Luke ii, 14; Rom. v. 1; x. 15; John xiv. 27; xvi. 33), **from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father** (from the Father, as their original fountain, who of His great love hath decreed

and secured them for us: from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, this solemn title being used for the more complete setting forth of the union of Jesus with the Father in the essence of the Godhead), **in truth and love** (truth and love are the conditional element in which the grace, mercy, and peace are to be received and enjoyed).

4–11.] **Truth and love:** These (see ver. 1) were the two ground-tones of the Epistle. And now the Apostle proceeds to describe his joy at finding the children of the *elect lady* walking in truth (ver. 4), and to enforce the commandment, to love one another (5, 6): and this in presence of the fact that many deceivers are in the world, who would rob us of our Christian reward, and of our share in God (7–9). These are not to be treated as brethren, nor greeted, lest we partake of their evil deeds (10, 11).

4.] **I rejoiced greatly** (at some definite time *perhaps*: but it may also be the epistolary form of putting the verb, implying the present only: and this is made more probable by the perfect tense, “*I have found*,” which follows. See however 3 John 3), **that I have found** (the most obvious interpretation is, that at some place where the Apostle was, *he came upon* these who are presently mentioned: as in Acts xviii 2, *Paul came to Corinth: and finding a certain Jew, &c.) of thy children* (some) **walking in-truth** (i. e. not only in honesty and uprightness, but in that truth which is derived from and is part of the truth of God in Christ: see above on 1.—Again, there is no hint whatever given that the rest, or that others, of her children were not walking in truth, The Apostle apparently, as above, in some place where he was, lit upon these children of the “*lady*,” and sends her their good report. Respecting the rest, he makes no mention nor insinuation), **according as we received commandment from the Father** (viz. to walk in the truth: not, as Lücke, to love one another, making this clause a further description of the manner in which they were walking in truth).

5.] **And now** (so coupling to what has gone before, 1 John ii. 28. It has also a force of breaking off, and passing to that which is the main subject, or most in the Writer’s thoughts, which here is, that this walking in truth is a walking after God’s commandments in love) **I entreat thee** (see on *entreating* and *asking*, 1 John v. 15, 16. Here the *entreating* carries a mild admonition with it, and assumes that the writer had a right thus to entreat), **lady, not as writing to thee a new commandment, but** (as writing to thee) **that which we had from the beginning** (see on this, 1 John ii. 7, 8), **that** (i. e. *in order that*: not merely explanatory here) **we love one another** (the expression of the commandment in the first person is a mark of gentleness and delicacy: a sign that he who wrote it kept the commandment himself).

6.] **And** (the onward course of thought here is highly characteristic of St. John) **this is love** (*love* is used in its widest sense, as

the sum and substance of all God's commandments: not only as love to God; nor only as love to the brethren), **that** (the explicative "that" of St. John) **we walk according to His commandments. The commandment** (the one commandment in which God's other commandments are summed up) **is this, even as ye heard from the beginning that ye should walk in it** ("Is this, even that which ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it," viz. in *love*).

from the beginning, as above, ver. 5, and 1 John ii. 7).

7, 8.] The condition of Love is Truth, see ver. 3. And the necessity of fresh exhortation to walk in love, in that love whose condition is truth, lies in the fact that there are many deceivers gone forth, denying the Truth: of whom we are to beware, and not, by extending to them a spurious sympathy, to become partakers with them.

7.] Because many deceivers (makers to wander) **went forth** (here probably, on account of the past tense, "*from us*," as in 1 John ii. 19. In 1 John iv. 1, it is perfect, "*are gone forth*," where I have preferred the sense, "are gone forth from him who sent them," viz. the evil one. Huther prefers this latter sense here also) **into the world, [namely] they who confess not** (instead of "*not confessing*," the Apostle writes **they who confess not**, thereby not merely characterizing the *deceivers* as not confessing, but absolutely identifying all who repudiate the confession which follows, as belonging to the class of *deceivers*) **Jesus Christ coming in [the] flesh (coming)**, altogether timeless, and representing the great truth of the Incarnation itself, as distinguished from its historical manifestation [1 John v. 6], and from the abiding effect of that historical manifestation [1 John iv. 2]. He who denies the *coming in the flesh*, denies the **possibility** of the Incarnation: he who denies the *having come*, denies its *actuality*). **This** (viz. "he that fulfils the above character") is the deceiver and the anti-christ (see notes on 1 John ii. 18, 22, as to the personal relation of these "*many*" to the one great Antichrist of prophecy. The word **this**, pointing to a class, makes each one of these, in his place, a representative and "precursor of Antichrist").

8.] The warming is suddenly introduced without any coupling particle, and becomes thereby so much the more solemn and forcible. **Look to yourselves (yourselves** here probably implies not as Bengel, *during my absence*, but "yourselves," as contrasted with the deceivers, that ye too become not as they), **that ye lose not the things which ye wrought** (the reading of this is somewhat uncertain. We had better give the explanation of all three forms, 1) "*that ye lose not the things which we wrought*," i.e. that ye, Christian converts, lose not that your Christian state of truth and love which we, Apostles and Teachers, wrought in you. The Apostles were God's *workmen*, Matt. ix. 37; 2 Tim. ii. 15: *the false apostles were crafty workmen*, 2 Cor. xi. 13; *bad workmen*, Phil. iii. 2: the true *work* was to cause men to believe on Christ, John vi. 29: and this *work* the false teachers put in peril of loss. If 2) the whole be in the first person, "*that we lose not the things which we wrought*," then the *apostolic* reward, the souls which are to be their hire, must be understood: if 3) in the secend,— "*that ye lose not the things which ye wrought*,"—no human merit, but the reward laid up for faithfulness, and for every thing done in His name, must be understood, which is reckoned of grace, and not of debt), **but receive reward in full** (the connexion of *work* with *reward* must not be broken. The idea is a complex one. Ye, our converts, are our *reward* in the day of the Lord: and this has suggested the use of the well-known word, even where it manifestly applies not to the teachers but to the taught, whose *reward* is the eternal life, which shall receive on that day its glorious completion: which is *having the Son and the Father*: see 1 John iii. 2. —If readings 1) or 2) be right, the use which Roman-Catholic expositors have tried to make of this verse to establish the merit of human works falls at once to the ground. Nor indeed does it fare much better if the other reading be taken).

9.] Explanation of this *loss*, that it is the non-possession of God, which is incurred by all who abide not in Christ's teaching. **Every one that goeth before [you]** (such I believe to be the meaning of the somewhat difficult word here used: every one who would set up for a teacher, *going before the sheep*, as John x. 4, and they following. The expositors who take this reading interpret it, "goeth forward too fast," "maketh false and unsound advance," regarding it, either as ironical [so Huther], or as serious [so Düsterdieck]), **and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ** (i. e. in Christ's doctrine,—that truth which Christ Himself taught. This is far more likely than that of Christ should be objective, as Bengel ["in doctrine which teaches that Jesus is the Son of God"], and others: and thus we have the personal genitive after *doctrine* wherever it occurs in the New Test.: see Matt. vii. 28: Mark iv. 1: John xviii, 19: Acts ii. 42), **hath not God** (see 1 John ii. 23, v. 12, notes): **he that abideth in the doctrine, that man hath both the Father and the Son** (see as above. The order is the theological one, the Father being mentioned first, then the Son).

10, 11.] The exercise of the love of brethren is conditioned and limited by the truth: and is not to be extended to those who are enemies and impugners of the truth. Those who harbour or encourage such, make common cause with them, and their evil deeds.

10.] If any cometh unto you, and bringeth not (the *indicative mood*, "*cometh*," "*bringeth*," shews that the case supposed actually existed: that such persons were sure to come to them: compare, in the revised text, John xi. 12; 2 Cor. ii, 5; 1 John iv. 11. It is not the same as if with a *junctive mood*, "*if any come, and bring*:" which always carries a purely hypothetical force, corresponding to an *interrogation*, whereas the other corresponds to an *assertion*) **this doctrine** (the expression, "**bringeth not this doctrine**," points out the person as a teacher, not a mere traveller seeking hospitality. The original implies that he not only comes without this doctrine, but by so doing, brings the contrary doctrine. The absence of testimony for the truth is, in one

who brings any testimony at all, equivalent to testifying for error), **receive him not into [your] house, and do not bid him goad speed:**

11.] for he that biddeth him good speed partaketh in his evil deeds (these words must be understood with their right reference: “not of men who have never had any relation with the church,—1 Cor. v. 10,—but of men who wish to be thought brethren, and overthrow the truth,” as Grotius says. These were not, to be received with the *hospitality* with which all Christian brethren were to be entertained. Such reception of them would in fact be only opening an inlet for their influence. But this is not the point on which the Apostle mainly dwells. It is the participation which the host in such a case would incur with them and their antichristian designs, by encouraging them. And this is further impressed by the caution against saying *good speed* to them: which is a further intensification of the exclusion from the house, and forms a climax,—do not even by wishing him good speed, which, if spoken by a Christian, would mean *God speed*,—identify yourselves with his course and fortunes. If you do, you pronounce approval of his evil deeds, and so far share his guilt, advancing their success by your wishes for it.

This command has been by some laid to the fiery and zealous spirit of St. John, and it has been said that a true Christian spirit of love teaches us otherwise. But as rightly understood, we see that this is so. Nor are we at liberty to set aside direct ethical injunctions of the Lord’s Apostles in this manner. Varieties of individual character may play on the surface of their writings: but in these solemn commands which come up from the depths, we must recognize the power of that One Spirit of Truth which moved them all as one. It would have been better for the Church now, if this command had been observed in all ages by her faithful sons).

12, 13.] CONCLUSION. Having many things to write unto you, I would not [communicate them] by means of paper and ink (paper, says Lücke, the Egyptian papyrus, probably the so-called Augustan or Claudian,—**ink**, that made of soot and water thickened with gum,—**pen** [see 3 John 13], the writing-reed, probably split,—were the New Testament writing materials): **but I hope to come to you, and to speak mouth to month** (so “*face to face*,” 1 Cor. xiii, 12), **that your joy may be filled full** (see 1 John i, 4: viz. by hearing from the mouth of the Apostle himself those messages of life and truth which he forbore writing now: not merely, as some think, by his bodily presence only: still less, because the Apostles were unwilling to commit all their teaching to writing, but reserved many things to oral teaching only, as some Roman-Catholic Commentators, than which it is hardly possible to imagine a sillier comment: for the *First Epistle was written* with this very same view, ch. i. 4). **There greet thee the children of thine elect sister** (these words are variously interpreted according as the *kyria* is understood of a lady, or of a church. The nou-mention of the *kyria herself* here seems, it must be confessed, rather to favour the latter hypothesis. See on the whole, the Introduction).

3 JOHN

Chapter 1

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

3 John: Chapter 1

I. 1.] ADDRESS. **The elder** (see Introduction to the two Epistles) **to Caius the beloved** (on Caius, see Introduction. The epithet **beloved** seems to be used this first time in a general sense,—beloved by all: see below), **whom I** (for my own part: Cains was generally beloved, and the Apostle declares that he personally joins in the affection for him) **love in [the] truth** (see 2 John 1, note).

2–4.] *Wish that Caius may prosper as his soul prospers: and ground of this latter assertion.*—**Beloved** (the repetition of the word is due perhaps more to the fact that the direct address begins here, than to any specific motive, such as the supposed ill health of Caius), **I pray that concerning all things thou mayest prosper and be in health** (i. e. bodily health), **even as thy soul prospereth** (as is shewn by what follows. There is a passage in Philo, in which the well-being of body and soul are similarly compared: that of the body referring to health and strength, that of the soul to the enjoyment of virtue).

3.] For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified to thy truth (thy share of that Truth in which thou walkest, see below), **even as** (almost equivalent to **how that**, see below) **thou walkest in truth** (this clause is not an independent one, adding the testimony of the Apostle to that of the brethren,—“as [I know that] thou walkest, &c.:” but is explanatory of the former clause, and states the substance of the testimony of the brethren, as is shewn by what follows).

4.] Explains **I rejoiced greatly** above. **I have no greater joy than this** (literally, “*than these things*”), **that I hear of my children walking in the truth** (the expression **children** here seems rather to favour the idea that the “*Kyria*” of the 2nd Epistle is a Church: see Introduction to 2 John).

5–8.] *Praise of the hospitality shewn by Caius; and reason of that praise.* **Beloved** (beginning again of new address: see above on ver. 2), **thou doest a faithful act** (one worthy of a “faithful” man) **whatsoever thou workest towards** (so the Lord in Matt. xxvi. 10 describes His anointing by Mary thus, “*She hath done a good work towards Me*”) **the brethren, and that** (and those brethren), **strangers** (*love of strangers* is an especial mark of Christian love, Rom. xii, 13, 1 Tim. iii. 2, Tit. i. 8, Heb. xiii. 2, 1 Pet. iv. 9),

6.] who (the above-named strange brethren) **bore testimony to thy love in the presence of the church** (viz. where St. John at the time of writing. They were Evangelists, ver. 7: and thus would naturally give the church an account of their missionary journey, during which they were so hospitably treated by Caius): **whom thou wilt do well if thou forward on their way worthily of God** (in a manner worthy of Him whose messengers they are and whose servant thou art): **for on behalf of the Name** (of Christ: see Acts. v. 41; ix. 16; xv. 28) **they went forth** (on their missionary journey), **taking nothing** receiving nothing by way of benefaction or hire: even as St. Paul in Achaia, 1 Cor. ix. 18; 2 Cor. xi. 7 ff.; 1 Thess. ii, 9 ff.; against Huther, who denies the applicability of the comparison, seeing that in St. Paul’s case they were *Christian churches*: but so must these have been before they would contribute to the support of their missionaries. The peculiar word used for **nothing** implies that it was their own deliberate purpose; refusing to take any thing) **from the Heathens. We therefore (contrast to the heathens: therefore, because they take nothing from the heathens) ought to support** (the word does not seem to signify “receive hospitably,” as some have explained it) **such persons, that we may become fellow-workers [with them] for the truth.**

9, 10.] *Notice of the hostility of Diotrephes.* **I wrote somewhat to the church** (the word **somewhat** does not imply that the thing written was specially important, nor on the other hand does it depreciate; but merely designates indefinitely: compare Acts xxiii. 17; Luke vii. 40; Matt. xx. 20. The contents of the Epistle are not hinted at. The **church** is apparently the church of which Cains was a member: not, as Bengel, that out of which the missionaries of ver. 7 had gone forth): **howbeit Diotrephes, who loveth preeminence** (he appears to have been an ambitious man, who willed that not the Apostle but himself should rule the church) **over them** (the members of the *church*, implied in the word previously used), **receiveth us not** (does not recognize our authority: here in an improper sense, but in the next verse probably literal: see there. **We** wants no explanation, such as our commands, our Epistles, or the like: in rejecting the Apostle’s person, he rejected all his influence). On this account, if I should come, I will bring to mind (i. e. as Bede, to the knowledge of all, by plainly stating them) **his works which he doeth** (what they were, is explained by the participle following), **prating against us** (this is the best rendering, which conveys not only that he used reproaches, but also that the reproaches were mere tattle, worth nothing, irrelevant. See 1 Tim. v. 13) **with wicked speeches: and not satisfied with this** (his conduct and words), **neither doth he himself receive the brethren** (here **receive** seems best: taken in its literal sense, of entertaining hospitably, see 2 John 10, **The brethren** are

probably the same as in ver. 5, the travelling missionaries), **and hinders** (by forbidding: see 1 Thess. ii, 16) **those that would** (receive them), **and casts them** (those that would receive the brethren: not, the travelling brethren. themselves) **out of the church** (manifestly, by excommunication, which owing to his influence among them he had the power to inflict. There is no difficulty, nor any occasion to take the word as pointing at that which Diotrephes was *attempting* to do or *threatening* to do, and so as spoken in irony: the present tense indicates his habit, as above. He was evidently one in high power, and able to forbid, and to, punish, the reception of the travelling brethren. See Introduction).

11.] Upon occasion of the hostility just mentioned, St. John *exhorts Cains to imitate not the evil but the good*,—probably as shewn in the praises of Demetrius which follow. **Beloved, imitate not evil** (abstract), **but good** (abstract also). **He that doeth good is from God** (is born of God, and has his mission and power from Him; as so often in the first Epistle): **he that doeth evil hath not seen God** (see reff).

12.] *The praise of Demetrius.* **Testimony hath been borne to Demetrius by all** (namely, who know him, and have brought report concerning him), **and by the truth itself** (it is not very easy to explain this expression. We may understand it that the reality of facts themselves supports the testimony of all. But there are two reasons against this view: 1) that it does not correspond to the objective fact asserted in the statement, nor to the parallelizing of this testimony with that of *all and that of the Apostle*: and 2) that thus the Christian and divine sense of the truth, which St. John seems always to put forward, would be entirely sunk. Some would understand that Demetrius had done much for the truth, and his deeds were his witness: but this is hardly a witness of *the truth* to him. Others take refuge in the extraordinary supposition, that the Holy Spirit had revealed to the Apostle the truth respecting Demetrius. Huther regards the testimony borne by the truth to be that furnished by **all**, whose evidence was decisive, not from their credit as men. but because they all spoke of and from the truth of Christ dwelling in them. This would reduce this new testimony to the former, and would in fact besides include the following in it likewise. The best interpretation is that of Düsterdieck. The objective Truth of God, which is the divine rule of the walk of all believers, gives a good testimony to him who really walks in the truth. This witness lies in the accordance of his walk with the requirement of God's Truth. It was the mirror in which the walk of Demetrius was reflected: and his form, thus seen in the mirror of God's Truth, in which the perfect form of Christ is held up to us [1 John ii. 6, iii. 3, 16], appeared in the likeness of Christ; so that, the mirror itself seemed to place in a clear light his Christian virtue and uprightness, and thus to bear witness to him): **yea, we too** (besides the two testimonies foregoing) **bear testimony; and thou knowest that our testimony is true.**

13. 14.] Close of the Epistle.

13.] I had many things to write to thee, howbeit I will not to write by means of ink and reed (see on 2 John 12):

14.] but I hope immediately to see thee, and (then) we shall speak mouth to mouth (see 2 John 12). **Peace be to thee** (beautifully paraphrased by Lyra, "The internal peace of the conscience, the fraternal peace of friendship, the supernal peace of glory." Remember our Lord's legacy, John xiv. 27, and His greeting after the Resurrection, John xx. 19. 26). **The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name** (as if I had written their names here). 'The reason why St. John mentions **friends** [see John xi. 11, xv. 15, Acts xxvii. 3], and not *brethren* [1 Cor. xvi. 20, Phil. iv, 21, Eph. vi. 23], is probably to be found in the personal character of the Epistle, not addressed as from an Apostle to a church, but as from a friend to his friend, in which mutual friends on both sides would be the senders and receivers of salutation.

JUDE

Chapter 1

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE

Jude: Chapter 1

1, 2. *Address and greeting.*] **Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ (servant**, probably not here in the wider sense, in which all Christians are servants of Christ—but in that special sense in which those were bound to His service who were employed in the preaching and disseminating of His word. On the absence of any official designation, see Introduction), **and brother of James** (see Introduction), **to the called** (in the sense of St. Paul; effectually drawn, by God the Father to the knowledge of the Gospel), **beloved in** (the phrase is one not elsewhere found, and difficult of interpretation. The meanings “*by*,” “*on account of*,” understanding “*beloved by the writer*,” are hardly admissible. The only allowable sense seems to be, “*in the case of*,” “*as regards*,” understanding of course that the love of the Father is spoken of) **God the Father** (St. Paul ordinarily in his greetings says “*God our Father*,” Rom. i. 7, 1 Cor. i. 3, 2 Cor. i. 2, Eph. i. 2, Phil. i. 2, Col. i. 2, 2 Thess. i. 1, (2?) Philem. 3. But he has **God the Father** absolutely in the following places; Gal. i. 1, 2, Eph. vi. 23, Phil. ii. 11, (2 Thess. i. 2?) 2 Tim. i. 2, Titus i. 4; as also St. Peter, 1 Pet. i. 2, 2 Pet. i. 17: St. John, 2 John 3. It became more frequently used, as might be expected, in the later days of the canon), **and kept for Jesus Christ** (reserved, to be His at the day of His coming. If the question be asked, kept by whom? the answer must be, by God the Father: though constructionally the words are not connected. The participles are *perfect*, giving the signification “from of old and still”): **Mercy to you, and peace, and love, be multiplied** (all three proceeding from God: God's mercy, God's peace, God's love: see ver. 21. In the somewhat similar passage, Eph. vi. 23, the love and faith are clearly, in themselves, the gift of God: mutual love, or love towards God. But the other seems better here).

3, 4.] *Purpose, and occasion, of the Epistle.*

3.] **Beloved** (only found, in the beginning of an Epistle, here and 3 John 2), **giving all diligence** (the phrase is only found here. It implies more than mere earnest desire: a man's diligence is necessarily action as well as wish) **to write to you concerning the common salvation** (this may mean, concerning the fact of our common salvation, brought in by Christ; or concerning the means of attaining that salvation, i.e. the doctrines and practices by which it is to be forwarded. Perhaps the latter is here preferable. On the idea conveyed by **common**, see Tit. i. 4, and 2 Pet. i. 1), **I found it necessary** (not, as A.V. “*it was needful*.”) the necessity was not *part of the giving diligence*, but supervened on it, owing to the circumstance to be mentioned in the next verse) **to write to you, exhorting [you] to contend earnestly for the faith** (objective here: the sum of that which Christians believe faith *which is believed*, not faith *by which we believe*) **once for all** (“an urgent fact;—no other faith will ever be given.” Bengel. This is obscured by the “*once*” of the A.V., which represents merely its having been given, not its having been the only gift of the kind) **delivered to the saints** (i. e. Christians: believers.—The meaning then of this verse is, that St. Jude, who was before earnestly desirous to write to the Church universal concerning the salvation which is common to us all [De Wette, after Sherlock, supposes that St. Jude was actually engaged on a larger and more general Epistle, and was compelled to break it off by the necessity mentioned. This may have been so: but we can hardly gather so much from the words], found urgent occasion at once to do so, respecting not merely nor directly that common salvation, but one point, viz. the keeping inviolate the faith once for all delivered to God's people, And the reason of this necessity which arose, now follows).

4.] **For there crept in** (not “*are... crept in*:” the past tense explains the arising of the occasion of his thus writing. On **crept in**, see 2 Pet. ii. 1, and note: also Gal. ii. 4. Secrecy, and lack of legitimate introduction, are plainly expressed in the word. “*Crept in*,” viz. into the Christian church) **of old certain men** (it has been observed that the term **certain men** has a tinge of contempt about it), **[men] who have been of old written down in prophecy** (to what time and fact are we to refer such designation of them? Clearly not to God's eternal purpose, in this place, from the term **of old**, which, as Huther remarks, is never used of that purpose, but points to some fact *in time*. And if so, then the previous writing down of these men can only point to the Old Test. prophecies. What special description of them is intended, might be difficult to say were it not for the quotation below, ver. 17, from the prophecy of Enoch. The warnings contained in the historical facts adduced below may also be meant. It may be observed that the ultra-predestinarians, Beza and Calvin, find, as we might expect, strong defence for their views in their interpretation here. Beza indeed gathers from this place, “that this eternal decree of God comprehended not only the event, but even principally, the persons themselves involved in it”) **to this judgment** (what judgment, or rather result of judgment? that presently to be mentioned: the sentence which St. Jude has in his mind, and proceeds in the following verses to unfold. **judgment**, as so often, though not the same as *condemnation*, yet gets the condemnatory meaning from the character of the context), **impious, changing the grace of our God** (i. e. the gift of grace, the state of salvation, in which our sins are forgiven us and we are admitted into the freedom of God's children. Of **our God**; drawing closer the bond of God's true children to Him and one another, and thus producing greater abhorrence of those who have thus abused His grace) **into lasciviousness** (the words *might* mean, “perverting the grace of our God in the direction of, for the purposes of lasciviousness:” but the meaning of the verb used is simply to change, not to pervert: and we therefore must understand, as

above, that they made the state of grace and Christian liberty into a state of [moral] licence and wantonness), **and denying** (see 2 Pet. ii, 1) **the only Master, and our Lord Jesus Christ** (in 2 Pet. ii. 1 **Master** is used of Christ: which circumstance might tempt us to refer it to Christ here also. But probability seems to weigh on the other side. In every other place [Luke ii, 29, Acts iv. 24, Rev. vi. 10, Jer. iv. 10 in the Septuagint translation] **Master** is used of God: 2) the addition “*only*” seems to bind this meaning to it here: 3) the denial of God by disobeying His law is the explanatory resumption of the last clause: 4) Master and Lord are hardly distinguishable, if both applied to Christ).

5-7.] Examples of Divine vengeance.

5.] *First example:* unbelieving Israel in the wilderness. See Heb. iii. 16–iv. 5. **But** (solemn contrast to the conduct just mentioned) **I wish to remind you, knowing as ye do** (better here than “although ye know,” on account of the term “*once for all*” which follows. The A.V. is altogether wrong) **once for all** (i. e. having once for all received the Knowledge of) **all things** (all that refers to that of which I am speaking: the clause carries with it a latent admonition, to apply other examples for yourselves), **that Jesus** (critical principles seem to require this remarkable reading. It is not entirely preceded by 1 Cor. x. 4: for there St. Paul uses not the personal human name, but “*Christ*,” in which there is no such difficulty. The only account to be given seems, that, the Person designated by the two names being the same, they became sometimes convertibly used in popular exhortation), **having saved the people** (on the fact, see Exod. xiv. 19, xxxiii. 20, 23, xxxii. 2, Isa. lxiii. 9, in which last place however the Septuagint version has “*Out of all their affliction not an ambassador, nor yet an angel, but he himself named them*”) **out of the land of Egypt, secondly** (not as A.V., “*afterward*,” but it indicates a second deed of the Lord, His first-mentioned having been the deliverance out of Egypt) **destroyed them that believed not** (viz. by forbidding their entrance into the land of promise [see Heb. iii. 18], and slaying them in the wilderness. This example is not mentioned in 2 Pet. ii., but instead of it, the judgment of the flood).

6.] *Second example:* the rebel angels. See 2 Pet. ii. 4. **And** (the connexion with the foregoing is very close) **angels, those which kept not (angels** is probably indefinite, and then what follows designates those angels who are meant) **their own dignity** (some interpret as A.V., “*first estate*,” “original condition;” some again, “*the government which was over them*,” viz. that of God. But seeing that angels are often in the New Test. called “*governments*,” or “*powers*,” as they also were among the Jews, and that such meaning answers best to the parallel clause which follows, there can be little doubt that the rendering *government, or principality, or dignity*, is right. The fact alluded to is probably that which is obscurely indicated in Gen. vi. 2. See Introduction), **but left their own [proper] habitation** (viz. heaven), **He hath kept** (in sharp contrast to “*which kept not*”) **against the judgment of the great day** (at the end of the world) **in eternal bonds under darkness** (the darkness being considered as brooding over them, and they under it. There is apparently a difference, which we cannot explain, between the description of the rebel angels here and in the parallel place, 2 Pet. ii. 4, and that in the rest of the New Test., where the devil and his angels are said to be powers of the air, and to go about tempting men. But perhaps we are wrong in absolutely identifying the evil spirits mentioned here with those spoken of in 2 Peter).

7.] *Third example:* Sodom and Gomorrah. See 2 Pet. ii. 6. **How** (not “*even as*,” as A.V.) **Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, following fornication in like manner to these** (i. e. to the angels above mentioned. The manner was similar, because tho angels committed fornication with another race than themselves, thus also *going away after strange flesh*), **and going away after** (it was a departure from the appointed course of nature, and seeking after that which was unnatural) **other flesh** (than that appointed by God for the fulfilment of natural desire. The sin of Sodom was afterwards common in the most enlightened nations of antiquity: see Rom. i. 27. But in all probability Sodom and Gomorrah must be numbered among those whose sin went further even than this: compare Lev. xviii. 22–25. See 2 Pet. ii. 10), **are set forth as an example, undergoing** (to this day, present participle; alluding to the natural phenomena of the Dead Sea) **the just punishment of eternal fire** (the sense is, undergoing the punishment, as even now be seen, of eternal fire: of that fire which shall never be quenched).

8 ff.] *Designation of these evil men as following the same destructive courses. In like manner nevertheless* (i. e. notwithstanding these warning examples) **these men in their dreams** (the term represents that state of dreaming in the sleep of sin, out of which men are so often called on to awake to righteousness and the light of Christ: so Arnaud, “*cependant ceux-ci, comme des gens qui agissent sans savoir ce qu’ ils font, comme s’ils rêvaient, pour ainsi dire....*”) **defile the flesh** (by unnatural lusts, as in verse 7, the *flesh*, generally: not, ‘*their flesh*,’ but our common flesh), **and despise lordship, and speak evil of glories** (of what sort? Some understand those of kings and Cesars: others include ecclesiastical rulers and Apostles. But to neither of these meanings can verses 9, 10 be fitted: and it becomes therefore necessary to understand the words of celestial lordships and dignities: probably in both cases those of the holy angel).

9.] **But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed concerning the body of Moses, dared not** (by the context, from reverence for Satan’s former glory) **bring against him a judgment of evil speaking** (i. e. as

A.V. *a railing accusation*: a sentence savouring of, belonging to, *evil speaking*), **but said, The Lord rebuke thee** (the source of the tradition to which St. Jude here refers as familiar to his readers, is not known with any certainty. Origen says, “In the

Ascension of Moses, of which book the Apostle Jude makes mention in his Epistle, Michael the archangel, disputing with the devil concerning the body of Moses, says..." No such tradition is found in any apocryphal or rabbinical book now extant. In the targum of Jonathan on Deut. xxxiv. 6, it is stated that the grave of Moses was given into the special custody of Michael. Some have given an allegorical interpretation, understanding by **the body of Moses** the law, or Jewish polity, or even people: and, thus interpreting, fix the occasion very variously: at the giving of the law: at the siege under Hezekiah, or the rebuilding under Zerubbabel. All such explanations are of course out of the question: and the literal, matter of fact alone to be held fast. It is, however, remarkable, that the same words, **The Lord rebuke thee**, are spoken by the angel to the devil in Zech. iii. 1-3. This has led some, e.g. Bede, to imagine, that this was the occasion referred to, when Joshua and Satan stood as adversaries concerning the deliverance of Israel from captivity. The only straightforward conclusion is, that St. Jude took the incident from primitive tradition, which tradition, slightly modified, is also given by the prophet Zechariah. That the incident is related as matter of fact, and not as an "argumentum ad hominem," is evident by the very form of it. That, being thus related as matter of fact, it *is* matter of fact, is a conclusion which will or will not be made, according as we are or are not, persuaded of the authenticity of our Epistle as a part of canonical Scripture: and according as we esteem that canonical Scripture itself).

10.] Contrast of the behaviour of these persons to that just related. 2 Pet. ii. 12. **These on the other hand, whatever things they know not, speak evil of** (the reference in *whatever things they know not* is to the spiritual world. Those who understand *dominion* and *glories* above of human authorities, are at a loss for an explanation here: so Arnaud, "il est assez difficile de préciser, quelles étaient ces choses qu'ignoraient ces impiés": **but whatever things naturally, as the irrational animals, they understand** (viz. the objects of sense: of which *the flesh*, ver. 8, has already been mentioned as one. **naturally**, i.e. instinctively.. In 2 Pet. ii. 12, the comparison to irrational creatures is not confined to the sort of knowledge which they have, but is extended to the persons themselves and their conduct), **in these** (in the element and region of these) **they corrupt themselves** (or, are depraved).

11.] The description is interrupted by *a denunciation on them for having followed in the steps of former ungodly men. Woe unto them* (so also St. Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 16, "woe is unto me:" from which it appears that Bengel is not exact, when he says "that this apostle only, and in this place only, uses the imprecation"): **for they went by the way** (the past tenses are probably anticipatory, as looking back on their course: as those in John xvii,—"I glorified Thee on the earth, &c." In an English version we are sometimes [though not here] compelled to render these by our perfect, "*they have gone*," &c.) **of Cain** (how? I have treated some of the explanations in my Greek Test. The most probable answer is that given by Stier and Huther, that the point of comparison is that selfish regard and envy which was at the root of Cain's sin), **and rushed after** (so literally) **the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying** (either instrumental, "perished in gainsaying, as K.," or local, "perished in," i. e. as included in, "the g. of K.," i.e. when we read of K. and his company perishing in their gainsaying, we read of these too, as perishing after the same example. This latter seems preferable, on account of the parallelism with the other two clauses) **of Korah** (the common point being, that they like Korah despised God's ordinances. *Gainsaying*, because Korah and his company spoke against Moses).

12, 13.] Continuation of the description of these ungodly men. 2 Pet. ii. 13, 17.—**These are rocks [which are] in your love-feasts** (the Greek word [spiladēs] is interpreted to mean *rocks under water*. They were the rocks on which the love-feasts [agapæ] stood in danger of being wrecked. It is unnecessary and unjustifiable to attempt to give the word any other meaning, as some have done on account of the "spots" [spiloī] in 2 Pet. ii. 13. But each passage must stand on its own ground), **feasting with you** (it may mean, feasting together: but the other is more probable) **fearlessly** (without any fear of the consequences for themselves; or, as some take it, *for you*), **pasturing their own selves** (using the *love-feasts* not for their legitimate purpose, the realization of the unity of Christians by social union, but for *their own* purposes, the enjoyment of their lusts, and the furtherance of their schemes. See Ezek. xxxiv. 1; the parallelism of which has however been too far pressed here by Grotius and Bengel, "*feeding themselves, not the flock*:" which thought does not seem to be in the context, but merely that they feed and pasture *themselves* in the *love-feasts*, having no regard to the Shepherd [or shepherds] set over them): **clouds without water** (see on "*wells without water*" in 2 Pet. ii. 17, Water is *expected* from clouds), **carried out of course by winds** (here our text is the more concise: St. Peter having, as above, the "*wells without water*" separate from the "*clouds carried by a storm*." Prov. xxv. 14. **carried away**, borne by, or as above, borne out of their course, hither and thither), **autumn trees** (i. e. as trees are in the late autumn: **without fruit** explaining it, see below: "trees as in late autumn, without fruit or leaves." It does not mean that their fruit is withered, as Beza [and consequently A.V.J], **without fruit** (as trees at the time above mentioned; but there is nothing in this word to indicate whether fruit has been on them or not), **twice dead** (it is not easy to explain these words in reference to trees. For that we must do so, and not desert the similitude, and understand it of spiritual death twice inflicted, or of death here and in eternity, must be evident by "*plucked up by the roots*" following. The most likely reference of the word is to the double death in a tree, which is not only as it seems to the eye in common with other trees, in the apparent death of winter, but really dead: dead to appearance, and dead in reality), **rooted out** (the various descriptive clauses form a climax: not only without leaves and fruit, but dead: not only dead, but plucked up and thrown aside. "Tous ces mots sont des métaphores énergiques pour montrer le néant de ces impures, la légèreté de leur conduite, la stérilité de leur foi et absence de leurs bonnes mœurs." Arnaud):

13.] wild waves of the sea, foaming up their own shames (see Isa. lvii. 20: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, whose

waters cast up mire and dirt," which beyond doubt has been in the Writer's mind. **shames**, plural, either, each his own shame, or all their own disgraces, instances of disgraceful conduct), **wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever** (see 2 Pet. ii. 17, where nearly the same words occur. **wandering stars**,—in the Greek, **planet stars**,—would seem most probably to indicate *comets*, which [as in Oct. 1858] astonish the world for a time, and then pass away into darkness. The similitude would not find any proprietary as applied to the *planets*, properly so called: for there can be no allusion to the astronomical fact of their being naturally opaque bodies, as Bengel imagines. Many Commentators have supposed that the similitude is to be understood of teachers, who would enlighten others, and yet are doomed to darkness themselves: so Eeumenius, comparing the transformation into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14. But the context does not justify this. Rather should we say, these professing Christians, by their profession lights in the world, instead of letting that light shine on more and more into the perfect day, are drifting about in strange errors of doctrine and practice till it will be utterly extinguished in eternal darkness).

14, 15.] Prophecy of Enoch respecting them:—see below.—**Yea, and of these prophesied Enoch, seventh from Adam (**"mentioned to command the antiquity of the prophecy," Calvin. Possibly also the fact of seven

being the sacred number may have been in view, as Bengel: "The word is not without mystery, seeing that immunity from death and the sacred number concur." Several similar designations are quoted: e.g. Philo alleges Moses to have been the seventh generation from Abraham. A rabbinical writer on Numb. xxv. 12, says, "Phineas was the seventh progeny from Jacob our father"), **saying, Behold, the Lord** ("the name Jehovah [of which the Lord is the rendering] was already known in the time of Enoch," Bengel) **came** (the historic tense of prophecy) **among** (in, as surrounded by) **His holy myriads** (of angels: see Deut. xxxiii. 2: Zech. xiv. 5, Heb. xii. 22), **to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the impious concerning all their works of impiety which they impiously did, and concerning all the hard things which impious sinners spoke against Him.**—I have discussed in the Introduction the question as to the source of this citation, and its relation to the present apocryphal book of Enoch. I will only here set down the passage as it at present stands in De Sacy's version: "And He came with ten thousands of His holy ones, to hold judgment: on them, and destroy the impious, and fight with all carnal men for all things which sinners and impious men have done and wrought against Him."

16.] Continuation of the description, especially with reference to the concluding words of the prophecy.—**These are murmurers** (properly, they who within their teeth and without words blame another who displeases them. Murmurers against what, is not said: probably against the appointments and ordinances of God) **dissatisfied with their lot** (Philo uses the Greek word of the Israelites complaining in the wilderness), **walking according to their lusts** (this is closely connected with the preceding: it is their base desires craving satisfaction which make them querulous and discontented), **and their mouth speaketh great swelling things** (see 2 Pet. ii. 18 note), **admiring [men's] persons** (holding mere outward appearances, dignities, of men in admiration) **for the sake of advantage.**

17, 18.] Exhortation to remember how the Apostles forewarned them of these men.—**But ye, beloved** (see again below, ver. 20), **remember the words which were before spoken by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ** (this can hardly be cited as evidence on one side or the other on the question whether St. Jude himself was an Apostle. He *might* use the expression, being himself an Apostle: he is certainly more likely to have used it, not being one. According to the critical text, St. Peter uses the same expression, without the "*us*," 2 Pet. iii. 2: and whichever view is taken as to the genuineness or otherwise of 2 Peter, there could be no intention by such an expression to exclude either the real or the pretended St. Peter from the number of the Apostles), **that they told you** (whether by writing, or by word of mouth, does not appear: so that we cannot say, with Bengel, "hence we see that they to whom Jude is writing, had heard the other Apostles also.") It is worthy of remark that he does not say *they told us*, but *you*; hereby again not indeed making it certain that he included himself among the Apostles, but making it very uncertain, whether he intends to *exclude himself*) **that at the last of the time** (see notes on 2 Pet. iii. 8: Heb. i. 2: 1 Pet. i. 20: i. e., at the end of the world, in the last age of the Church) **there shall be scoffers** (men who sport with what is holy and good. The prophecy is contained in 2 Tim. iii. 1, 1 Tim. iv. 1, Acts xx. 29, and doubtless formed a constant subject of *viva voce* warning. 2 Pet. iii. 1, 2 can hardly be supposed to be referred to, for that place is, as this, a reminiscence of things before said by the Apostles, and nearly in the same words), **walking according to their own lusts of impieties** (so literally; indicating the direction, or perhaps the character of those desires. Compare the same words above, ver. 16).

19.] Last characteristics of these men. **These are they that separate** (or "are separating," viz. from the Church, having no real sympathy with the spirit of the Gospel:—that draw lines of distinction, by walking after their own desires, not in the path of the Church's obedience, thus separating both themselves from you, and you from themselves), **sensual** (we have no English word for the quality here implied in the Greek word *psychikos*; and our biblical psychology is, by this defect, entirely at fault. The **psyche** is the centre of the personal being, the "I" of each individual. It is in each man bound to the man's higher part, and to the body, man's lower part; drawn upwards by the one, downwards by the ether. He who gives himself up to the lower appetites, is *fleshly*: he who by communion of his *spirit* with God's Spirit is employed in the higher aims of his being, is *spiritual*. He who rests midway, thinking only of self and self's interests, whether animal or intellectual, is the **psychikos**, the selfish man, the man in whom the spirit is sunk and degraded into subordination to the subordinate **psyche**. In the lack of any adequate word, I have retained the "sensual" of the A.V., though the impression which it gives is a wrong one: "selfish")

would be as bad, for the **psychikos** may be an amiable and generous man; “animal” would be worse: “intellectual,” worse still. If the word were not so ill-looking in our language, “psychic” would be a great gain), **not having the spirit** (see above, not directly the Holy Spirit of God, but the higher spiritual life of man’s spirit in communion with the Holy Spirit. These men have not indeed ceased to have a spirit, as a part of their own tripartite nature: but they have ceased to possess it in any worthy sense: it is degraded beneath and under the power of the **psyche**, the personal life, so as to have no real vitality of its own).

20–23.] CONCLUDING EXHORTATION TO THE READERS: and a) vv. 20, 21, *as to their own spiritual life*.—**But ye, beloved** (resumed from ver. 17), **building up yourselves upon** (as a foundation) **your most holy faith** (the *faith* here is the foundation; viz. the *faith which is believed*, the object of faith. Elsewhere in Scripture, CHRIST is this foundation, see 1 Cor. ii. 11; which in fact comes to the same, for He is the Author and Finisher of our faith, the *alpha and omega*), **praying in the Holy Spirit** (as the means of thus building yourselves up. The expression is not found elsewhere, but is in strict analogy with Scripture, usage: compare “*speaking in the Spirit*,”—also Rom. viii. 26, Eph. vi. 18), **keep yourselves** (in the original, said of the one great life-long act to be accomplished by the *building up and praying*) **in the love of God** (within that region of peculiar love wherewith God regards all who are built up on the faith and sustained by prayer: **of God** being a subjective genitive, “God’s love,” not objective, the love towards God. The expression is very like “*abide in my love*,” John xv. 9, where “*I also loved you*” preceding fixes the meaning to be Christ’s love to them), **looking for** (present. participle, as in Tit. ii. 13, where see note. It is to be the habit of the life, as those other present participles, *building up and praying*) **the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ** (viz. that which He will shew at His coming. Huther remarks that *mercy*, more usually predicated of the Father, is in the addresses of the Pastoral Epistles, and of 2 John, attributed to the Father and Son jointly) **unto eternal life** (these words may be joined with **mercy**,—that mercy, whose issue shall be eternal life; or with **looking for**,—as the issue and aim of the expectation; or with **keep yourselves**,—as the final terminus of that watchful guarding. Perhaps the right choice between the three will be to combine the two last: for **keep yourselves** is subordinate and conditional to **looking for**: “keep yourselves... in expectation of... unto”). The direct and studied reference to the Blessed Trinity will not escape the reader.

b) vv. 22, 23.] *Exhortation as to their conduct with reference to the persons previously stigmatized in the Epistle.*—**And some indeed convict when contending with you** (or, “when separating from you.” These appear to be the only two meanings of the original word which suit the context.—This is the first class: that of those who oppose themselves, who must be convicted and down-argued. According to the commonly received text, the rendering will be, as A.V., “*of some have compassion, making a difference*,” viz., between them and the others); **but others save** (attempt to save; this, and not the absolute command, is implied in the original word), **snatching them from the fire** (the same passage in the prophets, Zech. iii. 1–3, which has already been before St. Jude’s mind in ver. 9, again furnishes him with the material of this figure. There we read, “*Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*” compare also Amos iv. 11. The **fire** is most probably not future eternal fire: but the present hell into which their corrupt doctrines and practices have cast them, not however without reference to its ending in fire eternal. This is the second class; including, perhaps, any over whom your influence extends, as younger members of the Church, &c., whom you can thus rescue by snatching them out of the fire of temptation and peril), **and others compassionate in fear** (on what account, is shewn by what follows: “*lest you yourselves should suffer pollution*.” This is the third class: consisting of those whom not falling in the way of so as personally to convict, nor having influence over so as to rescue, the believers could only compassionate [and on occasion given, lovingly help] as led away hopelessly to their ruin: but in shewing such compassion, they were to maintain a wholesome fear of their deadly error, for fear they themselves should become defiled by it.—The following clause is explanatory of “*in fear*”), **hating** (not, “seeing that ye hate,” nor “though ye hate:” the present participle simply falls under and expands the former clause, thus forming part of the command) **even the** (or, “*their*”) **garment which has received defilement from the flesh** (hating not merely fleshly pollution itself, but even the traces and outskirts of it; even that, be it what it may, which has its mark and stain upon it. On the sense, see Rev. iii. 4).

24, 25.] CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY, conceived in terms referring to their state of danger and necessity of divine upholding. **But** (this word, as in Rom. xvi. 25, closes off all other considerations and sums up all in this one. It is not at all given by the “*now*” of the A.V., which conveys strictly temporal idea to the hearer) **to Him that is able** (exactly thus, Rom. xvi. 25) **to keep you without falling, and to set [you] before-the-presence-of His glory** (which will be revealed when the Son of man shall come, *in His glory, and of His Father, and of the holy angels*, Luke ix. 26, in the “*manifestation of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ*.” Tit. ii. 18) **blameless** (see 1 Thess. iii. 13) **in** (element, in which they will be found) **great-rejoicing** (the word signifies the exuberance of triumphant joy: the corresponding verb occurs in 1 Pet. i. 6), **to the only God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord** (on the union of *God* with *Saviour*, see Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, §1. 34. Observe the qualification here), **be glory, majesty, might and power, before all time** (before the whole age, i.e., of the world. Thus we have eternity past), **and now** (thus, time present), and to all the ages (thus, eternity future).—**Amen** (the ordinary conclusion of a doxology: compare Rom. i. 15, 1 Pet. iv. 11 [and 2 Pet. iii, 18, where, as here, it stands at the end of the Epistle]).

REVELATION

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THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Revelation: Chapter 1

CHAP. I. 1–3.] SUPERSCRIPTION: in which the contents and Writer of the book are declared, and the importance of its subject indicated by a blessing on those who shall read and hear it.

The Revelation (**revelation**) imports the manifestation of holy mysteries by the enlightening of the leading faculties of the soul, either by divinely imparted dreams, or in a waking vision by divine illumination. Here, the word need not be taken in any but this its general sense, as in 2 Cor. xii. 1, where it is plural; the particular purpose of this revelation follows) **of Jesus Christ** (how is this genitive to be understood? Is our Lord the subject or the object? Clearly here the former: for it is not Christ who is here revealed, except in a remote sense: but Christ who reveals, as is plain in what follows), **which God** (the Father) **gave to Him** (Stern asks, “How are we to understand this? Is not Christ very God, of one essence with the Father from eternity? Did He not, by virtue of the omniscience of His divine nature, know as exactly as the Father, what should be the process of the world’s history, what the fate of the Church? What purpose was served by a revelation from God to Jesus?” He proceeds to say that the words cannot refer merely to the revelation as made to *us*, but are clearly against such an interpretation: and gives, at some length and very well, that which in one form or other all will accept as the true explanation, in accordance with John vii. 16, xiv. 10, xvii. 7, 8. The man Christ Jesus, even in His glorified state, receives from the Father, by his hypostatic union with Him, that revelation which by His Spirit He imparts to His Church. For, Acts i. 7, the times and seasons are kept by the Father in His own power: and of the day and the hour knoweth no man, not the angels in heaven, nor even the Son, but the Father only, Mark xiii. 32. I may observe, that the coincidence in statement of this deep point of doctrine between the Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse, is at least remarkable), **to shew** (is this infinitive of the purpose dependent on the verb **gave**, or on the substantive **revelation**? Is it the purpose of God in giving, or the purpose of the revelation in revealing, that is asserted? At all events, Heinrichs is wrong, who takes together, “*which God gave [empowered] Him to shew.*” But of the others, the construction with **gave** is the more probable, as being the more usual: “that He might shew,” &c. And the verb **shew** must not here be confined to its stricter meaning of shewing in vision: for then we must confine the reference of “*his servants*” to the Apocalyptic Seer alone: but must be taken in its wider sense of exhibiting as knowledge, informing of. So in Matt. xvi. 21) **to His** (*Christ’s*, most probably, as below in this verse, and ch. ii. 20: for thus the **He** is kept to the same subject throughout) **servants** (here meaning all Christians, not prophets only. ‘That John himself is one of these servants below, does not affect this general meaning) **what things must** (by the necessity of the divine decree: see Matt. xvii. 10, xxiv. 6, xxvi. 54al.) **come to pass shortly** (i. e. *before long*. ‘The context, the repetition below, “*for the time is at hand,*” and the parallel ch. xxii. 6, followed, ver. 7, by “*Lo, I come quickly,*” fix this meaning here, as distinguished from the other of ‘*swiftly,*’ which is also precluded by the form of construction in the original. This expression must not be urged to signify that the events of apocalyptic prophecy were to be close at hand: for we have a key to its meaning in Luke xviii. 8, where our Lord says, “*Shall not God avenge His elect, which cry unto Him day and night, even if He is long-suffering with them? I say unto you that He will avenge them shortly:*” where long delay is evidently implied. Hengstenberg, repudiates this, and says it is self-evident that these words can only be adduced here “by a wrong method of interpretation.” But surely the two cases are exactly parallel: and his strong language here, as elsewhere, proves nothing. His own interpretation of the words, natural as he seems to think it, is forced and unwarrantable. He (in common with many others) takes them to mean that the events spoken of would very soon *begin* to take place, The axe, he says, lay at the root of the Roman Empire when John wrote this, as it did at the root of the Persian Empire when Daniel wrote. But this interpretation is not borne out by the Greek. The words cannot signify “which must soon *begin* to come to pass,” but, “which, in their entirety, must soon come to pass.” So that we are driven to the very same sense of **shortly** as that in Luke xviii. above, viz. to *God’s speedy time*, though He seem to delay: in spite of the scorn which Hengstenberg pours on this meaning. His maxim, that a Prophet, speaking to men, must speak according to men’s ideas, is quite worthless, and may be confuted by any similar prophetic saying, even by the one which he brings in its favour, Hagg. ii. 7: and his complaint, that thus we make the Seer and even the Lord Himself like bad physicians who delude their patients with false hopes [so, in the main, Stern also], is unworthy of a Christian Expositor, after our Lord’s own plain use of the same method of speech again and again in His prophecies in the Gospels and in this book. It remains to observe, that these words cannot with any fairness be used as furnishing a guide to the interpretation of the prophecy. They are far rather to be regarded as a prophetic formula, common with Him to whom a thousand years are as one day, and used in order to teach us how short our time, and the time of this our world, is. See on the whole, Fbrard’s able note, and his remarks on the absurdity of Hengstenberg’s pressing the words in favour of his præterist. scheme); and **He** (*Jesus Christ*, not *God*, see ch. xxii. 16: the subject is changed, and the relative construction abandoned. So almost all Commentators) **signified [it] sending by His angel** (the Angel mentioned is the same who informs the Seer in chap. xvii. 1, 7, 15, xix. 9, xxi. 9, xxii. 1, 6, which latter place takes up this; ib. 8 ff.; and who is spoken of by our Lord ib. 16. It is remarkable that this angel does not appear as the imparter of the visions until ch. xvii. Some indeed, as Ewald, have fancied that they trace his presence in ch. Iv. 1 and throughout: but ch. XVII. 1 is too manifestly the introduction to a new appearance for this to be the case; and previously to that

the Seer receives his information from different persons. Our Lord Himself opens the Apocalyptic vision; but it is another voice which calls John up to the place of heavenly vision, ch. iv. 1. In vii. 13, one of the four and twenty elders speaks to him: in x. 8, it is the former voice again which addresses him, and in ib. 9, it is the angel who stands on the earth and the sea that gives him the book. Only in the great close of the prophecy, opening with ch. xvii., does one angel stand by him; referred to, as here, under the name **the angel**. In the visions of Daniel and Zechariah an angel mediated: Dan. viii. 16, ix. 20, x. 10 ff., Zech. i. 1, 19, al.) **to His servant John** (on the whole question of the writer of the book, see Introduction),

2.] who testified of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatsoever things he saw (these words must, in all fairness of construction, be referred to this present book, and not, as by some of the older Expositors, and recently by Ebrard, to the Gospel of St. John. The reasons given by Ebrard for such reference will not hold: see my Greek Test. Besides, the Evangelist distinctly tells us, John xx. 30, that in writing his Gospel, he did not set down **as much as he saw**, but only a portion of the things which Jesus did in the presence of His disciples, whereas in the case of this Revelation it was otherwise: he set down all which he saw, as a faithful transmitter of the Apocalyptic vision to the churches).

3.] Blessed is (or *be*, in the ordinary meaning of **blessed**: not necessarily referring on to eternal blessedness, as Hengst.) **he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy and observe the things written in it; for the time is near** (it can hardly be reasonably denied that in the terms, **he that readeth, and they that hear**, the Apostle had in his mind the one public reader and the many hearers. And so the great majority of Commentators. If the words are to be thus understood as above, they form at least a solemn rebuke to the most unjustifiable practice of the Church of England, which omits with one or two exceptions the whole of this book from her public readings. Not one word of the precious messages of the Spirit to the Churches is ever heard in the public services of a Church never weary of appealing to her *Scriptural* liturgies. Surely it is high time, that our timid rulers should gather courage to face their duties, and such an omission should be supplied.—Notice that not three classes of persons, but two only, are here indicated: **he** that reads, and **they** that hear and do.

those things which are written therein are the several exhortations to repentance, faith, patience, obedience, prayer, watchfulness, stedfastness, which are scattered up and down in the prophecy. The *time being near* makes the book of the more importance, and the blessedness of reading and observing it greater. The *nearness* spoken of is to be understood as alluding to the **shortly** of verse 1, which see. We know little now of relative nearness and distance in point of time: when the day of the Lord shall have opened our eyes to the true measure, we shall see, how near it always was).

CH. I. 4—III. 22] INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHECY, in the form of a *sevenfold Epistle* to the seven churches of Asia, And herein, vv. 4, 5, *address and greeting*, ending with *doxology*. [Ebrard, who seems to love singularity for its own sake, objects to the above arrangement, because the sevenfold epistle has not yet begun, and prefers calling this a dedicatory title to the whole book. But the other view is far simpler and better. The sevenfold Epistle is clearly before St. John's mind, and, full of the images of the vision which he had seen, he only interrupts it by solemn ejaculatory references to the glories of that vision and the sublime announcement of the Lord's coming, and then hastens on to introduce it by a prefatory account of his own circumstances when the Epistles were entrusted to him, and of the appearance of the Lord who thus entrusted them.] **John to the seven churches which are in Asia** (the form of address is exactly that in the Epistles of St. Paul: see Rom. i. 1 ff., 1 Cor. i. 1 ff., &c. That St. Paul, in Romans and elsewhere, is careful to designate himself and his office, and St. John introduces himself without any such designation, belongs doubtless in part to the individual character of the two Apostles, but is besides

a strong testimony that the John who here writes needed no such designation in the eyes of those to whom he was writing. See this, and other evidence as to the authorship, urged in the Introduction. See on the seven churches below, ver. 11. **Asia**, as always in the New Test., is the proconsular province so called. It consisted of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia: under Mysia and Lydia including Ionia and Æolia, and the neighbouring islands of the Ægean. It was called proconsular, because it was governed by one of consular rank, under the title of proconsul): **Grace be to you and peace** (so St. Paul in all his Epistles except the three pastoral) **from Him who is and who was and who is to come** (a paraphrase of the unspeakable name *Jeovah*, resembling the paraphrase

“I AM THAT I AM” in Exod. iii. 14, for which the Jerusalem Targum has, as here, “HE WHO WAS AND IS AND IS TO COME:” as has the Targum of Jonathan in Deut. xxxii. 39. It follows from what is remarked above, that the meaning of **is to come** is not here to be pressed as referring to any future *coming*. By doing so we should confuse the meaning

of the compound appellation, which evidently is all to be applied to the Father. By some **He which is** is supposed to mean the Father, **which was** the Son [*“in the beginning was the Word”*], and **which is to come** the Spirit, as ever proceeding forth and descending

on the Church), **and from the seven spirits which [are] before His throne** (Audreas takes these for the seven principal angels [ch. viii. 2]: so also many other Commentators. But this is highly improbable, as these angels are never *called* “**spirits**,” and as surely mere creatures, however exalted, would not be equalized with the Father and the Son as fountains of

grace. The common view is doubtless right, which regards the seven as *the energies of the Holy Spirit*:—“Thou the anointing Spirit art, Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.” but rather perhaps to be regarded as expressing His plenitude and perfection, than to be separately assigned as [but query?] in the lines following of the hymn Veni Creator Spiritus. The key to this expression, which is an anticipation of the visions afterwards to be related, is ch. v. 6, where see notes: as also on ch. iv. 5. The **seven** can hardly be entirely without allusion to the *seven churches*, and to the *sevenfold* imagery throughout. The number seven denotes completeness, and was much noted by the Jewish Commentators as occurring in the Old Test. The seven spirits betoken

the completeness and universality of working of God’s Holy Spirit, as the seven churches typify and indicate the whole church. The reference to Isa. xi. 2 is but lamely made out, there being there but *six* energies of the Spirit mentioned.

That to Zech. iv. 2, 10 is more to the point: see notes as above), **and from Jesus Christ** (as we have before had the Father and the Holy Spirit mentioned

as the sources of grace and peace, so now the Son, coming last, on account of that which is to follow respecting Him, which has respect to His threefold office of Prophet, King, and Priest: see however below), **the faithful witness** (see John xviii, 37, “*To this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.*” It is to the general mission of the Redeemer to bear witness to the truth, and not merely to the apocalyptic portion of His testimony which is to follow, that this title must be referred. This book [ver. 2] is *the testimony of Jesus Christ*: But the *title* reaches far wider. Embracing

as it does that *testimony* before Pontius Pilate, and indeed that of His whole life of witnessing to the truth, we can perhaps hardly say that it marks out his prophetic office with sufficient distinctness for us to believe it indicated here), **the first-born of the dead** (death is regarded as the womb of the earth, from which the resurrection is the birth: see note on Col. i. 18: and Acts ii, 24 note. The *firstfruits of them that sleep*, 1 Cor. xv. 20, is quite a different figure), **and the Ruler of the kings of the earth** (this kingly office of Christ is reached through his death and resurrection.

In Ps. lxxxix. 27, the combination of titles is much as here, “*I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.*” See also Isa. lv. 4. “That which the Tempter held forth to Jesus.. Matt. iv. 8, on condition of worshipping Him, He has now attained by the way of his humiliation

unto death; viz. victory over the world, John xvi. 33.” De Wette).—Now follows, consequent upon the glorious titles of Christ which have been enumerated, an ascription of praise to Him for his inestimable

love to us.—**Unto Him that loveth us** (the present tense includes in itself the past, “that lov ed us,” which is the feebler, as it is the more obvious reading.

It is His ever-abiding character,

that He loveth his own, John xiii. 1: out of that love sprang the mighty act of love which follows: but it did not exhaust

its infinite depth: it endures now, as then. The waiting till He become, in the unfolding of the Father’s purposes, the acknowledged Head over his Church, is in reality as great a proof of that love now, as the Cross was then) **and washed** (or, **loosed**: the difference between the two words in Greek is only that of one letter) **us from our sins in His blood** (the past tense here points to a definite event, viz. his sacrifice of Himself. In such an image as this, which occurs again ch. vii. 14, we have enwrapped together the double virtue of the atoning blood of Christ in justification, the deliverance

from the guilt of sin, and sanctification,

the deliverance from the power of sin: the forensic and the inherent purity,

of both which it is the efficient medium: of the former by its application in faith, of the latter by such faith, in its power, uniting us to Him who is filled with the Spirit of holiness. See 1 John i. 7, and note),

6.] and he made [us] a kingdom (viz. the kingdom of God or of heaven, so much spoken of by our Lord Himself and his Apostles: consisting of those who are His, and consummated at His glorious coming. This kingdom is one in which His saints will themselves reign: see the parallel place ch. v. 10, where “*and they shall reign upon the earth*” is added: and Dan. vii. 27: but above all the place which is here referred to, Exod. xix. 6, “*But ye shall be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation*”(1 Pet. ii. 9)], **priests** (the **kingdom** was the collective description: **priests** is the individual designation. See on the union of the two characters in the individual Christian, the note on 1 Pet. ii. 9) **to** (as *belonging to*; the Father being the ultimate object of reference, as His will is the origin, and His glory the result, of all that is brought about by the mediatorial work of Christ) **God and His Father, to Him be** (or, *is, belongs*: the like ambiguity is found in all doxological sentences) **the glory and the**

might unto the ages (i. e. for ever. See note on Gal. i. 5): **Amen.** 7, 8.] *A solemn announcement of the coming of Christ, and declaration, by way of ratification, of the majesty and omni-potence of God [see below].* **Behold He** (the Person last spoken of: the subject being continued from the preceding verses) **cometh with the clouds** (the clouds, viz. of heaven: so expressed in Dan. vii. 13, and Mark xiv. 62: compare “*in the cloud*,” ch. xi. 12), **and every eye shall see Him** (by a well-known figure, not merely Hebraistic but common to all tongues, the acting member is said to do that which the man does by its means. This is to be understood of the whole human race, risen and summoned before Him), **and** (among them: the **and** does not couple a separate class, but selects a prominent one) **they**

which (said of the whole class: almost equivalent to “whoever:” “all they, who”) **pierced Him** (see John xix. 36 f. and note. As there St. John evidently shews what a deep impression the whole circumstance here referred to produced on his own mind, so it is remarkable here that he should again take up the prophecy of Zechariah [xii. 10] which he there cites, and speak of it as fulfilled. That this should be so, and that it should be done with the same word **pierced him**, not found in the Septuagint version of the passage, is a strong presumption that the Gospel and the Apocalypse were written by the same person. The persons intended in this expression are beyond doubt those to whom our Lord prophesied in like terms, Matt. xxvi. 64; viz. those who were His murderers, whether the Jews who delivered Him to be crucified, or the Romans, who actually inflicted His death. That the meaning must not here be generalized

to signify all who have by their sins crucified the Son of God afresh, is plain from the consideration that this class are taken out from among that indicated by “*every eye shall see Him*” which precedes, whereas on that supposition

they would be identical with it; for we all have pierced Him in this sense), **and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn at Him** (i. e. their mourning shall be directed towards Him as its object: in fear for themselves in regard to the consequences of His coming.

The prophecy is in allusion to Matt. xxiv. 30; and its sense, that all, even the holiest of men, shall mourn at the visible approach of that day. But as Bengel well remarks, there will be then two causes of mourning: *hostile terror*, and *penitential terror*. The former will prevail in the impenitent and careless world; the latter even in the comforted and rejoicing church. The holiest saint, when that Presence is manifested, in the midst of his “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us,” will personally feel with St. Peter, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” The whole is an adaptation and amplification of the words of Zechariah xii. 10). **Yea, Amen** (both these words are used in 2 Cor. i. 20 as forms of ratification. Both together answer to the “Thus saith the Lord” of the prophets. Andreas remarks, that the **Yea** is according to the Greek usage, to shew the unchangeableness of the things said, the **Amen** according to the Hebrew usage, assuring us that no obstacle shall intervene so as to hinder their fulfilment). **I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, He that is and that was and that is to come, the Almighty** (by whom are these words spoken? Certainly as they here stand, they must be understood as uttered by the Eternal Father. And similarly we find Him that sitteth on the throne speaking in ch. xxi. 5 ff. In our ver. 17, and in ch. xxii. 13, it is our Lord who speaks. Nor need we be surprised, that He who is of one essence with the Father should assert of Himself the same eternal being as the Father. This need not lead us to force the reference of any passage, but each must be ruled by considerations of its own context, Schöttgen gives examples of the Rabbinical usage of “from Aleph even to Tau,” to signify “completely,” “entirely:” and of the word A-th being a name of the glory of God, because it comprehends all the letters.

The title Almighty answers in the Septuagint version of the Old Test. to the Hebr. *Jehovah Sabaoth*, also to *Shaddai*).

9–20.] Introduction to the Epistles. Appearance of our Lord to St. John, and command to write what he saw, and to send it to the seven churches.

9.] Description of the Writer, and of the place where the Revelation was seen. **I John** (so again ch. xxii. 8: so Daniel, viii. 1, ix. 2, x. 2) **your brother** (no inference can be drawn against the apostleship of the Writer from this his designation of himself. Indeed from his entire silence respecting himself in his Gospel, we may well believe that here, where mention of his name was absolutely required, it would be introduced thus humbly and unobtrusively), **and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance [or, patience] in Jesus** (the construction and arrangement are peculiar. The conjunction of these terms seems to be made to express, a partaker, as in the kingdom, so in the tribulation and endurance which are in and by Christ: but the insertion of **kingdom** between **tribulation** and **endurance** is startling. Probably, the tribulation brings in the kingdom [Acts xiv. 22], and then as a corrective to the idea that the kingdom in its blessed fulness was yet present, the endurance is subjoined. “John introduces three portions of inheritances in which he declares himself partaker. But the middle one of these, i.e. the kingdom, cannot be possessed, unless with the exercise of tribulation on the one side, and the defence of patience on the other.” Ambrose Ansbert [8th century]), **was (found myself) in the island which is called Patmos** (see Introduction, §ii. par. 4) **on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus** (the substantives form the same expression as occurred before, ver. 2, where see note. There they indicated *this* portion of the divine word and testimony, of which John was a faithful reporter. Whether their meaning is the same here, will depend partly on what sense we assign to

“on account of.” In St. Paul’s usage, it would here signify *for the sake of*, i.e. for the purpose of receiving: so that the Apostle would thus have gone to Patmos by special revelation in order to receive this revelation. Again, keeping to this meaning, these words may mean, that he had visited Patmos in pursuance of, for the purposes of, his ordinary apostolic employment, which might well be designated by these substantives. And such perhaps would have been our acceptation of the words, but that three objections intervene. 1) From what has preceded in this verse, a strong impression remains on the mind that St. John wrote this in a season of tribulation and persecution. Why should he throw over his address this tinge of suffering given by the tribulation and patience, if this were not the case? 2) The usage of our Writer himself in two passages where he speaks of death by persecution [ch. vi. 9, xx. 4] shews that with him **on account of** [or, **for**] in this connexion is “*because of*,” “*in consequence of*.” And St. John’s own, usage is a better guide in St. John’s writings, than that of St. Paul. Besides which, Origen’s Greek ear found no offence in this usage, for he incorporated it into his own sentence,... “He condemned John in his testimony, on account of the word of truth, to the island Patmos.” 3) An early patristic tradition relates that St. John was banished to Patmos. See the authorities in the Introduction, and the question discussed, whether we are justified in ascribing this tradition solely to our present passage. These considerations, mainly those arising from the passage itself, compel us, I believe, to understand the words of an exile in Patmos).

10, 11.] I was (“Je me trouvais:” not merely “*I was*,” but “*I became*”) **in the Spirit** (i. e. in a state of spiritual ecstasy or trance, becoming thereby receptive of the vision or revelation to follow. That this is the meaning is distinctly shewn by the same phrase occurring in ch. iv. 2: where after seeing the door open in heaven, and hearing the “*Come up hither,*” he adds, “*immediately I became in the Spirit.*” See also ch. xxi. 10. Ebrard well says, “Connexion with surrounding objects through the senses is suspended, and a connexion with the invisible world established.” On the attempt made by some to give the words a different meaning,

see below) **on the Lord’s day** (i. e. on the first day of the week, kept by the Christian church as the weekly festival of the Lord’s resurrection. On any probable hypothesis of the date of this book, this is the earliest mention of the day by this name. This circumstance, coupled with a bias in favour of a peculiar method of interpretation, has led certain modern interpreters,

of whom, as far as I know, Wetstein was the first, to interpret the words of the day of *the Lord’s coming*. So Züllig, and in our own country, Drs. S.R. Maitland and Todd. But 1) the difficulty of the thus early occurrence of this term, “*the Lord’s day,*” is no real one. Dr. Maitland says [see Todd’s Lectures

on the Apoc., Note B, p. 295], “I know of nothing in the Scripture or in the works of the ante-Nicene Fathers on which to ground such an assumption.” To this we may answer, that the extent of Dr. Maitland’s knowledge of the ante-Nicene Fathers does not, happily for us, decide the question: as the expression occurs repeatedly

in those very Fathers: see the citations in my Greek Test. Mr. Elliott, Hor. Apoc. iv. 367 note, has pointed out that the primitive Syriac version renders 1 Cor. xi. 20, “not as befitteth the day of the Lord ye eat and drink,” which is an interesting proof of the early usage. This chronological objection being disposed of, and the matter 2) taken on its own merits,

it really is astonishing how any even moderate Greek scholars can persuade themselves that the words can mean that which these Commentators maintain. See this shewn in my Greek Test.): **and I heard a voice** (see Ezek. iii. 12) **behind me** (Isa. xxx. 21), **great as of a trumpet, saying** (the trumpet is the instrument of festal proclamation, Numb. x. 10; John ii. 15, &c.: accompanies divine manifestations,

Exod. xix. 19 f.; Joel ii. 1: Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Thess. iv. 16. The similarity to the sound of the trumpet here was it the loudness and clearness of the voice: see also ch. iv. 1. From this latter it appears

that this voice was not that of our Lord, but of one who there also spoke to the Apostle. Düsterdieck remarks that **behind me** leaves an indefiniteness as to the speaker), **What thou seest** (the present

carries on the action through the vision now opening,— “*what thou art seeing*”)

write (forthwith) **into a book, and send to the seven churches, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamus, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea** (for all particulars

respecting these churches, see the Introduction,§ii.).

12–20.] THE VISION, *in which our Lord appears to St. John, and the command is repeated.* This vision is the introduction, not only to the messages to the churches, but to the whole book: see further on ver. 19.

12.] And I turned about to see the voice which was speaking with me (the voice, the acting energy, being used to signify

the person whose voice it was): **and when I had turned about I saw seven golden candlesticks** (the seven golden candlesticks are [united in one] part of the furniture of the tabernacle, Exod. xxv. 31 ff. Again, in Zech. iv. 2. 11, we have the “*candlestick, all of gold,*” with its seven lamps, Here there are seven separate candlesticks, typifying, as that *one*, the entire church, but now no longer bound together in one outward unity and one place. Each local church has now its candlestick, to be retained or removed from its place according to its own works):

13.] and in the midst of the candlesticks one like to the Son of Man (i. e. to Christ: see John v. 27: not simply, “*to a son of man*”), **clothed in a garment reaching to the feet** (see the reff. in Daniel and Ezekiel, which the description and even the diction closely resemble. This long garment was a sign of high rank or office. Arethas supposes the dress to be that of the Melchisedek-priesthood; but without reason. See Eccl. vii. 8, “If thou followest righteousness, thou shalt obtain her, and *put her on, as a glorious long robe*”), **and girt round at the breasts with a golden girdle** (in Dan. x. 5, Gabriel has his *loins* girt with gold of Uphaz. Some suppose a distinction—the girding round the loins betokening activity, while that round the breast is a sign of repose. But Hengstenberg well observes that this would hardly apply: for Christ is here in fulness of energy as ruler and orderer of His Church. Ebrard seems nearer the truth in regarding the higher girding as a sign of majesty. But perhaps after all the point is not to be pressed; for the angels in ch. xv. 6 are also girt *round the breasts*. Nor is the golden girdle distinctive of regal majesty: for this they also bear, ibid.):

14.] and his head and his hairs [were] white like white wool, as snow (by the **head** is perhaps indicated the forehead; not the face, which is afterwards described. It is only in colour, not in material, that His hair is compared to white wool; and the words, **as snow**, are afterwards added to impress this still more. The whiteness signifies *purity* and *glory*, not as Augustine and others think, *eternity*, either here or in Dan. vii. 9), **and his eyes as a flame of fire** (so Dan. x. 6: representing perhaps, as Vitringa says, “the perspicacity of the divine and pure mind, piercing all secrets.”) This may be, notwithstanding that Gabriel has eyes like lamps of fire in Daniel. Though *omniscience* could not be ascribed to him, the figure might be relatively consistent. But it is perhaps better to consider these physical details rather as in themselves characteristic, than as emblematic of attributes lying beneath them. The “fiery eye” among the sons of men, is indicative of energy and power of command: so also in the Son of man Himself):

15.] and his feet were like to chalcolibanus (so literally. This word has defeated all the ingenuity of Commentators hitherto. I have in my Greek Testament discussed the various conjectures, which mostly vary between a *kind of brass* and a *species of incense*), **as if they had been burnt in a furnace** (and so red-hot and glowing): **and his voice as the voice of many waters** (Ebrard sees an allusion to the quiet and majestic sound of the sea, appealing to ch. xvii. 1 and xiii. 1; but, as Düsterdieck remarks, there seems to be no such allusion here, but only to the *power* of the voice as resembling the rushing

of many waters. So Dan. x. 6; Ezek. xlvi. 2, where the same expression is found, i. 24, where the sound of the wings of the creatures is “*as the noise of great water*”).

16.] And having (St. John takes up the description from time to time irrespective of the construction, as if with separate strokes of the pencil) **in his right hand seven stars** (not *on* his right hand, as a number of jewelled rings, but *in* his right hand, as a wreath or garland, held in it. De Wette well remarks that *this*, which is the more natural rendering, is also required by the symbolism. If the seven churches which the seven stars symbolize, were *on* the Lord’s hand as rings, they would seem to be serving (adorning?) Him, and not to be the objects of his action: but now that He *holds them in* his hand, He appears as their Guardian, their Provider, their Nourisher: and, we may add, their Possessor, who brings them out and puts them forth to be seen when He pleases. His universal Church would hardly be thus represented, but only a portion of it which it pleases Him to take in his hand and hold forth as representing the rest): **and out of his mouth a two-edged sharp sword going forth** (compare Isa. xi. 4, xlvi, 2: also our ch. ii. 16, and Wisd. xviii. 15. The same figure occurs with reference to *men* in Ps. lv. 21, lvii. 4, lix. 7: and examples of it are given from the Rabbinical writings. The thing signified may perhaps be as in 2 Thess. ii. 8, and in ch. xix. 21; but clearly we must not exclude the attributes of the *word of God*, Heb. iv. 12, Eph. vi. 17. And this all the more, inasmuch as 1) here the Lord is represented not as taking vengeance on his enemies, but as speaking with his own, both in the way of comforting and of threatening: and 2) in ch. xix. 21, where this very sword is again alluded to as slaying the Lord’s enemies, His title as sitting upon the horse is “*the word of God*”): **and his countenance** (not *general appearance*). Had this been so, how should the Apostle have noted the details just mentioned? for the whole figure of our Lord would have been too dazzling for him to contemplate. It is natural that after describing the eyes, and that which proceeded from the mouth, he should give the general effect of the countenance) **as the sun shineth in his strength** (see Judges v. 31:—that is, when unclouded and in full power: not necessarily at midday, but at any time. The construction is again broken: “*as the sun shining*” would be the regular connexion).

17, 18.] And when I saw Him, I fell at his feet as dead (the effect of the divine appearance: see Exod. xxxiii. 20; Job xlvi. 6; Isa. vi. 5; Ezek. i. 28; Dan. viii. 17 ff., x. 7 ff. There is no discrepancy in this bodily action with the spiritual nature of the vision, as De Wette thinks, either here or in the places where similar physical effects are described. ch. v. 4, xix. 10, xxii. 8 [Dan. vii. 15]. Düsterdieck well remarks in reply, that the *being in the Spirit* does not supersede existence in the body. Just as dreamers express their bodily feelings by physical acts, e.g. by starting or weeping, so might St. John while in this ecstasy: see

Acts ix. 3). **And he placed his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not** (see Dan. x. 12, Luke i. 13, 30, ii. 10, Matt. xvii. 7, Mark xvi. 6. These places, and the whole character of our Lord's words, shew that the Apostle's falling down as dead was purely from fear, not, as Ebrard imagines, as an expression of ecstatic love); **I am the first and the last** (see ver. 11 above: this is the meaning here,

not as the semi-Socinian Commentators

explain it, "*both highest in dignity and also most humiliated:*" it is the eternity of God which is expressed—of Him who is before all and after all, from and to everlasting), **and the living One** (not the *life-giving* One, however true the fact may be; nor here signifying *alive from the dead*; but it is the well-known attribute of God, the Eternal, not in bare duration, but in personal life. The *giving* life is *included*,

but the word expresses far more. The A.V. is wrong in connecting these words with those that follow); **and I was** (*I became*: it was a state which I passed into) **dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore** (see Rom. vi. 9, Acts xiii. 34.

am alive expresses more emphatically than would the simple verb "*live*," the residence and effluence of life. By this mention of His own death and revival, the Lord reassures His Apostle. He is not only the living One in His majesty, but He has passed through death as one of us, and is come to confer life even in and through death); **and I have the keys of death and of Hades** (not, of *hell*: the two words should never be confounded. I can bring up from death, yea even from the mysterious

place of the spirits of the departed. The figure of the keys is often used in this book; see ch. iii. 7: ix. 1: xx. 1. The Targum of Jonathan on Deut. xxviii. 12 says, "There are four keys in the hand of the Lord... the key of life, of the tombs, of food, and of rain" We have the *gates* of death as opposed to the gates of the daughter of Zion, Ps. ix. 14; cf. also Job xxxviii. 17; and the gates of Hadés, Matt. xvi. 16, Isa. xxxviii. 10).

19.] Write therefore (‘because I have vouchsafed thee this vision,—I whose majesty is such, and whose manifested loving-kindness to thee.’ ‘The connexion is better thus than with ver. 11, as some: “Now that thy fear is over, write what I bade thee.” But it is very doubtful whether ver. 11 is spoken by our Lord at all: see there) **t he things which thou sawest** (just now: the vision which was but now vouchsafed thee), **and what things they are** (two meanings of the words thus rendered are possible. 1) ‘*the things which are*,’ viz. which exist at the present time. This has been taken by many Commentators, ancient and modern. 2) as above, “*what things they [the things which thou sawest] are*,” i.e. *signify*: so some of the ancients and moderns. Both on account of the construction in the original [see my Greek Test.], and because the verb **are**, unquestionably in this meaning of *signify*, occurs twice in the next verse, I have no hesitation in taking this latter meaning, as given above), **and the things which are about to happen after these** (viz. after the things which thou sawest: the next vision, beginning with ch. iv., which itself opens with “*after these things I saw*.” I would take the verb **be** in the sense of happening, not in the wide ages of history, but in *apocalyptic vision*: seeing that, **these** things meaning “*the things which thou sawest*,” *a present vision*, **the things which shall be** will by analogy mean the things which shall succeed these, i.e. a future vision. Notice, it is not “*the things which must come to pass*,” as in ver. 1: not the necessity of prophecy, but only the sequence of things seen);

20.] the mystery (i. e. the secret signification) **of the seven stars which thou sawest upon** (held in, and so standing over, as a wreath) **my right hand, and the seven candlesticks of gold** (elliptic construction for ‘*and the mystery of the seven candlesticks*,’

&c.).—**The seven stars are** (signify) [**the] angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches** (the import of the **angels** has been much disputed. Very many both ancient and modern Commentators take them for the *presiding presbyters*, or *bishops*, of the churches. This view is variously supported. It derives probability from the analogy of the vision itself, in which, seeing that the candelabra represent the churches themselves, existing vessels containing much light, the stars, concentrated sparks of light, should represent some actually existing persons in or connected with the churches. Again it is supported by our finding that throughout the seven Epistles the angel is treated as representing and responsible for the particular church. But before we pass on to the other great section of interpretation, we may at once dismiss those forms of this one which make the *angel* the *ideal representative*

of the governing body, or an *ideal messenger* from the church, or an anticipatory idea of the office of Bishop, not yet instituted: or, in short, any idealism at all. As the *church* is an objective reality, so must the *angel* be, of whatever kind. This consideration will also affect the current of interpretation which takes the angels to be *the churches themselves*. The second line of interpretation is that which regards them as *angels*, in some way representing the churches. In favour of this is 1) the constant usage of this book, in which the word **angel** occurs only in this sense: 2) the further usage of this book, in which we have, ch. xvi. 4, the *angel of the waters* introduced without any explanation, who can be none other than the angel presiding over the waters: 3) the expression of our Lord Himself, Matt. xviii. 10, “*their angels in heaven do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven*,” coupled with that expressed by the church in the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, Acts xii. 15, with regard to their disbelief of Peter standing at the door, “*it is his angel*” both asserting the doctrine that

angels are allotted to persons, and are regarded as representing them: a subject full of mystery, and requiring circumspect treatment, but by no means to be put aside, as is commonly done. 4) The extension of this from individuals to nations in the book of Daniel, which is so often the key to apocalyptic interpretation. See Dan. x. 21, xii. 1: an analogy according to which there might well be angels not only of individuals,

but of churches. 5) The fact that throughout these Epistles, nothing is ever addressed individually as to a teacher, but as to some one person reflecting as it were the complexion and fortunes of the church in a way in which no mere human teacher or ruler could. That there is no exception to this in ch. ii. 20, see maintained in note there. 6) To the objection advanced in the comment of Arethas, that "*the presiding angel had not sinned*, so as to want exhorting to repent, &c.," the reply may be made, with advantage to this interpretation,

that there evidently is revealed to us a mysterious connexion between ministering angels and those to whom they minister,

by which the former in some way are tinged by the fates and fortunes of the latter. E.g. in our Lord's saying cited above, the place of dignity there asserted of the angels of the little children is unquestionably

connected with the character of those whose angels they are: and it cannot be following out such a revelation too far to say that, if some of the holy angels are thus and for this reason advanced

to honour, others may be similarly, and for the opposite reason, placed in less honour and relatively disgraced. That this idea is found expressed in the Rabbinical

writings is a mark of the further development of the truth, which seems to have been first revealed to Daniel. 7) It will be perceived that this interpretation does not lie under any of the objections stated above as idealizing that which ought to be an objective reality. For it contemplates

the angels of the churches as really existent, not as ideal beings. It is only when this latter is the case, that those objections can apply. 8) It will also be perceived,

that both the circumstances, which were cited as making for the former interpretation,

tell equally for this: viz. a) that just noticed, the actual existence of these persons in or belonging to the churches, and b) the fact that in the Epistles the angel is treated as representing and responsible

for the particular church.

So that I cannot but regard this second view as far the more likely one. It has been taken by Origen, Jerome, and several more of the ancients, and by many among the moderns.

The attempt to defend the interpretation of *angels* as bishops by the analogy of the *legate of the congregation*, in the synagogue, appears to be futile, inasmuch as that officer held quite an inferior place, in no way corresponding to a bishop, or any kind of president of the church.

As regards the symbolism, *stars* are the symbols of the angels of the churches, inasmuch as angels are beings of light, Heb. i. 7 [from Ps. civ. 4], where see note; Job xxxviii. 4, where they are called the morning stars. The same symbolism is used in the prophets of Lucifer, the daystar, the son of the morning, Isa. xiv. 12 ff., who would exalt his throne above the stars of God, ib. ver. 13; Rev. xii. 4, 9. See also Luke x. 18. That stars are also used to symbolize earthly authorities, is what might be expected from the very nature of the symbol, and should never have been alleged here as a reason against the literal interpretation of *angels*.

The churches themselves are represented by candlesticks, agreeably with the universal symbolism both of the prophetic and evangelic Scriptures. Compare Prov. iv. 18; Isa. lx. 1, 3; Matt. v. 14, 16; Luke xii. 35; Phil. ii. 15).

Revelation: Chapter 2

CH. II. 1—III. 22.] THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES. Views have considerably differed respecting the character of these Epistles, whether they are to be regarded as simply historical, or historico-prophetic, or simply

prophetic. The point on which all, I presume, will be agreed is, that the words contained in these Epistles are applicable to and intended for the guidance, warning, and encouragement of the whole Church Catholic, and its several parts, throughout all time. The differing interpretations will here be only briefly alluded to. One account of them will be found in Vitringa's (Latin) Commentary, pp. 27–58: and (but scantily, as most interpreters pass over this portion of the book slightly) in the introductions to the principal commentaries. See also Abp. Trench's Appendix to his Commentary on the Seven Epistles, pp. 209–225.

Before commenting on each individual Epistle, I would notice the similar construction of all. This may be thus described. Each Epistle contains, 1. A command, to write to the angel of the particular church. 2. A sublime title of our Lord, taken for the most part from the imagery of the preceding vision. 3. An address to the angel of the church, always commencing with *I know*, introducing a statement of its present circumstances: continuing with an exhortation either to repentance or to constancy; and ending with a prophetic announcement, mostly respecting what shall be at the Lord's coming. 4. A promise made to "*him that overcometh*," generally accompanied with a solemn call to earnest attention, "*He that hath an ear, &c.*"

1-7.]—THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS. **To the angel of the church in Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth fast** (compare ch. ii. 25, iii. 11) **the seven stars in his right hand, He that walketh in the midst of the seven candlesticks of gold** (assertions of Christ's being the Lord, the Governor and the Upholder of His Church, agreeably to the vision of ch. i.: coming in suitably in this first Epistle, as beginning the complete number): **I know** (am aware of: not as some explain it, *approve*. The context determines this to be the fact here, but not this word. The *works* might be *bad* ones, see John iii. 19) **thy works** (so in all the Epistles, except those to Smyrna and Pergamus), **and thy labour** (1 Cor. iii. 8, xv. 58, the same word), **and endurance (labour and endurance [or, patience])** form the active and the passive sides of the energizing Christian life. The two are explanatory, in fact, of **works**; see 1 Cor. xv. 58: these being the resulting fruits of **labour and patience**,

see ch. xiv. 13), **and that thou canst not bear wicked persons** (these are here regarded as a burden, an incubus, which the Ephesian church had thrown off. The assertion is as yet general: it is particularized in the next clause), **and didst try** (make experiment of) **those who say that they are apostles, and are not, and didst find them false** (this is deeply interesting in connexion with St. Paul's prophetic caution, Acts xx. 28–30. That which he foretold had come to pass, but they had profited by his apostolic warning): **and hadst endurance, and didst bear** (them, while trying them: or perhaps the verb is used absolutely) **for my Name, and hast not been weary. Howbeit I have** (nothing need be supplied: the following clause is the object to the verb "*I have*") **against thee that thou hast left** (deserted; or let go) **thy love which was at first** (towards whom? Arethas understands *charity to thy neighbours*. Grotius similarly, "and others very variously. But there can I think be little question that the language is *conjugal*, and the love, as Ambrose Ansbert ["thou hast cast away the affection of a chaste spouse"], and others,—the first fervent chaste and pure love of the newly-wedded bride: see Jer. ii. 2.

In what particular the Ephesian church had left her first love, is not stated. Perhaps, as Ansbert says, "she was excited with the love of this world:" or, seeing that it is negative, rather than positive delinquency which is blamed, the love of first conversion had waxed cold, and given place to a lifeless and formal orthodoxy). **Remember therefore whence thou hast fallen** (the first fervour of love is regarded as a height, from which the church had declined), **and repent** (quickly and effectually, as the tense in the original implies), **and do the first works** (the works which sprung from that thy first love: those resume); **but if not, I [will] come to thee** (not Christ's final coming, but his coming in special judgment is here indicated), **and will move thy candlestick out of its place** (i. e. will make thee cease to be a church: see the fulfilment noticed in Introd., §iii. par. 7), **if thou do not repent** (shalt not have repented; i.e. by the speedy time indicated in the previous command).

6.] Notwithstanding, this thou hast (this one thing: there is no need to supply "*good*" or the like: of what sort *this one thing* is, is explained by what follows. We may notice the tender compassion of our blessed Lord, who, in his blame of a falling church, yet selects for praise one particular in which His mind is yet retained. This is for our comfort: but let us not forget that it is for our imitation also. "He in the midst of painful matters inserts encouraging ones, lest the church should be swallowed up by overmuch sorrow." Arethas [10th century]),

that thou hatest the works ("he says not, the Nicolaitans themselves, but their works: because the persons are to be loved in charity, but their vices had in detestation." Lyra. It would have been well for the church, had this always been remembered. **the works**, see below, must be referred to the moral delinquencies of this sect) **of the Nicolaitans** (there has been much dispute who these were. The prevailing opinion among the fathers was, that they were a sect founded by Nicolaus the proselyte of Antioch, one of the seven deacons. But there early becomes evident a desire to vindicate Nicolaus the deacon from the opprobrium of having been the founder of such a sect; and in consequence we soon find another Nicolaus substituted for the deacon of that name. An apocryphal Acts of the Apostles speaks of a Corinthian of this name, infamous for licentious practices. We come now to the second principal view with regard to this sect, which supposes their name to be symbolic, and Nicolaus to be the Greek rendering of Balaam, and to mean, "*He ruined, or absorbed the people.*" Consequently the name Nicolaitans is said to be equivalent to Balaamites, as is also inferred from ver. 14. This view seems first to have been broached by Heumann in 1712, and since then has been the prevailing one. But in the first place, the names are by no means parallel; and next, the view derives no support from ver. 14 f., where the followers of Balaam are distinct from the Nicolaitans: see

note there. And besides, there is no sort of reason for interpreting the name otherwise than historically. It occurs in a passage indicating simple matters of historical fact, just as the name Antipas does in ver. 13. If we do not gain trustworthy accounts of the sect from elsewhere, why not allow for the gulf which separates the history of the apostolic from that of the post-apostolic period, and be content with what we know of them from these two passages? There is nothing repugnant to verisimilitude in the report mentioned by the Fathers, that Nicolaus fell into impurities; nor need all of those who were chosen to aid the Apostles in distributing alms, have been even to the end of their lives spotless and infallible. At least it may be enough for us to believe that possible of one of them, which the post-apostolic Fathers did not hesitate to receive), **which I also hate** (this strong expression in the mouth of our Lord unquestionably points at deeds of abomination and impurity: compare

Isa. lxi. 8; Jer. xliv. 4; Amos v. 21; Zech. viii. 17).

7.] Solemn conclusion of the Epistle. **He that hath an ear** (no fanciful distinction must be imagined between the singular, and the plural which is found in the Gospels [Matt. xi. 15, xiii. 9, &c.]. We have precisely the same use of the singular in Matt. x. 27, where a distinction will hardly be maintained), **let him hear what the Spirit** (speaking in its fulness, through Him to whom it is given without measure, to John who was *in the Spirit*, in a state of spiritual ecstasy and receptivity: compare John xvi. 13) **saith to the churches** (Ebrard well notices that not a colon [or semi-colon, as in A.V.], but a full stop must be put here, as indeed might be shewn from the way in which the proclamation is repeated in ver. 29 and in ch. iii. 6, 13, 22. It directs attention, not to that which follows only, but to the whole contents of the seven Epistles), **To him that conquereth** (the verb is absolute, without any object expressed. So of Christ Himself in ch. iii. 21) **I will give to him** (so literally: the personal pronoun is repeated both idiomatically and for emphasis) **to eat** (i. e. I will permit him to eat: not in the ordinary sense of *giving to eat*: see ch. iii. 21) **of [the fruit of] the tree** (see Gen. ii. 9, from which the words come: and to suit which apparently the words *in the midst of* have been substituted for *in*) **of life, which is in the paradise of God** (the way to which tree was closed up after man's sin, Gen. iii. 24. The promise, and its expression

are in the closest connexion with our Lord's discourse in John vi., as will be seen by comparing Gen. iii. 22. But we need not therefore say that Christ *is* the tree of life here, nor confuse the figure by introducing one which in its character is distinct from it. Still less is the tree to be interpreted as being the Holy Spirit. See, for the imagery, ch. xxii. 2, 14, 19. The words **of God**, as following *paradise*, come from Ezek. xxviii. 13, and set forth the holiness and glory of that paradise, as consisting in God's dwelling and delighting in it).

8-11.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA. **And to the angel of the church in Smyrna** (in accordance with the idea of the angel representing the bishop, many of the ancient Commentators have inferred that Polycarp must have been here addressed. Whether this were chronologically possible, must depend on the date which we assign to the writing of the Apocalypse. He was martyred in A.D. 168, 86 years after his conversion) **write; These things saith the first and the last, which was [became] dead and revived** (see ch. i. 17, 18. The words here seem to point on to the promise in verses 10, 11): **I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty** (in outward wealth, arising probably from the *tribulation*, by the despoiling of the goods of the Christians); **nevertheless thou art rich** (spiritually; see 2 Cor. vi. 10, ch. iii. 18, and James ii. 5): **and** (I know) **thy calumny from** (arising from) **those who profess themselves to be Jews, and they are not, but [are] Satan's synagogue** (these slanderers were in all probability actually Jews by birth, but not [see Rom. ii. 28; Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 33; 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 4 ff.] in spiritual reality; the same who every where, in St. Paul's time and afterwards, were the most active enemies of the Christians. When Polycarp was martyred, we read that "all the multitude of Gentiles and Jews dwelling in Smyrna cried out, enraged with a loud voice;" and afterwards when faggots were collected for the pile, "the Jews most eagerly, as is their wont, giving help." This view is strengthened by the context. Had they been, as some have supposed, Christians, called *Jews* in a mystical sense, they would hardly have been spoken of as the principal source of calumny against the Church, nor would the collective epithet of *Satan's synagogue* be given to them. Abp. Trench brings out there, how *church*, the nobler word, was chosen by our Lord and His Apostles for the assembly of the called in Christ, while *synagogue*, which is only once found [James ii. 2] of a Christian assembly [and there, as Düsterdieck notes, not with *of God*, but *your*], was gradually abandoned entirely to the Jews, so that in this, the last book of the canon, such an expression as this can be used. See the opposite in Numb. xvi. 3, xx. 4, xxxi. 16,—*the Lord's synagogue* [so in the Septuagint version]).

10.] **Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer** (in the ways mentioned below. The expression indicates manifold tribulation, as there): **behold for certain** (the expression in the original gives the tone of present certainty and actuality), **the devil** (it is understood from the context, that the devil would act through the hostility of human agents, and among them eminently these Jewish enemies) **is about to cast [some] of you into prison** (to be literally

understood: the constant accompaniment

of persecution, Acts xii. 3; xvi. 23), **that ye may be tried** (by temptations

to fall away: not, that ye may be *proved*. This might be the end which Christ had in view in permitting the persecution: but the expression here rather gives the purpose of the agent in the previous clause, viz. *the devil*); **and ye shall have tribulation ten**

days (the expression is probably used to signify a short and limited time: so in Gen. xxiv. 55; Judges xi. 19; Dan. i. 12: see also Numb. xiv. 22; 1 Sam. 1. 8; Job xix. 3; Acts xxv. 6. All kinds of fanciful interpretations

have been given: see in my Greek Test.). **Be** (literally, **become**: new circumstances of trial requiring new kinds and degrees of fidelity; which does not remain as it is, but takes accession) **thou** (it is quite futile to attempt to distinguish in these Epistles between what is said to the Angel in the singular, and what is said to the Church in the plural. This is shewn by the former part of this verse, “**thou art about to suffer**,”... followed by **some of you**. Only where there is occasion

to discriminate, is the plural used: see v. 24f.: but wherever the whole church is spoken of it is in the singular, under the person of its representative angel) **faithful unto** (not, “*until*,” but “*even unto*,” i.e. up to the point or measure of: Let not thy faithfulness stop short of enduring death itself. Compare Phil. ii. 8) **death, and** (reff.) **I will give thee the crown** (the crown, as being the well-known prize promised to the faithful: as in James i. 22, 2 Tim. iv. 8) **of life** (genitive of apposition: the life itself being the crown: see note, and distinction, on 2 Tim. iv. 8).

11.] Conclusion: see above, verse 7.—**He that conquereth shall not be injured** (the form in the original gives great, precision and certainty to the promise: there is no chance that he should be) **by** (as the source or original of injury) **the second death** (defined to be, in ch. xx. 14, *the lake of fire*. In this he shall have no part, nor it any power over him).

12–17.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUS. **And to the angel of the church in Pergamus write;** These things saith **He that hath the sharp two-edged sword** (the designation of our Lord is made with reference to ver. 16 below): **I know where thou dwellest**, (viz.) **where is the throne of Satan** (it is not easy to say, what these words import. Andreas (cent. vi.) and Arethas (cent. x.) say, “He calls Pergamus the throne of Satan, as being idolatrous beyond the rest of Asia.” But it may be doubted whether it was more idolatrous than e.g. Ephesus. And so Vitringa and Bengel. A more likely direction in which to find the solution is that taken by Lyra: “Satan’s throne, that is, his power, in inclining the unbelievers to persecute the church:” for above, ver. 10, the act of persecution is ascribed to the devil: and here we learn by what follows, that he had carried it at Pergamus to the extent of putting Antipas to death; which seems not to have been reached elsewhere at this time. Whether this may have been owing to the fact of the residence of the supreme magistracy at Pergamus, or to some fanatical zeal of the inhabitants for the worship of Æsculapius, or to some particular person

or persons dwelling there especially hostile to the followers of Christ, must remain uncertain.—I may remark, that it is plainly out of the question to attempt, as has been done by some, to connect such an expression as this with the prophecies of the latter portion of the book, and to anticipate for the insignificant Pergamus a leading place in their fulfilment. The expression

is relevant, as the context shews, merely to the then existing state of the city, and not to any future part which it should take in the fulfilment of prophecy): **and thou holdest fast my name** (the profession

of thy faith in Me), **and didst not deny the faith of me in the days of Antipas ny witness** (martyr), **my faithful one, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth** (of Antipas, the shortened form of Antipater,—after the analogy of Hermas

for Hermodorus, Lucas and Silas for Lucanus and Silvanus,—nothing is known to us with certainty, except from this passage. Andreas (cent. vi.) says that he had read the account of his martyrdom: and Arethas (cent. x.) says, that his “martyrdom” was still extant.

Ribera gives an account from Simeon Metaphrastes, that he was bishop of Pergamus,

and lived to extreme old age: and that when a persecution arose, in the time of Domitian, after having frequently witnessed

a good confession he suffered death by being scorched in a hot brazen bull. The Greek and Roman martyrologies contain

similar accounts at his day, April 11th. Respecting the childish symbolic meanings which have been imagined for his name, in defiance of philology and of sobriety alike, see my Greek Test. On the words **where Satan dwelleth**, see above).

14, 15.] Nevertheless I have against thee a few things (used as a term of comparison with the far greater number of approved things which remained) [**that**] (i. e. “namely, that,” introducing the form of the indictment): **thou hast there** (in Pergamus: the locality is specified probably on account of the description which has been just given of it as the place where a faithful martyr had suffered unto death) **men holding the teaching of Balaam** (not simply “doctrine corresponding to the character of the advice of Balaam,” but used in strict correspondence with the words “*who taught*” following: that which a man teaches being his doctrine, And to *hold* this teaching, is to follow the teaching), **who taught Balak** (it is not expressly asserted in Num. xxxi. 16 that it was *Balak* whom Balaam advised to use this agency against Israel: but the narrative almost implies it: Balak was in power, and was the most likely person to authorize and put in force the scheme, And so Josephus makes Balaam on departing call to him Balak and the princes of Midian, and give them the advice) **to put a stumblingblock**

(an occasion of sin) **before** (in the way, or before the face of) **the sons of Israel, to eat** (i. e. inducing them to eat) **things offered to idols** (from Num. xxv. 1, 2, it was not only participation in things offered to idols, but the actual offering sacrifices to them, of which the children of Israel were guilty. But seeing that the *participation* was that which was common to both, our Lord takes that as the point to be brought forward) **and to commit fornication.**

15.] Thus thou also hast (as well as those of old: not, as the Church at Ephesus, ver. 6) **men holding** (see above) **the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner** (viz. in eating things offered to idols, and fornication. We may remark, 1) that it is most according to the sense of the passage to understand these sins in the case of the Nicolaitans, as in that of those whom Balaam tempted, literally, and not mystically: 2) that the whole sense of the passage is against the idea of the identity of the Balaamites and the Nicolaitans: and would be in fact destroyed by it. The mere existence of the etymological relation is extremely doubtful [see above on ver. 6]: and even granting it,—to suppose the two identical, would be to destroy the historical illustration by which the present existing sect is described).

16.] Repent therefore (the command is addressed not only to the Nicolaitans, but to the church, which did not, like that of Ephesus, hate them, but apparently tolerated them): **but if not, I [will] come to thee quickly** (here again,—though in the common phrase which expresses the last great day,—not said of the Lord's final coming; as indeed the language shews, for then He will no longer "*make war*"), **and will make war with them** (the Nieolaitans) **with** (literally, in, as armed with or arrayed in) **the sword. of my mouth** (many expositors suppose an allusion to the sword of the angel, armed with which he withstood Balaam in the way [Num. xxii. 23, 31], or to that and the sword by which those who sinned in the matter of Baalpeor [Num. xxv. 5] and eventually Balaam himself [Num. xxxi. 8] were slain: but seeing that the connexion with ch. i. 16 is so plainly asserted by our ver. 12, it seems better to confine the allusion to that sword, and not to stretch it to what after all is a very doubtful analogy).

17.] Conclusion. For the former clause see on ver. 7. We may notice that in these three first Epistles, the proclamation precedes the promise to him that conquereth: in the four last, it follows the promise.—**To him that conquereth I will give to him** (see above on ver. 7) **of the manna which is hidden** (in this **manna**, there is unmistakably an allusion to the proper and heavenly food of the children of Israel, as contrasted with the unhallowed idol-offerings; but beyond that, there is an allusion again [see above on ver. 7] to our Lord's discourse in John vi., where He describes Himself as the true bread from heaven: not that we need here, any more than in ver. 7 [see note there], confuse the present figure by literally pressing the symbolism of that chapter. Christ's gifts may all be summed up in the gift of Himself: on the other hand, He may describe any of the manifold proprieties of his own Person and office as His gift. This manna is **hidden**, in allusion partly perhaps to the fact of the pot of manna laid up in the ark in the holy of holies (Exod. xvi. 33: compare our ch. xi. 19: not to the Jewish fable, that a pot of manna was hidden by Josiah before the wasting of the temple, and shall again be produced in the time of the Messiah]:—but principally to the fact that our spiritual life, with its springs and nourishments, is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3. See also Ps. lxxviii. 24; cv. 40), **and I will give to him a white stone** (see below), **and on the stone a new name written, which none knoweth except he that receiveth it** (the views concerning this stone have been very various. Bede interprets it "the body, now white by baptism, then resplendent with the glory of incorruption." But this is surely out of the question. Some have connected this with the mention

of the manna, and cited the Rabbinical

tradition, that with the manna fell precious stones and pearls. Others again think of the precious stones bearing the names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate

of the High Priest, the order for which was contemporary with the giving of the manna, Exod. xxviii. 17; xxxix. 10, and regard this as indicating the priestly dignity of the victorious Christian, Ebrard

remarks, that as the hidden manna was the reward for abstaining from idol-meat, so this for abstinence from fornication.

Again Arethas and others have reminded

us of the Gentile custom of presenting

the victors at the games with a stone or ticket which entitled them to nourishment at the public expense, and to admission to royal festivals. Hence they regard the white stone as the ticket of admission to the heavenly feast. But it may be replied, 1) the feast is mentioned separately under the name of the hidden manna: and 2) the description of the writing on the stone, which follows, will not suit this view. Again, others, regarding

the connexion of the white stone with the manna, refer to the use of the lot cast among the priests, *which* should offer the sacrifice: or to the writing a name, at election by ballot, on a stone or a bean: or to the custom of *absolving* criminals with a white stone and condemning them with a black one. Some expositors combine

two or more of these expositions.

But it is against all these interpretations, that no one of them fits the conditions of this description. Each one halts in the explanation either of the stone itself, or of that which is written on it. Least of all, perhaps, does the last apply; the verdict of *acquittal* would be a strange reward indeed to one who has fought and overcome in the strength of an acquittal long ago obtained, Col. iii. 13. The most probable view is that which Bengel gives a hint of, and which Hengstenberg and Düsterdieck hold, that the figure is derived from the practice of using small stones, inscribed with writing, for various purposes, and that, further than this, the imagery belongs to the occasion itself only. Taking it thus, the colour is that of victory, see ch. iii. 3; vi. 2; iv. 4; xix. 14. The *name inscribed* yet remains for consideration. It is in this, as it would be in every case, the inscription which gives the stone its real value, being, as it is, a token of reward and approval from the Son of God. But *what name* is this? not *what name in each case*, for an answer to this question is precluded by the very terms, “*which none, &c.:*” but of *what kind?* Is it the name of Christ Himself, or of God in Christ? This supposition is precluded also by the same terms: for any mysterious name of God or of Christ would either be hidden from all [so ch. xix. 12], or known to all who were similarly victorious through grace. These very terms seem to require that it should be the recipient’s *own name*, a *new name* however; a revelation of his everlasting title, as a son of God, to glory in Christ, but consisting of, and revealed in, those personal marks and signs of God’s peculiar adoption of *himself*, which he and none else is acquainted with. “If the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy” [Prov. xiv. 10], then the deep secret dealings of God with each of us during those times, by which our sonship is assured and our spiritual strife carried onward to victory, can, when revealed to us in the other blessed state, be known thoroughly to ourselves only).

18–29.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA. **And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write;** These things saith the Son of God (our Lord thus names Himself here, in accordance with the spirit of that which is to follow; ver. 27 being from Ps. ii., in which it is written, “*The Lord said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*”), **who hath his eyes as a flame of fire** (connected with ver. 23, “*I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts*”), **and his feet are like to chalcolibanus** (for this word, see on ch. i. 15. There is here probably a connexion with ver. 27, “*as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces,*” which will be the work of the strongly shod feet): **I know thy works, and the love** (this, standing first, is probably quite general, to God and man) **and the faith** (general again: not *faithfulness*, but in its ordinary sense) **and the ministration** (viz. to the sick and poor, and all that need it: the natural proof of love and faith—faith working by love, Gal. v. 6) **and the endurance** (in tribulation: or perhaps the “*patient continuance in well-doing*” of Rom. ii. 7) **of thee; and (that) thy last works (are) more (in number, or importance, or both) than the first** (this praise is the opposite of the blame conveyed

by ver. 5 to the Ephesian church).

20.] Notwithstanding, I have against thee that thou sufferest thy wife Jezebel (on the whole, the evidence for **thy** being inserted in the text seems to me to preponderate. It could not well have been *inserted*: and was sure to have been erased, from its difficulty, and possibly from other reasons, considering what was the common interpretation of the *angel*. It does not create any real difficulty: finding its meaning not in the matter of fact at Thyatira, but in the history from which the appellation **Jezebel** is taken. In 1 Kings xxi. 25 we read, “*Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord: whom Jezebel his wife stirred up:*” from which text the phrase is transferred entire, importing that this Jezebel was to the church at Thyatira what that other was to Ahab. It is not so easy to determine who is, or who are, imported by the term. The very fact of the name, Jezebel being chosen [for it is impossible, even were this the actual name of a woman, that it should be used here with any other than the symbolic meaning], coupled with **thy wife**, as above explained, takes us out of the realms of simple fact into those of symbolism. The figure of “*Jezebel thy wife*” being once recognized in its historical import, it would not be needful that an individual woman should be found to answer to it: the conscience of the Thyatiran church could not fail to apply the severe reproof to whatever influence was being exerted in the direction here indicated. So that I should rate at very little the speculations of many Commentators on the supposed woman here pointed out. Düsterdieck, recently, remarks that the expression, **which calleth herself a prophetess**, has something individual about it. So it has: but may not this individuality belong just as well to the figure, as to the thing signified by it? The sect or individuals being once concentrated as **Jezebel**, this expression would follow of course, in the propriety of the figure. On the whole, however, I should feel it more probable that some individual *teacher*, high in repute and influence at the time, is pointed at. The denunciation of such a teacher under such a title would be at once startling and decisive. Nor would probability be violated by the other supposition, that a favoured and influential party in the Thyatiran church is designated. The church herself is represented by a woman: why may not a party [compare the Jews, who are the “*synagogue of Satan*” of ver. 9] within the church be similarly symbolized? However

this may be, the real solution must lie hidden until all that is hidden shall be known. See more below), **who calleth herself a prophetess** (this clause perhaps points at an individual: but there is on the other hand no reason why a sect claiming prophetic gifts should not be indicated: the feminine belonging as before

to the historical symbol), **and she teacheth and deceiveth my servants, to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols** (hence the propriety of the name Jezebel: for both these were the abominations of the historical Jezebel: 2 Kings ix. 22, 30 [See Jer. iv. 30; Nahum iii. 4]: the latter indeed in its more aggravated

form of actual idolatry, 1 Kings xviii. 19. This specification of the mischief done shews us that this influence at Thyatira was in the same direction as the evil works of the Nicolaitans at Pergamus, ver. 14. The fact that this was the prevalent direction

of the false teaching of the day, is important in a chronological point of view: see Introduction, §iii. par. 6). **And I gave her time** (not, “in my pre-ordination of what is to be,” as in Mark xiii. 20, but denoting historically that which the Lord had actually done, in vain. Notice that the “*suffering*” her, on which depended the time given her for repentance, is yet blamed [ver. 20] in the church of Thyatira as a sin) **that she should repent, and she willet not to repent of** (literally, “*out of*,” so as to come out of) **her fornication** (the word is here to be taken, as in all these passages, in its literal sense. Otherwise,

if taken figuratively, it would be only a repetition of the other particular, idolatry).

22.] Behold (arrests attention, and prepares the way for something unexpected and terrible), **I cast her** (evidently against her will: but there is not necessarily violence in the word: it is the ordinary verb for being “cast” on a bed of sickness: so Matt. viii. 6, 14) **into a bed** (of sickness, see Ps. xli. 3: will change her bed of whoredom into a bed of anguish. So most Commentators. Perhaps the threat has reference to a future pestilence. Some understand the bed to be future punishment, referring to Isa. xiv. 11), **and those who commit adultery** (not now *fornication*, but a more general term, embracing in its wide meaning both the fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols, and well known as the word used of rebellious and idolatrous Israel, Jer. iii. 8, v. 7; Ezek. xvi. 32&c.) **together with her** (not those who *commit adultery with her*, But those who, as well as she, commit adultery: those who share with her in her adulteries. These, as interpreted by the tone with which the rebuke began, will mean, those who by suffering and encouraging her, make themselves partakers of her sin, And this rather favours the idea that not one individual, but a dominant party, is intended. See below) **into great tribulation** (this clause forms a kind of parallelism with the former, so that *into great tribulation* is parallel with *into a bed*. But it is not to be regarded as interpreting the bed. Her punishment and that of her children [see below] is one thing; that of the partakers in her adulteries, those in the church who tolerated and encouraged her, another, viz. great tribulation. This is forcibly shewn by the words *if they do not repent of her works* following), **if they do not** (speedily and effectually, shall not have done so by the time which I have in my thoughts) **repent of her** (not *their*: they are Christ’s servants who are tampering with her temptations and allowing themselves in her works, which are alien from their own spiritual life) **works, And her children** (emphatically put forward as distinguished from the last mentioned: as if it were, “And as to her children, &c.” These are her proper adherents: not those who suffer her, but those who are begotten of her, and go to constitute her. Some Commentators have vainly dreamt of the slaughter of Ahab’s seventy sons, 2 Kings x.: but they were not *Jezebel’s* children. The historical

figure is obviously dropped here) **I will slay with death** (the expression is probably

a rendering of the Hebrew idiom, which the Septuagint renders by “*to kill with death*,” and which occurs Lev. xx. 10, in reference to adultery. But we need not suppose a direct reference to that passage: for there is nothing of adultery here: we have done with that, and are come to the judgment on *her children*); **and all the churches** (this remarkable expression, meaning not, all the Asiatic churches, but all the churches in the world to the end of time, lifts the whole of this threatening and its accompanying encouragements out of proconsular Asia, and gives us a glimpse into the universal character of these messages)

shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts (which, see Rom. viii. 29, is the attribute of God: and therefore of the Son of God. Compare ver. 18 above, and note. Grotius says, “By the *reins* are understood the desires,” as also Ps. cxix. 13, Jer. xii. 2, Prov. xxviii. 16: by the *heart*, the thoughts, 1 Sam. xvi. 7, 1 Kings viii. 39&c. But it seems doubtful whether so minute a distinction

is in the words; whether they are not rather a general designation for the whole inward part of a man): **and I will give to you** (‘will render, in My doom of judgment.’ The strain of the Lord’s message

is suddenly changed into a direct ad-dress to those threatened) **to each according to your works** (not the mere outward products of the visible life, but the real acts and verities of the inward man, discerned

by the piercing eye of the Son of God).

24.] But (contrast to those addressed before) **to you I say, the rest who are in Thyatira, as many as have not** (not only do not *hold*, but are free from any contact with) **this teaching, such as have not known the depths** (deep places) **of Satan, as they call them** (it was the characteristic of the falsely named *Gnosis* [Knowledge], to boast of its *Batheia*, or depths, of divine things. Tertullian says, in accusing the Valentinian heretics of dark deeds in secret, that if you ask plain questions about their mysteries, they knit their brows, and answer, “*It is deep.*” We may safely therefore refer the expression to the heretics spoken

of. But it is not so clear to whom, as their subject, the words **as they call them** are to be appropriated, and again *whose* words **“of Satan”** are, whether those 1) of our Lord, 2) of the heretics, or 3) of the Christians addressed. If they belong to the *Christians*, then the sense will be, that they, the Christians, called the **depths** of the heretics the depths of **Satan**, and were content to profess their ignorance of them. So far would be true enough; but the sentence would thus be left very flat and pointless, and altogether inconsistent in its tone with the solemn and pregnant words of the rest of the message. If the words **as they call them** belong to the *heretics*, we have our choice between two views of the words **of Satan**: either 1) that the heretics themselves called their own mysteries **the depths of Satan**. But this, though held by some as a possible alternative,—can hardly be so, seeing that the words surely would not bear the sense thus assigned to them, viz. that they could go deeper than and outwit Satan in his own kingdom: and seeing moreover, that no such formula, or any resembling it, is found as used by the ancient Gnostic heretics: or 2) that the words **as they call them** apply only to the word *depths*, and that, when, according to *their* way of speaking, “*of God*” should have followed [1 Cor. ii. 10], the Lord in indignation substitutes **of Satan**. This has been the sense taken by most Commentators. And it appears to me that this alone comes in any measure up to the requirements of the passage, in intensity of meaning and solemnity, as well as in likelihood); **I cast not upon you any other burden** (to what do the words refer? There can, I imagine, be little doubt as to the answer, if we remember some of the expressions used in the apostolic decree in which these very matters here in question, fornication and abstaining from unholy meats, were the only things forbidden to the Gentile converts. For our Lord here takes up and refers to those very words. In Acts xv. 28 we read, “*It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.*” This act of simple obedience, and no deep matters beyond their reach, was what the Lord required of them. And this *burden* resolved itself into keeping the faith once delivered to the saints, as enjoined in the next sentence. The word has been very variously understood:—of the trouble given them by Jezebel and her followers:—of the punishments about to befall the heretics, which were not to be feared by the Christians:—of the burden of previous suffering implied in the word **patience** above,—and of the sense of “*burden*,” so often occurring in the prophets when they denounce the divine threatenings. But to my mind the allusion to the apostolic decree

is too clear and prominent to allow of any other meaning coming into question: at least any other which sets that entirely aside. Others may be deduced and flow from that one, which have meaning for the church now that those former subjects of controversy have passed away): **but** (“only:” i.e., forget not that the licence just accorded involves this sacred obligation)

that which ye have (see ch. iii. 11: not to be restricted in its sense to their stedfastness in resisting Jezebel and hers, but representing the sum total of Christian doctrine and hope and privilege; the “*faith once for all delivered to the saints*” of Jude 3), **hold fast** (the word in the original

sets forth not so much the continuing habit, as the renewed and determined grasp of every intervening moment of the space prescribed) **until the time when I shall come** (the original gives an uncertainty when the time shall be, which we cannot convey in our language).

26.] And (the announcement of reward to the conqueror *now first* precedes the proclamation to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches: and is joined, *here alone*, by “**and**” to the preceding portion of the Epistle; being indeed more closely connected with it in this case than in any of the others: see below) **he that conquereth and he that** (by this second designation this second class is precluded from being taken as merely explanatory of the first, and is specified as included in it) **keepeth to the end** (it is remarkable, that immediately after the words, so pointedly alluded to above, in the apostolic decree, Acts xv. 28, was added, *from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well*) **my works** (contrast to **her works**, ver. 22: but extending beyond that contrast to a general and blessed truth. **My works**, i.e. which belong to Me, are the attributes of Myself and of Mine), **I will give to him authority over the nations** (compare the words, “*Have thou authority over the cities,*” Luke xix. 17, which is the reward of him who obeyed the command, “ *Occupy till I come.*” The authority here spoken of is that which shall be conferred on the saints when they shall inherit the earth, and reign with Christ in His Kingdom. It has been gradually realized, as the stone cut out without hands has broken in pieces other kingdoms; but shall only then find its entire fulfilment), **and he shall govern** (literally, “*shall shepherd.*” It is the Septuagint rendering of a similar

word signifying *to break in pieces*, which they have taken as an Hebrew verb signifying *to shepherd*, in Ps. ii. 9. The saying, as rendered by them, is sanctioned by being thrice quoted in this book, see ch. Xii. 5, xix. 15) **them with a rod of iron** (a sceptre of severity: ie. of inflexible justice), **as the vessels of pottery are broken up** (crushed, or shivered: the original

gives the idea of the multitudinous fragments collapsing into an heap: the “broken to shivers” of the A.V. is very good), **as I also have received from my Father** (viz. in Ps. ii. 9, in which Psalm it is said, “*Thou art my Son,*” ver. 7. The power there conferred on Me, I will delegate

to my victorious servant). **And I will give to him the star of the morning** (it is not easy to say what, in strict exactness, these words import. The interpretations given are very various and inconsistent. The early Expositors, Andreas and Arethas, Understand it of the Lucifer of Isa. xiv. 12, i.e. the devil, whom our Lord saw as lightning fall from heaven.—or, as there

imported, the King of Babylon, the most powerful monarch on earth. Another ancient meaning given is the day-star arising in the hearts of the faithful, spoken of by St. Peter, 2 Pet. i. 19. Victorinus (century iv.) says it is *the first resurrection*.

Many others, ancient and modern, understand Christ Himself, who, ch. Xxii. 16, declares Himself to be *the bright and morning star*: and doubtless, as has been before remarked on the fruit of the tree of life, ver. 7, and on the hidden manna, ver. 17, in the mystical sense, Christ Himself

is the sum and inclusion of all Christ's gifts: this truth serves to connect the symbolism of all these passages, but does not justify us in disturbing that of one by introducing that of another. Here the morning star clearly is not Christ Himself, the very terms of the sentence separating the two. Then again, we have Lyra's interpretation,

the glorious body; Grotius's, that it is brightness as much exceeding all other, as the morning star excels the other stars. And this interpretation is probably near the mark. In Dan. xii. 3 we read that the righteous shall shine *as the stars*, and in Matt. xiii. 43 that they *shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*. And in Prov. iv. 18, we read that "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect

day." Still, this interpretation does not quite satisfy the words **I will give him**: unless indeed the poetic imagery be, that he is imagined as clad in the glory of that star, putting it on as a jewel, or as a glittering robe. De Wette supposes that the star is to be given to him as its ruler: but such an interpretation would lead into a wide field of speculation which does not seem to have been opened by Scripture, and is hardly required by the passage itself).

29.] See above, on ver. 7.

Revelation: Chapter 3

CHAP. III. 1-6] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT SARDIS. The spirit of this Epistle is one of rebuke and solemn denunciation. Even the promise, ver. 5, is tinged with the same hue. For the history, see Introduction.—**And to the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God** (this designation of our Lord has not before occurred: but it is new rather in form than in substance. We have mention

in ch. i. 4 of the seven spirits which are before God's throne: and we there found occasion to interpret them of the plenitude of the Godhead in its attributes and energies. See, for further elucidation, ch. iv. 5, v. 6. These spirits, this plenitude,

Christ, the Lord of the Church, possesses,

is clothed and invested with, in all fulness. From Him the spiritual life of his churches comes as its source, in all its elements of vitality. He searches all the depths both of our depravity and of His own applications of grace. He has in his hand all the Spirit's power of conviction. He wields the fire of purification and the fire of destruction. Whether the Spirit informs, or rebukes, or warns, or comforts, or promises, whether He softens or hardens

men's hearts, it is Christ who, searching

the hearts as Son of God and feeling their feelings as Son of man, wields and applies the one and manifold Spirit.

The designation here has its appropriateness in the whole character of this solemn Epistle. The Lord of the Church comes, armed with all the powers of the Spirit; searching the depths of hypocrisy, judging of the worthlessness of works not done in faith. The difficulty of this general attribute of Christ, and not any one selected specially as applying to Sardis being here introduced, seems to be best accounted for, not, as Ebrard, by the general prophetic import of the Epistle, but by the fact that the minatory strain of the Epistle justifies the alleging the whole weight and majesty of the divine character of our Lord, to create alarm and bring about repentance), **and the seven stars** (the former symbolism [ch i. 16, 20] still holds in all its strictness. Nor have we the least right here, as some do, to suppose that the stars and the spirits are identical. The motive mentioned above would fully account for this designation also: The Lord of all the churches: He who appoints them their ministering angels, and has them, and all that is theirs, in His hand): **I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest** (I need only mention for warning the childish fancy, that the Bishop of Sardis was named Zosimus or Vitalis (*living*). The expression explains itself: thou hast a repute that thou livest: art *nominally*, as we commonly now say, Christian), **and** (the mere copula carries the contrast far more vividly and pathetically than when it is made rhetorically complete by inserting "yet") **art dead** (spiritually dead: void of vitality and fruitfulness: sunk in that deep deadly sleep which, if not broken in upon and roused up, is death itself: so St. Paul, Eph. v. 14). **Be** (literally, **become**: because a change is involved: become what thou art not) **watchful** (we can hardly help in English substituting the adjective for the participle "watching;" thereby losing objective vividness, and getting instead a subjective attribute of character. "Awake and watch" would be, in paraphrase,

tantamount to the text), **and strengthen the remaining things, which were** (the time is transferred to that indicated by the fulfilment of the command: which were, when thou shalt apply thyself to strengthen them) **about to die** (there is a question whether these *remaining matters* are to be understood as *things*, matters in which the Sardian church was not yet totally without spiritual vitality, or as *persons*, who were not yet passed into the almost universal death-sleep of hypocrisy. The latter view is taken by very many Commentators. And there is nothing in the construction to preclude it. But if I mistake not, there is in the context. For to assume that the *persons remaining* could be thus described, would surely be to leave no room for those mentioned with so much praise below in ver. 4. **Had the things which remain** not occurred, we might have well understood “*strengthen those that were ready to die,*” of confirming those thy weak members who on account of the general deadness were near losing their spiritual life altogether: but with the former expression, this can hardly stand. We must therefore take the other view,—“*strengthen those thy remaining few graces, which in thy spiritual deadly slumber are not yet quite extinct*”): **for I have not found thy works complete in the sight of my God** (up to the mark and measure of being acceptable to Him: i.e. not wrought in that living faith which alone renders human works acceptable to God, by uniting them to Him on whom the Father looks with perfect approval. Dürsterdieck well observes, “The express reference to the absolute rule of all Christian morality is here put the more strongly and strikingly, because this church had *among men* a name that she lived.” The **my** binds on the judgment of Him who speaks to that of God). **Remember [therefore] how** (not subjective, “*with* what manner of reception,” but objective, “*after what sort:*” as in Eph. iv. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 11) **thou hast received**

(perfect tense; said of the permanent deposit of doctrine entrusted) **and heardest** (merely past tense: said of the act of hearing, when it took place), **and keep** (what thou hast received and hearest: keep, as an abiding habit), **and repent** (the command is of a quick and decisive act of amendment). **If therefore** (the **therefore** is hardly because it is assumed, in the present evil state of the Sardian church, that the exhortation will be in vain: far rather, because repentance is so grievously needed. And it follows on the plain declaration which has been made of that present evil state; coming forcibly and unexpectedly where we should rather have looked for “*But if*”) **thou dost not watch** (shalt not have awaked and become watchful, before the time about to be indicated in the threat which is coming), **I will come as a thief** (these words do not here refer to our Lord’s final coming, but to some signal judgment in which He would overtake the Sardian church. Just as the formula derived from the great truth of the suddenness of His second coming is frequently applied to His final judgment in Jerusalem, so is it to other His partial and special advents to judgment in the case of individuals and churches), **and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee. Nevertheless**

(notwithstanding this state of apathy even to spiritual death) **thou hast** (belonging to thee as members. Notice as Bengel remarks, that these few had not separated themselves from the church in Sardis, notwithstanding its degraded state) **a few names** (“men who may be counted by name:” compare Acts i. 15; ch. xi. 13, note. The term would hardly be used except

of a limited number) **in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments** (literally, did not defile: the past tense is from the standing-point of the future day presently introduced, as so commonly when life is looked back on from the great time of retribution. The meaning of the figure [which occurs also in Jude 23] has been variously given. There can be little doubt that the simpler and more general explanation

is the right one: viz. who have not sullied the purity of their Christian life by falling into sin): **and they shall walk with me in white** (the white here is not to be identified with the undefiled garments which they now wear: it is a new and glorious hue of victory: see ch. vi. 11; vii. 9; xix. 8. The allusion which some have imagined, to their priesthood,—because when a judgment was held by the Sanhedrim on the priests, those who were condemned

were clothed in black, while the blameless wore a white robe,—seems, like so many of these rabbinical illustrations, to be far-fetched, and to spoil the simplicity

of the passage. An allusion to Zech. iii. 3 ff. is far more obvious. **with me**, in remarkable accord with our Lord’s prayer in John xvii. 21, “*Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, where I am, there they also may be with me:*” see also Luke xxiii. 43), **for they are worthy** (the *worthiness* here is found in the terms of the sentence itself. They have *kept their garments undefiled*: they of all others then are the persons who should walk in the glorious white robes of heavenly

triumph. Exactly thus in ch. xvi. 5, 6, “*They shed blood, and thou gavest them blood to drink: they are worthy.*” To dream of any merit here implied, is not only to miss, but to run counter to the sense of the whole saying and situation. The absence of defilement is only explained by ch. vii. 14, “*They washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb:*” and as Vitringa excellently says, “*Un worthiness* here marks the proportion and congruency which was between the state of grace in which they had been on earth, and of the glory which the Lord had decreed for them according to the measure of this very law of grace”). **He that conquereth, he** (the reading “*he that conquereth*”

thus,” found in so many MSS., seems to have arisen originally in a very usual confusion of the long and short *o* in Greek, and then to have been retained, from not being altogether without meaning;

"thus," i.e. as those first mentioned)

shall be clad in white garments (the concluding promise takes the hue of what had gone before, and identifies those

just spoken of with these victorious ones): **and I will not wipe out his name out of the book of life** (this again takes its colour from the preceding. Those who have a name that they *live*, and are dead, are necessarily wiped out from the book of *life*: only he whose name is a living name, can remain on those pages. Here again the Rabbinical expositors have gone wrong in imagining that the genealogical tables of the priests are alluded to. Far rather is the reference to the ordinary lists of citizens, or of living members of any body or society, from which the dead are struck out. Thus they whose names have been once inscribed in this book, whether by their outward admission into Christ's church in baptism, or by their becoming living members of Him by faith, if they endure to the end as His soldiers and servants, and obtain the victory, shall not, as all His mere professed members shall, have their names erased from it. The figure itself, of the book of life, is found as early as Exod. xxxii. 32 f.); **and I will his name in the presence of my Father and in the presence of his angels** (see Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8, both of which are here combined: see also Luke ix. 26; Mark viii. 38. The promise implies that in the great day the Judge will expressly acknowledge the name thus written in the book of life, as belonging to one of His. See ch. xx. 15, xxi. 27; also Matt. vii. 23, [xxv. 12], where He repudiates those whom He knows not).

6.] See above, ch. i. 7.

7–13.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA. It has been remarked, that this Epistle bears a tinge throughout, of Old Test. language and imagery, correspondent to the circumstances of the church as connected with the Jews dwelling there. For the history, &c., see Introduction). **And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith the holy One** (as opposed to the *synagogue of Satan* below; not with reference to Christ's High-priesthood, but expressive of moral attribute), **the true One** (this title would appear as if it were chosen to declare an attribute of our Lord, opposed to "*those who say... and are not, but do lie*" below), **he that hath the key of David** (i. e. He that is the Heir and Lord of the abiding theocracy. In Isa. xxii. 22, it is said of Eliakim son of Hilkiah, "*The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open:*" which is manifestly the passage here incorporated into the Lord's message: and the sense is that whatever inferior degrees there may be of this power of opening and shutting the church [*the house of David*, with reference to the false Jews below], the supreme power, the one true key, belongs to the Lord Christ alone. It is hardly justified, and serves but little purpose, to attempt to set up a distinction between "*the key of David*" here, and "*the key of the house of David*" in Isaiah. The key is the same in both cases: but the One possesses, it as his own by right, the other has it merely entrusted to him; laid on his shoulder. See on the whole sense, Matt. xvi. 19), **who openeth, and no one shall shut; and shutteth, and no one shall open** (these words are to be taken not merely of the power of Christ to forgive sins, but generally, as indeed the next ver. requires. Christ only has power to admit into and exclude from His kingdom; to enlarge the work and opportunities of His church, and to contract them): **I know thy works**

(these words stand by themselves; not as connected with what follows below, the intervening sentence, "*behold,... shut,*" being considered parenthetical).

They are words of comfort and support to the Philadelphian church): **behold, I have given before thee a door opened** (i. e. have granted, in my possession and administration of the key of David, that a door should stand opened. The door is variously understood: but most Expositors take it to mean, as in 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3 [otherwise in Acts xiv. 27], an opportunity for the mission work of the church. And this appears to be the true sense here, by what follows in ver. 9, promising conversion of those who were now foes.

before thee, because the course is naturally *forward*), **which no one is able to shut: because** (gives the reason of what preceded; the Lord will confer this great advantage on the Philadelphian church, *because...*) **thou hast little power** (not as A.V. "*a little strength*," thereby virtually reversing the sense of the words: the original importing "*thy strength is but small*," and the A.V. importing "*thou hast some strength*," the fact of its smallness vanishing under the indefinite term "*a little*."

This smallness of strength must not be attributed to a scanty bestowal of miraculous powers on the Philadelphian church, but to the fact of the fewness of the congregation of Christians there: possibly *also* to their poverty as contrasted with the wealth of their Jewish adversaries), **and** (using that little well) **didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name** (the past tenses perhaps refer to some time of especial trial when both these temptations, to break Christ's word and deny His name, were put before the church). **Behold. I give** (not, *to thee*, nor can we render it by *I*

will make, as the A.V.: the sense is broken off in the following clause, and the verb **give** resumed by **I will make them) of the synagogue of Satan** (see on ch. ii. 9, where the same expression occurs of outward Jews who were not real Jews), **who profess themselves to be Jews and they are not, but do lie,—behold, I will make them that they shall come, and shall worship before thy feet** (so in Isa. lx. 14, "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee: and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet: and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of

the Holy One of Israel." See also Isa. xlix. 23; Zech. viii. 20–23), **and that they may know that I loved thee** (the English idiom requires, "have loved thee:" but the past tense has its propriety, referring as it does to the time preceding that in which they shall do this. Düsterdieck takes it as used of that great proof which Christ gave of His love by dying for His church, appealing to the same tense in Eph. v. 25; Gal. ii. 20; 1 John iv. 10, 11. But thus we lose the especial reference to the particular church which seems to be involved in the recognition. It is the love bestowed on the Philadelphian church, in signalizing its success in the work of Christ, that these converted enemies shall recognize). **Because thou didst keep the word of my endurance** (or, **patience**: the word preached to thee, enjoining that endurance which belongs to Me and mine, see ch. i. 9), **I also** (I on my side: the **also** expressing reciprocity) **will keep thee** (**thee**, emphatic and prominent) **from** (from out of the

midst of: but whether by *immunity from*, or by *being brought safe through*, the preposition

does not clearly define) **the hour of temptation** (the appointed season of sore trial: literally, **of the temptation**, of the well-known and signal temptation. But the article cannot be expressed in English, because it would unavoidably become the antecedent to "which" following)

which is about to come upon the whole world (the time imported is that prophesied of in Matt. xxiv. 21 ff., viz. the great time of trouble which shall be before the Lord's second coming. As such, it is immediately connected with **I come quickly** following), **to try them that dwell upon the earth** (see ch. viii. 13, &c., where the expression applies to those who are not of the church of Christ. In this great trial, the servants of Christ shall be kept safe, ch. vii. 3. The trial of the *temptation* will operate in two ways: on the faithful, by bringing out their fidelity; on the unfaithful and unbelieving, by hardening them in their impenitence, see ch. ix. 20, 21, xvi. 11, 21.

The Expositors have in many cases gone away from this broad and obvious meaning here, and have sought to identify the *hour of temptation* with various periods of trial and persecution of the *Church*: a line of interpretation carrying its own refutation with it in the very terms used in the text. Thus Grotius understands it of the persecution under Nero; Lyra, of the future increase of that under Domitian, which was raging as the Apostle wrote: others, of those under Trajan: others again, of the troubles which should arise on account of Antichrist, which is nearer the mark).

11.] I come quickly (these words, which in different senses and with varying references form the burden of this whole book, are here manifestly to be taken as an encouragement and comfort to the Philadelphian church, arising from the nearness

of the Lord's coming to reward her; compare **thy crown** below): **hold fast that which thou hast** (this, in the language of these Epistles, imports any advantage, or progress in grace, already possessed; compare ch. ii. 6, "*This thou hast, that*".... This is regarded as a treasure, to be firmly grasped, as against those who are ever ready to snatch it away. In this case it was a rich treasure indeed: compare vv. 8, 10), **that no one take** (snatch away: but here the figure stops: it is not *for himself* that the robber would snatch it, but merely to deprive the possessor. So we have, to "*take peace out of the earth*," ch. vi. 4) **thy crown**.

12.] The reward of the conqueror. **He that conquereth, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God** (i. e. he shall have a fixed and important place in the glorified church hereafter. That this, and nothing referring to any honour or dignity in the church militant, or in that as leading on to the church triumphant is intended, is manifest from the whole diction of this passage, as well as from comparing the corresponding promises, which all refer to the blessings of the future state of glory. It is no objection to this view, that in the heavenly Jerusalem there is no temple, ch. xxi. 22: but rather a corroboration of it. That glorious city is all temple, and Christ's victorious ones are its living stones and pillars. Thus as Düsterdieck well remarks, the imagery of the church militant, 1 Cor. iii. 16 ff.; Eph. ii. 19 ff.; 1 Pet. ii. 5 ff., is transferred to the church triumphant, but with this difference, that the saints are no longer the stones merely, but now the pillars themselves, standing in their immovable firmness. On **my God**, see note on ch. ii. 7), **and out of it he shall never more go out** (the subject is not the *pillar*, but *he that conquereth*; and the sense, that he who is thus fixed in his eternal place as a pillar in the heavenly temple, will never more, from any cause, depart from it. Those Commentators who have understood the promise of the church *militant*, have been obliged to take the *going out* as passive, shall not *be cast out*. Lyra takes it in both senses—"neither by apostasy, nor by excommunication." And. thus except that the latter word will have no place, we may well understand the general term here used: none shall thrust him out, nor shall he be any more in danger of falling, and thus thrusting himself out. It is well worth noticing the recorded fact, that Philadelphia was notorious for calamities by earthquake. The language in which Strabo describes this is remarkable in connexion with this promise of the pillar which should not be moved: "Philadelphia cannot trust to its walls, but day by day they are more or less shaken and crack. And the inhabitants always take into account these accidents of their land, and build with reference to its character." And still more so in another place: "The city of Philadelphia is full of earthquakes; the walls are constantly cracking, and some part or other of the city is always in trouble, wherefore the inhabitants are scanty." Tacitus tells us, that in the reign of Tiberius, when the twelve cities of proconsular Asia were overthrown by an earthquake, Philadelphia suffered, and was in consequence excused its taxes, and in common with the others entrusted to a senatorian commissioner to repair): **and I will write upon him** (the conqueror; not the pillar) **the name of my God** (some think of the mitre breastplate of the high priests, on which was inscribed "Holiness to the Lord," Exod. xxviii. 36.

But this does not seem applicable here, where, from this and the following particulars, it is rather a blessed belonging to God and the holy city and Christ, that is imported, than the priestly office of the glorified Christian), **and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which descendeth out of heaven from my God** (on the whole, see ch. xxi. 2, 3, and notes. It is *possible*, that the name Jehovah Shammih, Ezek. xlvi. 35, may be meant; but hardly probable, seeing that the Holy Name itself has before been mentioned as inscribed

on him. The inscription of the name of the city would betoken citizenship),—**and mine own new name** (not the name mentioned ch. xix. 16, which is known and patent, but that indicated ch. xix. 12, “*which none knoweth but Himself*”)

for this is clearly pointed at by the word **new**. By the inscription on him of this new name of the glorified Saviour is declared, that he belongs to Him in His new and glorious state of eternal rest and triumph).

13.] See above, ch. ii. 7.

14–22.] THE EPISTLE TOT THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA. **And to the angel** (not, the bishop or ruler, see on ch. i. 20) **of the church in Laodicea write; These things saith the Amen** (see Isaiah. Christ is the Amen, inasmuch as His words shall never pass away, but shall find certain ratification. This, and not, the particular case which is treated in 2 Cor. i. 20, seems to be the reference here, where not the ratification of promises merely, but general fidelity and certainty are concerned: as Arethas says, “This is the same as *these things saith the true One*: for Amen means yea. There is then *yea* in all things said of Him; i. e., all is truth, and none a lie”), **the faithful and true witness** (there does not seem in this title to be any allusion to the prophecies which are about to follow in ch. iv. ff. as some have imagined. Far rather does it substantiate the witness borne in the Epistle itself, as we have seen in the case of the other introductions), **the beginning of the creation of God** (see Col. i. 15, and note. In Him the whole creation of God is begun and conditioned: He is its source and primary fountain-head. The mere word **beginning** would admit the meaning that Christ is the first-created being: see Gen. xlix. 3; Deut. xxi. 17; and Prov. viii. 22. And so the Arians here take it, and some who have followed them. But every consideration of the requirements of the context, and of the Person of Christ as set forth to us in this book, is against any such view. Dürsterdieck asks the questions, “How could Christ write if it were only this present Epistle, if He were himself a creature? How could every creature in heaven and earth adore Him, if He were one of themselves [ch. xix. 10]? We need only think of the appellation of our Lord as the Alpha and Omega [ch. xxii. 13: compare i. 8] in its necessary fulness of import, and we shall see that in the Alpha lies the necessity of His being the **beginning** of the Creation, in the Omega that of His coming to bring the visible creation to an end”): **I know thy works, that** (see above, ver. 1, where the construction is the same: I have thy whole course of life before me, and its testimony is, that...) **thou art neither cold nor hot** (the peculiar use of the similitude of physical cold and heat here, makes it necessary to interpret the former of the two somewhat differently to its common acceptation: so that while **hot** [compare Rom. xii. 11] keeps its meaning of *fervent*, warm and earnest in the life of faith and love, **cold** cannot here mean “dead and cold,” as we say of the listless and careless professor of religion:

for this is just what these Laodiceans were, and “what is expressed by the word rendered **lukewarm** below. So that we must, so to speak, go further into coldness for the meaning of **cold**, and take it as signifying, not only entirely without the spark of spiritual life, but also and chiefly, by consequence, openly belonging to the world without, and having no part nor lot in Christ’s church, and actively opposed to it. This, as well as the opposite state of spiritual fervour,

would be an intelligible and plainly-marked condition: at all events, free from that danger of mixed motive and disregarded

principle which belongs to the lukewarm state: inasmuch as a man in earnest, be he right or wrong, is ever a better man than one professing what he does not feel. This necessity of interpretation

here has been much and properly pressed by some of the later Commentators, but was by the older ones very generally

missed, and the coldness interpreted of the mere negative absence of spiritual life): **would that thou wert cold or hot: so** (expresses the actual relation of facts to the wish just expressed, as not fulfilling it: “seeing that this is not so”) **because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I shall soon spue thee out of my mouth** (it being the known effect of the taking of lukewarm water, to produce vomiting).

I shall soon is a mild expression, carrying with it a possibility of the determination being changed, dependently on a change in the state of the church).

17, 18.] In these verses, the *lukewarmness* is further expanded, as inducing miserable unconsciousness of defect and need, and empty self-sufficiency. And the charge comes in the form of solemn and affectionate counsel. **Because** (forms the reason of *I advise* below: *seeing that*) **thou sayest [that] I am rich, and am become wealthy, and have need in nothing** (the three expressions form a climax: the first giving the act of being rich, the second the process of having become so [in which there is not merely outward fact, but some self-laudation: see Hosea xii. 8], the third the result, self-sufficingness. From the whole

context it is evident that not, as many have imagined, outward worldly wealth, but imagined spiritual riches, are in question. The imagined spiritual self-sufficingness was doubtless the natural growth of an outwardly prosperous condition: but the great self-deceit of which the Lord here complains was not concerning worldly wealth, which was a patent fact, but concerning spiritual, which was a baseless fiction), **and knowest not that thou** (emphatic; “thou, of all others;” corresponding to the use of the articles below) **art the wretched and the pitiable one** (in both cases, as distinguished above others, as the person to whom above all others the epithets belong. And these epithets are especially opposed to the idea that there was no want of any thing), **and poor and blind and naked** (observe, the counsel which follows takes up these three points in order, thereby bringing them out as distinct from and not subordinate to the two preceding), **I advise thee** (there is a deep irony in this word. One who *has need of nothing*, yet needs counsel on the vital points of self-preservation) **to buy** (at the cost only of thy good self-opinion. That a *pauper* should be advised to *buy gold and raiment, and ointment*, might of itself shew what kind of buying is meant, even if Isa. Iv. 1, “*Nay, without money and without price,*” had not clearly defined it. Yet notwithstanding such clear warning

not to go wrong, the Roman-Catholic expositors have here again handled the word of God deceitfully, and explained, as Lyra, “Buy, ie. with good works;” Cornelius-a-lapide, “The word *buy* signifies

that a man must do many things and contribute many things in order to be fit to receive these gifts from God.” The term, in fact, continues the irony. “All this lofty self-sufficiency must be expended in the labour of getting from Me these absolute necessities.” So most of the later expositors. So even the Roman-Catholic Stern, but disguising the truth under an appearance of *some* price being given: “What is the price? Has not the Lord Himself said that she is poor and pitiable and naked and wretched? She must give up her heart to Christ, her feelings, thoughts, and active work; must entirely give up herself to the Lord for His own possession, Matt. xiii. 45, 46”) **gold from me** (who am the source of all true spiritual wealth, Eph. iii. 8) **[fresh] burnt from the fire** (the **from** gives the sense of being just fresh from the burning or smelting, and thus not only tried by the process, but bright and new from the furnace. This is better than, with many Commentators, to make the **from** almost equivalent to *by*, signifying the source from which the *burning* comes.

In the interpretation, this gold represents all spiritual *wealth*, in its sterling reality, as contrasted with that merely imaginary sort on which the Laodiceans prided themselves. It is narrowing it too much to interpret it as *charity*, or *faith*, or indeed any one spiritual grace, as distinguished from the sum total of them all), **that thou mayest be** (literally, mayest have become, viz., by the purchase) **rich; and white garments** (Düsterdieck rightly remarks that the white garments are distinct from the gold only in being a different image in the form of expression, not really in the thing signified. On the meaning, see ver. 4, ch. vii. 14, xix. 8. The lack of *righteousness*, which can be only bought from Christ, and that at the price of all fancied righteousness of our own, is just as much a *poverty* as the other), **that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest** (the choice of the word seems as if some particular time were in view when such manifestation would take place. If we are to assign one, it will naturally be that of the Lord’s coming, when “*we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ,*” 2 Cor. v. 10: when the Lord of the Church will come to see his guests, and all not clad in the wedding robe will be cast out, Matt. xxii. 11 ff.); **and collyrium** (eye-salve; the use of which is apparent from what follows. The *collyrium* was so called from its shape, being a stick or roll of ointment for the eyes, in the shape of a bread-cake) **to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see** (in the spiritual interpretation, this collyrium will import the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which, like the gold of His unsearchable riches, and the white garment of His righteousness, is to be obtained from Him, John xvi. 7, 14; Acts ii. 33; and also at the price of the surrender of our own fancied wisdom. The analogy of 1 John ii. 20, 27 is not to be overlooked: see notes at those places).

19.] Importing that these rich proofs of Christ’s love are only to be sought by such as the Laodiceans in the way of rebuke and chastisement: and reciprocally, as tending not to despair, but to encouragement, that rebuke and chastisement are no signs of rejection from Christ, but of His abiding and pleading love, even to the lukewarm and careless. **I** (emphatically prefixed: I, for my part: it is one of My ways, which are unlike men’s ways), **as many as I love** (not, as Grotius, “meaning those whom T have determined

only not to cast out and abjure;”

but in its fullest and most blessed sense. Nor is the assertion addressed only to the better portion of the church, but to all, as a gracious call to repentance; as is evident from the words next following), **I rebuke and chasten** (the *rebuking*, the convincing of sin, producing conviction, is a portion of the Lord’s chastening: the latter may extend very much wider than the former, even to judgments and personal infliction, which, however they may subserve

the purpose of *convicting*, are not, properly speaking, part of it. “*Rebuke* pertains to words, *chastisement* to stripes.” Ansbert); **be zealous then** (in thy habit of Christian life), **and repent** (begin that life of zeal by an act, decisive and effective, of change of purpose, Change of purpose must, in the fact, precede *zeal*, which is the effectual working in a man’s life of that change of purpose).

20.] Behold, I stand at the door, and knock (the reference to Sol. Song, v. 2, is too plain to be for a moment doubted: and if so, the interpretation must be grounded in that conjugal relation between Christ and the church,—Christ and the soul,—of which that mysterious book is expressive. This being granted, we may well say, that the vivid depiction of Christ *standing at the door* is introduced, to bring home to the lukewarm and careless church the truth of His constant presence, which she was so deeply forgetting. His *knocking* was taking place partly by the utterance of these very rebukes, partly by every interference in judgment and in mercy. Whenever His hand is heard, He is knocking the door. But it is not His hand only that may be heard: see below): **if any man hear my voice** (here we have more than the mere sound of his knock: He speaks. See Acts xii, 13 f., “*As Peter knocked at the door*”... “*when she knew Peter’s voice.*”—In that case we must conceive Rhoda to have asked, “Who is there?” and Peter to have answered, It may not be uninstructive to fill up this connexion in a similar manner. “It is I,” is an answer the soul may often hear, if it will enquire the reason of an unexpected knock at the door of its slumbers; or we may compare Sol. Song, v. 2, “*It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me*”), **and open the door** (literally, “shall have heard,” “shall have opened:” but it would be pedantry thus to render in our language. On the sense, see Sol. Song, v. 6.

Our verse is a striking and decisive testimony to the practical freedom of our will to receive or reject the heavenly Guest: without the recognition of which, the love and tenderness of the saying become a hideous mockery.

We then open the door to Christ, when we admit Him, His voice, His commands, His example, to a share in our inner counsels and sources of action. To say that this can be done *without* His grace, is ignorance: to say it is done only by that grace irresistibly exerted, is far worse,—it is, to deprive His gracious pleadings of all meaning), **I will enter in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with me** (the imagery is taken from the usages of intimate hospitality. But whereas in these it would be merely the guest who would sup with the host who lets him in, here the guest becomes himself the host, because He is the bread of life, and the Giver of the great feast of fat things and of the great marriage supper [Matt. viii. 11, xxv. 1 ff.; Rev. xix. 7, 9]. St. John is especially fond of reporting these sayings of reciprocity which our Lord uttered; compare John vi. 56 [x. 38], xiv. 20, xv. 4, 5, xvii. 21, 26. This blessed admission of Christ into our hearts will lead to His becoming our guest, ever present with us and sharing in all our blessings—and, which is even more, to our being ever in close union with Him, partaking ever of His fulness, until we sit down at His table in His Kingdom).—**He that conquereth** (see above, ch. ii. 26, and ver. 12, for the construction), **I will give to him to sit**

(in the blessed life of glory hereafter: such promises cannot be regarded, as this by some, as partially fulfilled in this life: for thus the following analogy, “*as I also, &c.*” would fail) **with me** (compare Johu xvii. 24) **on my throne** (have a share in My kingly power, as ch. ii. 27, xx. 6), **as I also conquered, and sat down with my Father on His throne** (the past tenses refer to the historical facts of the Resurrection and Ascension. By the latter, Christ sat down at the right hand of God, or of the throne of God, as Heb. xii. 2. No distinction must be made between the throne of the Father, on which Christ sits, and that of Christ, on which the victorious believer is to sit with Him: they are one and the same, called “*the throne of God and the Lamb,*” ch. xxii. 1; and the glory of the redeemed will be a participation in it of the Father and the Son, John xvii. 22).—Doubtless the occurrence of this, the highest and most glorious of all the promises, in this place, is to be explained

not entirely from any especial aptness to the circumstances of the Laodicean church, though such has been attempted

to be assigned [e. g. by Ebrard—because the victory over lukewarmness would be so much more difficult than that in any other case], but also from the fact of its occurring at the end of all the Epistles, and as it were gathering them all into one. It must not be forgotten too, that the words, **I sat down with my Father on His throne**, form a link to the next put of the book, where we soon, ch. v. 5, 6, read, **And I saw in the midst we ‘the throne... a Lamb standing, as it were slain.**

22.] See on ch. ii. 7.

From this point begins the Revelation proper, extending to the end of the book. And herein we have a first great portion, embracing chapp. iv.—xi., the opening of the seals and the sounding of the trumpets. But preparatory to both these series of revelations, we have described to us in chapp. iv. v., the heavenly scenery which furnishes the local ground for these visions, Of these, ch. iv. is properly the scene itself: ch. v. being a further unfolding of its details with a view to the vision of the seals which is to follow. So that we have,—

Revelation: Chapter 4

CH. IV. 1-11.] THE VISION OF GOD’ S PRESENCE IN HEAVEN. “Decrees respecting the fortunes of the future vest with God, and from Him comes the revelation of them through Jesus Christ, Hence the Revelation begins with the imparting to the Apostle, through Christ, of the vision of God’s presence.” De Wette.

1.] After these things (or, “*after this,*”—is a formula frequently occurring in this book, and nowhere indicating a break in the

ecstatic state of the Seer, but only the succession of separate visions. Those are mistaken, e.g. Bengel, Hengstenberg, who imagine an interval, here and in the other places, during which the Seer wrote down that which had been previously revealed to him. The whole is conceived as imparted in one continuous revelation consisting of many parts. See below on ver. 2) **I saw** (not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of ecstatic vision, as throughout the book. He is throughout *in the Spirit*. It is not *I looked*, as in A.V.: not the directing of the Seer's attention which discovers the door to him, but the simple reception of the vision which is recorded), **and, behold, a door set open** (not, *was opened*, us A, V. which gives the idea that the Seer witnessed the act of opening. For the same reason the word "*opened*" is objectionable, as it may be mistaken for the past tense of the neuter verb *to open*) **in heaven** (notice the difference between this vision and that in Ezek. i. 1; Matt. iii. 16; Acts vii. 56, x. 11. In those, the heaven itself parts asunder, and discloses the vision to these below on earth: here the heaven, the house or palace of God [Ps. xi. 4, xviii. 6, xxix. 9], remains firmly shut to those on earth, but a door is opened, and the Seer is rapt in the Spirit through it. Henceforth usually he looks from the heaven down on the earth, seeing however both alike, and being present in either, as the localities of his various visions require): **and the former voice** (much confusion has been introduced here by rendering,

as A.V., "*the first voice which*," &c., giving the idea that it means, *first after* the door was seen set open; whereas it is *the voice which I heard at first*, viz. in ch. i, 10) **which I heard** (at the beginning) **as of a trumpet speaking with me** (viz. ch. i. 10. This clause is not predicative, "*was as...*" as A.V. and Treg. The construction simply is—"behold, a door... and the voice...", both clauses being dependent on "**behold**."—The voice is not that of Christ, but of some undefined heavenly being or angel. As Düsterdieck observes, all we can say of it is that it is the *same voice* as that in ch. i. 10, which there, ver. 17, is followed by that of our Lord, not "*as of a trumpet*," but "*as of many waters*," as stated by anticipation in ver. 15), **saying, Come up hither** (viz. through the opened door), **and I will shew thee** (it is surprising

how Stier can allege this **I will shew thee** as a proof that the Lord Himself

only can be speaking: compare ch. xxi. 9, 10, xxii. 8, 9, which latter place is decisive against him) **the things which must** (of prophetic necessity) **take place after these things** (so literally: viz., the things now present: as in ch. i. 19, but the *things* not being the same in the two cases. So that **after these things** has very much the general meaning given by the "*hereafter*" of the A.V.: this clause corresponds to "which are about to happen after these things" of ch. i. 19).

2.] Immediately I was (became) **in the Spirit** (i. e. I experienced a new accession of the Spirit's powerful influence, which transported me thither: "I was in a trance of ecstasy:" see on ch. i. 10. It is hardly credible that any scholar should have proposed to understand "*there*" after **was**, "*immediately I was there in the Spirit*:" but this was done by Züllig, and has found an advocate in England in Dr. Maitland): **and, behold, a throne stood** (the A.V. "*was set*," gives too much the idea that the placing of the throne formed part of the on: "*lay*" would be our best word, but we do not use it of any thing so lofty as a throne. I have therefore adopted **was there**, as best, indicating mere position) **in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting** (called henceforward throughout the book, **He that sitteth upon the throne**, and being the Eternal Father [not as Lyra, *the Three-One God*; for He that sitteth on the throne is distinguished in ch. vi. 16, vii. 10 from the Son, and in ver. 5 from the Holy Spirit]: see ch. vii. 10, xix. 4, where we read expressly "*to God that sitteth upon the throne*." So that it is not for the reasons sometimes suggested, that the Name is not expressed: e.g. on account of the Jewish unwillingness to express the sacred Name: or, that the mind has no figure and the tongue no word by which to express it. The simple reason seems to be, as assigned by Hengstenberg and Düsterdieck, that St. John would describe simply that which he saw, *as he saw it*. For the same reason he does not name Christ expressly in the first vision, ch. i. 13); **and he that sat** (no need to supply "*was*:" the nominatives are all correlative after **behold**) **like in appearance** (lit. "*in vision*," "*in sight*," as A.V. in the next clause) **to a jasper and sardine stone** (the **jasper** appears to have been a beautiful stone of various wavy colours, semi-opaque, granulous in texture, used in ancient times for gems and ornaments, but in more modern ones on a larger scale for pavements

and tables. The altar in Canterbury

Cathedral stands on a platform of yellow jasper pavement, 30 feet by 14 feet. The **sardine** is a red stone, commonly supposed to answer to our cornelian. But Epiphanius, in his treatise on the twelve stones in Aaron's breastplate, says of it, that it is a Babylonian stone, blood red in colour, like the gleam of the **sardine** fish when pickled, and semi-opaque. Several of the Commentators have said much on the symbolic significance of these stones as representing the glory of God. Thus much only seems, in the great uncertainty and variety of views, to stand firm for us: that if the **jasper** is to be taken as in ch. xxi. 11, as, by the reference there to *the glory of God* it certainly seems it must, then it represents a watery crystalline brightness, whereas the **sardine** is on all hands acknowledged

to be fiery red. Thus we shall have ample material for symbolic meaning: whether, as some take it, of the one great judgment by water [or of baptism], and the other by fire,—as others, of the goodness

of God in nature [jasper being taken as *green*] and His severity in judgment,—as Ansbert, of the divinity and humanity

[because His humanity at the time of His passion was tinged with blood], &c., or as the moderns mostly, of the holiness of God and His justice. This last seems to me the more probable, especially as the same mixture

of white light with fire seems to pervade

the Old Testament and Apocalyptic visions of the divine majesty. Compare Ezek. i. 4, viii. 2; Dan. vii, 9: and our ch. i. 14, x. 1. But nothing can be confidently

asserted, in our ignorance of the precise import of the *jasper*): **and a rainbow**

(Gen. ix. 12–17; Ezek. i. 28) **round about the throne** (i. e. in all probability, surrounding the throne vertically, as a nimbus; not horizontally), **like to the appearance of an emerald** (on this name, in Greek “*smaragdus*,” all seem agreed, that it represents the stone so well known among us as the *emerald*, of a lovely green colour. Almost all the Commentators think of the gracious and federal character of the bow of God, Gen. ix. 12–17. Nor is it any objection to this that the bow or glory here is green, instead of prismatic: the *form* is that of the covenant bow, the colour even more refreshing and more directly symbolizing

grace and mercy, So far at least, we may be sure of as to the symbolism of this appearance of Him that sitteth on the throne: that the brightness of His glory and fire of His judgment is ever girded by, and found within, the refreshment and surety of His mercy and goodness. So that, as Düsterdieck says well, “This fundamental

vision contains all that may serve for terror to the enemies, and consolation to the friends, of Him that sitteth on the throne...”).

4.] The assessors of the enthroned One.—The construction after **behold** still continues. **And round the throne twenty-four thrones** (i. e.) evidently smaller thrones, and probably lower than **the throne**): **and upon the twenty-four thrones, elders sitting, clothed in white garments; and on their heads golden crowns** (these twenty-four elders are not *angels*, as maintained by some, as is shewn [not by ch. v. 9, as generally argued, even by Elliott, vol. i.p. 81 f.: see text there: but] by their white robes and crowns, the rewards of *endurance*, ch. iii. 5, ii. 10,—but *representatives of the Church*, as generally understood. But if so, what sort of representatives, and why twenty-four in number? This has been variously answered. The usual understanding has been that of our earliest Commentator, Victorinus; who says, “twelve Apostles, and as many Patriarchs.” And this is in all probability right in the main: the key to the interpretation being the *analogy with* the sayings

of our Lord to the Apostles, Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30. That those sayings do not regard the *same* session as this, is no argument against the inference from analogy. The Abbot Joachim brings against this view that the twelve patriarchs were not personally holy men, and never are held up as distinguished in the Old Testament. But this obviously is no valid objection. It is not the personal characters,

but the symbolical, that are here in question. It might be said with equal justice that the number of the actual Apostles is not definitely twelve. It is no small confirmation of the view, that in ch. xv. 3, we find the double idea of the church, as made up of Old Testament and New Testament saints, plainly revealed to St. John; for he heard the victorious saints sing *the song of Moses*, and *the song of the Lamb*. See also ch. xxi. 12, 14, where the twelve *gates* of the New Jerusalem are inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes, and its twelve *foundations* with those of the twelve Apostles. Various other interpretations are given in my Greek Test.).

5.] And out of the throne go forth (the tense is changed, and the narrative assumes the direct form, which, however, is immediately dropped again, and the accumulation of details resumed) **lightnings and voices and thunders** (the imagery seems to be in analogy with that in the Old Testament, where God’s presence to give his law was thus accompanied: Exod. xix. 16; where lightnings and voices occur in juxtaposition as here. If this idea be correct, then we have here represented the sovereignty and almightyess of God): **and seven lamps** (the former construction is resumed) **of fire burning before the throne [itself], which are the seven Spirits of God** (see notes on ch. i. 4, v. 6. These seem to represent the Holy Spirit in his sevenfold working: in his enlightening and cheering as well as his purifying and consuming agency. So most Commentators. De Wette and Ebrard regard the representation as that of the Holy Spirit, the principle of physical and spiritual life, which appears only wrong by being too limited. Hengstenberg is quite beside the mark in confidently [as usual] *confining* the interpretation of the lamps of fire to the consuming power of the Spirit in judgment. The fact of the parallel ch. v. 6 speaking of *seven eyes*, and such texts as ch. xxi. 23; Ps. cxix. 105, should have kept him from this mistake. The whole of this glorious vision is of a composite and twofold nature: comfort is mingled with terror, the fire of love with the fire of judgment): **and before the throne as it were a sea of glass** (not, “*glassy*,” as rendered by Elliott: the word describes not the appearance, but the material, of the sea: it appeared like a sea of glass—so clear, and so calm) **like to cystal** (and that not common glass, which among the ancients was, as we see from its remains, cloudy and semi-opaque, but like rock crystal for transparency and beauty, as Victorinus, “clear water, steady, unruffled by the wind.” Compare by way of contrast her that sitteth on the *many waters*, the multitudinous and turbulent waters, ch. xvii. 1.—In seeking the explanation of this, we must first track the image

from its Old Test. earlier usage. There, in Exod. xxiv. 10, we have in the Septuagint version, “*And they saw the place where the God of Israel stood: and that which was under His feet was as it were work of sapphire bricks, and as the appearance of the firmament of heaven in its purity.*” Compare with this Ezek. i. 22, “*And the likeness over the heads of the living beings themselves was as it were a firmament, stretched out over their wings above.*” In Job xxvii. 18 also, the sky is said to be “as a molten looking-glass.” If we are to follow these indices, the primary reference will be to the clear ether in which the throne of God is upborne: and the intent of setting this space in front of the throne will be, to betoken its separation and insulation

from the place where the Seer stood, and indeed from all else around it. The material and appearance of this pavement of the throne seem chosen to indicate majestic

repose and ethereal purity. All kinds of symbolic interpretations, more or less fanciful, have been given. See some of them specified in my Greek Testament). **And in the midst of the throne** (not, as Hengstenberg, *under* the throne: their movements are free, see ch. xv. 7. See below), **and round about the throne** (i. e. so that in the Apostle’s view they partly hid the throne, partly overlapped the throne, being symmetrically arranged with regard to it, i.e., as the number necessitates,

one in the midst of each side), **four living beings** (the A.V., “*beasts*,” is the most unfortunate word that could be imagined. A far better one is that now generally adopted, “*living-creatures*:” the only objection to it being that when we come to vv. 9, 11, we give the idea, in conjoining “*living-creatures*” and “*created*,” of a close relation which is not found in the Greek. I have therefore preferred *living-beings*, or, **beings**, which gives the same idea) **full of eyes before and behind** (this, from their respective positions, could be seen by St. John; their faces being naturally towards the throne. On the symbolism, see below). **And the first living-being like to a lion, and the second living-being like to a steer** (the Greek word is not necessarily to be pressed to its proper primary meaning,

as indicating the young calf in distinction

from the grown bullock: the Septuagint use it for an ox generally), **and the third living-being having its face as of a man** (or, **the face of a man**), **and the fourth living-being like to a flying eagle. And the four living-beings, each of them having six wings apiece. All round and within** (I prefer much putting a period at **apiece**, to carrying on the construction; as more in accord with the general style of this description.

Understand, after both *around*, and *within*,—**their wings**: the object of St. John being to shew, that the six wings in each case did not interfere with that which he had before declared, viz. that they were *full of eyes before and behind*. Round the outside of each wing, and up the inside of each [half-expanded] wing, and of the part of the body also which was in that inside recess) **they are full of eyes: and they have no rest by day and by night** (these words may belong either to “*have no rest*,” or to “*saying*.” I prefer joining it with the latter), **saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty** (so far is identical with the seraphim’s ascription of praise in Isa. vi. 3: **Almighty** answering usually, the Septuagint to *Sabaoth*, though not in that place), **which was, and which is, and which is to come** (see on ch. i. 8).

These four living-beings are in the main identical with the cherubim of the Old Test. [compare Ezek. i, 5–10, x. 20], which are called by the same name of living-creatures, and are similarly

described. We may trace however some differences. In Ezekiel’s vision, each living-being has all four faces, Ez. i. 6, whereas here the four belong severally, one to each. Again in Ezekiel’s vision, it is apparently the *wheels* which are full of eyes, Ezek. i. 18; though in ch. x. 12, it would appear as if the animals also were included. Again, the having *six* wings apiece is not found in the cherubim of Ezekiel, which have *four*, Ezek. i. 6,—but belongs to the seraphim described in Isa. vi. 2, to whom also [see above] belongs the ascription of praise here given. So that these are forms compounded out of the most significant particulars of more than one Old Test. vision.

In enquiring after their symbolic import, we are met by the most remarkable diversity of interpretation. 1) Our earliest Commentator, Victorinus, may serve as the type of those who have understood them to symbolize the Four Evangelists, or rather, *Gospels*:—“The animal like a *lion* is the Gospel according to Mark, in which the voice of a lion roaring in the desert is heard, the voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Under the figure of a *man*, Matthew strives to announce to us the generation of Mary from whom Christ received flesh. So while he enumerates from Abraham to David and Joseph, he has spoken as of a man. Therefore his preaching shews the effigy of a *man*. Luke, while he tells of the priesthood of Zacharias offering a victim for the people, and the angel appearing to him,—on account of the priesthood, and the description of the victim, is represented by an *ox*. And the Evangelist John, like an *eagle*, taking wing and hastening up to loftier things, treats of the Word of God.” I have cited this comment at length, to shew on what fanciful and untenable ground it rests. For with perhaps the one exception of the last of the four, not one of the Evangelists has any inner or substantial accordance with the character thus assigned. Consequently these characteristics are found varied, and that in the earliest writer whom the view can be traced, viz. Irenæus, who makes the lion to be the gospel of St. John; the steer that of St. Luke, as above; the man, that of St. Matthew; the eagle, that of St. Mark. So also Andreas. But again Augustine attributes the lion to St.

Matthew, the man to St. Mark, the steer to St. Luke, and the eagle to St. John. These notices may again serve to shew with what uncertainty the whole view is beset. It has nevertheless been adopted by Jerome, Primasius, Bede, and many others of old, and among the moderns by Williams [on the Study of the Gospels, pp. 1–92], Scott [Interpretation of the Apocalypse, p. 132, but making, as Augustine above, the lion, St. Matthew; the man, St. Mark; the ox, St. Luke; and the eagle, St. John], Wordsworth [Lectures on the Apocalypse, p. 116, who, as in his statements on the other details, so here, ascribes unanimity [see below!] to the ancients: “in them *the ancient church* beheld a figure of the four gospels,” suppressing also the fact of discrepancies in the application to the individual gospels], &c. The principal of the other interpretations prevalent among the ancients and moderns have been: 2) the 4 elements: 3) the 4 cardinal virtues: 4) the 4 faculties and powers of the human soul: 5) Our Lord in the fourfold great events of Redemption: 6) the 4 patriarchal-churches: the lion being Jerusalem, for its constancy; the ox, Antioch, for its obedience; the man, Alexandria, for its human learning; the eagle, Constantinople, for having produced the men of most elevated contemplation: and Cornelius-a-lapide, who adopts this, interprets the throne of God to be “the see of Rome, in which sits the lion of God:” 7) the 4 great Apostles, Peter, fervent as the *lion*: James the Lord’s brother, patient as the *ox*: Matthew, good as the *man*: Paul, always flying about as the *eagle*: 8) all the doctors of the church: 9) four orders of churchmen, pastors, deacons, doctors, contemplatives: 10) the 4 representatives of the New Test. church, as the four standards of the tribes Reuben, Judah, Ephraim, and Dan, which are traditionally thus reported [see also Num. ii.], were of the Old Test. church: 11) the 4 virtues of the Apostles, magnanimity, beneficence, equity, wisdom: 12) the 4 principal angels: 13) the angelic, or equal-to-angelic, state of the glorified church: so Elliott, vol. i.p. 87. But thus we have no account given of the peculiar symbolism of these living-beings, nor of the part which they perform in the act of praise below. There are many other interpretations

and ramifications of interpretation,

hardly worth recounting. But the one which above all these seems to me to require our notice is that which is indicated

in the rabbinical sentence cited by Schöttgen here: “There are four which hold pre-eminence in this world: man among all animals; the eagle among birds; the ox among cattle; the lion among beasts.” The four cherubic forms are the representatives of animated nature—of God’s sentient creation. In Ezekiel, each form is compounded of the four. Here, the four forms are distinct. There [xxviii. 12], where the prince of Tyrus is compared to one of them, it is called the impression of similitude, and the crown of beauty: in Isaiah vi. where the seraphim, which enter into the composition of these living-beings, ascribe holiness to Jehovah, they cry, “His glory is the fulness of the whole earth.” With this view every thing that follows is in accordance. For when these, and the 24 elders, in vv. 9–11, fall down before the throne, the part which these living-beings bear in the great chorus of praise is sufficiently indicated by the reason which they give for their ascription, viz. *for Thou art worthy, because Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created.* The objection brought against this view by Ebrard, viz. that Behemoth, the king of the waters, is not here represented,

is mere trifling. He forgets that in the record of creation, the noblest of the creatures sprung from the waters are not fishes, but birds; and that the eagle represents both. It is in strict accordance also with this view, that these living-beings are full of eyes, ever wakeful, ever declaring the glory of God: that they have each six wings, which doubtless are to be taken as in Isa. vi. from which the figure comes—“with twain he covered his face [*reverence*, in not venturing to look on the divine majesty], and with twain he covered his feet [*humility*, hiding his own created form from the glory of the Creator], and with twain he did fly [*obedience*, readiness

to perform the divine commands].” This view is taken by the best of the modern Commentators: by Herder, De Wette, Rinck, Hengstenberg, Düsterdieck. Ebrard differs only in this, that he regards them as symbolic not of creation itself, but of the creative power of God. Stern, whose commentary on this whole passage is very able and beautiful, inclines rather to take them as representing the power of divine grace within the church of God: but in his usual interpretation treats them as “the whole creative-life of nature.” See also my Hulsean Lectures for 1841, vol. i. Lecture ii.

We have thus the throne of God surrounded by His Church and His animated world: the former represented by the 24 elders, the latter by the four living-beings.

9–11.] *The everlasting song of praise of creation in which the church joins.* It is well observed by Düsterdieck, that the ground of this ascription of praise is not *redemption*, which first comes in at ch. v. 9 ff.,—but the power and glory of God as manifested in Creation; so that the words of the elders are in beautiful harmony with the praise of the four living-beings, and with the signification of the whole vision. **And whosoever the living-beings shall give** (the future must not be pressed quite so strongly as is done by De Wette [so also Stern], “from henceforth for all the time to come: see ch. vii. 15 ff.: beforetime it was not so, seeing that the 24 elders have only assumed their place since Christ’s work of Redemption has been proceeding and His victory developing.” Still, it has a distinct pointing onward towards the future, implying eternal repetition of the act) **glory and honour** (i. e., recognition of His glory and honour) **and thanksgiving** (i. e., actual giving of thanks) **to Him that sitteth upon the throne, to Him that liveth to the ages of the ages, the twenty-four elders shall fall down before Him that sitteth upon the throne, and shall worship Him that liveth to the ages of the ages** (ch. v. 8, xix. 4), **and shall cast**

down their crowns (to disclaim all honour and dignity of their own, and acknowledge that all belongs

to Him. Instances of casting down crowns are cited by the Commentators. Tacitus relates that Tiridates advanced to the image of Nero, took his crown from his head and threw it down at the feet of the image) **before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord and our** (Düsterdieck

remarks that the **our** has a force here peculiarly belonging to the 24 elders, as representing the redeemed, and thus standing in a covenant relation to God nearer than that of the 4 living-beings. But we must not forget, that Creation is only a part of Redemption, Col. i. 20) **God, to receive the glory** (the *glory&c.*, as alluding to the *glory&c.* ver. 9, ascribed by the living-beings. The articles

are improperly omitted in the A.V.) **and the honour and the might** (observe that **the might**, in the mouth of the 24 elders, represents *thanksgiving* in that of the 4 living-beings, The elders, though themselves belonging to creation, in this ascription of praise look on creation from without, and that *thanksgiving*, which creation renders for its being, becomes in their view a tribute to Him who *called them into being*, and thus a testimony to His creative power. And thus the reason follows): **because Thou didst create all things** ("this universal whole," the universe),

and on account of Thy will (i. e., beemise Thou didst will it: "*for thy pleasure,*" of the A.V., introduces an element entirely strange to the context, and, however true in fact, most inappropriate

here, where the **because** renders a reason for the worthiness to receive the glory, honour, and power) **they were** (not exactly *came into being*: for this the word

cannot signify: nor again, though thus the requirement of the *word* would be satisfied, *were*, in thy decree from eternity, before they were created: nor again as Bengel, "all things *were*, from the creation

down to the time of this ascription of praise and henceforward." The best explanation is that of Düsterdieck, *they existed*, as in contrast to their previous non-existence: whereby not their *coming into being*, but the simple fact of their being, is asserted. A remarkable reading of some of our MSS. is worth notice: "by reason of Thy will they **were not**, and were created?" i.e., "they were created out of nothing"), **and were created** (they both had their being—and received it from Thee by a definite act of Thine).

Revelation: Chapter 5

CH. V. 1–14.] *The book with seven seals*, containing *the things which must happen after these things*, which the Seer was to be shewn, ch. iv. 1. *None found worthy to open it but the Lamb, who takes it for this purpose, amidst the praises of the heavenly host, of the church, and of the creation of God.*

1.] The sealed book. **And I saw** (notice, that from the general vision, in the last chapter, of the heavenly Presence of God, the scene is so far only changed that, all that remaining as described, a particular incident is now seen for the first time, and is introduced by **And I saw**) (lying) **on the right hand** (i. e. the right hand was open, and the book lay on the open hand. So in ch. xx. 1, where see note. The common rendering, *in* the right hand, misses this sense. The lying on the open hand imports that *on God's part* there was no withholding of His future purposes as contained in this book. The only obstacle to unsealing it was as follows, ver. 3) **of Him that sat upon the throne a book** (i. e., "a roll of a book," as in Ezek. ii. 9 f. This explanation alone will suit the meaning of the word as applied

to the contemporary practice regarding sacred writings. See also Jer. xxxvi.

2, 23; Zech. v. 2: and below) **written within and behind** (such scrolls, written not only, as commonly, on the inner side, but also on the outer, which, to one reading the inner, was *behind* [see below], are mentioned by Pliny, Lucian, Juvenal, and Martial. This writing, within and without, so that the whole roll was full, seems to betoken the *completeness* of the contents as containing the divine counsels: there was no room for addition to that which was therein written. This would be of itself a sufficient reason for the *fulness* of the scroll. To see two *divisions of written matter* indicated, by the writing within, and by that on the back, correspondent to one another, seems hardly warranted by the text), **fast-sealed with seven seals** (not, consisting of seven writings, each sealed with one seal, as various Commentators hold: but one book, fastened with seven seals, which were visible to the Apostle. Various ingenious methods have been imagined, by which the opening of each of these seals may have loosened a corresponding portion of the roll. But they all proceed on the assumption that the roll in the vision was *unfolded*, which is nowhere to be gathered from the text. Nor have we any right to say that the separate visions which follow the opening of each seal are identical with *separate portions* of writing on the roll. These visions are merely symbolic representations of the progress of God's manifestation of the purpose of His will; but no portion of the roll is

actually unfolded, nor is any thing read out of the book. Not its contents, but the gradual stops of access to it, are represented by these visions. What is *in* that book, shall not be known, until there shall be known to the powers and authorities in the heavenly places, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10: till those material events, which marked the gradual opening of the sum of God's purposes, are all past, and the roll is contemplated in its completeness by the spirits of the glorified hereafter. This *completeness* is here set forth to us again by the mystic number

seven. There are some excellent remarks on the entire distinctness of *the opening of the seals*, and the *reading of the book*, in Cornelius-a-lapide: "For nothing in the book would be read, except after the opening

of all seven seals; for when all were opened, then at length the book could be opened and read, not before." So also Ribera: "Those calamities which were involved in the seals, were all to come, before the things which were written in the book appeared and were known."

Mr. Elliott, in his work "Apocalypse Alfordiana," specially directed against my commentary on this book, treats this view with all the scorn which is unfortunately so characteristic of him: calling it absurd, unscriptural, &c. He has not produced a word of proof, or even illustrative corroboration, of his own view, that the opening of each seal corresponds to the unrolling of a certain portion of the scroll: but has contented himself with re-asserting it in the strongest language, and pouring contempt on those who hold the other view. I grieve to say, that this is so often the case throughout his above-mentioned work, as to render it impossible for me, in many places, to meet his objections in argument. One who distrusts his own as well as all other explanations, and believes that much of this mysterious book is as yet unfathomed, is no match for one who hesitates not on every occasion to shew his confidence that he is in the right, and all who differ from him are wrong.

An enquiry here arises, *What is represented by this Book?* Opinions have been very various. 1) Some of our earliest Commentators understood by it the Old Testament: or the Old and New conjoined. It will appear from the extracts given in my Greek Test., that the opening of the seals was very generally by the earlier fathers and interpreters taken to mean, the fulfilment, and consequent bringing to light, of Old Test. prophecy by the events of Redemption as accomplished in the Person of our Lord. But, if so, then this view cannot consist with what follows in the Apocalypse. For manifestly the opening of the seals, as notified by the symbolic visions belonging to each, does not relate to things past, but to things which were yet future when this book was written. Nor can this apparent consensus of the early expositors be cited, as it has been e.g. by Dr. Adams, in support of any *other* view than theirs, in which this Book shall still represent the Old Test. Such for example is that of Dr. Adams himself, who regards the opening of the sealed Book as symbolizing a future republication of the genuine text of the Old Test., by which the Jewish people is to be converted. The untenability of this view appears at once, if only from [so to speak] its touching the apocalyptic course of visions at this point only, and finding no justification or expansion in any of the symbolic visions accompanying the opening of the seals. 2) Some have held the Book to be *Christ Himself*. But for the same reasons as above, neither can this be maintained. 3) Wetstein takes it to be "the writing of divorce written by God against the Jewish nation:" which for the same reason falls to the ground. 4) Schöttgen, the sentence pronounced by the Judge and His assessors against the enemies of the Church: and similarly, in the main, Hengstenberg: but this view, though strongly defended by Hengstenberg, is not borne out by the contents of these chapters. 5) Aleasar holds it to be that part of the Apocalypse which treats of the opening of the seven seals [ch. vi.—xi.]: and nearly so Hengstenberg also, except that he allows only from vi. 1 to viii. 1 for this portion. But both are obviously wrong, seeing that the opening of the seventh seal evolves a series of symbolic actions which only ends with the book itself. So that this comes to 6) the Book being the Apocalypse itself: so Cornelius-a-lapide, seeing in the seven seals that part relating to their opening, and after that regarding the subsequent visions concerning Antichrist and the end of the world, as the *contents of the book itself*. But he seems, in concluding his paragraph, to resolve this view into the wider one, 7) that the Book represents "the deliberation and decision of the Divine Providence, wherein God determined

with Himself to do or permit, &c." This is very nearly that of Arethas, Lyra, Vitringa, Mede, Ewald, De Wette, Stern, Düsterdieck, and others. And this is, in the main, my own view. We may observe, that it is in fact but a limitation of this meaning, when many understand the Book to contain the prophetic fortunes of the Church of Christ: but also that it is a limitation which has arisen from the mistake noticed above, of confounding the opening of the seals with the reading

of the contents of the book. Those successive openings, or if we will, the fortunes and periods of the Church and world, are but so many preparations for that final state of perfection in which the Lamb shall reveal to the Church the contents of the Book itself).

2.] And I saw a strong angel (the epithet **strong** is by no means superfluous, but corresponds to the *loud voice* below, which, as appears by what followed, penetrated heaven and earth, and Hadés. Compare ch. x. 1, 3 and notes) **proclaiming in a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals of it? and no one was able, in heaven, nor yet upon the earth, nor yet under the earth** (in Hadés, the place of departed spirits: not, in the *sea*), **to open the book, nor yet to look on it** (the looking on the book is an act subsequent to the opening it,—the looking on the book, with a view to read it. For the claim to open the book must be founded on a claim of worthiness to see that which was contained in it).

4.] And I (emphatic, ‘I, for my part’) **wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book, nor to look upon it** (it had been promised to him, ch. iv. 1, that he should be shewn future events: and now it seemed as if this promise were about to be frustrated by the lack of one worthy to open the book. There was no weakness of faith, as Hengstenberg fancies: indeed such a supposition is entirely

out of place here: St. John is in this book the simple *recipient* of the Apocalypse;

for *that* he is summoned to the heavenly scene, for *that* he is waiting in humility: but that now seems to be precluded,

and his tears burst forth in the earnestness of disappointed desire after the fulfilment of the promise. Christ, as the opener of the book, is not yet revealed to him: and to have him anticipating that revelation by the power of his individual faith, would be to put him out of his place and violate consistency).

5.] And one from among the elders (“some say,” says Lyra, “that it was Matthew the Evangelist, who said in the person of Christ, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and earth:’” he himself preferring *Peter*, who hind before this suffered martyrdom, and who was “one, that is first, among the Apostles.” But see the interpretation of the elders above, iv. 4. The elders, in their triumphant place round God’s throne, know better than the Evangelist, yet clothed with the infirmities of this earthly state, the nature and extent of the victory and glory of Christ.

It is the practice of the book to introduce the heavenly beings thus talking with the Seer: compare ch. vii. 13 f.; x. 4, 8 ff.; xvii. 1; xix. 9; xxi. 9, &c.; xxii. 8, &c.) **saih to me, Weep not: behold, the Lion which is from the tribe of Judah** (from Gen. xlxi. 9: the *lion*, as victorious: *from the tribe of Judah*, as the Messiah of promise, sprung from among the brethren of the Seer, and so carrying more comfort to him), **the Root of David** (from Isa. xi. 1, 10: i.e. the branch or sucker come up from the ancient root, and so representing it: not, as some, the divine root which brought forth David: for the evident design here is to set forth Christ as *sprung from* the tribe of Judah and lineage of David, and His victory as his exaltation through suffering, ver. 6), **conquered** (the A.V., “hath prevailed to open,” loses sight of the victory of Christ, and of the uniform sense in which the verb *to conquer* is constantly used in this book. The past tense must not be resolved into a perfect, but points to the past event of that great victory, by virtue of which the opening is in His power), **[so as] to open the book, and** (in order to that) **its seven seals.**

6.] The vision of the Lamb. And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living-beings, and in the midst of the elders (the words seem to indicate the middle point before the throne: whether on the glassy sea or not, does not appear: but certainly not *on* the throne, from what follows in the next verse), **a Lamb** (literally, **a little lamb**; the *diminutive*, as applied to our Lord, is peculiar to the Apocalypse. It is difficult to say what precise idea is meant to be conveyed by this form of the word. Elsewhere, we have another form: John i. 29, 36; 1 Pet. i. 19; Acts viii. 32: and as *that* is found in Isa. liii. 7, from which the figure here is taken, the alteration of the word appears to be purposely made. Possibly it may be to put forward more prominently the idea of meekness and innocence) **standing** (i. e. in its natural living position: the word is probably chosen on account of what immediately follows. Though as *if slain*, it was not lying, but standing) **as if slain** (i. e. retaining the appearance of death-wounds on its body: looking as if it had been slain: compare ch. i. 18. So the majority of Commentators. Ebrard is quite wrong in supposing that the **as if** has any emphasis on it: it merely serves to solve the apparent paradox lying in the juxtaposition of **standing** and **slain**), **having seven horns** (the horn is the well known emblem of might: compare 1 Sam. ii. 10; 1 Kings xxii. 11; Ps. cxii. 9, cxlviii. 14; Dan. vii. 1, 20 ff., viii. 3 ff.; ch. xvii. 3 ff. The perfect number **seven** represents that “all power is given unto Him in heaven and earth,” Matt. xxviii. 18) **and seven eyes, which (eyes) are the seven spirits of God sent forth into the whole earth** (i. e. which eyes represent the watchful active operation of God’s Spirit poured forth through the Death and by the victory of the Lamb, upon all flesh and all creation. As the seven burning lamps before the throne represented the Spirit of God immanent in the Godhead, so the seven eyes of the Lamb represent the same Spirit in his sevenfold perfection, profluent, so to speak, from the incarnate Redeemer: busied in His world-wide and world-long energy: the word used, *apestalmena*, reminding us of the *apostolic* work and church. Compare Zech. iv. 10: “*Those seven... they are the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth*”).

7.] The Lamb takes the Book. And he (or, it) came and took (not, ‘received,’ as Ebrurd. The book hy on the open hand of Him that sat on the throne, for any to take who was found worthy) **it** (i. e. the Book; compare next verse) **out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne** (Vitrunga’s enquiry, whether we are to imagine the Lamb to have had partly a human form and hands, is rightly dismissed by Düsterdieck as unneeded, and bespeaking want of tact).

8.] Song of praise following thereupon. And when he took (not, “when he had taken,” as A.V., but a pure past: the context, and not the word itself, indicating that the act to be described was subsequent to that thus expressed) **the book, the four living-beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb** (who shares the divine throne, and honour, and worship, ver. 13; ch. xxii. 1; and ch. iii. 21), **having each [of them]** (this apparently applies only to the elders: not for any grammatical reason, but on account of the symbolism: for

1) it is unnatural to suppose figures described as the four living-beings are, having harps or vials; and even if this is not to be pressed [see above on ver. 7], yet

2) it is inconsistent with the right view of the four living-beings, as representing creation, that they should present the prayers of the Saints) **a harp** (properly a zither or kind of guitar, played either with the hand, or with a plectrum or quill), **and golden vials** (cups, or bowls: or, by the context, censers) **full of incense, which** (vials: each vial being full of incense) **are** (represent) **the prayers of the saints** (see especially ch. viii. 3: Ps. cxl. 2, “*Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense.*” The twenty-four elders, representing as they do the whole church of God, are represented as offering the praises and the prayers of the whole church: the harps representing the former, the censers the latter. Of any thing approaching intercession on the part of the glorified saints for the church below, or indeed of the glorified saints at all, there is not the least mention, nor does this passage touch the question of the fact of such intercession. In the division of the two employments, the most of prayer falls to the lot of the church in trial, and the most of praise to the church in glory: and this is perhaps the reason why, while they have harps on which they themselves play, they only offer or present the vials of incense. De Wette remarks, that the Writer of the Apocalypse seems not to know any thing of the intercessory office of Christ. But that office is prominent through this whole scene. What is the Lamb as it had been slain—what the confession, “*Thou redeemedst us to God by Thy blood,*” but recognitions of it? It underlies the whole book): **and they sing** (why *present*)?

Is it because the sound still lingered

in his ears? Or more probably, as describing their special and glorious office generally, rather than the mere one particular ease of its exercise?) **a new song** (new, because the *occasion* was new; the manifestation of the worthiness of the Lamb calls forth fresh words springing from fresh and living thoughts. These words which follow could not be spoken except by those who had seen Christ’s redemption complete; therefore they must needs be new), **saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals of it: for Thou wast slain, and didst redeem** (the object is not expressed, nor need it be: see similar constructions, Matt. xxv. 8; 1 John iv. 13. The **us**, which is in the MSS, added or prefixed to the verb, has considerable authority, but on the whole seems more likely to have been inserted, considering the prevalent early interpretation of the elders as Apostles and Prophets, than omitted because they were imagined to be angels) **to God by** (literally,

in, as the vehicle, and conditioning element of redemption) **thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue and people and nation** (the only thing to be noticed is the quadruple *number* of these specifications, as indicating universality: see again below, ver. 13); **and madest them a kingdom and priests, and they reign upon the earth** (“this clause differs from that in ch. i. 6, both by the **and** before ‘priests,’ and by the important addition ‘*and they reign,*’ &c. Here we have three particulars: 1) that those who are bought to be God’s own are made into a kingdom, viz. God’s,—2) that they are made into priests,—3) that they are invested kingly power. So rightly Ebrard.”

Düsterdieck. The present tense, **they reign**, is not to be rendered as a future, but keeps its own meaning [the whole aspect and reference of this heavenly vision being *not future*, but *present*: the world and church as now existing, compare Eph. ii. 6]. The Church even now, in Christ her Head, reigns on the earth: all things are being put under her feet, as under His: and even if this meaning be questioned, we have her kingly rank and office asserted in the present, even in the midst of persecution and contempt).

11, 12.] *The assenting chorus of the host of angels.* **And I saw** (not in a general vague sense, introducing a fresh particular merely; but in its proper sense: John saw the host of angels whose voice he heard: compare ch. vi. 1 f.) **and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living-beings and the elders** (i. e. surrounding on all sides, in the more distant space, the smaller circle hitherto described. The Church, as the vehicle of the work of Redemption, of which Creation is but a part, is the central and crowning manifestation of God’s power and love and wisdom. Round it, and Him who is its Head, the heavenly hosts are ranged in humble admiration; and into its wonders they desire to look. Compare Eph. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12); **and the number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands** (i. e. innumerable in its vastness. See Ps. lxviii. 18, and Dan. vii. 10), **saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the “Lamb that hath been slain to receive** (by way of *ascribed praise*: see ch. iv. 11 and note) **the power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing** (here, as in ch. vii. 12, but in differing order, we have *seven* particulars of ascription. But here there is a difference both from ch. vii. 12 and iv. 11. In each of those places the article **the** is repeated before each particular: here, one article includes them all. Bengel well remarks, that we must regard them all as if they formed but one word. And when they are thus regarded, the article seems to point out the fact of all these, as one, belonging to God, whose power and glory the Lamb is declared worthy to share.

Of the particulars themselves, **riches** is better kept in its generality, all riches and fulness, than limited to *spiritual* riches; see 1 Chron. xxix. 11: **blessing** is in the sense so frequent when the word and its cognate verb are used of an act passing from man to God: viz. that of ascribed praise: the *will* on the part of the creature, though unaccompanied by the *power*, to return blessing for blessing conferred. The idea of Bengel, that the septenary number has to do with the seven seals, is hardly probable: the

number, as indicating completeness, running through the whole book).

13, 14.] *The chorus of assenting praise from Creation itself.* **And every creature** (i. e. by the very terms, animated creature: for heaven and earth and sea themselves are mentioned as the *abodes* of these creatures) **which is in the heaven** (the chorus being *universal*, this will include the angels, previously mentioned, and the glorified saints), **and on the earth, and under the earth** (i. e. not the devils, as even Vitringa: but as in Phil. ii. 10, the departed spirits in Hadés: see note there), **and upon the sea** (i. e. most probably, on the surface of the sea; meaning not those on ships, but those sea-animals which are regarded as being on the surface), **and the things in them** (so in Exod. xx. 11), **I heard all saying, Unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb** (the Church, including Creation, gives praise to the Lamb for Redemption, vv. 9, 10: the angels praise the infinite condescension of the Son of God: the entire universe celebrates the glory of the universal Father, and of the Redeemer, thence accruing) **be (or, is, belongs) the blessing and the honour and the glory and the might** (notice the fourfold arrangement where *universality* is set forth; and the repeated article, exhaustive of each predicate separately. It is fanciful, with Bengel, to allot the four ascriptions among the four classes of creatures above mentioned. In each case the number has the same signification: but they need not separately correspond) **to the ages of the ages.**

14.] *The solemn assent of the celestial representatives of Creation and of the Church.* **And [I heard] the four living-beings saying Amen** (as above, in ch. iv. 11, the four living-beings assert the worthiness of God to receive the glory and the honour and the power *on account of His having created* all things, so here they say their Amen to *creation's* chorus of praise: being themselves the representatives of the animated Creation). **And the**

elders fell down and worshipped (in silent adoration of God and of the Lamb).

Revelation: Chapter 6

CHAP. VI. 1—VIII 1.] THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS. As preliminary to the exposition of this section, I may observe that it is of the first importance to bear in mind, that the openings of these seals correspond to the various arrangements of God's Providence by which the way is prepared for the final opening of the closed book of His purposes to His glorified Church. That opening shall not fully and freely be made, till His people will know even as they are known. And that will not be, till they are fully gathered in to His heavenly garner. This book the Lamb opens, containing as it does matters which "no one knoweth, neither the angels which are in heaven, nor even the Son," first by the acts and procedures of His establishment of His reign over the earth, and then finally by His great second coming, the necessary condition of His elect being gathered out of the four winds into His glory. When these preparations for His coming have taken place, and that coming itself has passed, and the elect are gathered into glory, then will be the time when the last hindrance to our perfect knowledge will be removed, and the book of God's eternal purposes will lie open—the theme of eternity's praise.

I may add that, for the sake of perspicuity, I shall mainly follow, in these notes, the track of that interpretation which seems to me to be required; noticing only differences in those of other Commentators where absolutely necessary.

1-8.] *The opening of the first four seals*, marked by the ministration of the four living-beings.

1.] And I saw when the Lamb opened one from among the seven seals, and I heard one from among the four living-beings saying, as the voice of thunder (which is to be taken not as peculiarly belonging to this first as resembling a lion, but as belonging to all alike, and accounted for by their mysterious and exalted nature: compare ch. i. 10, x. 3), **Come** (to whom, and with what meaning is this spoken?). The great majority of Commentators have taken the received reading, which fixes it by adding "*and look*," or, "*and see*," as an address to the Seer, to approach nearer and look at the coming vision. And even those who have rejected this addition have yet regarded

it as a true gloss, and the "Come" as addressed to the Seer. But whither was he to come? Separated as he was by the glassy sea from the throne, was he to cross it? Compare the place where the Seer is to come and take the little book [ch. x. 8], and see how different is the whole form of expression. In interpreting so unusual a term of address, surely we should rather begin by enquiring whether we have not the key to it in the book itself. And in this enquiry, are we justified in leaving out of consideration such a verse as ch. xxii. 17, "*The Spirit and the Bride say Come* [the same word, and in the same number and Person] *and let him that hear eth say Come*," and the following "*Amen, Come, Lord Jesus,*" xxii. 22? This seems to shew, in my mind, beyond a doubt, what, in the mind of the Seer, this remarkable and insulated exclamation importeth. It a cry addressed, not to himself, but to the Lord Jesus: and as each of these four first seals is accompanied by a similar cry from one of the four living-beings, I see represented in this fourfold **Come** the groaning and travailing together of creation

for the manifestation of the sons of God, expressed in each case in a prayer for Christ's coming: and in the things revealed when the seals are opened, His fourfold preparation for His coming on earth. Then at the opening of the fifth seal the longing

of the martyred saints for the same great consummation is expressed, and at that of the sixth it actually arrives). **And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him having a bow; and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and in order that he may conquer** (in the first place, the figure of the horses and their riders at once brings to mind the similar vision in Zechariah, i. 7–11, vi. 1–8, where the men on the horses are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the whole earth. In Zech. i. as here, that part of the vision is followed, ver. 12, by the cry of the “*How long?*” Here the horses and their riders are the various aspects of the divine dispensations which should come upon the earth preparatory to the great day of the Lord’s coming. As regards this first, the whole imagery speaks of *victory*. The horses of the Roman commanders

in their triumphs were white. The *bow* serves to identify the imagery here with that in Habakkuk iii. 9, where God goes forth for the salvation of His people: see also Isa. xli. 2; Zech. ix. 13: and even more strikingly with that in Ps. xlv. 4, 5, “In thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.” It is hardly possible

that one whose mind was full of such imagery, should have had any other meaning

in his thoughts than that to which these prophecies point. The *crown* finds its parallel in the vision of Zech. vi., where, ver. 11, it is said, “Take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest.” The *going forth conquering and in order to conquer* can only, it seems to me, point to one interpretation. The *conquering* might be said of any victorious earthly power whose victories should endure

for the time then present, and after wards pass away: but the *in order that he may conquer* can only be said of a power whose victories should last for ever. Final and permanent victory then is here importated.

Victory, we may safely say, on the part of that kingdom against which the gates of hell shall not prevail: whose fortunes and whose trials are the great subject

of this revelation. Such is the first vision, the opening of the first seal in the mystery of the divine purposes: *victory for God’s church and people*: the great key-note, so to speak, of all the apocalyptic harmonies. And notice, that in this interpretation, there is no lack of correspondence

with the three visions which follow. All four are *judgments* upon the earth: the beating down of earthly power, the breaking up of earthly peace, the exhausting of earthly wealth, the destruction of earthly life. Nor is this analogy disturbed, when we come to enquire, *who is the rider* on this white horse. We must not, in reply, on the one hand, too hastily introduce the Person of our Lord Himself, or on the other, be startled at the objection that we shall be paralleling Him, or one closely resembling Him, with the far different forms which follow. Doubtless, the resemblance to the rider in ch. xix. 11 ff. is very close, and is intended to be very close. The difference

however is considerable. There, He is set forth as *present* in His triumph, followed by the hosts of heaven: here, He is working, in bodily absence, and the rider is not Himself, but only a symbol of His victorious power, the embodiment of His advancing

kingdom as regards that side of its progress where it breaks down earthly power, and makes the kingdom of the world to be the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. Further it would not be wise, nor indeed according to the analogy of these visions, to specify. In all cases but the last, these riders are left in the vagueness of their symbolic offices. If we attempt in this case to specify further, e.g. as Victorinus,

“The white horse is the word of preaching with the aid of the Holy Spirit sent forth into the world; for the Lord saith, This gospel shall be preached through all the world, for a testimony before the nations, and then shall the end come;”—while we are sure that we are thus far right, we are but partially right: we do not cover the extent of the symbol, seeing that there are other aspects and instruments of victory of the kingdom of Christ, besides the preaching of the Word. The same might be said of any other of the partial

interpretations which have been given by those who have taken this view. And it was taken, with divergences of separate detail, by all expositors from the earliest times down to the year 1500).

3, 4.] And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living-being saying, Come (see above on ver. 1). **And there came forth another horse, red** (the colour of blood. The colour of the horse in each case has reference to the employment of the rider), **and to him that sat upon him it was given to take away peace** (not “the peace left by the former seal,” for 1) the former seal neither implies nor leaves such peace, and 2) these four seals are strictly correlative, not consecutive on one another; but, peace *in its entirety* **out of the earth** (generally, as ever: not, Judæa, nor the Roman empire, nor any special portion merely) **and that they** (men: the inhabitants of the earth) **shall kill** (so literally: not only importing the result of purpose, but including also matter of fact, “that they may... which they also shall”) **one another: and there was given to him a great sword** (the key to the interpretation of this seal is to be found in Matt. x. 34 and parallels: “*Think not that I came to send peace upon the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword.*” It represents to us the taking away of peace from the earth, the slaying one another, the reign of the sword, as one of the destined concomitants of the growing and conquering power of Christ, and one of the world-long and world-wide preparations for His coming. Observe, all *limitations* of this meaning are wrong; whether to the persecutions of the Christians, or to any period of time, ancient or modern, The above was the most ancient interpretation; e.g. we have in Victorinus, “The red horse, and he that sat upon him having a sword, are future wars, as we read in the gospel, for nation shall rise against nation, &c.” Matt. xxiv. 7).

5, 6.] And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living-being saying, Come (see above on ver. 1). **And I saw, and behold a black horse** (the colour is indicative of the mournful nature of the employment of the rider: see below), **and he that sat on him having a balance** (the symbol of scarcity, during which the bread is doled out by weight: see Ezek. iv. 16, “*They shall eat bread by weight, and with care;*” and Levit. xxvi. 26, “*When I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight; and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.*” The meaning “yoke,” instead of **balance**, is one which in this connexion cannot be justified. On the import, see below) **in his hand. And I heard as it**

were (this qualification must apparently be taken with the whole clause—“something like [a voice in the midst of the four living-beings],” the uncertainty applying to the *situation*, not to its being a voice, which it *was*) **a voice in the midst of the four living-beings** (it is not specified, *whose* voice: but the point from which the voice comes is appropriate to its intent, which is to mitigate the woes of creation, represented by the four living-beings: see below), **saying** (Let there be) **A chœnix** (see below) **of wheat for a denarius, and three chœnices of barley for a denarius** (the sense seems to be, Take care that there be thus much food for thus much price. The denarius was the ordinary soldier’s pay for a day in the time of Tiberius [see note on Matt. xx. 2], and has been usually and not unfairly assumed to be twice mentioned here as representing a day’s wages. The chœnix appears in like manner to be taken for a day’s provision: for so it is used in several of the numerous places cited by the Commentators. Herodotus, in estimating the amount of food consumed by the army of Xerxes, assumes this: “I find by calculation,”

he says, “supposing that each consumed a chœnix a day and no more....” and similarly Thucydides, speaking of allowance made to the Lacedæmonians in Sphacteria while negotiations were going on. A proverb also is mentioned, “Don’t sit upon a chœnix,” meaning, “don’t confine your provision to the current day, a chœnix being an allowance for the day.” Nothing can be more decisive than such proverbial usage. The tendency of the voice is then to check or limit the agency of the rider on the black horse, and to provide that, notwithstanding his errand of famine, sustenance

shall not utterly fail. With regard

to the three chœnices of barley, the cheaper and less profitable grain, it seems to have been rightly interpreted as taking in the other case, of the workman who, out of his denarius a day, has to maintain not himself only, but his family also, and cannot consequently afford the dearer wheaten bread); **and the oil and the wine do not thou injure** (not, “do thou not commit injustice in the matter of the oil and the wine.” The usage of this book should have prevented such an interpretation: for the verb here used with the accusative of the material object hurt or injured is the constant habit of our Writer: and in no case do we find the other construction used by him, or indeed by any other writer to my knowledge. Rinck gives another meaning,

equally untenable, “waste not the oil and the wine,” seeing they are so costly.

As regards the meaning, the spirit of the saying is as explained above: the rider on the black horse, symbolizing Famine, is limited in his desolating action by the command given, that enough is to be reserved for sustenance. Wheat, barley, oil, and wine, formed the ordinary sources of nourishment: see Ps. civ. 14, 15. So that as regards its *intent*, the command is parallel with that saying of our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 22. It is the mercy of God, tempering His judgments. And in its general interpretation, as the opening of the first seal revealed the certain proceeding on to victory of Christ and His church, and the second, that His coming should be prepared in the world not by peace but by the sword, so now by this third we learn that Famine, the pressure of want on men, not sweeping them away by utter failure of the means of subsistence, but keeping them far below the ordinary standard of comfort, and especially those who depend on their daily labour, will be one of the four judgments by which the way of the Lord’s coming will be opened. This seems to point not so much to *death* by famine, which belongs to the next vision, as to agrarian distress with all its dreadful consequences: ripening in some cases [see below] into

the hunger-death, properly the consequence of Famine.

The above interpretation of the third seal is given in the main by Victorinus— “The black horse signifies famine: for the Lord saith, ‘*There shall be famines in places:*’” but he allegorizes the latter part of the vision: “*hurt not the oil and the wine,*” i.e., “strike not with plagues the spiritual man”).

7, 8.] And when he opened the fourth I heard [the voice of] the fourth living-being saying, Come (see above on ver. 1). **And I saw, and behold a livid horse** (the word, meaning originally and properly grass-green, when used of flesh implies that greenish pallor which we know as *livid*: the colour of the corpse in incipient decay, or of the complexion extremely pale through disease), **and he that sat upon him his name was Death** (i. e. he was death personified. In this case only of the four is the explanation given. It is wrong to understand Pestilence by *this death*: see below), **and Hadés** (the impersonation of the place of the departed: see ch. i, 18, xx. 14, where as here *Death and Hadés* go together. Eichhorn and Ebrard understand it of the whole multitude of the departed: but this clearly is beside the purpose: personification being the prevailing character of these four riders) **was following with him** (in his train: ready to engulf and detain his victims), **and there was given to them** (Death and Hadés, considered as joint partners in the baleful work) **power over the fourth part of the earth** (perhaps owing to the fourfold division of these former seals: not implying thereby that this last rider divided the earth with the three former, but thus specifying his portion as being one of four. At all events this suggests itself here as a possible reference of the number four: whereas in ch. viii. the continually recurring *third part* has no such assignable solution. The expositors for the most part pass it over, merely as signifying a considerable portion. Our principal English *historical* interpreter, with whose historical interpretation it will not square, takes refuge in the reading of the vulgate, “*over [the] four parts of the earth.*” But the reading cannot, for a moment be received on such authority; nor are we at liberty to arrange the sacred text so as to square with our preconceived systems) **to kill with sword and with famine and with death** (i. e. here, *pestilence*: see below), **and by (by**, seeing that the other three were rather general indications of the manner in which, but this last of the actual agent by whose administration) **the wild beasts of the earth** (the enumeration comprehends the “*four sore judgments*” enumerated in Ezek. xiv. 21, and in the same terms. This fixes the meaning of this second and subordinate **death** as above).

This seal also is interpreted as above by the earliest Commentators: e.g. Victorinus: “These same also, among other means of death, the Lord had foretold, great coming pests and mortalities.” But as on the third seal, so here also, he goes off into vague allegory about the latter part of the vision).

We have now passed the four first seals, after which the character of the vision changes. One feature common to these four is, Personification: the representation of processions of events by the impersonation of their leading features. Another is, the share which the four living-creatures bear in the representation, which after this point ceases, as far as the seals are concerned. In my mind, no interpretation can be right, which does not take both these common features into account. And this may best be done by viewing, as above, these four visions as the four solemn preparations for the coming of the Lord as regards the visible Creation, which these four living-beings symbolize. The whole Creation demands His coming. **COME**, is the cry of all its tribes. This cry is answered, first by the vision of the great Conqueror, whose arrows ave in the heart of his enemies, and whose career is the world’s history. The breaking of this first seal is the great opening of the mystery of God. This in some sense includes and brings in the others. Those others then, as we might expect, hold a place subordinate to this. They are, in fact, but exponents of the mysteries enwrapt within this conquering career: visions of the method of its being carried out to the end in its operation on the outward world. That the world-wide declaration of the everlasting Gospel should be accompanied by war, by famine, by pestilence, and other forms of death, had been announced by our Lord Himself [Matt. xxiv. 11], and is now repeated in this series of visions. The fulfilment of each of these judgments is, as it were, the removing a seal from the book of God’s mysterious purposes: the bringing nearer of the time when that book shall be open for all the redeemed to read.

With regard to the question whether these four visions are to be regarded as consecutive or contemporaneous, I have already expressed an opinion. In their *fulness*, I believe them to be contemporaneous, and each of them to extend through the whole lifetime of the church. The analogy of the whole four symbols seems to require this. We read nothing implying that there are “days” of the opening of any particular seal, as there are, ch. x. 7, of the sounding of the several trumpets. The **in order that he may conquer** of the first seal speaks of a purpose which will not be accomplished till the earth be all subjugated: and if I am right in supposing the other visions subordinate to this, their agency is necessarily included in its process. At the same time I would by no means deny that they may receive continually recurring, or even ultimate fulfilments, as the ages of the world go on, in distinct periods of time, and by distinctly assignable events. So far we may derive benefit from the commentaries of those who imagine that they have discovered their fulfilment in successive periods of history, that, from the very variety and discrepancy of the periods assigned by them, we may verify the fact of the prevalence of these announced judgments, hitherto, throughout the whole lifetime of the Church.

As regards *ultimate* fulfilment, there can be no doubt, that all these judgments on the world without, as well as the manifestation [of which they form a part] of the conquering career of the Kingdom of Christ, will reach their culminating point before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

I may add, that no account whatever is taken, in the common *historic* interpretation, of the *distinctive* character of the four first seals, as introduced by the cry of the four living-beings: nor indeed is any interpretation commonly given of that cry itself.

9–11.] OPENING OF THE FIFTH SEAL. We may at once observe, that the whole character of the vision is altered. The four living-beings have uttered each his cry of **Come**, and are now silent. No more horses and riders go forth upon the earth. The scene is changed to the heavenly altar, and the cry is from thence. Any interpretation which makes this vision of the same kind with and consecutive to the four preceding, must so far be wrong. In one point only is the character of the former vision sustained. It is the “*dwellers upon the earth*” who are the objects of the judgment invoked: as it was the earth, and its inhabitants, and its produce, which were the objects of the former judgments. See again below on the sixth seal.

9.] And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar (it is an altar of *sacrifice* which is here meant; the peculiar form of the word *slain*, which follows, seems plainly to imply this: see below) **the souls** (i. e. departed spirits. It is manifestly idle to enquire, seeing that the Apostle was in a state of spiritual and supernatural vision, *how* these disembodied spirits became visible to him, That they were not clothed with bodies is manifest) **of those that have been slain on account of the word of God and on account of the testimony which they had** (so literally: i. e, which was committed to them to bear, and which they bore: see ch. xii. 17.

Much has been said about the souls of the martyrs not being their departed spirits, which must be conceived of as being in bliss with Christ, and in consequence it has been imagined that these were only their animal lives, resident in the blood and shed forth with it. But no such difficulty really exists. We know, whatever be the bliss of the departed martyrs and confessors, that they are waiting for the coming of the Lord, without which they are not perfect: and in the holy fire of their purified zeal, they look forward to that day as one of righteous judgment on the ungodly world. The representation here, in which they are seen *under the altar*, is simply symbolical, carrying out the likening of them to victims slain on an altar. Even as the blood of these victims was poured under the altar and the life was in the blood, so their souls are represented as under the symbolical altar in heaven, crying for vengeance, as blood is often said to do. After this, it hardly need be said that no inference can be drawn from this vision respecting the intermediate state between the death of the saints and the coming of the Lord): **and they cried with a great voice, saying (they, viz. the souls, which are identified in the sentence with the persons themselves: not, as some think, the *slain* as distinguished from the *souls*), Until when (i. e. how long), thou Master** (it is God who is here addressed; with Him rests the time when to avenge His elect, see Luke xviii. 7, 8) **holy and true, dost thou not judge (give decision in the matter of) and exact vengeance for our blood from them that dwell on the earth** (i. e. the ungodly world, as distinguished from the church of God)?

As hitherto, so here again, the analogy and order of our Lord’s great prophecy in Matt. xxiv. 11 is closely followed. “The signs of His coming, and of the end of the world” were there announced by Himself as war, famine, and pestilence, vv. 6, 7. And when He had declared that these were but the beginning of sorrows, He next, vv. 9 f., announces the persecution and martyrdom of His people. Similarly here, after the judgments already announced, we have the prayer for vengeance on the part of the martyrs, and the announcement of more such martyrdoms to come. And as our Lord’s prophecies revived a partial fulfilment in the events preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and may have done so again and again since, but await their great and final fulfilment when the day of His coming approaches, so it is with these. The cry of the martyrs’ blood has been ever going up before God since Stephen fell: ever and anon, at some great time of persecution, it has waxed louder: and so on through the ages it shall accumulate and gather strength, till the great issue of the parable Luke xviii. 1 ff. is accomplished. **And there was given to them each a white robe** (there will be no real difficulty in understanding this, if we are careful to mark its real place and interpret it accordingly. The white robe, in this book, is the vestment of acknowledged and glorified righteousness in which the saints walk and reign with Christ: see ch. iii. 4; vii. 13 ff., al. This was given to the martyrs: but their prayer for vengeance was not yet granted. The Seer saw in vision that this was so. The white robe was not actually bestowed as some additional boon, but seemed in vision to be thus bestowed, because in that vision one side only of the martyrs’ intermediate state had been presented, viz. the fact of their slaughter and their collective cry for vengeance. Now, as over against that, the other more glorious side is presented, viz. that though the collective cry for vengeance is not yet answered, yet individually they are blessed in glory with Christ, and waiting for their fellows to be fully complete), **and it was said to them that they should rest** (not merely, *abstain from their cry for vengeance, be quiet*;—but, *rest in blessedness*, See ch. xiv. 13, and Dan. xii. 13) **yet a little while, until their fellow-servants** (a title corresponding to **Master** above) **also and their brethren** (the two substantives describe the same persons; those who are at the same time their fellow-servants and their brethren: the former term reminding them of the necessity of completeness as far as the service of their one Master is concerned: the latter, as far as they belong to one and the same great family) **shall have accomplished** (viz. “*their course*”), **who are about to be slain as also they were.** **12—VII. 17.] OPENING OF THE SIXTH SEAL, AND ITS ATTENDANT VISIONS.** And herein [12–17] *Immediate approach of the great day of the Lord*, Matt. xxiv. 29: (vii. 1–8) *gathering of the elect out of the four winds*, Matt. xxiv. 31: (vii. 8–17) *vision of the whole glorified church*, Matt. xxv.

The interpretation of this sixth seal is a crucial point in Apocalyptic exegesis. We may unhesitatingly set down all interpretations as wrong, which view as the fulfilment of this passage any period except that of the coming of the Lord. See

the grounds of this below. **And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and a great earthquake took place** (we have no word but “earthquake” for the word, literally **shaking**, here used in the original: but it does not by any means cover the meaning. For here the heavens are shaken, and the sea, and the dry land. See Hag. ii. 6, 7, and the comment in Heb. xii. 26 f. Compare also Zech. xiv. 4, 5), **and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair** (see Isa. i. 3. The cloth meant is the *cilicium*, or hair cloth: see note on Acts xviii. 3. This answers to Matt. xxiv. 29,—“*Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened*,”... and to “*the sun shall be turned into darkness*,” in Joel ii. 31), **and the whole moon** (i. e. not the moon in her crescent or her incomplete form, but entire; as we say, the full moon) **became as blood** (so Matt. as before, “*and the moon shall not give her light*”: and Joel ii. 31, “*and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come*”), **and the stars of the heaven fell to the earth** (so Matt. as before, “*and the stars shall fall from heaven*”), **as a fig-tree casteth her unripe figs** (De Wette explains it to mean, the winter figs, which almost always fall off unripe) **when shaken by a great wind** (so Matt. again, “*and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken*.” It is remarkable,

that in Matt., when the description has finished, the next words are, “*learn the parable from the fig-tree.*” The similitude from the fig-tree, though a different one,

rises to the mind of the Apostle as he sees in vision the fulfilment of his Master’s words which were so shortly followed by a similar illustration. The imagery

itself, as that in the beginning of the next verse, is from Isa. xxxiv. 4). **And the heaven parted asunder as a scroll when rolled up** (the stars having fallen from it, the firmament itself was removed away, as an open scroll which is rolled up and put by. So also almost verbatim, Isa. xxxiv. 4), **and every mountain and island were moved out of their places** (compare again Matt. xxiv. 35, “*heaven and earth shall pass away*.” the whole earth is broken up by a change as total as any of those previous ones which have prepared it for its present inhabitants, Compare ch. xvi. 20; and Nahum i. 5). **And the kings of the earth, and the great men** (the great civil officers, statesmen and courtiers, us distinguished from the next following), **and the chief captains** (in Acts xxi.—xxv., the officer in command of the garrison

at Jerusalem is so called), **and the rich men and the strong men** (hitherto the enumeration has comprised all those who from their circumstances would have most ground for trust in the permanence of the existing state of the earth: these last being perhaps the physically strong, see Ps. xxxiii. 16: or perhaps all those who on account of any strength, physical or intellectual, are of the number of the sturdy or stout-hearted. Now, the catalogue

becomes more general), **and every man, bond and free, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains** (see Isa. ii. 19, from which the imagery comes), **and say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the countenance** (see Nahum i. 6: and compare Ps. xxxiv. 16, ‘*The countenance [face] of the Lord is against them that do evil*’) **of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb** (the imagery is from Hosea x. 8, further impressed by our Lord’s solemn saying on the way to Calvary, Luke xxiii. 30:—the meaning, that all these shall seek death or annihilation

in terror of the coming day, when they shall have to stand before God): **because the great day** (we have no way in English of expressing the title here used without an awkward periphrasis. It is literally. ‘the day, that great day.’ This name, if properly considered, should have kept expositors firm here to the great, verity of this part of the Apocalyptic visions, and prevented them from going into all sorts of incongruous interpretations, as they have done) **of His wrath is come, and who is able to stand?**—We are thus brought to the very threshold itself of the great day of the Lord’s coming. It has not yet happened: but the tribes of the earth are troubled at its immediate approach, and those terrible signs with which all Scripture ushers it in, have taken place. We are now then arrived at the time described in Matt. xxiv. 30: the coming itself of the Son of man being for a while kept in the background, as hereafter to be resumed. He is seen as it were coming: but before the vengeance is fully accomplished, the elect of God then living on the earth must be gathered, as Matt. xxiv. 31, out of the four winds of heaven, from among the inhabitants of the earth. To this ingathering the sealing in our text is the necessary preliminary. The correspondence between. the series of prophecies holds even in the minutest particulars, and where they do not correspond, their very differences are full of instruction. See these pointed out as we proceed.

Revelation: Chapter 7

CH. VII. 1–8.] THE SEALING OF THE ELECT. **[AND] after this** (these words shew that the opening of the sixth seal is complete, and that what is now to follow,—viz. the two visions each introduced with similar words, **after this** [or, these things] **I saw**,—comes in by way of episode. They represent two great events, the sealing of the elect on earth, and the final assemblage of the saints in heaven, The great day of the Lord’s judgment is not described; it is all but brought before us under the sixth seal, and is actually going on in the first of these episodes [see below]: but only that part of it which regards the saints appears to us, and that only by its result—their gathering in to heaven) **I saw four angels** (not, as many interpreters, *bad*

angels nor does it necessarily follow that we are to adopt the analogy of ch. xvi. 5 and to regard them as “angels of the winds:” but simply angels, to whom this office is committed. This is all that is declared to us in the text, and it is idle to enquire beyond it. All allegorizing and all individualizing interpretations are out of the question) **standing upon the four corners of the earth** (i. e. North, South, East, and West, the cardinal points from which the winds blow) **holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind may not blow on the earth nor on the sea nor against any tree.** And I saw another angel (as before, simply an angel: not as has fancied, our Lord, nor the Holy Spirit; compare the words, **of our God**, below) **coming up from the rising of the sun (coming up)**, because the rising of the sun is low on the earth’s horizon, whereas the Apostle was in heaven, looking down on the earth: and **from the rising of the sun**, as naturally agreeing with the glorious and salutary nature of his employment. Compare Ezek. xlivi. 2; Mal. iii. 2. The allegorical interpretations which have been given are entirely uncountenanced in the text), **having the seal of the living God (living, as giving to the seal solemnity and vital import); and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to injure** (viz. by letting loose the winds, which they as yet held in) **the earth and the sea, saying, Do not ye injure the earth nor the sea nor the trees, until we (not, I; see Matt. xxiv. 31, cited below) shall have sealed the servants of our God** (the God alike of the speaker and of those addressed) **upon their foreheads** (the noblest, as well as the most conspicuous part, of the human frame).

This vision stands in the closest analogy with Matt. xxiv. 31, where immediately after the appearing of the sign of the Son of man and the mourning of the tribes of the earth, we read, *And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* The judgment of the great day is in fact going on in the background; but in this first and general summary of the divine judgments and dealings, in which the sighs of Creation and of the Church for Christ’s coming are set before us, only that portion of its proceedings is described which has reference to these two. When the strain is again taken up, the ease and reference are different.

The questions now arise, 1) who are these that are sealed? and 2) what is the intent of their being sealed? 1) Those who have followed the preceding course of interpretation will have no difficulty in anticipating the reply. They are, primarily, those elect of God who shall be living upon earth at the time here indicated, viz. that of the coming of the Lord: those indicated in Matt. xxiv. 31, above cited. (On the import and reason of the use of *Israel* and its tribes, I shall speak below.) As such, they are not *identical with*, but are *included in*, the great multitude which no man can number of ver. 9 ff. But they are also symbolical of the first-fruits of the church; see notes on ch. xiv. 1 ff.

4.] **And I heard the number of the sealed, an hundred and forty-four thousand sealed** (the number is symbolical of fixedness and full completion, 12×12 taken a thousand fold. No one that I am aware of has taken it literally, and supposed that just this particular number and no more is imported. The import for us is, that the Lord knoweth and sealeth His own: that the fulness of their number shall be accomplished and not one shall fail: and, from what follows, that the least as well as the greatest of the portions of his Church shall furnish its quota to this blessed company: see more below) **from every tribe** (i. e. from the sum of the tribes; from every tribe, all being taken together. This is evident from what follows) **of the sons of Israel** (this has been variously understood. By many, and even by the most recent Commentator, Düsterdieck, these sealed ones are taken to represent Jewish believers: the chosen out of the actual children of Israel. I need hardly say that such an interpretation seems to me to be quite inconsistent with the usage of this book. Our rule in such cases must be, to interpret a term, where it may possibly be ambiguous, by the use of the same term, if we can discover any, in a place or places where it is clear and unmistakable. Now in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, ch. xxi. 9 ff., we have the names *of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel* inscribed on its twelve gates. Can there be any doubt as to the import of those names in that place? Is it not, that the city thus inscribed is the dwelling-place of the Israel of God? Or are the upholders of the literal sense here prepared to carry it out there, and to regard these inscribed names as importing that none but the literal descendants of Israel dwelt within? [For observe that such an inference could not be escaped by the fact of the names of the twelve Apostles being inscribed on its foundations: those being individual names, the others collective.] It seems certain, by this expression being again used there in the same words, that the Apostle must here, as there, have intended Israel to be taken not as the Jewish nation, but as the Israel of God. Again, we have a striking indication furnished in ch. iii. 12, who these children of Israel are:— “*He that overcometh,.... I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God,—and my new name.*” These words serve to bind together the sealing here, and the vision of the new Jerusalem in ch. xxi. Nor is it any valid objection to this view that the persons calling themselves Jews in ch. ii. 9, iii. 9, have been taken to be actual Jews, There is a wide difference in the circumstances there, as there is also in the appellation itself): **out of the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand sealed, &c. &c.**—The points to be noticed in this enumeration are, 1) That with the exception of Judah being placed first, the order of the tribes does not seem to follow any assignable principle. It may indeed be not without reason, that Reuben, the eldest, next follows Judah, and Benjamin the youngest is placed last, with Joseph his own brother: but beyond this, all is uncertainty: as any one will find, who attempts to apply to the order any imaginable rule of arrangement, So far has been generally confessed. “No order is kept, because all are equal in Christ,” says Grotius. 2) That the tribe of Dan is omitted. This is accounted for by the fathers and ancient interpreters, from the idea [founded on Gen. xl ix. 17] that antichrist was to arise from this tribe: by most Commentators, from the fact, that this tribe was the first to fall into idolatry, see Judg. xviii.: by others, from the fact that this tribe had been long ago as good as extinct. Grotius quotes for this a Jewish tradition. Accordingly we find in 1 Chron. iv. ff. where all Israel are reckoned by genealogies, that this tribe is omitted altogether. This latter seems the more probable account here, seeing that in order to the

number 12 being kept, some one of the smaller tribes must be omitted. In Deut. xxxiii., Simeon is omitted. 38) That instead of Ephraim, *Joseph* is mentioned. We have a somewhat similar instance in Numb. xiii. 11, with this difference, that there it is "of the tribe of Joseph, namely of the tribe of Manasseh." The substitution here has been accounted for by the "untheocratic" recollections connected with the name Ephraim. But this may well be questioned. In the prophecy of Hosea, where the name so frequently occurs, it designates Israel repentant, as well as Israel backsliding; compare especially ch. xiv. 4–8, the recollection of which would admirably fit the spirit of this present passage. I should rather pose that some practice had arisen which the Apostle adopts, of calling the tribe of Ephraim by this name. 4) That the tribe of Levi is included among the rest, hardly appears to depend on the reason assigned by Bengel and others, that the Levitical ceremonies being now at an end, all are alike priests and have access to God: for in some Old Test. catalogues, even where territorial division is in question, Levi is not omitted: the cities of the priests being mentioned under the head of this tribe. See 1 Chron. vi.

It yet remains to enquire, before passing on to the second vision in this episode, what is the import and intent of the sealing here mentioned. It has been the general view, that it was to exempt those sealed from the judgments which were to come on the unbelieving. And it can hardly be denied, that this view receives strong support from Scripture analogy; e.g. that of Exod. xii. and Ezek. ix., especially the latter, where the exempted ones are marked, as here, on their foreheads. It is borne out by our ch. ix. 4, where these sealed ones are by implication exempted from the plague of the locusts from the pit. It is again hardly possible to weigh fairly the language used in this place itself, without coming to the same conclusion. The four angels are commanded not to begin their work of destruction, until the sealing has taken place. For what imaginable reason could such a prohibition be uttered, unless those who were to be sealed were to be marked out for some purpose connected with that work? And for what purpose could they be thus marked out, if not for exemption? The objection brought against this view by Düsterdieck, that so far from being exempt from trials, the saints in glory have come out of great tribulation, is grounded on the mistake of not distinguishing between the trials of the people of God and the judgments on the unbelieving world. In the latter, the saints have no part, as neither had the children of Israel in the plagues of Egypt. And indeed the very symbolism here used, in which the elect are pointed out under the names of the 12 tribes, serves to remind us of this ancient exemption. At the same time, exemption from the coming plagues is not the only object of the sealing. It serves a positive as well as a negative purpose. It appropriates to God those upon whom it has passed. For the seal contains His own Name, see ch. iii. 12, xiv. 1. And thus they are not only gathered out of the world, but declared to be ready to be gathered into the city of God. And thus the way is prepared for the next vision in the episode.

9–17.] THE GREAT MULTITUDE OF THE REDEEMED IN HEAVEN. The opening of the sixth seal introduced the coming of the Lord. The first vision of the episode revealed the gathering together of the elect from the four winds. But before the seventh and *last* seal can be opened, and the book of God's purposes be unrolled, not only must all things on this earth be accomplished, but the whole multitude of the redeemed must be gathered in to the joy of their Lord. Then, and not till then, shall we know even as we are known, and read the mystery of God's ways without hindrance. Accordingly, in this sublime vision we are admitted to a sight of the finished state of glory, in which the seventh seal shall be opened. **After these things** (see above on ver. 1. The term indicates separation from that which went before, and introduces a second and distinct vision in the episode) **I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no one could** (not that the attempt was actually made, but that if made it was sure to fail) **number, out of every nation** (see ch. v. 9), **and [all] tribes and peoples and tongues** (observe, that this very specification, of a multitude without number, carries us on the past the first or millennial resurrections, indicated in the two former parables of Matt. xxv. [see notes there], and past the final judgment sublimely described at the end of that chapter: "*the righteous unto life eternal*" is the point at which our vision takes up that prophecy. We have *the righteous*, in their robes of righteousness, made white in the blood of the Lamb, already, vv. 15–17, in the midst of those pleasures for evermore, which always stand in Scripture for a description of the employments of the life everlasting), **standing before the throne, and before the Lamb** (by these words the vision is fixed as belonging to that heaven itself which has been previously described, ch. iv. The celestial scene becomes filled this innumerable throng: its other inhabitants remaining before) **clothed in white robes** (see ch. vi. 11, note: and below, ver. 14), **and palm-branches in their hands** (bearing the palm-branch was a mark of festal joy, compare John xii. 13; 1 Mace. xiii. 51); **and they cry** (the present tense expresses their unceasing occupation) **with a loud voice, saying, Salvation** (literally, "*the salvation:*" i.e., the praise of our salvation: the ascription of the salvation which we have obtained) **[be] to our God who sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb.**

11, 12.] The choir of angels, as in ver. 11, respond to the ascription of praise. **And all the angels were standing round the throne and the elders and the four living-beings, and fell before the throne on their faces** (then they were in the vision in the similitude of men), **and worshipped God, saying, Amen: the blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honour and the power and the might** (observe the sevenfold ascription) **be to our God unto the ages of the ages. Amen.** **13–17.] Explanation of the vision.** **And one of the elders answered** (on this use of the word **answered** see Matt. xi. 25, Deut. xxv. 9. The reply is made, not to words actually uttered, but to thoughts, or to circumstances requiring remark), **saying to me** (the elders symbolizing the Church, one of them fitly stands out as the interpreter of this vision in which the glorified Church is represented), **These that are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they** (the questions

are those ordinarily put when we seek for information respecting strangers; but put here for the sake of furnishing the

explanation.

Both inquiries are answered in ver. 14)? **And I said to him, My lord** (the address is one of deep reverence, as to a heavenly being. See the limits of this reverence in ch. xix. 10, xxii. 8, 9), **thou knowest** (see Ezek. xxxvii. 3, from which the form of expression comes. The words must not, with Ebrard, be forced to mean, "I know well, but thou knowest better:" but must be taken in their simple acceptation,

"I know not, but thou dost." And this again need not mean that the Apostle had no thought on the subject, but that he regarded himself as ignorant in comparison with his heavenly interlocutor). **And he said to me, These are they that come** (not, as A.V., "that *came*:" nor again must the present be put prominently forward, that *are coming*, as if the number in the vision were not yet complete: still less is it to be taken as a quasi-future, "that *shall come*:" but the present tense is merely one of *designation*. Their description, generically, is, that "they are they that *come*, &c.") **out of the great tribulation** (the definite article ought not to be omitted, as in A.V. It is most emphatic:

"out of the tribulation, the great one." And in consequence some have explained

the words of that last great time of trial which is to try the saints before the coming of the Lord. But to limit it to this only, is manifestly out of keeping with the spirit of the vision. I would rather understand it of the whole sum of the trials of the saints of God, viewed by the Elder as now complete, and designated by this emphatic and general name: "all that tribulation"),

and they washed their robes (the past tense is that so often used of the course of this life when looked back upon from its yonder side: they did this in that life on earth which is now [in the vision] past and gone by) **and made them white** (the references are full of interest) **in the blood of the Lamb** (i. e. by that faith in the atoning blood of Christ of which it is said, "*cleansing their hearts by the faith*," Acts xv. 9: and 1 John i, 7, "the blood of Jesus Christ... cleanseth us from all sin." See also Eph. v. 25–27. Observe,

we must not separate the two acts, washing and making white, as Hengstenberg

does, interpreting the former of the forgiveness of sins, the latter of sanctification:

the latter is only the result of the former: they washed them, and by so doing made them white. The act was a life-long one,—the continued purification of the man, body, soul, and spirit, by the application

of the blood of Christ in its cleansing power). **On this account** (*because* they washed their robes white in Christ's atoning and purifying blood: for nothing that has spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, can stand where they are standing: compare again Eph. v. 27: none will be there who are not thus washed) **they are before the throne of God** (in the presence of His throne: seeing Him [Matt. v. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 12] as He sees them), **and they serve Him by day and by night** ("this," says Bede, "is a way of expressing eternity in our human language") **in His temple** (as His priests, conducting the sweet praises of that heavenly choir, ver. 10, and doing what other high and blessed service He may delight to employ them in): **and He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His habitation over them** (it is exceedingly difficult to express the sense of these glorious words, in which the fulfilment of the Old Test. promises, such as Levit. xxvi. 11; Isa. iv. 5, 6; Ezek. xxxvii. 27, is announced.

They give the fact of the dwelling of God *among* them, united with the fact of His protection being over them, and assuring to them the exemptions next to be mentioned. In the term **shall tabernacle** [so literally] are contained a multitude of recollections: of the pillar in the wilderness, of the Shechinah in the holy place, of the tabernacle of witness with all its symbolism. These will all now be realized and superseded by the overshadowing presence of God Himself). **They shall not hunger any more, nor yet** (the repeated negative is exclusive, and carries a climax in each clause) **thirst any more, neither shall the sun ever light upon them, no, nor any heat** (as, e.g., the burning wind, the sirocco, which word is used in Isa. xl ix. 10, from whence this whole sentence is taken): **because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne** (the term **in the midst of** is somewhat difficult to express in its strict meaning. Probably, the two points required for estimating the position would be the two extreme ends of the throne to the right and to the left) **shall tend them** (as a shepherd his flock), **and shall guide them to the fountains of the waters of life** (see ch. xxii. 1, and Ps. xxviii. 2): **and God shall wipe away every tear out of their eyes.**

All is now ready for the final disclosure by the Lamb of the book of God's eternal purposes. The coming of the Lord has passed, and the elect are gathered in. Accordingly, THE LAST SEAL IS NOW OPENED, which lets loose the roll.

Revelation: Chapter 8

CH. VIII. 1.] And when (or, **whenever**). This word occurs in the opening of this seal only, giving it an indefiniteness which does not belong to any of the rest. The touch is so slight as not to be reproducible in another language: but it can hardly be denied that in the Writer's mind it exists) **he opened the seventh seal** (what sign may we expect to follow? The other six seals have been accompanied each by its appropriate vision. Since the opening of the last one, followed as it was by the portents and terrors of the day of the Lord, there has been an episodical series of visions, setting forth the gathering in of the elect, and the innumerable multitude of the glorified Church. What incident is appropriate for the removal of this last, the only obstacle yet remaining to the entire disclosure of the secret purposes of God?) **there was** (there became, there came on, supervened, from a state very different, viz. the choral songs of the great multitude, re-echoed by the angelic host) **silence in the heaven about half an hour** (in enquiring into the meaning of this silence, let us first see whether we have any indication by analogy in the book itself, which may guide us. In ch. x. 4, when the Apostle is about to write down the voices of the seven thunders, he is commanded to abstain, and not to write them down. And though neither the manner nor the place of that *withholding* exactly corresponds to this half-hour's silence, yet it holds a place relating to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, quite sufficiently near to that of this, with regard to the seventh seal, to be brought into comparison with it. It imports 1) a passing over and withholding, as far as the Apostle is concerned, of that which the seventh seal revealed: i.e. of that complete unrolling of God's book of His eternal purposes, of the times and seasons

which He holds in His own power. For this unrolling, every thing has been prepared: even to the taking off of the last seal which bound the mysterious roll. But as to what the roll itself contains, there is silence. 2) But it also imports, as Victorinus

beautifully says, "*that the half-hour is the beginning of eternal rest.*" the commencement of that blessed sabbatical state of rest, during which the people of God shall be in full possession of those things which ear hath not heard nor eye seen. With equal truth and beauty does the same, our earliest apocalyptic expositor, proceed; "but he takes merely a part, because the interruption repeats the same things as far as order is concerned. For if the silence had been eternal, there would have been an end of narration." So that the vexed question, whether what follows belongs, or not, to the seventh seal, is, in fact, a question not worth seriously answering. Out of the completion of the former vision rise up a new series of visions, bearing a different character, but distinguished

by the same number, indicating perfection, and shewing us that though evolved out of the completion of the former series, they do not belong to the last particular

member of that series, any further than as it leads the way to them. Even more marked is this again below in ch. xi.

—xvi., where the pouring out of the seven vials can in no way be said to belong to or form part of the blowing of the seventh trumpet. It will be seen then that I believe

all interpretation to be wrong, which

regards the blowing of the seven trumpets as forming a portion of the vision accompanying

the seventh seal in particular: and again that I place in the same category all that which regards it as taking up and going over the same ground again. In the seven seals, we had revealed, as was fitting, the opening of the great Revelation, the progress and fortunes of God's Church and people in relation to the world, and of the world in relation to the church.

With regard to the trumpets themselves, we may observe, 1) That they repeat again the same mystic number *seven*, indicating that the course of events (see below) represented by this sounding is complete in itself, as was that indicated before by the breaking of the seals, and as is also that afterwards to be indicated by the pouring out of the vials: 2) That as in the case of the seals, there is a distinction made between the first four and the following three. Compare below, ver. 13. 3) That as also in the case of the seals, there is an interval, with two episodical visions, between the sixth and the seventh trumpet. Compare ch. x., and ch. xi. 1–14. 4) That, of the trumpets, six only announce visions partaking of the common character of judgments, whereas the seventh forms, as we also saw in the case of the seventh seal, the solemn close to the rest. 5) And further, that as regards this seventh trumpet, the matters imported by it as being *the third woe* (ch. xi. 14) are not given, but merely indicated by "*the time of the dead is come to be judged, &c.*" (ch. xi. 18): just as we saw that the things imported by the opening of the seventh seal were not detailed, but only indicated by the episodical visions, and by the nature of the similitude used. 6) That before the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the mystery of God is finished, as far as relates to the subject of this course of visions. This is indicated by the great Angel in ch. x. 7; and again by implication in ch. xi. 15–19, both by the purport of the voices in heaven, v. 15, and by the ascriptions of praise, vv. 16–18. This is the same again at the pouring out of the seventh vial, where the great voice from the throne announces "*It is past,*" ch. xvi. 17: as we saw that it was at the opening of the seventh seal, as indicated by the silence of half an hour. Each course of visions is complete in itself: each course of visions ends in the accomplishment of that series of divine actions which it sets forth. 7) That as, when the preparation for the seven angels to sound their trumpets is evolved out of the opening of the seventh seal, the vision of the seals is solemnly closed in by "*there were thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake,*" so the vision of the trumpets is solemnly closed in by "*there*

were lightnings and voices and thunders and a great hail." That the similar occurrence, ch. xvi. 18, does not close the series of the vials, seems to be owing to special circumstances belonging to the outpouring of the seventh vial: see there (ch. xvi. 21). 8) That as in vv. 3–5, which form ey close of the vision of the seals, and the opening of that of the trumpets, the offering of the prayers of the saints is the prominent feature

(see notes below), so in the close of the series of the trumpets we have a prominent disclosure of the ark of the covenant of God, declarag and sealing His faithfulness to His Church. Similarly again at the beginning of the series of the vials, we have the temple of the tabernacle of witness opened. Why we have not a similar

appearance at the close of that series, is to be accounted for as above. 9) That, seeing that this course of visions opens and closes as last noticed, it (to say nothing at present of the following series of the vials is to be regarded as embracing a course of judgments (for such evidently is every one of its six visions) inflicted in answer to those prayers, and forming a portion of that avenging invoked by the souls of the martyrs

in ch. vi. 10. 10) If this be so, then, as this series of visions is manifestly to be regarded as extending to the end of the whole period of *time* (compare ch. x. 7, "*in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he was about to blow his trumpet, and the mystery of God was finished,*" &c.), we may fairly say that it takes up the great world-wide vision of the seals at the point where it was said to the vengeance-invoking

martyrs that "*they should rest*

yet for a time:" and that the judgments of this series of visions occur during the time of waiting. This view is confirmed by finding that *the dwellers on the earth*, upon whom the vengeance is invoked in ch. vi. 10, are the objects of vengeance during this series of judgments, compare ver. 13. 11) In reference to this last remark we may observe that no one portion especially of the earth's inhabitants are pointed out as objects of this series of judgments, but all the ungodly, as usurpers of the kingdom of Christ. This is plain, by the expressions in the ascription of praise with which it closes, I mean, the kingdom of this world, &c. Earthly domination

is cast down, and the Lord's Kingdom is brought in. And it is also plain, from the expression used in that, same ascription of praise, "*and to destroy those that are destroying the earth,*" of what character have been these ungodly—the corrupters of the earth—the tainters and wasters of the means and accessories of life. 12) Whatever be the interpretation

which follows from the foregoing considerations,

two canons must not be violated. a) As in the case of the seals, so it is manifest here, from ch. xi. 18, "*the time of the dead to be judged is come,*" that the series of visions reaches forward to the time of the end, and is only terminated by the great events indicated in those words. And b) as yet, no particular city, no especial

people is designated as the subject of the apocalyptic vision. All is general. The earth, the trees, the grass, the sea, the waters, the lights of heaven, mankind,—these are at present the objects in our field of view. There is as yet no *throne of the beast*, as in the outpouring of the vials, ch. xvi. 10. The prophecy goes on becoming

more specific as it advances: and it is not for us to anticipate its course, nor to localize and individualize where it is as yet general and undefined. The further details will be treated as we go on). 2.] *First appearance of the seven trumpet-angels. And I saw* (viz. during the symbolic silence, at the end of the half-hour. What now follows is not to be dered as in the interpretation chronologically consequent upon that which was indicated by the seals, but merely as in the *vision* chronologically consequent on that course of visions. The evolution of the courses of visions out of one another does not legitimately lead to the conclusion that the *events represented by them* are consecutive in order of *time*. There are other and more important sequences than that of time: they may be independent of it, or they may concur with it) **the seven angels which stand before God** (compare Tobit xii. 15, "*I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before [more properly, enter in before] the glory of the Holy One.*") The agreement is not entire, inasmuch as here *another angel*, and not one of the seven, presently offers the prayers of the saints. These are not the archangels, nor are they the seven spirits of ch. iv. 5: nor again are they merely seven angels selected on account of the seven trumpets: this is entirely precluded by the article, **the seven angels which stand**, &c. It is clear that the passage in Tobit and the words here refer to the same matter, and that the fact was part of that revelation with regard to the order and employments of the holy angels, which seems to have taken place during the captivity), **and there were given to them seven trumpets** (understand, with intent that they themselves should blow them). **And another angel** (not to be identified with *Christ*, as is done by Bede, Vitringa, Calovius, and others, and recently [for doctrinal reasons] by Elliott: for thus confusion is introduced into the whole imagery of the vision, in which the Lord Jesus is *otherwise* present, viz., as the Lamb in the midst of the throne. In ch. v. 8, we have the twenty-four elders falling down with vials containing the prayers of the saints: here we have

an angel offering incense that it may mingle with the prayers on the heavenly altar. Any theological difficulty which belongs to the one belongs also to the other; and it is a canon which we must strictly observe in interpretation, that we are not, on account of supposed doctrinal propriety, to depart from the plain meaning of words. In ch. vii. 2 we have “*another angel*” in the sense of a created angel [see note there]: and would it be probable that St. John would after this, and I may add with his constant usage of the term throughout the book for angel in its ordinary sense, designate our Lord by this title?” There is something to me far more revolting from theological propriety in such a supposition, than in an angel being seen in the heavenly ministrations offering incense to mix with the prayers of the saints. It ought really to be needless to remark, in thus advocating consistency of verbal interpretation, that no countenance is hereby given to the invocation of angels: the whole truth of their being and ministration protesting against such an inference. They are simply *ministering spirits*, and the action here described is a portion of that their ministry. *Through Whom* the prayers are offered, we all know. He is our only Mediator and channel of grace) **came and stood over** (so that his form appeared above it; the altar being between the Apostle and him) **the altar** (viz. the altar named ch. vi. 9, as the repetition of the word with the article shews: see below on ver. 5), **having a golden censer** (the word used signifies elsewhere the *frankincense* itself. But here it unquestionably

means a *censer*; see below, ver. 5, where the word is the same. No argument can be derived from the censer being a golden one. The spirit of the heavenly imagery will account for this without going further: we have, throughout, crowns [iv. 4], incense-vials

[v. 8], vengeance-vials, [xv. 7], girdles [xv. 6], a measuring-reed [xxi. 15], &c., all of the costly metal). **And there was given to him** (viz. by divine appointment, through those ministering:

not, by the saints who offered the: prayers, for two reasons: 1) because the incense is mentioned as something distinct

from the prayers of the saints; see below: 2) because no forcing of the expression,

there was given unto him, will extract this meaning from it. It is a frequent apocalyptic formula in reference to those things or instruments with which, or actions by which, the ministrations

necessary to the progress of the visions are performed: compare ch. vi. 2, 4 [twice], 8, 11, vii. 2, viii. 2, ix. 1, &c.) **much incense** (see ch. v. 8, and on the difference of the imagery, below), **that he might give it to** (so literally: various renderings and supplyings of the construction

have been devised: but the simple dative after “*give it*” appears the only legitimate one: and the sense as expressed by Calovius, “that he might add it to the prayers of the saints, and so make them prayers of sweet savour.” The object was, to *incense* the prayers of the Saints: on the import, see below) **the prayers of all the saints** (not only now of those martyred ones in ch. vi. 9: the trumpets which follow are in answer to the whole prayers of God’s church. The martyrs’ cry for vengeance is the loudest note, but all join) **upon** (the preposition

in the original carries the idea of *motion* with it; which thus incensed were offered on the golden altar, &c. From what follows it would seem that the prayers were already before God: see below) **the altar of gold which was before the throne** (this may be a different altar from that over which the angel was standing; or it may be the same further specified. The latter alternative seems the more probable. We must not imagine that we have in these visions a counterpart of the Jewish tabernacle, or attempt to force the details into accordance with its arrangements. No such correspondence

has been satisfactorily made out: indeed to assume such here would be perhaps inconsistent with ch. xi. 19, where first the temple of God in heaven is opened. A general analogy, in the use and character of the heavenly furniture, is all that we can look for). **And the smoke of the incense ascended to** (such again seems to be the only legitimate rendering of the dative in the original. The common one, “*with*,” cannot be justified. The prayers, being already offered, received the smoke of the incense. The whole imagery introduces

the fact that those prayers are about to be answered in the following judgments) **the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the angel, before God** (notice, that no countenance is given by this vision to the idea of angelic intercession.

The angel is simply a minister. The incense [importing here, we may perhaps say, acceptability owing to the ripeness of the season in the divine purposes,

so that the prayers, lying unanswered

before, become, by the fulness of the time, acceptable as regards an immediate

reply] is *given* to him: he merely wafts the incense up, so that it mingles with the prayers. Düsterdieck well remarks,

that the angel, in performing sacerdotal offices, is but a fellow-servant of the saints [ch. xix. 10], who are themselves priests [ch. i. 6, v. 10, vii. 15]).

5.] And the angel took the censer (after having used it as above, i.e. shaken from it the incense on the altar) **and filled it** (while the smoke was ascending) **from the fire of the altar** (i. e. from the ashes which were on the altar), **and cast it** (i. e. the fire with which the censer was filled: the hot ashes) **towards the earth** (to signify that the answer to the prayers was about to descend in the fire of God's vengeance: see below, and compare Ezek. x. 2): **and there took place thunders and lightnings and voices and an earthquake** ("by means of the prayers of the saints," says Cornelius-a-lapide, "praying for vengeance on the ungodly and their persecutors, the fire of vengeance, viz. thunders, lightnings, and the following plagues of the seven angels and trumpets, was sent down on the ungodly." All these immediate consequences of the casting down of the hot ashes on the earth are the symbolic precursors of the divine judgments about to be inflicted).

One point must here be noticed: the intimate connexion between the act of this incense-offering angel) and the seven trumpets which follow. It belongs to them all; it takes place when now the seven angels have had their trumpets given them, and this series of visions is introduced. So that every interpretation must take this into account: remembering that the judgments which follow are answers to the prayers of the saints, and are inflicted on the enemies of the church.

6.] And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves that they might blow (raised their trumpets to their mouths, and stood in attitude to blow them).

7-12.] The first four trumpets. It has been before observed, that as in the case of the seals, so here, the first four are marked off from the last three. The distinction is here made, not only, as there, by an intrinsic feature running through the four, but by the voice of the eagle in ver. 13, introducing those latter trumpets and giving them also a distinguishing feature. And as we there maintained [see note on ch. vi. 8] that any interpretation, to be right, must take into account this difference between the four and the three, so here also. But in order to the taking into account of this difference, we must gain some approximate idea of its import. Does the intrinsic feature, common to these four plagues, bear a general interpretation which will suit their character as distinguished from the other three? I imagine it does. For, whereas each of those three [or rather of the former two of them, for, as has been observed, the seventh forms the solemn conclusion to the whole] evolves a course of plagues including separate and independent details, these four are connected and interdependent. Their common feature is destruction and corruption: not total, it is true, but partial: in each case to the amount expressed by *the third part*: but this fractional extent of action appears again under the sixth trumpet, ch. ix. 15, 18, and therefore clearly must not be pressed as carrying the distinctive character of the first four (on its import see note below, ver. 7). It is in the *kind* of exercise which their agency finds, that these four trumpets are especially distinguished. The plagues indicated by them are entirely inflicted on *natural objects*: the earth, trees, grass, sea, rivers, lights of heaven: whereas those indicated by the two latter are expressly said to be inflicted on *men*, and *not* on natural objects: compare ch. ix. 4, 15. Surely, however those natural objects are in each case to be understood, this is a point not lightly to be passed over. Nor can it fail to strike every unprejudiced student, that we must not, as is done by many expositors, interpret the *earth* and *grass* and *trees* as signifying nations and men in the former portion of the series of visions, and then, when the distinction between these and men is made in the latter part, be content with the literal meaning. With every allowance for the indisputable intermixture, in many places, of literal and allegorical meanings, all analogy requires that in the same series of visions, when one judgment is to destroy earth, trees, and grass, and another not to injure earth, trees, or grass, but men only, the earth, trees, and grass should bear the same meaning in the two cases. We may fairly say then, that the plagues of the four former trumpets affect the accessories of life—the earth, the trees, the green grass, the waters as means of transit and of subsistence, the lights of heaven:—whereas those of the last two affect life itself, the former by the infliction of pain, the latter of death.

A certain analogy may be noticed, but not a very close one, between these plagues and those in Egypt of old. The analogy is not close, for the order is not the same, nor are all particulars contained in the one series which are contained in the other: but the resemblance is far too striking to pass without remark. We have the hail and fire, the water turned to blood, the darkness, the locusts [, the infliction of death]: five, in fact, if not six, out of the ten. "The Egyptian plagues are beyond doubt remembered in the sacred imagery, if they are not reproduced."

The secret of interpretation here I believe to be this: The whole seven trumpets bring before us the punishment of the enemies of God during the period indicated by their course. These punishments are not merely direct inflictions of plagues, but consist in great part of that judicial retribution on them that know not God, which arises from their own depravity, and in which their own sins are made to punish themselves. This kind of punishment comes before us especially in the four first trumpet-visions. The various natural accessories of life are ravaged, or are turned to poison. In the first, the earth and its produce are ravaged with fire: in the second, the sea is mingled with blood, and ships, which should have been for men's convenience, are destroyed. In the third, the waters and springs, the essential refreshments of life, are poisoned, and death is occasioned by drinking of them. In the fourth, the natural lights of heaven are darkened. So that I regard these first four trumpets as setting

forth the gradual subjugation of the earth to Him whose kingdom it is in the end to become, by judgments inflicted on the ungodly, as regards the vitiating and destroying the ordinary means of subsistence, and comfort, and knowledge. In the details of these judgments, as also of the two following, there are many particulars which I cannot interpret, and with regard to which it may be a question whether they are to be considered as other than belonging to the requisite symbolic machinery of the prophecy. But in confessing this I must also say, that I have never seen, in any apocalyptic Commentator, an interpretation of these details at all approaching to verisimilitude: never any which is not obliged to force the plain sense of words, or the certain course of history, to make them fit the requisite theory. "Many examples of these will be found in the history of apocalyptic interpretation given by Mr. Elliott in vol. iv. of his Horae Apocalypitiae.

7.] And the first blew his trumpet, and there took place hail and fire mingled in blood (i. e. the hail and the fire were mingled together in blood, as their flux or vehicle; the stones of hail and the halls of fire [not lightning] fell in a shower of blood, just as hail and fireballs commonly fall in&shower of rain. There is here manifestly an allusion to the plague of hail in Egypt, of which it is said that "the fire ran along upon the ground;" "*there was hail and fire mingled with the hail,*" Exod. ix. 24: but with the addition of the blood. With regard to this latter, we may remark, that both here and under the vials, where the earth, seas, and rivers are again the objects of the first three judgments, *blood* is a feature common to all three. It appears rather to indicate a general character of the judgments, than to require any special interpretation in each particular case. In blood is life: in the shedding, or in the appearing, of blood, is implied the destruction of life, with which, as a consequence, all these judgements must be accompanied), **and it was cast into the earth** (towards the surface of the earth): **and the third part** (this expression first occurring here, it will be well once for all to enquire into its meaning in these prophecies. I may first say, that all *special* interpretations seem to me utterly to have failed; e.g. that of Elliott, which would understand it of a tripartite division of the Roman Empire at the time to which he assigns this judgment. It is fatal to this whole class of interpretations, that it is not said the hail&c. were *cast on a third part*, but that the destruction occasioned by them *extended* to a third part of the earth on which they were cast. And this is most expressly declared to be so in this first case, by *all green grass* being also destroyed, not a third part: a fact of which this interpretation takes no notice. It is this mixture of the fractional third with other designations of extent of mischief, which will lend us I believe to the right interpretation. We find it again under the third trumpet, where the star Wormwood is cast "*on the third part of the rivers, and on the springs of the waters:*" the result being that *the third part of the waters* was embittered. This lax usage would of itself lead us to suppose that: we are not to look for strict definiteness in the interpretation. And if we refer to the prophecy in Zech. xiii. 7 ff., where the import is to announce judgment on a greater part and the escape of a remnant, we find the same tripartite division: "*And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, &c.*" Nay, in the Apocalypse itself, we have *the third part* used where the sense can hardly but be similarly indefinite: e.g., under the sixth trumpet, ch. ix. 15, 18, and xii. 4, where it is said that the dragon's tail "*draweth the third part of the stars of heaven:*" the use of the *present* shewing that it is rather a general power, than a particular event which is designated. Compare again the use of "*the fourth part the earth,*" in ch. vi. 8, and of "*the tenth part of the city,*" in ch. xi. 13. All these seem to shew, that such prophetic expressions are to be taken rather in their import as to amount, than in any strict fractional division. Here, for instance, I would take the pervading **third part** as signifying, that though the judgment is undoubtedly, as to extent, fearful and sweeping, yet that God in inflicting it, spares more than he smites: two-thirds escape in each case, while one is smitten) **of the earth** (i. e. plainly of the surface of the earth, and that, of the cultivated soil, which admitted of such a devastation) **was burnt up** (so that the *fire* prevails in the plague, not the hail nor the blood), **and the third part of the trees** (in all the earth, not in the third part) **was burnt up, and all green grass** (upon earth: no longer a third part: possibly because green grass would first and unavoidably every where scorch up at the approach of such a plague, whereas the hardier crops and trees might partially escape) **was burnt up**.

8.] And the second angel blew his trumpet: and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea (first, by the **as it were**, that which was cast into the sea was *not a mountain*, but only a burning mass so large as to look like one. Then, it was *this mass itself*, not any thing proceeding from it, which was cast down. So that the introduction of a *volcano* into the imagery is quite unjustifiable. In the language [hardly in the sense] there seems to be a reminiscence of Jer. li. 25, "*I will make thee a burnt mountain.*" It is remarkable that there the *mountain* should be characterized as "*O destroying mountain... which destroyest all the earth.*" compare our ch. xi. 18): **and the third part of the sea became blood** (so in the Egyptian plague the Nile and all the Egyptian waters, By the *non-consequence* of the *result* of the fiery mass falling into the sea is again represented to us that in the infliction of this plague from above, the instrument of it is merely described as it appeared (**as it were**), not as it really was. So that all ideas imported into the interpretation which take the *mountain*, or the *fiery* character of it, as elements in the symbolism, are departures from the real intent, of the description): **and the third part of the creatures [that were] in the sea** (not, as Elliott, "in the third part of the sea," but in the whole. Nor again must we stretch the words "*in the sea*" to mean the maritime coasts, nor the islands, nor the transmarine provinces: a usage not even shewn to exist by the examples cited by him) **died** (compare Exod. vii. 17–21), **those which have life** (animal souls), **and the third part of the ships were destroyed** (another inconsequent result, and teaching us as before).

We may remark, at the end of this second trumpet, that the judgments inflicted by these first two are distinctly those which in ch. vii. 3 were held back until the servants of God were sealed: "*Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed, &c.*" So that, as before generally remarked, the place of these trumpet-plagues must be sought *after* that sealing; and

consequently [see there] in very close conjunction with the day of the Lord itself).

10.] And the third angel blew his trumpet, and there fell from heaven a great star burning as a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of the waters (it can hardly be said, as Düsterdieck, that we are here as matter of course to understand, on the *third part* of the fountains, any more than we are to limit “*all green grass*” in ver. 7 to all the grass within the third part of the earth). **And the name of the star is called Wormwood** (in the original, *Apsinthos*. The medicinal use of the plant was known to the ancients), and **the third part of the waters became (was turned into) wormwood: and many [of the] men** (who dwelt by these waters: such may be the force of the art. But the expression may: be general: **many men) died from the waters, because they were embittered** (compare the converse history, Exod. xv. 23 ff., of the bitter waters being made sweet by casting a certain tree into them. See also 2 Kings ii. 19 ff. The question whether wormwood was a deadly poison or not, is out of place here. It is not said that all who drank, died. And the effect of any bitter drug, however medicinally valuable, being mixed with the water ordinarily used, would be to occasion sickness and death. It is hardly possible to read of this third plague, and not to think of the deadly effect of those strong spirituous drinks which are in fact water turned into poison. The very name *absinthe* is not unknown in their nomenclature: and there is no effect which could be so aptly described by the falling of fire into water, as this, which results in *ardent spirit*,—in that which the simple islanders of the South Sea call *firewater*. That this plague may go on to destroy even this fearful proportion of the ungodly in the latter days, is far from impossible, considering its prevalence even now in some parts of the civilized world, But I mention this rather as an illustration, than as an interpretation). **And the fourth angel blew his trumpet: and the third part of the sun was struck** (it is not said, as in the case of the former three trumpets, *with what*. And this absence of an instrument in the fourth of these correlative visions perhaps teaches us not to attribute too much import to the instruments by which the previous ones are brought about. It is the stroke itself, not its instrument, on which attention should be directed) **and the third part of the moon and the third part of the stars, that the third part of them might be darkened, and the day might not shine during the third part of it** (the limitation of the **third part** is now manifestly to time, not to brightness. So A.V. rightly, “for a third part of it.” That this consequence is no natural one following upon the obscuration of a third portion of the sun, &c., is not to be alleged as any objection, but belongs to the altogether supernatural region in which these visions are situated. Thus we have a globe of fire turning seawater to blood—a burning star embittering the waters: &c.), **and the night in like manner** (i. e. the night as far as she is, by virtue of the moon and stars, a time of light. And this is far more so under the glorious Eastern moon and stars, than in our mist-laden climate).

13.] Introduction of the three remaining trumpets by three woes. **And I saw and heard an** (literally, **one**. This may carry meaning—a single or solitary eagle,—as might also be the case in ch. xviii. 21, see there) **eagle** (hardly to be identified with the eagles of Matt. xxiv. 28: for 1) that saying is more proverbial than prophetic: and 2) any application of that saying would be far more aptly reserved for our ch. xix. 17. Nor again is the eagle a bird of ill omen, as Ewald says: nor a contrast to the dove in John i. 32, as Hengstenberg but far more probably the symbol of judgment and vengeance rushing to its prey, as in Deut. xxviii. 49; Hos. viii. 1; Hab. i. 8. Nor again is it to be understood as an angel in eagle’s shape: but a veritable eagle in the vision. Thus we have the altar speaking, ch. xvi. 7) **flying in mid-heaven** (i. e. in the south or noon-day sky, where the sun reaches the meridian. So that the word does not signify the space intermediate between heaven and earth, but as above. And the eagle flies there, to be seen and heard of all. I may also notice that the whole expression favours the true reading, **eagle**, as against the substituted “*angel*”), **saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to those that dwell upon the earth** (the objects of the vengeance invoked in the prayers of the martyrs, ch. vi. 10: the ungodly world, as distinguished from the church) **by reason of the remaining voices of the trumpet** (the singular is used generically: the three voices all having this common to them, that they are the sound of a trumpet) **of the three angels who are about to blow.**

Revelation: Chapter 9

CH. IX.—XI.] *The last three, or woe-trumpets.* These, as well as the first four, have a character of their own, corresponding in some measure to that of the visions at the opening of the three last seals. The particulars related under them are separate and detailed, not symmetrical and correspondent. And as in the seals, so here, the seventh forms rather the solemn conclusion to the whole, than a distinct judgment of itself. Here also, as there, it is introduced by two episodical passages, having reference to the visions which are to follow, and which take up the thread of prophecy again at a period previous to things detailed before.

1–12.] The fifth, or first Woe trumpet. And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen (not, as A.V. *fall*, which gives an entirely wrong view of the transactions of the vision. The star had fallen before, and is first seen as thus fallen) **out of heaven to the earth** (the reader will at once think on Isa. xiv. 12, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” And on Luke x. 18, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” And, doubtless, as the personal import of this star is made clear in the following words, such is the reference here. We may also notice that this expression forms a connecting link to another place, ch. xii. 9, in this book, where Satan is represented as cast out of heaven to the earth: see notes there. It is hardly possible, with some Commentators, to understand a *good angel* by this fallen star. His description, as well as his work, corresponds only to an agent of evil. Andreas is obliged to distort words to bring in view: “descended upon earth; for

this is meant by **fallen**,” is enough to condemn any interpretation), **and there was given to him (was given**, as usual, for the purpose of the part which he is to bear in the vision) **the key of the pit of the abyss** (viz. of hell, which in the vision is a vast profundity opening by a pit or shaft upon the surface of the earth, imagined as shut down by a cover, and locked. This abyss is in the Apocalypse the habitation of the devil and his angels: compare ver. 11, ch. xx. 1, 3: see also ch. xi. 7, xvii. 8. See further in note on ch. xx. 10), **and he opened the pit of the abyss, and there went up smoke from the pit as smoke of a great furnace** (see Gen. xix. 28), **and the sun was darkened and the air** (not meaning, the air inasmuch as it receives its light from the sun: for the sun may be obscured, as by a cloud, without the air being *darkened*) **by reason of the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke** (which therefore was their vehicle or envelope) **came forth locusts into** (towards, over, so as to spread over: it gives more the sense of distribution than “*upon*” would) **the earth, and there was given to them power as the scorpions of the earth** (not as noting any distinction between land and water-scorpions, as Ewald, but because the scorpions are natural and of the earth, whereas these locusts are infernal and not of nature) **have power** (viz. to sting, as below explained): **and it was commanded them that they shall not hurt the grass of the earth, nor yet every (i. e. any) green thing, nor yet every (any) tree** (the usual objects on which locusts prey: compare Exod. x. 13, 15), **but only** (literally, *except*: the former sentence being regarded as if it had run, “that they should hurt nothing,”—and then “*except*” follows naturally) **the men, the which** (so literally: it designates the class or kind) **have not the seal of God upon their foreheads** (this, as before noticed, fixes this fifth trumpet to the time following the sealing in ch. vii. It denotes a plague which falls on the unbelieving

inhabitants of the earth after the servants of God have been marked out among them, and of which the saints are not partakers. Either then it denotes something purely spiritual, some misery from which those are exempt who have peace with God,—which can hardly be, consistently with vv. 5, 6—or it takes place in a state totally different from this present one, in which the wheat and tares are mingled together. One or other of these considerations will at once dismiss by far the greater number of interpretations. The fact of Mahomet’s mission

being avowedly against corrupt Christianity as idolatry, does not in the remotest

degree answer the conditions. In the very midst of this corrupt Christianity were at that time God’s elect scattered np and down: and it is surely too much to say that every such person escaped scathless

from the Turkish sword). **And it was given to them** (allotted to them by God as the limit of their appointed work and office: here the statement expresses rather the limitation than the extension of the grant) **that they should not kill them** (the unsealed), **but that they** (the unsealed):

the subject is changed) **shall be tormented five months** (the reason seems to be correct, which several Commentators have given for this number being chosen: viz. that five months is the ordinary time in the year during which locusts commit their ravages. At all events we are thus in some measure delivered from the endless

perplexities of capricious fancy in which the historical interpreters involve us): **and their torment** (i. e. that of the sufferers) **is as the torment of (arising from) a scorpion, when it has smitten** (by its bite or sting) **a man. And in those days men shall seek death** (observe the transition of the style from the descriptive

to the prophetic. For the first time the Apostle ceases to be the exponent, of what he saw, and becomes the direct organ of the Spirit), **and shall not find it: and they shall vehemently desire** (*desire* alone is not strong enough) **to die, and death fleeth** (the pres., of the *habitual* avoidance in those days) **from them** (the longing to die arises from the excruciating pain of the sting. See Jer. viii. 3.

I cannot forbear noticing as we pass, the caprice of historical interpreters. On the command *not to kill* the men, &c., in ver. 5, our principal modern historical interpreter says, “i. e. not to annihilate them as a political Christian body.” If then the same rule of interpretation is to hold, the present verse must mean that the “political Christian body” will be so sorely beset by these Mahometan locusts, that it will vehemently desire to be annihilated, and not find any way. For it surely cannot be allowed that the *killing of men* should be said of their annihilation as a political body in one verse, and their *desiring to die* in the next should be said of something totally different, and applicable to their individual misery).

7.] The Apostle now returns to the description of the locusts themselves. **And the shapes of the locusts [were] like horses made ready for war** (this resemblance,—compare Joel ii. 4, “*the appearance of them is as the appearance of horses*,”—has been noticed by travellers. Ewald remarks that one German name for the grasshopper is *Heu-pferd*, the grass-horse. And especially does the likeness hold good when the horse is equipped for war; the plates of the horse’s armour being represented by the hard laminæ of the outer shell of the locust: see below, ver. 9), **and on their heads as it were crowns like unto gold** (it is not easy to say what this part of the description imports. An attempt has been made to apply it to the turban: but granting some latitude to the word *crowns*, **like gold** will hardly bear this. The appearance of a turban, even when ornamented with gold, is hardly *golden*. I should understand the words, of the head actually ending in a crown-shaped fillet which resembled gold in its material, just as the wings of some of the beetle tribe might be said to blaze with gold and gems. So we have below,

"they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron." the material not being metallic, but only as it were metallic. Some understand these crowns of soldiers' helmets: but this is quite arbitrary and gratuitous): **and their faces [were] as the faces of men** (Düsterdieck well observes, that we must not, suppose them actually to have had human faces, but that the face of the locust, which under ordinary circumstances has a distant resemblance to the human countenance, bore this resemblance even more notably in the case of these supernatural locusts. It is not *their faces were the faces of men*, but, "*were as the faces of men.*" Nor again can we agree with the idea that **men** is here used to designate the male sex: an interpretation recommended here,—the general

word in the original importing both sexes,—by the wish to introduce the moustache

of the Arabs. It is much more natural to take the general term in its and wider meaning:—their faces were Like human faces: and then comes the limitation, not in the face, but in another particular), **and they had hair as the hair of women** (i. e. long and flowing, 1 Cor. xi. 14f. De Wette quotes from Niebuhr an Arabic proverb in which the antlers of locusts are compared to the hair of girls. But perhaps we must regard the comparison

as rather belonging to the supernatural portion of our description, Ewald would understand the hair on the legs, or on the bodies, of the locusts, to be meant, referring to *rough caterpillars*, Jer. li. 27.

To infer, from this feature, licentiousness

As a characteristic in the interpretation, is entirely beside the purpose): **and their teeth were as the teeth of lions** (so also of the locust in Joel i. 6. Eward rightly designates

as very doubtful a fancied resemblance

to a lion in the under jaw. We may observe that this, as some other features

in the description, is purely graphic, and does not in any way apply to the plague to be inflicted by these mystic locusts), **and they had breastplates as iron breastplates** (the plate which forms the thorax of the natural locust, was in their case as if of iron), **and the sound of their wings [was] as a sound of chariots of many horses** (by the two genitives the sound of both, the chariots and the horses, is included. The chariots are regarded as an appendage to the horses) **as they run to war. And they have tails like to scorpions**

(i. e. to the tails of scorpions), **and stings** (vis. in their tails: this is the particular especially in which the comparison finds its aptitude): **and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months** (see above on ver. 5). **They have as king over them** (or, "they have a king over them, Viz.".... It favours this last alternative, in this particular, of having a king, they are distinguished from natural locusts: for Prov. xxx. 27, "*the locusts have no*

king") **the angel of the abyss; his name Is in Hebrew Abaddon** (i. e., perdition; used in the Old Test. for the place of perdition, Oreus, in Job xxvi. 6; Prov. xxvii. 20, in both of which plies it is joined with Hadés (Sheol),—Ps. lxxxviii. 12; Job xxviii. 22. In all these places the Septuagint translators express it by *perdition* (*apoleia*). So that this is the local name personified: or rather perhaps that abstract name personified,

from which the local import itself is derived), **and in the Greek he has for his name Apollyon** (the name seems chosen from the Septuagint word *apoleia*: see above.

It is a question, who this angel of the abyss is. Perhaps, for accurate distinction's sake we must not identify him with Satan himself,—compare ch. xii. 3, 9,—but most regard him as one of the principal of the bad angels). **The one (first) woe hath passed: behold, there cometh** (singular, the verb applying simply to that which is future, without reference as yet to its plurality) **two woes after these things.** There is an endless Babel of allegorical and historical interpretation of these *locusts from the pit*. The most that we can say of their import is, that they belong to a series of judgments on the ungodly which will immediately precede the second advent of our Lord: that the various und mysterious particulars of the vision will no doubt clear themselves up to the church of God, when the time of its fulfilment arrives: but that no such clearing up has yet taken place, a very few hours of research among histories of apocalyptic interpretation will serve to convince any reader who is not himself the servant of a preconceived system.

13–21.] The sixth Trumpet. And the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice (literally, **one** voice: but it is doubtful, in the uncertain authenticity of the word *four*, whether any stress is to be laid on this **one** or not. Vitringa gives it the emphasis,— "*that the four horns simultaneously uttered, not a diverse, but, one and the same voice.*" and so Hengstenberg. The allegorical interpreters give it various imports—the agreement of the four Gospels,—that of the prayers of exiled Jews, &c.) **out of the [four] horns of the golden altar which was before God** (the same altar as that previously mentioned in ch.

viii. 3 and vi. 9, where see notes. From ch. xvi. 7 it would appear that the voice probably proceeded from the altar itself, represented as uttering the cry of vengeance for the blood shed on it; compare ch. vi. 9, with which cry of the martyred saints the whole series of retributive judgments is connected. The reading of the Sinaitic MS. [*The reading is uncertain. We have here but two very ancient MSS., and of those the Alexandrine omits four, while the Sinaitic omits altogether the words* from the four horns of: *reading, I heard the voice of the golden altar, &c.*] is very remarkable, and may represent the original text. To suppose that the cry from the altar is indicative of an altar having been the scene of some special sin on the part of the men of Roman Christendom, and so to apply it to the perversions of Christian rites in the Romish Church, is surely to confuse the whole imagery of the vision. For it is not of *any altar* in the abstract that we are reading, but of *the golden altar which was before God*, where the prayers of the saints had been offered by the angel, ch. viii. 3, 5: and the voice is the result of those prayers, in accordance with which those judgments are inflicted.

The horns again, representing the *enceinte* of the altar, not any special rites with which the horns of an altar were concerned, cannot be pressed into the service of the above-noticed interpretation, but simply belong to the propriety of that heard and seen. The voice proceeded from the surface of the altar, on which the prayers had been offered: and that surface was bounded by the *horns*) **saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet** (viz. that one now before us,—belonging to the present vision), **Loose** (it is too much to say that the angel himself is made the active minister of this loosing: we do not read “*and he went and loosed*” following, but simply “*and the four angels, &c. were loosed.*”) We must therefore believe that the command is given to him only in so far as he is the representative and herald of all that takes place under his trumpet-blowing) **the four angels which are bound** (so A.V. rightly: “*are bound*” is the true perfect passive, not “*have been bound*”) **on** (not “*in,*” as A.V.) **the great river Euphrates** (the whole imagery here has been a crux of the interpreters: as to who these angels are, and what is indicated by the locality here described. I will only venture to point out, amidst the surging tumult of controversy, one or two points of apparent refuge to which we *must not* betake ourselves. First, we must not yield to the temptation, so attractive at first sight, of identifying these four angels with the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth and holding in the four winds, in ch. vii. 1 ff. For the mission of these angels is totally distinct from theirs, as the locality is also. There is not a syllable of *winds* here, nor any hurting of earth, sea, or trees. Secondly, the question need not perplex us here, whether these are good or bad angels: for it does not enter in any way into consideration. They simply appear, as in other parts of this book, as ministers of the divine purposes, and pass out of view as soon as mentioned. Here, it would almost seem as if the angelic persons were little more than personifications: for they are immediately resolved into the host of cavalry. Thirdly, that there is nothing in the text to prevent “*the great river Euphrates*” from being meant literally. Düsterdieck maintains, that because the rest of the vision has a mystical meaning, therefore this local designation must have one also: and that if we are to take the Euphrates literally and the rest mystically, endless confusion would be introduced. But this is quite a mistake, as the slightest consideration will shew. It is a common practice in Scripture allegory to intermingle with its mystic language literal designations of time and place. Take for instance the allegory in Ps. lxxx. 8, 11, “*Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt.... it sent out its boughs unto the sea, and its branches unto the river:*” where, though the vine and its boughs and branches are mystical, Egypt, the sea, and the river, are all literal. See some good remarks on this in Mr. Elliott’s 1st vol., p. 331 ff., where the above example is cited among others). **And the four angels were loosed, which had been prepared against** (in reference to) **the hour and day and month and year** (viz. which had been appointed by God: the appointed hour occurring in the appointed day, and that in the appointed month, and that in the appointed year. The article **the**, prefixed,

and not repeated, seems to make this meaning imperative. Had the article been repeated before each, the ideas of the appointed

hour, day, month, and year would have been separated, not, as now, united: had there been no article, we *might* have understood that the four were to be added together to make up the time, though even thus the “*against*” occurring once only would have made some difficulty), **that they should kill the third part of men** (on the third part, see above, ver. 7. It seems necessary, that in this term, **men**, we are to include only the “*dwellers on the earth*” of ch. viii. 13, not any of the servants of God): **and the number of the armies of the cavalry was twice myriads of myriads** (i. e. $20,000 \times 10,000 = 200,000,000$, two hundred millions. The number seems to be founded on those in Ps. lxviii. 17, Dan. vii. 10);—**I heard the number of them. And after this manner** (i. e. according to the following description) **saw I the horses in my vision** (Düsterdieck suggests, and it seems likely enough, that this express reference to *sight* is inserted on account of the words “*I heard,*” which preceded) **and those who sat upon them, having** (most naturally refers to both horses and riders, not to riders only. The armour of both was uniform) **breastplates red, as fire** (the three epithets express the colours of the breastplates, and are to be separated, as belonging each to one portion of the host, and corresponding to the fire, smoke, and brimstone which proceeded out of the horses’ mouths below), **and blue, as smoke** (literally, hyacinthine. The hyacinth of the Greeks is supposed to have been our dark blue iris), **and yellow, as brimstone** (light yellow: such a colour as would be produced by the settling fumes of brimstone):

and the heads of the horses (the horses are taken up again, both horses and riders having been treated of in the preceding

sentence) **[were] as heads of lions, and out of their mouths goeth forth fire and smoke and brimstone** (i. e. separately, one of these out of the mouths of each division of the host. It is remarkable, that these divisions are *three*. though the angels

were *four*). **From** (indicates not directly the instrumentality, but the *direction from which* the result comes) **these three plagues were killed the third part of men, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which goeth forth out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouth** (principally; seeing that by what proceeded from their mouth their mission, to slay the third part of men, was accomplished)

and in their tails: for their tails were like serpents, having heads, and with them they hurt (i. e. inflict pain: viz. with the bites of the serpent heads in which they terminate).

I cannot but mention, in no unfriendly spirit, but because, both being friends, Truth is the dearer, that which may be designated the culminating instance of incongruous interpretation in the modern English historical exposition of these prophecies. These tails are, according to the Commentator, the horsetails, borne as symbols of authority by the Turkish Pachas. Well may Mr. Barker say [Friendly Strictures, p. 32], “an interpretation so wild, if it refutes not itself, seems scarcely capable of refutation.” Happily, it does refute itself. For it is convicted, by altogether leaving out of view the power in the *mouths*, which is the principal feature in the original vision: by making no reference to the serpent-like character of these tails, but being wholly inconsistent with it: by distorting the canon of symmetrical interpretation in making the *heads* attached to the tails to mean that the tails are symbols of authority: and by being compelled to render instead of **they hurt**, “*they commit injustice*,” a meaning which, in this reference, the word will not bear. When it is said of fire-and smoke-and brimstone-breathing horses which kill the third part of men, that besides having power in their mouths they have it in their tails, which are like serpents, ending in heads, it would be a strange anti-climax to end, “and with these they do injustice.” I will venture to say, that a more self condemnatory interpretation was never broached than this of the horsetails of the Pachas.) **And the rest of men** (this specification which follows clearly shews what sort of men are meant: viz. the ungodly alone) **who were not killed by** (literally, *in*: i.e. the course of) **these plagues, did not even repent of** (literally, *out of*: so as to come out from) **the works of their hands** (i. e. as the context

here necessitates, not, the whole course of their lives, but the idols which their hands had made. This will at once appear on comparing our passage with Deut. iv. 28, and Ps. cxxxv. 15. See also Acts vii. 41) **that they should not** (in order not to) **worship devils** (see 1 Cor. x. 20; 1 Tim. iv. 1, and notes there. The objects of worship

of the heathen, and of semi-heathen Christians, are in fact devils, by whatever name they may be called), **and images of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk: and they did not repent of their murders nor of their witchcrafts** (literally, their **drugs**: concrete in sense of abstract) **nor of their fornication nor of their thefts.** The character of these sins points out very plainly who are the sufferers by this sixth, or second woe trumpet,

and the survivors who do not repent. We are taught by St. Paul that the heathen are without excuse for degrading the majesty of God into an image made like unto corruptible things, and for degenerating into gross immoralities in spite of God’s testimony given through the natural conscience.

And even thus will the heathen world continue in the main until the second advent of our Lord, of which these judgments are to be the immediate precursors. Nor will these terrible inflictions themselves

bring those to repentance, who shall ultimately reject the Gospel which shall be preached among all nations. Whether, or how far, those Christians who have fallen back into these sins of the heathen, are here included, is a question not easy to decide. That they are not formally in the Apostle’s view, seems clear. We are not yet dealing with the apostasy and fornication within the church herself. But that they, having become as the *dwellers upon the earth*, even so far as to inherit *their* character of persecutors of the saints, may by the very nature of the case, be individually included in the suffering of these plagues,—just as we believe and trust that many individually belonging to Babylon may be found among God’s elect,—it is of course impossible

to deny.

Revelation: Chapter 10

CH. X. 1–X1. 14.] EPISODICAL AND ANTICIPATORY. As after the sixth seal, so here after the sixth trumpet, we have a passage interposed, containing two episodes, completing that which has been already detailed, and introducing the final member of the current series. But it is not so easy here as there, to ascertain the relevance and force of the episodes. Their subjects here seem further off: their action more complicated. In order to appreciate them, it will be necessary to lay down clearly the point at which we have arrived, and to observe what is at that point required.

The last vision witnessed the destruction of a third part of the ungodly by the horsemen from the East, and left the remainder in a state of impenitent idolatry and sin. Manifestly then the prayers of the saints are not yet answered, however near the time may be for that answer. If then this Episode contains some assurance of the approach of that answer in its completeness, it will be what we might expect at this point in the series of visions.

At the same time, looking onwards to the rest of the book, we see, that as out of the more general series of visions at the opening of the seals, affecting both the church and the world, there sprang a new and more particular series of the trumpets, having reference to one incident in the former vision, and affecting especially the "inhabiters of the earth," so if now the gaze of prophecy once more turns to the church and her fortunes, and the Apostle receives a new commission to utter a second series of prophecies, mainly on that subject, it will also be no more than what we might fairly look for.

Again: if the episodical vision in its character and hue partakes of the complexion of the whole series of trumpet-visions, and, as regards the church, carries a tinge of persecution, and of the still crying prayer for vengeance, not yet fully answered,—while at the same time it contains expressions and allusions which can only be explained by reference onward to the visions yet to come; this complex character is just that which would suit the point of transition at which we are now standing, when the series of visions immediately dependent on one feature in the opening of the seals is just at its end, and a new one evolving the other great subject of that general series is about to begin.

Now each one of these particulars is found as described above. For 1) the angel of ch. x. declares, with reference to the great vengeance-burden of the whole series of the trumpet-visions, respecting which the souls of the martyrs had been commanded "*that they should rest yet for a time*," ch. vi. 11,—that "*there should be no more delay*," but that in the days of the seventh angel, when he is about to blow, the whole mystery of prophecy would be fulfilled.

2) The same angel gives to the Seer the open little book, with a distinct announcement that he is to begin a new series of prophecies, and that series, by what immediately follows, ch. xi. 1 ff., evidently relating to the church of God in an especial manner.

3) The whole complexion of the episodical

vision of the two witnesses, ch. xi. 3 ff., is tinged with the hue wh has pervaded the series of trumpet-visions, from their source in ch. vi. 9–11, viz., that of vengeance for the sufferings of the saints: while at the same time allusions occur in it which are at present inexplicable, but will receive light hereafter, when the new series of visions is unfolded. Such are the allusions to "*the wild beast which cometh up out of the abyss*," ch. x. 7, and to "*the great city*," ib. ver. 8.

With these preliminary considerations, we may, I think, approach these episodical visions with less uncertainty.

1-11.] THE VISION OF THE LITTLE BOOK. **And I saw another strong angel** (**another**, perhaps in allusion to the many which have been mentioned: but seeing that the epithet **strong** occurs only in the mention of the angel who cried out in reference to the sealed book, ch. v. 2, and that the present angel's errand also regards a book, we can hardly help taking **another** with both substantive and adjective, and referring it to that **first strong angel** in ch. v. 2, And this consideration may serve to introduce the assertion, to me hardly admitting of a doubt, that this angel is not, and cannot be, our Lord Himself. Such a supposition would, it seems to me, entirely break through the consistency of apocalyptic analogy. Throughout the book, as before observed, on ch. viii. 3, angels are the ministers of the divine purposes, and the carriers out of the apocalyptic course of procedure, but are every where *distinct from the divine Persons themselves*. In order to this their ministry, they are invested with such symbols and such delegated attributes as beseem in each case the particular object in view: but no apparent fitness of such symbolical investiture to the divine character should induce us to break through the distinction, and introduce indistinctness and confusion into the book. When St. John means to indicate the Son of God, he indicates Him plainly: none more so: when these plain indications are absent, and I find the name **angel** used, I must take leave to regard the agent as distinct from Him,—however clothed, for the purposes of the particular vision, with His delegated power and attributes) **descending out of heaven** (the place of the Seer yet continues in heaven: see below, vv. 8, 9), **clothed with a cloud** (as a messenger of divine judgment: see ch. i. 7), **and the rainbow upon his head** (**the**, i.e., the well-known, ordinary rainbow: indicating, agreeably with its first origin, God's covenant of mercy. See note on ch. iv. 3), **and his face as the sun** (indicating the divine glory with which he was invested: see ch. i. 16, xviii. 1: and compare Luke ix. 26), **and his feet as pillars of fire** (see ch. i. 15. The symbols with which this angel is accompanied, as those which surrounded the throne of God in ch. iv. 2 ff., betoken judgment tempered with mercy, the character of his ministration, which, at the same time that it proclaims the near approach of the completion of God's judgments, furnishes to the Seer the book of his subsequent prophecy, the following out of God's purposes of mercy), **and having in his hand** (his *left* hand, by what follows, ver. 5) **a little book** (the diminutive has been taken by some to point to the subsequent eating of the book by the Apostle: but Düsterdieck remarks that if so, even the *little book* would be too large:—by others, to the size relatively to the angel. But the most natural reason for its use is to be found by comparison with the **book** of ch. v. ff. That was the great sealed roll of God's purposes: this [see below] but one portion of those purposes, which was to be made the Seer's own for his future prophesying. On the signification, &c., of this

little book or roll, see below, ver. 8, notes) **open. And he**

placed his right foot on the sea, and his left on the earth, and cried with a loud voice as a lion roareth (the whole imagery represents the glory and majesty of Him whose messenger this angel is: and is to be taken literally in the vision, the earth meaning the earth; the sea, the sea: and the description of the loudness of the voice being simply thus descriptive). **And when he cried, the seven thunders** (it is probable

that the article **the** is prefixed because, like the seven stars, churches, seals, trumpets, and vials, these seven thunders form a complete portion of the apocalyptic machinery: and, having no other designation, for the very reason that their meaning is not revealed, they are thus designated, as "*the seven thunders*") **spoke their** (literally, **their own**: but this cannot be expressed in the English; and there appears to be no further stress on the possessive, than as it belongs to the peculiar character of the utterances of these thunders. They were to be concealed,

remaining unwritten: and this fact, I conceive, reflects back a tinge on the possessive genitive, making it so far emphatic: the voices were, and remained, **their own**: not shared by being perpetuated)

voices. And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write (in obedience to the command in ch. i. 19): **and** (as I was about to write, a new circumstance

arose) **I heard a voice out of heaven** (from which it does not follow that the Seer is on earth, any more than in ver. 1) **saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them** (compare the contrary command, ch. xxii. 10. Many speculations have been raised as to the purport of the utterances of the seven thunders, and the reason for concealing them. From the very nature of the case, these must be utterly in vain. The wisdom of Him, who signified this Revelation to His servant John,

has not seen fit to reveal these things to us. But the very nature of the case also convicts some of these speculations

of error. The thunders, e.g., did not speak "*things exceeding human comprehension,*"

as Ewald thinks, seeing that not only did St. John understand their utterances, but he was about to write them down for others to read, as intelligible

to them also. Again, they were not any utterances of mere human device. They were spoken by command of the great angel, as ver. 3 necessarily implies: they, in common with the seals, trumpets, and vials, form part of the divinely-arranged machinery of the Apocalypse. It is matter of surprise and grief therefore,

when we find historical interpreters of our day explaining them of the papal anathemas of the time of the Reformation. It seems to me that no interpretation could be more unfortunate—none more thoroughly condemnatory of the system which is compelled to have recourse to it. For, merely to insist upon one point,—if it were so, then the Apostle sealed the utterances in vain, for all know what those thunders have uttered: then the command should have run "*seal the book even to the time of the end,*" as in Dan. xii. 4, instead of an absolute command as here. Thus much we may infer; from the very character of thunder, —that the utterances were of fearful import: from the place which they hold,—that they related to the church: from the command to conceal them,—first, encouragement, that God in His tender mercy to His own does not reveal all His terrors: secondly, godly fear, seeing that the arrows of His quiver are not exhausted, but besides things expressly foretold, there are more behind not revealed to us).

5-7.] The oath of the strong angel, that the time of fulfilment of all prophecy was close at hand. In this portion of the vision, the reminiscences of Dan. xii. 7 are very frequent:—"And I heard the man clothed in fine linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half: and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." **And the angel whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted his right hand** (not both hands, as in Daniel above, seeing that the little book lay open on his left. On the practice of lifting the hand in swearing, compare Gen. xiv. 22 [Exod. vi. 8 and Num. xiv. 30, margin], Deut. xxii. 40) **towards heaven** (us God's dwelling-place, Isa. lvii. 15), **and sware by Him that liveth to the ages of the ages** (compare Dan. above), **who created the heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it** (this full and formal designation of God as Creator of all is given, because the subject of the angel's oath is, the mystery of God, which necessarily rests in His power alone who made all things).

We may observe, that the fact as well as the form of this oath is against the supposition, that this strong angel is the Lord Himself. Considering St. John's own declarations respecting the Son of God, it is utterly inconceivable that he should have related as spoken by Him an oath couched in these terms), **that time** (i. e. **delay**: see below) **should no longer be** (i. e. should

no more intervene: in allusion to the answer

given to the cry of the souls of the martyrs, ch. vi. 11, “*And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a time.*” This whole series of trumpet-judgments has been an answer to the prayers of the saints, and now the vengeance is about to receive its entire fulfilment: time shall no longer intervene: the appointed delay is at an end. That this is the meaning, is shewn by what follows. Several erroneous views have been taken of this saying: e.g., 1) that of Bede and others, *that the succession of secular times should cease at the last trumpet*, and apparently the A.V. [“*that there should be time no longer*”),—that it imports the ending of the state of time, and the beginning of eternity 2) the *chronological* one of Bengel, who allots a definite length, viz. $1111\frac{1}{2}$ years (?) to a **time**, and then interprets “*there shall not elapse a time*” bringing the end, on his successive-historical system, to the year 1836; which is self-refuted: 3) the view of Vitringa and Hengstenberg, which grounds an error on the right understanding

of these words themselves,—“*that there should interpose no delay of time between the sound of the seventh trumpet and the fulfilment of the prophetic oracles.*” for the assertion of ver. 7, which is the carrying out of this denial, expressly identifies the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, with the immediate fulfilment of all prophecy): **but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel** (i. e. the days indicated, in the fulfilment of the vision, by the sounding of the seventh angel’s trumpet), **when he is about to blow his trumpet** (those words, **when he is about**, are used in their strictest propriety. For when the seventh angel *does* sound, the completed time of the fulfilment is simultaneous

with his blowing: compare ch. xi. 18: so that it is properly said that the fulfilment comes *in the days* when he is about to blow. I have shewn in my Greek Test. that the version which has been suggested, “at what time soever he may have to sound,” can hardly be the rendering of the words. The A.V., “when he shall begin to sound,” is inadmissible), **then the mystery of God** (this expression will be best understood by Rom. xvi. 25, connected as it is here with the verb **evangelized**, or, **declared the glad tidings** [see below]. It is the mystery of *the*

kingdom, as unfolded in the course of the Gospel dispensation, as is clearly shewn by the thanksgiving after the blowing of the seventh trumpet in ch. xi. 15 ff.) **is fulfilled**

(literally, *was fulfilled*,—the speaker looking back, in prophetic anticipation, on the days spoken of, from a point when they should have become a thing past), **as He evangelized His servants the prophets**

(i. e. as in our text, **as He declared the glad tidings to His servants the prophets**).

8-11.] The delivery of the little book to John, and announcement of a further work of prophecy to be carried on by him. And the voice which I heard out of heaven, [I] again [heard] talking with me and saying, Go take the book which lieth open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went away (so literally: i.e., from my former place as a spectator in heaven: from which, however, the Seer does not seem wholly to remove, compare ch. xi. 16, xix. 1 ff., although his principal spot of observation is henceforth the earth: see ch. xi. 1, xii. 18, xiv. 1, xvii. 3, &c.) **to the angel telling him to give me the little book. And he saith to me, Take and eat it up** (compare Ezek. iii. 1 ff.; Jer. xv. 16; Ps. xl. 9): **and it shall embitter thy belly, but in thy mouth shall be sweet as honey. And I took the book out of the hand of the angel, and ate it up: and it was in my mouth as honey; and when I had eaten it up, my belly was embittered** (there is the difference between Ezekiel’s roll and this, that in the prophet’s case, only the sweetness in the mouth is mentioned, ‘The Angel, dwelling most on the most important thing, the working of the contents of the book, puts the bitterness first: the Evangelist, in relating what happened, follows the order of time. The text itself will guard us against some misinterpretations of this bitterness and sweetness. It is plain that we must understand these to belong, not to differing characters of different portions of the contents of the book [as some], but to different sensations of the Evangelist in different parts of his body respecting one and the same content of the book. Nor again must we invert the order, imagining [us others] that the first bitterness leads afterwards to sweetness and joy, or [as others again] that the bitterness in the belly indicates the reception by the Evangelist, but the sweetness in the mouth, the declaration to others; proceeding on a misunderstanding of ver. 11). For further particulars, see below on ver. 11). **And they say** (this leaves the speakers quite

indefinite; amounting in fact to no more than “it was said”) **to me, Thou must** (i. e. it is God’s will that thou shouldest: a command is laid upon thee so to do) **again prophesy** (as thou hast done before in writing the former part of the revelation: see in the interpretation below) **concerning** (not as A. V. “before” nor can the original bear such a meaning. The substantives which follow the preposition are the objects of the prophecy) **peoples and nations and languages and many kings** (i. e. concerning the inhabitants of the earth, as before: compare ch. v. 9, where the Lamb’s worthiness to open the former book is connected with His having redeemed some out of every *tribe and language and people and nation*). I have postponed till this point the question, what we are to understand by the **little book**, and the Seer’s concern with it. And I will at once say, before discussing the various differing interpretations, that I conceive the simple acceptation of the description and symbolism here can lead but to one conclusion: viz. that it represents the *mystery of God* above spoken of, the subject of the remainder of the Apocalyptic prophecies. So far, many of the principal Commentators are at one. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how any

other interpretation can have been thought of, except as made necessary by some previous self-committal of the Expositor regarding the sealed book of ch. v., or by the exigencies of some historical system. But within the limits of this agreed meaning, there are many different views as to the extent of the reference of the “little book” to that which follows, and as to its relation to the seven-sealed book of ch. v. As regards these points, we may remark, 1) that the contents of the “little book” cannot well be confined to ch. xi. 1–13, or we should not have had so solemn an inauguration of it, nor so wide-reaching an announcement of the duty of the Apostle consequent on the receipt of it; 2) that the oath of the Angel must necessarily be connected with his bearing of the open book on his hand, and if so, makes it necessary to infer that the contents of the book are identical with the mystery, respecting which he swears; 3) that the episode which follows, containing the first work of the Apostle under that his new prophetic commission, inaugurates an entirely new matter—the things which befall the Church of God and the holy city, which new character of incidents continues to prevail until the very end of the book; 4) that the relation of this “little book” to the sealed book of ch. v. can hardly be doubtful to the readers of this Commentary, seeing that we have maintained that book to be the sum of the divine purposes, which is not opened at all within the limits of the apocalyptic vision, but only prepared to be opened by the removal of its seven seals. That this is not that complete record of the divine purposes, nor, technically speaking, any portion of it, must be evident to us. For it forms a small detached roll or volume, lying open on the angel’s hand: it is destined for the especial individual behoof of the Seer, into whom it passes, and becomes assimilated with himself, to be given forth as he should be directed to utter it. 5) That it contained *more than* we possess in the remaining portion of this book, is probable. St. John doubtless knew more than he has told us. Previously to this, he knew what the seven thunders uttered: and subsequently to this, we can hardly imagine that he was ignorant of the name of the wild-beast, whose number he has given us. It remains that we say something on the circumstances accompanying the Apostle’s reception of the mysterious book. Its *sweetness*, when he tasted it, allusive as it is to the same circumstance in Ezekiel’s eating the roll which was all lamentation, mourning, and woe, doubtless represents present satisfaction at being informed of, and admitted to know, a portion of God’s holy will: of those words of which the Psalmist said, Ps. cxix. 103, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth!” But when the roll came to be not only tasted, but digested,—the nature of its contents felt within the man,—bitterness took the place of sweetness: the persecutions, the apostasies, the judgments, of the church and people of the Lord, saddened the spirit of the Seer, and dashed his joy at the first reception of the mystery of God.

Revelation: Chapter 11

CH. XI. 1–13.] *The measurement of the temple of God. The two witnesses: their testimony, death, resurrection, and assumption into heaven: the earthquake, and its consequences.* This passage may well be called, even more than that previous one, ch. x. 1 ff., the *crux* of interpreters; as it is undoubtedly one of the most difficult in the whole Apocalypse. Referring to the histories of apocalyptic exposition for an account of the various interpretations, I will, as I have done in similar cases, endeavour to lay down a few landmarks, which may serve for guidance at least to avoid inconsistency, if we cannot do more. And I will remark, 1) that we are not bound to the hard “wooden” literal sense so insisted on in our day by some of the modern German Expositors. I would strongly recommend any one who takes that view, who will have Jerusalem mean nothing but Jerusasalem, and confine the two witnesses to two persons bodily appearing there, to read through the very unsatisfactory and shuffling comment of Düsterdieck here: the result of which is, that finding, as he of course does, many discrepancies between this and our Lord’s prophecy of the same destruction of Jerusalem, he is driven to the refuge that while our Lord describes matters of fact, St. John *idealizes* the catastrophe, setting it forth not as it really took place, but according to its inner connexion with the final accomplishment of the mystery of God, and correspondingly to the hope which God’s Old Testament people possessed as contrasted with the heathen power of this world, which abides in “Babylon.” But really, if we have come thus far by fighting for the literal interpretation, why not a little further? Or rather why *so far*? If “Babylon” is the abode of the world, why not “Jerusalem” of the church?—If our interpreter, maintaining the literal sense, is allowed so far to “idealize,” as to exempt the temple of God itself [ver. 2] from a destruction which we know overtook it, and nine-tenths of the city [ver 13] from an overthrow which destroyed it all, surely there is an end to the meaning of words. If Jerusalem here is simply Jerusalem, and the prophecy regards her overthrow by the Romans, and especially if this passage is to be made such use of as to set aside the testimony of Irenaeus as to the date of the Apocalypse by the stronger testimony of the Apocalypse itself [so Düsterdieck from Lücke], then must every particular be shewn to tally with known history; or if this cannot be done, at least it must be shewn that none contradicts it. If *this* cannot be done, then we may fairly infer that the prophecy has no such reference, or only remotely, here and there, and not as its principal subject. 2) Into whatever difficulty we may be led by the remark, it is no less true, that the “holy city” of ver. 2 cannot be the same as the “*great city*” of ver. 8. This has been felt by the literal interpreters, and they have devised ingenious reasons why the holy city should afterwards be called the great city: so De Wette, “he named jerusalem the great city, because he can no more call her holy after her desecration” [but he need not therefore call her great, by which epithet she is never called],—Düsterdieck, “because it is impossible in one breath to call a city ‘holy,’ and ‘Sodom and Egypt?’” [most true: then must we not look for some other city than one which this very prophecy has called holy?]. So far Joachim says well, “But his saying, ‘in the streets of the great. city,’ does not seem to favour the literal sense. For it [Jerusalem] is never called the great city, but rather Nineveh and Babylon are ‘thus called: because many are called and but few chosen.’ His other reason see in the interpretation below. 3) We are compelled, if I am not mistaken, to carry the above considerations somewhat further, by the very conditions of the prophecy itself. For it is manifestly and

undeniably of an *anticipatory* character. It is not, and cannot be, complete in itself. The words of ver. 7, “*the wild-beast which cometh up out of the abyss,*” bear no meaning where they stand, but require, in order to be understood at all, to be carried on into the succeeding visions of ch. xiii. ff. And if into those visions, then into a period when this wild-beast has received power from the dragon,—when, as in ch. xiii. 7, he makes war with the saints and conquers them, and all on earth except the elect are worshipping him. 4) Let us observe the result as affecting our interpretation. We are necessarily carried on by the very terms of our present compendious prophecy, into the midst of another prophecy, far more detailed and full of persons and incidents: of one which has its *great city, its temple of God, its worshippers in it, its witness of Jesus* and other coincident particulars. What inference does a sound principle of interpretation force upon us? What, if not this—that our present compendious prophecy, as in the particular of the beast that comes out of the abyss, so in its other features, must be understood as giving in summary, and introducing, that larger one? and consequently, that its terms are to be understood by those of that larger one, not servilely and literally where they stand? And observe, this is deduced from the very necessity of the case itself, as shewn in ver. 7, not from any system throwing its attraction forward and biassing our views. *We cannot understand this prophecy at all, except in the light of those that follow: for it introduces by anticipation their dramatis personae.* 5) If I mistake not, we thus gain much light on the difficulties of this prophecy. If it is a compendium of the more detailed prophecies which follow, opening the great series regarding God’s church, and reaching forward to the time of the seventh trumpet, then its separate parts, so hard to assign on any other view, at once fall into their places. Then, e.g. we at once know what is meant by the temple and its worshippers, viz., that these expressions are identical in reference with those others in the subsequent prophecy which point out an elect remnant, a Goshen in Egypt, a Zoar from Sodom, a number who do not worship the wild-beast and his image, who are not defiled with women, &c. And so of the rest.—6) It will then be on this principle that I shall attempt: the exposition of this difficult prophecy. Regarding it as a summary of the more detailed one which follows, I shall endeavour to make the two cast light on one another: searching for the meaning of the symbols here used in their fuller explanation there, and gaining perhaps some further insight into meanings there from expressions occurring here.

1, 2.] Command to measure the temple, but not the outer court, which is given to the Gentiles. And there was given to me (by whom, is not said, but it is left indefinite, as at ch. vi. 11, viii. 2) **a reed like to a staff** (see reff.), **saying**, (this word, **saying**, is out of the construction, and indefinite: as in ch. iv. 1), **Arise** (this word does not necessarily imply that the Apostle was kneeling before) **and measure the temple of God and the altar** (apparently, the altar of incense: as that alone stood in the temple, properly so called. But perhaps we must not be too minute in particularizing), and them that worship in it (see the previous remarks on this prophecy). The **measuring** here is evidently for the purpose of taking account of, understanding the bearing and dimensions of, that which is to be measured: see ch. xxi. 15, where the heavenly Jerusalem is measured, by the angel. But here two questions arise: 1) What is that which is measured? and 2) when does the measuring take place? 1) have no doubt that, as above hinted, *the temple of God* and its *altar* are to be here taken symbolically, as the other principal features of the prophecy: and to one believing this, there can be but little further doubt as to what meaning he shall assign to the terms. Thus understood, they can only bear one meaning viz. that of the Church of the elect servants of God, every where in this book symbolized by Jews in deed and truth. The society of these, as a whole is the *temple*, agreeably to Scripture symbolism elsewhere, e.g. 1 Cor. ii. 16, 17, and is symbolized by the inner or holy place of the Jerusalem temple, and among which they as true Israelites and priests unto God, have a right to worship and minister. These are they who, properly speaking, alone are **measured**: estimated again and again in this book by tale and number—partakers in the first resurrection,—the Church of the first-born. Then as to our question 2), it is one which, so far as I know, has not engaged the attention of expositors. When a command is elsewhere in this book given to the Seer, we may observe that his fulfilment of it is commonly indicated. He is commanded to write, and the writing before us proves his obedience. He is ordered to take the little book, and he goes and takes it. But of the fulfilment by him of this command, **Arise and measure**, no hint appears to be given. The voice goes on continuously, until it melts imperceptibly into the narrative of the vision, and we are startled by “*and I heard a loud voice,*” in ver. 12, when we had thought it to be still speaking. After that, we hear no more of the measuring, till another and more glorious building is measured in ch. xxi. This being so, either 1) which is inconceivable, the measurement does not take place at all, or, 2) which is hardly probable, it takes place and no result is communicated to us, or 3) the result of it is found in the subsequent prophecies: in the minute and careful distinctions between the servants of God and those who receive the mark of the wild-beast—in all those indications which point out to us the length and breadth and depth and height, both of faith, and of unfaithfulness). **And the court which is outside the temple** (i. e. apparently, every thing except the **temple** itself: not merely the outer court or court of the Gentiles. That only the temple itself, in the strictest sense, is to be measured, is significant for the meaning above maintained) **cast out** (of thy measurement. But these strong words, conveying so slight a meaning, doubtless bear in them a tinge also of the stronger meaning, “reckon as profane,” “account not as included in the sacred precinct”), **and measure not it** (it has a slight emphasis: otherwise, it need not have been expressed in the original), **because it was given** (viz. at the time when the state of things subsisting in the vision came in: or, in God’s apportionment) **to the Gentiles** (if the *temple* and the *worshippers* represent the elect church of the first-born, the nations will correspond to those who are outside this sacred enclosure: those over whom eventually the millennial reign of ch. xx. shall be exercised: those from among whom shall spring the enmity against God’s church, but among whom also shall be many who shall fear, and give God glory, compare ver. 13. Of these is formed the outward seeming church, mixed up with the world; in them, though not in each case commensurate with them, is Babylon, is the reign of the wild-beast, the agency of the false prophet: they are the *dwellers on the earth*, the material on which judgment and mercy are severally exercised in the rest of this book [see especially ver. 18], as contrasted with God’s own people, gathered and to be gathered out from among them), **and they shall**

tread down (i. e. trample as conquerors, the outer church being in subjection to them: see Luke xxi. 24, Dan. viii. 13. The other meaning, *shall tread*, merely, is of course included; but must not be made the prevalent one. The period named shall be one during which “*the*

kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and violent men take it by force,” Matt. xi. 12) the holy city (Jerusalem, in the literal sense of the prophecy: the whole temple except the *temple proper*, or sanctuary itself, being counted with the city outside) **forty and two months** (this period occurs in three forms in this BOOK: 1) as forty-two mouths; see ch. xiii. 5: 2) as 1260 days = 42 months x 30, see ver. 3, ch. xii. 6: 3) as time, times, and half a time = 3 1/2 years = 3 x 360 + 180 = 1260, see ch. xii. 14. This latter designation is also found in Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7. With respect to these periods, I may say that, *equal* as they certainly seem to be, we have no right to suppose them, in any two given cases, to be *identical*, unless the context requires such supposition. For instance, in these two verses, 2 and 3, there is strong temptation to regard the two equal periods as coincident and identical: but it is plain that such a view is not required by the context; the prophecy contains no note of such coincidence, but may be very simply read without it, on the view that the two periods are equal in duration, but independent of one another: and the rather, that this prophecy, as has been already shewn, is of a compendious character, hereafter to be stated at large. I will further remark, and the reader will find this abundantly borne out by research into histories of apocalyptic exegesis, that no solution at all approaching to a satisfactory one has ever yet been given of any one of these periods. This being so, my principle is to regard them as being still among the things unknown to the Church, and awaiting their elucidation by the event. It is our duty to feel our way by all the indications which Scripture furnishes, and by the light which history, in its main and obvious salient events, has thrown on Scripture: and, when those fail us, to be content to confess our ignorance. An apocalyptic commentary which explains every thing, is self-convicted of error)

3-13.] THE TWO WITNESSES: *their testimony, death, resurrection, ascension: consequences on the beholders*, The remarks just made are here especially applicable, No solution has ever been given of this portion of the prophecy. Either the two witnesses are literal,—two individual men,—or they are symbolical,—two individuals taken as the concentration of principles and characteristics, and this either in themselves, or as representing men who embodied those principles and characteristics. In the following notes I shall point out how far one, how far another of these views, is favoured by the text, and leave the reader to judge. **And I will give to my two witnesses** (the heavenly voice is still speaking in the name of Christ. That we must not press the **my** to the inference that *Christ himself* speaks, is plain by the words, *where also their Lord was crucified*, below. The definite article **the** [in the original, it is, **to the two witnesses of me**] seems as if the two witnesses were well known, and distinct in their individuality. The **two** is essential to the prophecy, and is not to be explained away. No interpretation can be right which does not, either in individuals, or in characteristic lines of testimony, retain and bring out this dualism. See further below), **and they shall prophesy** (this has generally been taken to mean, *shall preach repentance*. It may be so: but in ch. x. 11, the verb is used in its later and stricter sense of *foretelling events*, as in 1 Pet. i. 19; Jude 14. If their testimony consisted in denouncing judgment, the other would necessarily be combined with it) **a thousand two hundred and sixty days** (Düsterdieck remarks that the fact of a period of the same length as the forty-two months being now expressed in *days*, implies that they will prophesy day by day throughout it. The reader will of course see, that the two questions, of these days being *days* or *years*, and of the individuality or the symbolical character of the witnesses, are mutually connected together. He will also bear in mind that it is a pure assumption that the two periods, the forty-two months and the 1260 days, coincide over the same space of time. The duration of time is that during which the power of Elijah’s prophecy shut up the heaven: viz. three years and six months: see Luke iv. 25, and more on ver. 6 below), **clothed in sackcloth** (in token of need of repentance and of approaching judgment: see Isa. xxii. 12 Jer. iv. 8, vi. 26; Jonah iii. 5. Certainly this portion of the prophetic description strongly favours the individual interpretation. For first, it is hard to conceive how whole bodies of men and churches could be thus described; and secondly, the principal symbolical interpreters have left out, or passed very slightly, this important particular. One does not see how bodies of men who lived like other men [their being the victims of persecution is another matter], can be said to have prophesied *clothed in sackcloth*. It is to be observed that such was the garment of Elijah; see 2 Kings i. 8, and compare Matt. iii. 4), **These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks which stand before the Lord of the earth** (the whole from ref. Zech., to which the article the refers. But it is to be observed that while in Zech. we have the two *olive trees*, and spoken of in the same terms as here, there is but one *candlestick*, with its seven lights, which very seven lights, as there interpreted in ver. 10, are referred to in our ch. iv. 5, v. 6. So that it is somewhat difficult to say, whence the two candlesticks have come. The most probable view is that St. John has taken up and amplified the prophetic symbolism of Zechariah, carrying it on by the well-known figure of lights, as representing God’s testifying servants. Who the two “sons of oil” in the prophet were, whether Zerubbabel and Joshua, or the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, is of no import to our text here); **and if any one be minded to harm them, fire goeth forth** (the present tense, used of that which is habitual and settled, though yet future: see also on ver. 7 below) **out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies** (so Elijah, 2 Kings i. 10 ff.: and so ran the word of promise to Jeremiah, Jer. v. 14, “*I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them:*” the two being here combined together. Compare also Eccl. xlvi. 1, “*Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp:*”) **and if any one be minded to harm them, after this manner** (see Eccl. xlvi. 3, “*He three times brought down fire*”) **he must be killed** (this whole description is most difficult to apply, on the allegorical interpretation; as is that which follows. And as might have been expected, the allegorists halt and are perplexed exceedingly. The double announcement here seems to stamp the literal sense, and the words, **if any one**, and, **he must be killed**, are decisive against any mere *national* application of the words. *Individuality* could not be more strongly indicated).

These have (see on the present tense above) [**the] power to shut the heaven, that the rain may not rain during the days of their prophecy** (as did Elijah: the duration of the time also corresponding: see reff.): **and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood** (as had Moses, ref.), **and to smite the earth with** (see 1 Sam. iv. 8, from which, applying to the plagues in Egypt, the expression is taken) **every plague as often as they shall be minded** (all this points out the spirit and power of Moses, combined with that of Elias. And undoubtedly, it is in these two directions that we must look for the two witnesses, or lines of witnesses. The one impersonates the law, the other the prophets. The one reminds us of the prophet whom God should raise up like unto Moses; the other of Elias the prophet, who should come before the great and terrible day of the Lord; “*Who wast ordained for re-proof in their times, to pacify the wrath*

Of the Lord's judgment, before it brake forth into fury,” Eeclus. xviii. 10. But whether we are to regard these prophecies as to be fulfilled by individuals, or by lines of testimony, must depend entirely on the indications here given). **And when they have finished** (the tense used in the original implies, as plainly as words can imply it, that the whole period of their testimony will be at an end when that which is next said shall happen. All attempts of the allegorical expositors to escape this plain meaning of the words are in vain, Such is, “when they shall be about finishing: “whilst they shall perform;” “when they shall have completed their testimony,” meaning thereby not the whole course of it, but any one complete delivery of it, which others might have followed) **their testimony, the wild-beast that cometh up out of the abyss** (this is the first mention of the wild-beast; and the whole description, as remarked above, is anticipatory. The present tense gives simply *designation*, as so often: and is not to be interpreted future, “that is to come up.” The *character* of the beast is that he cometh up out of the abyss. This wild-beast is evidently identical with that mentioned in ch. xvii. 8, of which the same term is used, “*which is about to come up out of the abyss:*” and if so, with that also which is introduced ch. xii 1 ff., as “*a wild-beast coming up out of the sea,*” seeing that the same details, of the seven heads and ten horns, are ascribed to the two. But, though the appellation is anticipatory as far us this book is concerned, the beast spoken of was already familiar to its readers from Dan. vii. 21: See below) **shall make war with them** (the very expression is from Dan. vii, 21), **and shall conquer them and shall kill them. And their corpse** (“their wreck.” The singular is used, not for any mystical reason, but simply because the word in the original does not properly signify a dead body, but *that which has fallen*, be it of one, or of many. Below, where the context requires the separate corpses to be specified, wo have the plural) **[is]** (the present is best to supply, on account of the verbs following, which are in the present, until we come to *shall send*: and with which the portion relating to the corpses is bound up) **upon the open street** (literally, **the wide space**) **of the great city** (not Jerusalem [see above], which is never called by this name: but the *great city* of the succeeding visions, of which this is anticipatory and compendious), **namely, that which is called spiritually** (i. e. allegorically; in a sense higher than the literal and obvious one. The only other place in which we find this usage of the word is in 1 Cor. ii. 14, which see, and notes there) **Sodom and Egypt** (those Commentators who maintain that the literal Jerusalem is here meant, allege Isa. i, 9 ff, and Ezek. xvi. 48, as places where she is called Sodom. But the latter place is no example: for there Jerusalem is compared, in point of sinfulness, with her *sisters*, Samaria and Sodom, and is not called Sodom at all. And in Isaiah i. 9 ff., 1) it is not Jerusalem, but the Jewish people in general [see also Isa. iii. 9] that are called by this name: and that 2) not so much in respect of depravity, as of the desolation of Judæa, which [vv. 7–9] almost equalled that of the devoted cities, And even supposing this to be a case in point, no instance can be alleged of Jerusalem being called Egypt, or any thing bearing such an interpretation. Whereas in the subsequent prophecy both these comparisons are naturally suggested with regard to the great city there mentioned: viz. that of Sodom by ch. xix. 3, compared with Gen. xix, 28, and that of Egypt, and indeed Sodom also, by ch. xviii 4 ff.), **where their Lord also** (as well as they: not the specific term *crucifixion*, but the general fact of death by per-secution, underlying it, being in the Writer's mind) **was crucified** (these words

have principally led those who hold the literal Jerusalem to be meant. But if, as I believe I have shewn, such an interpretation is forbidden by the previous words, then we must not fall back on an erroneous view on account of the apparent requirements of these words, but enquire whether by the light of the subsequent prophecy, which is an expansion of this, we may find some meaning for them in accordance with the preceding conditions. And this is surely not difficult to discover. If we compare ch. xviii 24. with Matt. xxiii. 35, we shall find a wider ground than the mere literal Jerusalem on which to place the Lord's own martyrdom and that of His saints. It is true, He was crucified at Jerusalem: but it is also true that He was crucified not in, but outside the city, and by the hands, not of Jews, but of Romans. The fact is, that the literal Jerusalem, in whom was found the blood of all the saints who had been slain on earth, has been superseded by that wider and greater city, of which this prophecy speaks: and as the temple, in prophetic language, has become the church of God, so the outer city, in the same language, has become the great city which will be the subject of God's final judgments. For those who consider this, there be no hesitation in interpreting even local designation also of this great city). **And some from among the peoples and tribes and languages and nations look upon** (the prophetic history is carried on in the present, as in ch. xviii, 11 compared with ver. 9, and elsewhere) **their corpse** (see above) **three days and a half** (on this period we may remark, that these 3 ½ days are connected by analogy with the periods previously mentioned: with the 1260 days and 42 months = 3 years: and that in each case the half of the mystic number 7 enters. Also, that Elliott's calculation of this period as 3 ½ years, by which he makes out that that period elapsed, *precisely, to a day,* between the ninth session of the Lateran council, and the posting up of the theses by Luther at Wittenberg,—and on the accuracy of which he exclaims, “O wonderful prophecy! O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the foreknowledge of God!”—labours under this fatal defect;—that whereas his 3 years, from May 5, 1514, to May 5, 1517, are years of 365 days, his half-year, from May 5, 1517, to Oct. 31, of the same year, is “180, or half 360 days:” i.e. wanting 2 ½ days of the time required according to that reckoning. I may observe, that in his Apocalypsis Alfordiana, p.

128, he has repeated this inconsistency), **and do not permit their corpses to be put into a tomb** (the word in the original means not a *grave*, but a monument, or a tomb). **And they that dwell upon the earth** (i. e., the godless world) **rejoice over them** (at their fall) **and are glad, and shall send gifts to one another** (as on a day of festival, see Neh. viii, 10, 12; Esth. ix. 19, 29), **because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth** (viz. by the plagues above mentioned, vv. 5, 6). **And after the three days and an half, the Spirit of life** (not, *a spirit*: the whole diction is closely imitated from that used of the dry bones in Ezek. xxvii.) **from God** (these words, *from God*, belong not only to *life*, but to the Spirit of life) **entered in them, and they stood upon their feet** (the very words of Ezek. xxxvii. 10), **and great fear fell upon those who beheld them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying to them, Come up hither, And they went up to heaven in the cloud** (or, as we more commonly say in English, *the*

clouds: viz. the cloud which ordinarily floats in the air; the mist: not, “the cloud of Christ’s glory:” nor needing identification with any cloud previously mentioned in this book. But the ascension of the witnesses partakes of the character of His ascension. No attempt has been made to explain this ascension by those who interpret the witnesses figuratively of the Old and New Testament, or the like. The modern historical system, which can interpret such a Scripture phrase of “calling up to political ascendancy and power,” surely needs no refutation from me), **and their enemies beheld them, And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city** (the great city, as above) **fell, and there were slain in the earthquake names of men** (i. e. men themselves, the expression shewing that the number is carefully and precisely stated, as if the name of each were recounted: see below) **seven thousands** (i. e. the number 7000, In every place of the 23 where the word “chilias” occurs in the New Test., it signifies simply the numeral 1000, and never a chiliad, or a province, as the historical interpretation, forcing the expression to mean the seven Dutch united provinces, which were lost to the Papacy at the Reformation. It also forces the expression **names of men** out of its idiomatic sense to import “titles of dignity and command,” Duchies, Marquises, Lordships), **and the rest** (of the inhabitants of the city) **became terrified, and gave glory** (it would be entirely needless to contend that **gave** belongs to the same *subject* as **became terrified**, viz. **the rest**, had not an attempt been made to supply “the ascended witnesses” as a new subject. To say nothing of the inapplicability of the instances cited to justify such a view, our ch. xiv. 7 is decisive against it, where men are exhorted to “*fear God, and give Him glory:*” a also ch. xvi. 9, where the men tormented “*did not repent, to give Him glory.*” In fact, *the giving glory to God* is not equivalent in the Scriptures to *thanking God*, but is, as Bengel notices, “a mark of conversion or at all events, of the *recognition* of God. The exceptions to this are more apparent than real, e.g. Luke xvii. 18, where *recognition* is the main feature: Rev. iv. 9, where *glory* does not stand alone. See also 1 Sam. vi. 5. Josh. vii. 19 is a remarkable example of the ordinary meaning of the phrase) **to the God of heaven** (an expression otherwise confined to the later books of the Old Test.). **The second woe is past** (see on ch. ix. 12): **behold, the third woe cometh quickly** (the episodical visions of ch. x. 1–11, xi. 1–13, are finished; and the prophecy refers to the plagues of the sixth trumpet, ch. ix. 13–21. These formed the second woe: and upon these the third is to follow. But in actual relation, and in detail, it does not immediately follow. Instead of it, we have voices of thanksgiving in heaven, for that the hour of God’s kingdom and vengeance is come. The Seer is not yet prepared to set forth the nature of this taking of the kingdom, this remand to God’s servants, this destruction of the destroyers of the earth. Before he does so, another series of prophetic visions must be given, regarding not merely the dwellers on the earth, but the Church herself, her glory and her shame, her faithfulness and her apostasy. When this series has been given, then shall be declared in its fulness the manner and the process of the time of the end. And consequently as at the end of the vision of the seals, so here also. The sixth seal gave the immediately preceding signs of the great day—we were shewn in anticipatory episodes, the gathering of the elect and the multitude before the throne, and then the veil was dropt upon that series of visions and another began. And now, God’s avenging judgments on the earth, in answer to the prayers of His saints, having reached their final point of accomplishment, and the armies of heaven having given solemn thanks for the hour being come, again the veil is dropt, and again a new procession of visions begins from the beginning. The third woe, so soon to come, is in narration deferred until all the various underplots, so to speak, of God’s Providence have been brought onward to a point ready for the great and final dénouement).

15–19.] The seventh trumpet. And the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were great voices in heaven (notice, 2) that the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet, and the seventh vial, are all differently accompanied from any of the pre-ceeding series in each case. b) At each seventh member of the series we hear what is done, not on earth, but in heaven,—the half-hour’s silence, the song of thanksgiving, the voice from the temple and the throne, saying, “It is done.” c) At each seventh member likewise we have it related in the form of a solemn conclusion, that thunders, and lightnings, and voices (and an earthquake, and a great hail) occurred: see ch. xvi. 18 ff. d) At each seventh member we have plain indication in the imagery or by direct expression, that the end is come, or close at hand: 1) by the imagery of the sixth seal, and the two episodes, preceding the seventh seal: 2) by the declaration here, “*the time of the dead is come to be judged:*” 3) by “*It is done,*” sounding from the temple and the throne on the pouring out of the seventh vial. e) All this forms strong ground for inference, that the three series of visions are not continuos, but resumptive: not indeed going over the same ground with one another, either of time or of occurrence, but each evolving something which was not in the former, and putting the course of God’s Providence in a different light. It is true, that the seals involve the trumpets, the trumpets the vials: but it is not in mere temporal succession: the involution and inclusion are far deeper world-wide vision of the seals containing the cry for vengeance, out of which is evolved the series of the trumpets: and this again containing the episodical visions of the little book and the witnesses, out of which are evolved the visions of ecclesiastical faithfulness and apostasy which follow) **saying** (whose these

voices were, is not specified: but we may fairly assume them to have been those of the armies of heaven and the four living-beings, as distinguished from the twenty-four elders which follow), **The Kingdom over the world is become our Lord's and of his Christ** (no supply, such as "*the Kingdom*," is required. The genitive in both cases is one merely of possession), **and He** (no emphasis on He, as we are almost sure to lay on it, perhaps from the accent unavoidable in the Hallelujah Chorus of Handel) **shall reign to the ages of the ages** (this announcement necessarily belongs to the time close on the millennial reign: and this is no more than we might expect from the declaration of the strong angel in ch. x. 7). **And the twenty-four elders** (representing the church in glory) **which before God sat upon their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thanks to Thee, O Lord God the Almighty** (this ascription of thanks is the return for the answer to the prayers of the saints furnished by the judgments of the trumpets), **who art and wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great might and hast reigned. And the nations were angry** (the Septuagint translators begin Ps. xcvi. [our 99th] with these words: "*The Lord reigned, let the people be angry*"), **and Thine anger came, and the time of the dead, to be judged** (another indication that the end is at hand when these words are spoken), **and [the time] to give their reward to Thy servants the prophets** (see especially Matt. x. 41, to which reference seems to be made), **and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name, the small and the great** (the three terms together include the whole church), **and to destroy the destroyers of the earth** (all this looks onward to judgments and acts of God yet to come when the words are spoken. The thanksgiving is not that God hath done all this, but that the hour is come for it all to take place. Before it does, another important series of visions has to be unfolded).

19.] *Concluding, and transitional.* **And the temple of God was opened in the heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple** (the episode of ch. xi. 1 ff. began with measuring the temple of God, the shadow of things in the heavens: and now, when the time is come for the judgments there indicated to be fulfilled, that temple itself in the heavens is laid open. The ark of the Covenant is seen, the symbol of God's faithfulness in bestowing grace on His people, and inflicting vengeance on His people's enemies. This is evidently a solemn and befitting inauguration of God's final judgments, as it is a conclusion of the series pointed out by the trumpets, which have been inflicted in answer to the prayers of His saints. It is from this temple that the judgments proceed forth [compare ch. xiv. 15, 17, xv. 3 ff., xvi. 17]; from His inmost and holiest place that those acts of vengeance are wrought which the great multitude in heaven recognize as faithful and true, ch. xix. 2. The symbolism of this verse, the *opening* for the first time of the heavenly temple, also indicates of what nature the succeeding visions are to be: that they will relate to God's covenant people and His dealings with them): **and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and a great hail** (the solemn salvos, so to speak, of the artillery of heaven, with which each series of visions is concluded: see this commented on above, at the beginning of this section).

Revelation: Chapter 12

CHAP. XII.] THE VISION OF THE WOMAN AND THE GREAT RED DRAGON. On the nature of this vision, as introductory of the whole imagery of the latter part of the Apocalypse, I have already remarked at ch. xi. It is only needful now to add, that the principal details of the present section are rather descriptive than strictly prophetic: relating, just as in the prophets the descriptions of Israel and Judah, to things passed and passing, and serving for the purpose of full identification and of giving completeness to the whole vision. **And a great** (important in its meaning, as well as vast in its appearance) **sign** (one of those appearances by which God signified to John the revelations of this book, ch. i. 1) **was seen in heaven** (heaven here is manifestly not only the show-place of the visions as seen by the Seer, but has a substantial place in the vision: for below, ver. 7 ff., we have the heaven contrasted with the earth, and the dragon cast out of heaven into the earth. **See more there], a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon beneath her feet** (see Cant. vi. 10, which seems to be borne in mind), **and on her head a crown of twelve stars** (the whole symbolism points to the Church, the bride of God: and of course, from the circumstances afterwards related, the Old Test. church, at least at this beginning of the vision. That the blessed Virgin cannot be intended, is plain from the subsequent details, and was recognized by the early expositors. The crown of twelve stars represents the Patriarchs. Victorinus interprets the woman as the ancient church, and the twelve stars as above), **and [she is] (or, being) with child [and] crieth out in pangs and tormented to bring forth. And another sign was seen in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon** (interpreted below, ver. 9, to be the devil, the ancient serpent: see also vv. 13, 15. He is **red** perhaps for the combined reasons, of the wasting properties of fire, and the redness of blood: see John viii. 44), **having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his head seven diadems** (the Dragon being the devil, these symbolic features must be interpreted of the assuming by him of some of those details in the form of the beast in ch. xiii. 1 ff., to whom afterwards he gives his power and his throne: in other words, as indicating that he lays wait for the woman's offspring in the form of that antichristian power which is afterwards represented by the beast. At the same time, the *seven crowned heads* may possess an appropriateness of their own, belonging as they do to the dragon alone [the beast has the crowns on his *horns*, ch. xiii. 1]. They may represent, as he is Prince of this world, universality of earthly dominion. The ten horns belong to the fourth beast of Daniel, vii. 7, 20). **And his tail draggeth down the third part of the stars of the heaven, and cast them to the earth** (so the little horn in Dan. viii. 10, "cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them." The allusion here may be to the devil having persuaded and drawn down to perdition the rebel angels. The magnitude and fury of the dragon are graphically given by the fact of its tail, in its lashing backwards and forwards in fury, sweeping down the stars of heaven). **And the dragon standeth** (not "*stood*." Pliny describes the *dragon* as not prone and gliding like a

serpent, but walking lofty and erect) **before the woman which is about to bear, that when she hath borne he may devour her child** (this was what the devil instigated Herod the Great to do, who was the dependant of the Roman Empire. But doubtless the reference is wider than this: even to the whole course of hostility against the Lord during His humiliation: see below). **And she bore a male son, who shall rule** (literally, shepherd, i.e. order and guide) **all the nations with a rod of iron** (these words, cited verbatim from the Septuagint version of the Messianic Psalm ii., leave no possibility of doubt, who is here intended. ‘The man child is the Lord Jesus Christ, *and none other*. And this result is a most important one for the fixity of reference of the whole prophecy. It forms one of those landmarks by

which the legitimacy of various interpretations may be tested; and of which we may say, notwithstanding the contradiction sure to be given to the saying, that every interpretation which oversteps their measure is thereby convicted of error. Again, the exigencies of this passage require that the birth should be understood literally and historically, of that Birth of which all Christians know. And be it observed, that this rule of interpretation is no confident assertion of mine, as has been represented, but a result from the identifying use of words of the prophetic Scripture, spoken of Him who will not suffer His honour to be given to another): **and her child was caught up to God and to his throne** (i. e. after a conflict with the Prince of this world, who came and tried Him but found nothing in Him, the Son of the woman was taken up to heaven and sat on the right hand of God. Words can hardly be plainer than these. It surely is but needful to set against them, thus understood, the interpretation which would regard them as fulfilled by the “mighty issue of the consummated birth of a son of the church, a baptized emperor, to political supremacy in the Roman empire,” “united with the solemn public profession of the divinity of the Son of man”). **And the ‘woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath there** (so literally) **a place prepared from** (so literally: the source of the preparation being His command) **God, that they**

(the subject to the verb is left indefinite. In ver. 14 below, it is simply passive, where *she is nourished*) **may nourish her there for a thousand two hundred and sixty days** (the whole of this verse is anticipatory: the same incident being repeated with its details and in its own place in the order of the narrative below, vv. 13 ff. See there the comment and interpretation. The fact of its being here inserted by anticipation is very instructive as to that which now next follows, as not being consecutive in time after the flight of the woman, but occurring before it, and in fact referred to now in the prophecy as leading to that pursuit of the woman by the dragon, which led to it).

7 ff.] **And there was war in heaven** (we now enter upon a mysterious series of events in the world of spirits, with regard to which merely fragmentary hints are given us in the Scriptures. In the Old Test. we find the adversary Satan in heaven. In Job i., ii., he appears before God as the Tempter of His saints: in Zech. iii., we have him accusing Joshua the high priest in God’s presence. Again our Lord in Luke x. 18 exclaims, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” where see note. Compare also John xii. 31. So that this casting down of Satan from the office of accuser in heaven was evidently connected with the great justifying work of redemption. His voice is heard before God no more: the day of acceptance in Christ Jesus has dawned. And his angels, those rebel spirits whom he led away, are cast down with him, into the earth, where now the conflict is waging during the short time which shall elapse between the Ascension and the second Advent, when he shall be bound. All this harmonizes together: and though we know no more of the matter, we have at least this sign that our knowledge, as far as it goes, is sound,—that the few hints given us do not, when thus interpreted, contradict one another, but agree as portions of one whole.

The war here spoken of appears in some of its features in the book of Daniel, ch. x. 13, 21, xii. 1. In Jude 9 also, we find Michael the adversary of the devil in the matter of the saints of God): **Michael** (“one of the chief princes,” Dan. x. 13: “your prince,” i. e. of the Jewish nation, ib, ver. 21: “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people,” ib. xii. 1: “the archangel,” Jude 9: not to be identified with Christ, any more than any other of the great angels in this book. Such identification here would confuse hopelessly the actors in this heavenly scene. Satan’s being cast out of heaven to the earth is the result, not of his contest with the Lord Himself, of which it is only an incident leading to a new phase, but of the appointed conflict with his faithful fellow-angels led on by the archangel Michael. The expression, *his angels*, in both cases requires a nearer correspondence in the two chiefs than is found between Satan and the Son of God) **and his angels to war with the dragon, and the dragon warred and his angels, and [they]** (or, *he*: the reading is doubtful) **prevailed not, nor was even** (this brings in a climax) **their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent** (in allusion to the history in Gen. iii. Remember also that St. John had related the saying of our Lord, that the devil was *a murderer from the beginning*,” the cognate term in the original to **ancient** here), **he who is called the devil and Satan, he who deceiveth the whole [inhabited] world, was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast with him** (I would appeal, in passing, to the solemnity of the terms here used, and the particularity of the designation, and ask whether it is possible to understand this of the mere casting down of paganism from the throne of the Roman empire? whether the words themselves do not vindicate their plain literal sense, as further illustrated by the song of rejoicing which follows?). **And I heard a great voice in heaven** (proceeding appa-rently from the elders, representing the church [compare our *brethren* below]: but it is left uncertain) **saying, Now is come the salvation and the might and the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ** (i. e. the realization of all these: *the salvation of our God* being, as so often, that salvation which belongs to God as its Author: see Luke iii, 6): **because the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth** (the present participle implies the usual habit, though that his office was now at an end) **them before our God by day and by night. And they conquered him on**

account of the blood of the Lamb (i. e. by virtue of that blood having been shed: not as in A.V., “*by the blood*,” which is an ungrammatical rendering. The meaning is far more significant; their victory over Satan was grounded in, was a consequence of, His having shed his precious blood: without that, the adversary’s charges against them would have been unanswerable. It is remarkable, that the rabbinical books give a tradition that Satan accuses men all the days of the year, *except on the Day of Atonement*) **and on account of the word of their testimony** (the strict sense of the preposition must again be kept. It is because they have given a faithful testimony, even unto death, that they are victorious: this is *their* part, their appropriation of and standing in the virtue of that blood of the Lamb. Without both these, victory would not have been theirs: both together form its ground): **and they loved not their life unto death** (i. e. they carried their not-love of their life even unto death). **For this cause** (viz. because the dragon is cast down: as is shewn by the contrast below) **rejoice, ye heavens and they that dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil is come down to you** (the earth and sea) **having great wrath** (the enmity, which was manifested as his natural state towards Christ, ver. 4, being now kindled into wrath), **because he knoweth that he hath but a short season** (i. e. because the Lord cometh quickly, and then the period of his active hostility against the church and the race whom Christ has redeemed will be at an end: he will be bound and cast into the pit. Until then, he is carrying it on, in ways which the prophecy goes on to detail). **And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the male child** (the narrative at ver. 6 is again taken up and given more in detail. There, the reason of the woman’s flight is matter of inference: here, it is plainly expressed, and the manner of the flight also is related). **And there were given** (in the usual apocalyptic sense, i.e. granted by God for His purposes) **to the woman [the] two wings of the great eagle** (the figure is taken from Old Test. expressions

used by God in reference to the flight of Israel from Egypt. The most remarkable of these is in Exod. xix. 4, “I bare you on eagle’s wings, and brought you unto myself” So also Deuteronomy in the reff. But the articles are not to be taken as identifying the eagle with the figure used in those places, which would be most unnatural: much less must they be supposed to identify this eagle with that in ch. viii. 13, with which it has no connexion. The articles

are simply generic.

With these Old Test. references before us, we can hardly be justified in pressing the figure of the eagle’s wings to an interpretation in the fulfilment of the prophecy, or in making it mean that the flight took place under the protection of the Roman eagles, as some have done), **that she might fly into the wilderness** (the flight of Israel out of Egypt is still borne in mind) **to her place** (prepared of God, ver. 6: so also in Exod. xxiii. 20), **where she is nourished** (as God nourished Israel with manna in the wilderness,

see Deut. viii. 3, 16) **a time and times and half a time** (i. e. 3½ years; 42 months, ch. xi. 2; 1260 days, ver. 6 and ch. xi. 3) **from** (importing “safe from,” “far from,” “hidden from”) **the face of the dragon. And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might make her to be borne away by the river. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed down the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth**

(in passing to the interpretation, we cannot help being struck with the continued analogy between this prophecy and the history of the Exodus. There we have the flight into the wilderness, there the feeding in the wilderness, as already remarked: there again the forty-two stations, corresponding to the forty-two months of the three years and half of this prophecy: there too the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, not indeed in strict correspondence with this last feature, but at least suggestive of it. These analogies themselves suggest caution in the application of the words of the prophecy; and in this direction. The church in the wilderness of old was not, as some expositors would represent this woman, the pure church of God: His veritable servants were hidden in the midst of that church, as much as that church itself was withdrawn from the enmity of Pharaoh. And, it is to be noted, it was that very church herself which afterwards, when seated at Jerusalem, forsook her Lord and Husband, and committed adultery with the kings of the earth, and became drunk with the blood of the saints. It would seem then that we must not understand the woman of the invisible spiritual church of Christ, nor her flight into the wilderness of the withdrawal of God’s true servants from the eyes of the world. They indeed have been just as much withdrawn from the eyes of the world at all times, and will continue so till the great manifestation of the sons of God. I own that, considering the analogies and the language used, I am much more disposed to interpret the persecution of the woman by the dragon of the various persecutions by Jews which followed the Ascension, and her flight into the wilderness of the gradual withdrawal of the church and her agency from Jerusalem and Judaea, finally consummated by the flight to the mountains on the approaching siege, commanded by our Lord Himself, And then the river which the dragon sent out of his mouth after the woman might be variously understood,—of the Roman armies which threatened to sweep away Christianity in the wreck of the Jewish nation, —or of the persecutions which followed the church into her retreats, but eventually became absorbed by the civil power turning Christian,—or of the Jewish nation itself, banded together against Christianity wherever it appeared, but eventually itself becoming powerless against it by its dispersion and ruin,—or again, of the influx of heretical opinions from the Pagan philosophies which tended to swamp the true faith. I confess that not one of these seems to me satisfactorily to answer the conditions: nor do we gain any thing by their combination, But any thing within reasonable regard for the analogies and symbolism of the text seems better than the now too commonly received historical interpretation, with its wild fancies and arbitrary assignment of words and figures. As to the time indited by the 1260 days or 3 ½ years, the interpretations given have

not been convincing, nor even specious. We may observe thus much in this place: that if we regard this prophecy as including long historic periods, we are driven to one of two resources with regard to these numbers: either we must adopt the *year-day* theory (that which reckons a day for a year, and consequently a month for thirty Years,—and should reckon a year for 360 or 365 years), or we must believe the numbers to have merely a symbolical and mystical, not a chronological force. If [and this second alternative is best stated in an inverse form] we regard the periods mentioned as to be literally accepted, then the prophecy cannot refer to long historic periods, but must be limited to a succession of incidents concentrated in one place and space of time either in the far past or in the far future. Of all prophecies about which these questions can be raised, the present is the one which least satisfactorily admits of such literal interpretation and its consequences. Its actors, the woman and the dragon, are beyond all controversy mystical personages: one of them is expressly interpreted for us to be the devil: respecting the other there can be little doubt that she is the Church of God: her seed being, as expressly interpreted to be, God's Christian people. The conflict then is that between Satan and the church. Its first great incident is the birth and triumph of the Son of God and of man. Is it likely that a few days or years will limit the duration of a prophecy confessedly of such wide import? I own it seems to me that this vision, even if it stood alone, is decisive against the literal acceptation of the stated periods, Rejecting that, how do we stand with regard to the other alternative in its two forms? Granting for the moment the *year-day* principle, will it help us here? If we take the flight into the wilderness as happening at any time between the Ascension, A.D. 30, and the destruction of Jerusalem, D. 70, 1260 years will bring us to some time between a.d. 1290 and 1380: a period during which no event can be pointed out as putting an end to the wilderness-state of the church. If again we enlarge our limit for the former event, and bring it down as late as Elliott does, i.e. to the period between the fourth and seventh centuries, we fall into all the difficulties which beset his most unsatisfactory explanation of the man-child and his being caught up to God's throne, and besides, into this one: that if the occultation of true religion [the condition of the invisible church] was the beginning of the wilderness-state, then either the open establishment of the Protestant churches was the end of the wilderness-state of concealment, or those churches are no true churches: either of which alternatives would hardly be allowed by that author. And if on the other hand we desert the *year-day* principle, and say that these defined and constantly recurring periods are not to be pressed, but indicate only long spaces of time thus pointed out mystically or analogically, we seem to incur danger of missing the prophetic sense, and leaving unfixed that which apparently the Spirit of God intended us to ascertain). **And the dragon was wroth at the woman and departed** (from his pursuit of her) **to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus** (as in ch. vi. 9: see note there. Notice as important elements for the interpretation, 1) That the woman has seed besides the Man-child who was caught up to God's throne [for this is the reference of **the rest**], who are not only distinct: from herself, but who do not accompany her in her flight into the wilderness: 2) That those persons are described as being they who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus: 3) That during the woman's time of her being fed in the wilderness, the dragon is making war, not, against her, but against this remnant of her seed: 4) That by the form of expression here, descriptive of habit, and occurring at the breaking off of the vision as regards the general description of the dragon's agency, it is almost necessarily implied, that the woman, while hidden in the wilderness from the dragon's wrath, goes on bringing forth sons and daughters thus described. If I mistake not, the above considerations are fatal to the view which makes the flight of the woman into the wilderness consist in the withdrawal of God's true servants from the world and from open recognition. For thus she must be identical with this remnant of her seed, and would herself be the object of the dragon's hostile warfare, at the very time when, by the terms of the prophecy, she is safely hidden from it. I own that I have been led by these circumstances to think whether after all the woman may represent, not the invisible church of God's true people which under all conditions of the world must be known only to Him, but the *true visible Church*; that Church which in its divinely prescribed form as existing at Jerusalem was the mother of our Lord according to the flesh, and which continued as established by our Lord and His Apostles, in unbroken unity during the first centuries, but which as time went on was broken up by evil men and evil doctrines, and has remained, unseen, unrealized, her unity an article of faith, not of sight, but still multiplying her seed, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, in various sects and distant countries, waiting the day for her comely order and oneness again to be manifested—the day when she shall “come up out of the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved:” when our Lord's prayer for the unity of His being accomplished, the world shall believe that the Father has sent Him. If we are disposed to carry out this idea, we might see the great realization of the flight into the wilderness in the final severance of the Eastern and Western churches in the seventh century, and the flood east after the woman by the dragon in the irruption of the Mahometan armies. But this, though not less satisfactory than the other interpretations, is as unsatisfactory. The latter part of the vision yet waits its clearing up).

Revelation: Chapter 13

CHAP. XIII. 1–10.] THE VISION OF THE BEAST THAT CAME UP OUT OF THE SEA. See Dan. vii. 7, 8, 19–27, to which continual reference will be made in the Commentary. **And he** (i. e. the dragon) **stood upon the sand of the sea** (see Dan. vii. 2, where the four winds of heaven are striving upon the great sea); **and I saw out of the sea a wild-beast** (so the word used here and in the next description imports. It is not the same, and should be carefully distinguished from, that unhappily rendered *beasts* in our A.V. in the vision of ch. iv. and since) **coming up, having ten horns** (now put first, because they are crowned. The ten horns are found also in the fourth beast of Daniel, vii. 7) **and seven heads, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy** (whether we read singular, or, as some MSS., plural, the meaning will

be the same—on each head a name. The heads are [see for the interpretation ch. xvii. 9, 10, where it is given by the angel] Kings, in the widest acceptation of the word; Kings, as representing their kingdoms; not necessarily individual Kings (see as above):—the name or names of blasphemy, the divine titles given to those Kings, “Lord of the whole earth,” and the like: in the Roman form, “Deus” or “Divus.” Hereafter, when the great harlot succeeds to the character and symbolic details of the beast, this is carried yet further). **And the beast which I saw was like to a leopard, and its feet as of a bear** (see reff.), **and its mouth as the mouth of a lion** (thus uniting in itself the three previous kingdoms of Dan. vii. 4 ff., the first of which was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard; and in consequence representing, not the Roman Empire merely, but the aggregate of the Empires of this world as opposed to Christ and His kingdom), **And the dragon gave to it his might and his throne and great power** (i. e. this beast, this earthly persecuting power, was the vicegerent and instrument of the devil, the prince of this world, and used by him for his purposes of hostility against the remnant of the seed of the woman). **And [I saw] one among his heads as it were wounded unto death** (this seems to represent the Roman pagan Empire, which having long been a head of the beast, was crushed and to all appearance exterminated), **and the stroke of its death was healed** (in the establishment of the Christian Roman Empire. The period now treated of is the same, introduced here by anticipation, but hereafter to be described in detail, as that during which the woman sits on the beast and guides it. Very many Commentators have explained these seven heads as individual kings, and supposed the one who was wounded to death to be Nero, and these last words to allude to the idea that Nero would return from the dead and become antichrist. But this idea was certainly not prevalent in this form at the time when the Apocalypse was written. Tacitus merely relates, that there were many rumours about Nero’s death, and that in consequence many feigned or believed that he was alive, and that on the strength of this, a Pseudo-Nero arose in the East. The first who mentions the idea of *Nero returning from the dead*, is Augustine, in explaining 2 Thess. ii. 3 ff. But it is observable that Augustine does not connect the idea with the Apocalypse. This first done by Sulpicius Severus, and completed by Victorinus, whose very words betray the origin of the idea having been from this passage itself). **And the whole earth wondered after** (wondered at, as they followed, or gazed, after) **the beast, and worshipped the dragon, because he gave the (or, his) power to the beast, and worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like to the beast?** **And who is able to war with him** (these words are a sort of parody, in their blasphemy, on ascriptions of praise to God: compare Exod. xv. 11; Ps. xxxv. 10; lxxi. 19; cxii. 5; Isa. xl. 18, 25 xlvi. 5; Jer. xxix. 20 [xlix, 19]; Micah vii. 18: they represent to us the relapse into all the substantial blasphemies of paganism under the resuscitated Empire of Rome, and the retention of pagan titles and forms. I may remark, that nothing in those words finds any representative in the history of the times of the Pagan Empire)? **And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great and blasphemous things** (so we read of the little horn in Daniel vii. 8): **and there was given to it power to work** (this is more probably the meaning than “to spend” merely) **forty-two months** (the well-known period of the agency of antichrist; 3 ½ years; 1260 days: see Introduction), **and he opened his mouth** (spoken of the commencement of a series of discourses. These vv. 6, 7, in fact expand into detail that which ver. 5 gave compendiously) **for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, which dwell in heaven** (the apposition is strange, but if the *and* must be omitted, the meaning is to enhance the enormity of the blasphemy by bringing out the lofty nature of God’s holy Name and dwellingplace). **And there was given to it** (or him: so throughout) **to make war with the saints and to conquer them** (see ch. xi. 7, of which this is a wider statement) **and there was given to it power over every tribe and people and tongue and nation** (viz, universal empire). **And all shall worship it who dwell upon the earth, [every one] whose** (the change into the singular arises from resolving *all* into its component individuals) **name is not written in the book of life of the Lamb which is slain from the foundation of the world** (these last words are ambiguously placed. They may belong either to *is written*, or to *is slain*. The former connexion is taken by many. But the other is far more obvious and natural: and had it not been for the apparent difficulty of the sense thus conveyed, the going so far back as to *is written* for a connexion would never have been thought of. The difficulty of the saying is but apparent: 1 Pet. i, 19, 20 says more fully the same thing. That death of Christ which was foreordained from the foundation of the world, is said to have *taken place* in the counsels of Him with whom the end and the beginning are one. Ch. xvii. 8, which is cited by De Wette as decisive for his view, is irrelevant. Of course, where simply the writing in the hook of life from the foundation of the world is expressed, no other element is to be introduced: but it does not therefore follow, that where, as here, other elements are by the construction introduced, that, and that alone is to be understood).

9, 10.] These verses bear various meanings, according to the reading which we adopt. If the ordinary text, represented in the A.V., be taken, they express a consolation to the presented saints in the form of a law of retribution: the judgment of God will overtake the persecutors, and in that form in which their persecution was exercised. If we take the reading in the text, they form a prophetic declaration how it shall fare with the saints in the day of persecution, and declare also that in holy suffering of captivity and death consists their faith and patience, The latter appears to me, both from critical and contextual considerations, by far the more eligible. Thus we have what is so frequent in this book, an Old Test. citation (see below): and all falls into its place in connexion with the victorious war of the beast against the saints: whereas the other declaration is at least out of place in the context.—**If any man hath an ear, let him hear** (this notice is given to bespeak solemn attention to what follows, as warning Christians of their fate in the days of the beast’s persecution). **If any one is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any to be slain with the sword** (i. e. it is necessary that, as the other reading supplies), **he must be slain with the sword** (so Jer. xv. 2, “Such as are for death, to death and such as are for the sword, to the sword: and such as are for the famine, to the famine: and such as are for captivity, to captivity:” compare also Jer. xiii. 11 and Zech. xi. 9. As that was the order and process of God’s anger in his judgments on his people of old, so shall the issue be with the saints in the war of persecution which the beast shall wage with them). **Here is** (viz. in the endurance of these persecutions) **the endurance**

and the faith of the saints.

11-17.] THE SECOND WILD-BEAST, THE REVIVER AND THE UPHOLDER OF THE FIRST. It may be well to premise a few remarks, tending to the right understanding of this portion of the prophecy. 1) These two beasts are identical as to genus: they are both wild-beasts, ravaging powers, hostile to God's flock and fold. 2) They are diverse in origin. The former came up out of the sea: that is, if we go back to the symbolism of Daniel, was an empire, rising up out of confusion into order and life: the latter comes out of the earth: i.e. we may not unreasonably say, arises out of human society and its progress: which, as interpreted by the context, will import its origin and gradual development during the reign and progress of the secular empire denoted by the former beast. 3) The second beast is, in its zeal and action, entirely subsidiary to the first. It wields its authority, works miracles in its support, causes men to make and to worship its image; nay, itself is lost in the splendour and importance of the other. 4) An important distinction exists between the two beasts, in that this second one has two horns like a lamb. In other words, this second beast puts on a mild and lamb-like appearance, which the other did not. But it speaks as a dragon: its words, which carry its real character, are fierce and unrelenting: while it professes that which is gentle, its behests are cruel. And now I may appeal to the reader, whether all these requisites do not meet in that great wasting Power which arose, not out of anarchy and conquest, but out of men's daily life and habits, out of and in the presence of the last form of the secular power, which was the Empire of Pagan Rome; I mean, the *sacerdotal persecuting power*, which, gentle in its aspect and professions, was yet cruel in its actions; which did all the deeds of the Empire, in its presence, which kept up its image, its laws, its formulæ, its privileges; which, coming in as it did by a corrupt and ambitious priesthood, deceived by its miracles the dwellers on earth, and by them maintained the image of the despotic secular power? Surely it is this Latin Christianity, in its ecclesiastico-secular form, not identical with, but as preparing the way for, the great apostasy, helping, so to speak, to place the woman on the beast, as in ch. xvii., that is here depicted before us. It is this which, owing its power in the main to imposture and unwarrantably assumed spiritual authority, deserves best the name of *the false prophet*, expressly given to this second beast in ch. xix, 20. Nor would I limit the interpretation, as has generally been done, by dividing off Pagan from Christ. Primarily, this second beast plainly sets forth the Pagan sacerdotal power; this it was that made the image of the Emperors, that compelled Christians to worship that image, that wrought signs and wonders by its omens and magic. But as the first beast, still subsisting, has passed into a so-called Christian Roman Empire, so has the second beast into a so-called Christian priesthood, the veritable inheritor of pagan rites, images, and superstitions; actually the continuators, under a different name, of the same worship in the same places; that of the Virgin for that of Venus, Cosmas and Damian for Romulus and Remus, the image of Peter for that of Jupiter Tonans: lamb-like in profession, with the names and appearances of Christianity, but dragon-like in word and deed. And this was surely never more strikingly shewn than at the times when I am writing, when the Papal priesthood is zealously combining in the suicidal act of upholding the temporal power, as necessary to the spiritual pre-eminence of their "Lord God the Pope." So that I believe the interpretation of the second beast to be, the *sacerdotal persecuting power, pagan and Christian*, as the first is the secular persecuting power, pagan or Christian. I conceive the view which would limit it to the priesthood of Paganism quite insufficient for the importance of the prophecy; while that of Elliott, &c., which would limit it to the priesthood of the Papacy, fails notably in giving a meaning to its acts as here described, the making an image to the beast and causing men to worship it. **And saw another wild-beast coming up out of the earth** (see the preceding note), **and it had two horns like a lamb** (i. e. like the two horns of a lamb: see ref. It is quite

true that the absence of the definite article before the word **lamb** forbids the idea that a direct comparison is intended between this lamb-like beast, and the Lamb on Mount Sion: but it does not follow from this that no reference is made to that Lamb in the choice of the animal to which this beast is compared. I believe the choice is made to set forth the hybrid character of this second beast: see more below. The *number* may perhaps be of no special import, but merely inserted to complete the similarity: it, as a lamb has, had two horns), **and it spoke as a dragon** (here again, we cannot doubt that the term is chosen on account of the dragon which has been before mentioned. It is no objection to this, that we do not hear of that dragon speaking: the character of the animal explains what kind of speech is meant, and the acts of the dragon were of that kind. And as to this second beast, though its appearance and profession are sacerdotal, its words and acts are devilish. 'The whole description strongly recalls, to our mind our Lord's warning, "Beware of false prophets which come unto you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," Matt. vii. 15). **And it worketh all the power** (performs all the acts of authority) **of the first beast in his presence** (while the first beast is subsisting and beholding; and as the expression seems to shew, being in a relation to it of serving and upholding), **and maketh the earth and those that dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose wound of death was healed** (this was formerly, ver. 4, described as the reason why the world wondered after the former beast) **and worketh great miracles, so that** (it is notorious enough that the great arm of support of the sacerdotal power, pagan and papal, has ever been the claim to work miracles) **it even maketh fire to come down from the heaven to the earth in the sight of men** (it is probable that, this special miracle is mentioned to recall the spirit and power of Elias, and shew how the false prophet shall counterfeit the true), **and deceiveth those who dwell on the earth on account of** (the words express not the instrument, but the ground of the deceit: the imposture succeeds, because of...) **the miracles which it was given to him to work in the presence of the beast, ordering those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword, and lived** (this part of the prophecy seems to describe the acts of the pagan 'sacerdotal power then presently to follow. See more below). **And it was given to him to give breath** (or, spirit; by inference, life) **to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should even speak, and should cause that as many as do not worship the image of the beast should be slain.** The Seer is now describing facts which history substantiates to us in their literal fulfilment. 'The

image of Cæsar was every where that which men were made to worship: it was before this that the Christian martyrs were brought to the test, and put to death if they refused the act of adoration. ‘The words of Pliny’s letter to Trajan are express on the point: “When they called on the gods at my dictation, and offered incense and wine to thine image (which for this purpose I had ordered to be brought with those of the gods), and besides cursed Christ, which it is said that no true Christian can be compelled to do, I thought fit to dismiss them.” Above he had said, “those who persevered [in their Christianity] I ordered to be led to execution.” And if it be said as an objection to this, that it is not an image of the Emperor but of the beast itself which is spoken of, the answer is very simple, that as the Evangelist himself, in ch. xvii. 11, does not hesitate to identify one of the *seven kings* with the beast itself, so we may fairly assume that the image of the beast for the time being would be the image of the reigning Emperor. It is not so easy to assign a meaning to the giving *life and speech* to the image of the beast. Victorinus gives a curious explanation: “he shall also cause that a golden image to Antichrist shall be erected in the temple at Jerusalem, and a fallen angel shall enter and thence utter voices and give oracles.” The allusion probably is to some lying wonders permitted to the Pagan priests to try the faith of God’s people. We cannot help, as we read, thinking of the moving images, and winking and speaking pictures, so often employed for purposes of imposture by their far less excusable Papal successors.

And he (i. e. the *second beast*, more naturally than *the image*) **maketh all men, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that they should give them** (i.e. stamp on them. ‘The subject to the verb is left uncertain: it will naturally be understood to be, those whose office it is) **a mark** (such a mark as masters set on their slaves, or monarchs on their soldiers, a brand, stamped or burnt in, see note on Gal. vi. 17. We read in 3 Macc. ii, 29, of Ptolemy Philopater, that he ordered the Jews in Alexandria to be forcibly enrolled, and when enrolled, to be marked with a red-hot brand on their body, with the sign of Bacchus the Ivy-wearer. And Philo mentions idolaters who confessed their idolatry by branding themselves with indelible marks) **on their right hand** (on which part soldiers were branded), **or upon their forehead** (i. e. in some conspicuous part of the body, that all may see it: or as Augustine says, “in the forehead for profession: in the hand for operation”), **and that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except he who has the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name** (either in the name stamped in letters, or in the number of the name thus stamped, i.e. the number which those letters make when added together according to their numerical value. ‘The practice of thus calculating the numerical value of the letters in names was widely prevalent: see the instances collected by Mr. Elliott, vol. iii. pp. 220 ff.: and more below. ‘This particular in the prophetic description seems to point to the commercial and spiritual interdicts which have, both by Pagan and by Papal persecutors, been laid on non-conformity: from even before the interdict of Diocletian, through those of the middle ages [both which ran in nearly these very terms], down to the last remaining civil disabilities imposed on non-conformity in modern Papal or Protestant countries. For these last have their share in the enormities of the first and second beasts, in as far as they adopt or continue their practices. With regard to the circumstance of the imposition of the mark, I conceive that with the latitude here given, viz., that it may be the name or the number, and having regard to the analogy of the mark inscribed on the saints (ch. xiii, 1: compare ch. vii. 1 ff.), we need not be anxious to find other than a general and figurative interpretation. As it is clear that in the case of the servants of God no actual visible mark is intended, so it may well be inferred here that the mark signifies rather conformity and addiction to the behests of the beast, than any actual stigma impressed. Certainly we fail to recognize any adequate exposition of such stigma in the sign of the Cross as propounded by Mr. Elliott [iii, 236], or in the monogram on the labarum as succeeded by the Papal cross-keys, of Dr. Wordsworth [Apocalypse, Appendix G]. **Here is wisdom** (these words serve to direct attention to the challenge which follows: see ver. 10 and ch. xiv. 12, where here is similarly used): **let him who hath understanding calculate the number of the beast** (the terms of the challenge serve at once to shew that the feat proposed is possible, and that it is difficult. Irenæus’s view, that if St. John had meant the number to be known he would have declared it, and that of Andreas, “time shall seem to me, excluded by these considerations. The number may be calculated: and is intended to be known): **for** (gives a reason why the calculation may be made) **it is the number of a man** (i. e. is counted as men generally count: not, as Bede and others, the number belonging to an individual man)

and the number of it (the beast) is six hundred sixty-six (of all the hundreds of attempts which have been made in answer to the challenge, there is but one which seems to approach near enough to an adequate solution to require serious consideration. And that one is the word mentioned, though not adopted, by Irenæus, lateinos, the Greek letters of which, by their numerical power, make up the required number. This name describes the common character of the rulers of the former Pagan Roman Empire, for, says Irenæus, “they are Latins who now rule,” and, which Irenæus could not foresee, unites under itself the character of the latter Papal Roman Empire also, as revived and kept up by the agency of its false prophet the priesthood. The Latin Empire, the Latin Church, Latin Christianity, have ever been its commonly current appellations: its language, civil and ecclesiastical, has ever been Latin: its public services, in defiance of the most obvious requisite for public worship, have ever been throughout the world conducted in Latin: there is no one word which could so completely describe its character, and at the same time unite the ancient and modern attributes of the two beasts, as this, Short of saying absolutely that this *was* the word in St. John’s mind, I have the strongest persuasion that no other can be found approaching so near to a complete solution, See however the remarks on this subject in the Introduction, §v. par. 32, where I have after all thought it best to leave the matter in doubt).

Revelation: Chapter 14

CH. XIV. 1-20.] THE CONTRAST: THE BLESSEDNESS, AND THE COUNTERAGENCY OF THE SAINTS OF GOD. THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE OF THE EARTH. This is not entirely another vision, but an introduction of a new element, one of comfort, and joy, upon the scene of the last. And thus it must be viewed: with reference to the persecution by the beast which is alluded to in its course, vv. 9 ff. It is also anticipatory, first containing reference to the mystic Babylon, hereafter to become the subject of prophecy in detail; and to the consummation of punishment, and reward, also to be treated in detail hereafter. It is *general* in its character, reaching forward close to the time of the end, treating compendiously of the torment of the apostates and the blessedness of the holy dead, and leading, by its concluding section, which treats of the harvest and the vintage of the earth, to the vision of the seven last vials, now immediately to follow. It naturally divides itself into three sections: of which the first is,

1-5.] The Lamb on Mount Sion, and His hundred and forty-four thousand. And I saw, and behold the Lamb (viz, the same which before was seen in the midst of the throne, ch. v. 6 al.) **standing upon the mount Sion** (as in ch. xi., the holy city is introduced as the seat of God's true church and worship, so by a similar figure [not the same, for thus Mount Sion would be outside the temple proper, and given to the Gentiles] the holy mountain Sion is now chosen for the site of the display of God's chosen ones with Christ, the Son of David, whose city Zion was), **and with Him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father** (observe the tacit assumption that all understand Who is importuned by the Lamb) **written on their foreheads** (first observe the contrast: the nations of the earth, constrained to receive the mark of the beast on their forehead and hand, and the Lambs elect, marked with His name and that of His Father. The question next meets us, Are these 144, 000 identical with the same number in ch. vii, 4? The presumption certainly is that the same number occurring here, representing as there the elect and first-fruits of the church, here as there also inscribed on their foreheads with the seal of God in the one case, and His Name in the other, must be descriptive of the same body of persons. And this view, if acquiesced in here, will reflect back considerable light on that former vision of the sealing in ch. vii, 'Those, as these, will represent the first-fruits or choice ones among God's people, as indeed we have treated them in this commentary, and not the totality of those who shall form the great multitude which no man can number, These, as those, are taken to represent the people of God: their introduction serves to place before us the church on the holy hill of Zion, where God has placed His King, as an introduction to the description of her agency in preaching the everlasting Gospel, and her faithfulness amidst persecutions). **And I heard a voice out of heaven, as a voice of many waters** (refr.), **and as a voice of great thunder** (ch. vi. 1): **and the voice which I heard [was] as of harpers harping with their harps. And they sing [as it were] a new song** (i. e. they sing what sounded like a melody unheard before. 'The subject to **they sing** is of course not the 144, 000, but the heavenly harpers. On the matter of their song, see below) **before the throne, and before the four living-beings, and the elders** (the whole heavenly symbolism remaining as before, while the visions regarding God's temple and Mount Zion and the holy city are going forward. I would call the attention of the reader to the fact, essential to the right understanding of the vision, that the harpers and the song are in *heaven*, the 144, 000 on *earth*): **and no one was able to learn the song** (to apprehend its melody and meaning, so as to accompany it and bear a part in the chorus) **except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who were purchased** (see ver. 4, and 1 Cor. vi. 20; ch. v. 9) **from the earth** (the song has regard to matters of trial and triumph, of deep joy and heavenly purity of heart, which none other among men but these pure and holy ones are capable of apprehending. The sweetest and most skilful harmonies convey no pleasure to, nor are they appreciated by an uneducated ear: whereas the experienced musician finds in every chord the most exquisite enjoyment. The unskilled ear, even though naturally distinctive of musical sounds, could not learn nor reproduce them: but both these can be done by those who have ears to hear them. Even so this heavenly song speaks only to the virgin heart, and can be learnt only by those who accompany the Lamb whithersoever He goeth). **These are they who were not** (the past tense shews that their course is ended and looked back on as a thing past: and serves to confute all interpretations which regard them as representing saints while in the midst of their earthly conflict and trial) **defiled with women** (see below); **for they are** (always were and have kept themselves till the time present) **virgins** (there are two ways of understanding these words. Either they may be figurative, merely implying that these pure ones lived in all chastity, whether in single or in married life, and incurred no pollution [2 Cor. xi 2]: or they may be meant literally, that these purest ones had lived in that state of which St. Paul says, 1 Cor. vii. 1, *it is good for a man*. And as between these two meanings I conceive that the emphatic position of the words **with women** in the original goes some way to decide. It is not the fact of impurity in allowed intercourse, but the fact of commerce with women that is put forward. I would therefore believe that in the description of these who are the first-fruits from the earth, the feature of virginity is to be taken in its literal meaning. Nor need any difficulty be found in this. It is on all hands granted that he who is married in the Lord enters into holy relations of which the single have no experience, and goes through blessed and elevating degrees of self-sacrifice, and loving allowance, and preferring others before himself. And as every step of grace assured is a step of glory secured, there is no doubt that the holy married servants of God shall have a peculiar entrance into the fulness of that future Kingdom's employ, which will not be the lot of the single: seeing that in this matter also, the childhood of this state will be the father of the manhood of that one. But neither on the other hand can it be denied that the state of holy virginity has also its peculiar blessings and exemptions. Of these, the Apostle himself speaks of that absence of distraction from the Lord's work, which is apt to beset the married, busy as they are with the cares of a household and with pleasing one another. And another and primary blessing is, that in them that fountain of carnal desire has never been opened, which is so apt to be a channel for unholy thoughts and an access for the tempter. 'The virgins may thus have missed the victory over the lusts of the flesh: but they have also in great part escaped the conflict. Theirs is not the triumph of the toil-worn and stained soldier, but the calm and the unspottedness of those who have kept from the strife. We are perhaps more like that which the Lord intended us to be:

but they are more like the Lord Himself. And if He is to have round Him a peculiar and closer band, standing with Him on Mount Sion, none will surely grudge this place to those who were not defiled with women. Among these will be not only those who have lived and served Him in holy virginity, but also the dear children whom He has claimed from us for Himself, the youths and maidens who were gathered to His side before the strife began: before their tongues had learned the language of social falsehood, or their good names been tarnished with the breath of inevitable calumny. There is one meaning which these words will not bear, and which it is surprising that any Commentator should ever have attached to them: viz. that **with women** refers to the woman mentioned below, ch. xvii. So Dr. Wordsworth, p. 284: "They have not been defiled with women, What women? It may be asked. If we proceed, we read of the woman seated on the Beast, and of the harlotry of the woman, with whom the Kings of the earth commit fornication. And soon we see her displayed in all her meretricious splendour. There then is the reply." But the whole context here, as well as the language used, is against it: the following words, **for they are virgins**, carrying its decisive condemnation). **These [are] they that follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth** (the description has very commonly been taken as applying to the entire obedience of the elect, following their Lord to prison and to death, and wherever He may call them: but this exposition is surely out of place here, where not their life of conflict, but their state of glory is described, The words are used of special privilege of nearness to the Person of the Lamb in glory). **'These were purchased from men as a first-fruit to God and to the Lamb** (all have been thus purchased: but these specially, as and for the purpose of being a first-fruit. James i. 18 treats of a different matter, the purchased of all the redeemed as the first-fruits of creation. But these are a first-fruit among the purchased themselves). **And in their mouth was not found falsehood: they are blameless** (the Apostle has before him the words of Ps. xv. 1 ff, so strikingly similar: "*Who shall dwell in thy holy mountain? He that waketh blamelessly... speaketh truth in his heart, and hath not deceived with his tongue.*" These stand on Mount Zion, with Him who eminently fulfilled this character, and being in all things like Him).

6–13.] Three angels appear in mid-heaven, announcing three details of the period of the coming prophecy. A proclamation of the blessedness of the holy dead. These four announcements form the text and the compendium of the rest of the book: see Introd. §v. parr. 57 ff. **And I saw an [other] angel** (besides those already mentioned) **flying in mid-heaven** (see ch. viii. 13), **having the everlasting gospel** (such and no other is the meaning of the words. The epithet **everlasting**, here only applied to the Gospel, belongs to it as from everlasting to everlasting, like Him whose word it is: in contrast to the enemies of God whose destruction is in view) **to preach to** (literally, "over," throughout the extent of, "upon") **those that sit** (literally) **upon the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people** (compare Matt. xxiv. 14, "*This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations: and then shall the end come*"), **saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give Him glory** (the message of repentance ever accompanies the hearing of the Gospel among the nations; compare the first. preaching of our Lord and of His Forerunner, Matt. iv. 17, iii. 2, and St. Paul's message to the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 9), **because the season of His judgment is come** (see the citation from Matt. xxiv. above: the time of the end is close at hand when this great era of Christian missions is inaugurated: see below): **and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters** (i. e. turning from idols and vanities to serve the living and true God. The division of the waters into the sea and the fountains is one kept up through this prophecy: compare ch. viii. 8–11, xvi. 3, 4). **And another second angel followed** (it belongs to the solemnity of this series of proclamations that a separate place and marked distinction should dignify each of them), **saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, which hath made all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication** (two things are mingled: 1) the wine of her fornication, of which all nations have drunk, ch. xvii. 2: and 2) the wine of the wrath of God which He shall give her to drink, ver. 10, and ch. xvi. 19, 'The latter is the retribution for the former: the former turns into the latter: they are treated as one and the same. The whole is from Jer. li. 7, 8, where Babylon is a cup in the Lord's hand of which the nations are made to drink. This is the first mention of Babylon, hereafter to be so much spoken of, I reserve treatment of the interpretation till ch. xvii.: only mentioning by anticipation that Rome, pagan and papal, but principally papal, is intended). **And another third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any one worshippeth the beast and his image** (see above, ch. xiii. 15), **and receiveth the mark on his forehead, or upon his hand** (ch. xiii. 16), **he also** (also either 1] may be almost redundant, introducing the latter portion of the sentence merely as an addition to the former, or 2] may mean, as well as Babylon, The former sense seems to me the more probable) **shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled** (i. e. as A.V. poured into the cup. From the almost universal custom of mixing wine with water, the common term for preparing wine, putting it into the cup came to be *to mingle*. Hence the apparent contradiction in terms here [and in the Psalm below]. The figure of the cup of the Lord's wrath is found in Ps. lxxiv. 8, in the Septuagint version, "*In the hand of the Lord is a cup, full of the mixture of pure wine... all the sinners of the earth shall drink it,*" from which this is evidently taken) **in the enp of His anger, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the [holy] angels and in the presence of the Lamb** (seo ch. xx. 10, and Isa. in the reff., from which the: imagery comes, 'The meaning is as in Luke xvi 23 ff, that the torments are visible to the angels and the Lamb): **and the smoke of their torment goeth up to ages of ages** (see Isa. in the reff., and Gen. xviii. 28, which doubtless is the fountain-head: also ch. xix. 3): **and they have not rest (from torment) day and night who worship the beast and his image; and whoever** (from speaking collectively the solemn declaration becomes even more solemn by individualizing) **receives the mark of his name, Here** (viz. in the inference to be drawn from the certainty of everlasting torment to all who worship the beast or receive his mark: that all the saints of God must refuse to do either) **is the endurance of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus** (the faith, that is, which has Him for its object). **And I heard a voice out of heaven** (whose, is not told us, and it is in vain to speculate: certainly not, as Hengstenberg, from the spirits of the just themselves. The command, **write**, would rather point to the angel who reveals the visions to the

Evangelist, ch. i. 1, and compare ch. iv. 4), **saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth** (the connexion is not difficult. The mention of the endurance of the saints brings with it the certainty of persecution unto death. ‘The present proclamation declares the blessedness of all who die not only in persecution, but in any manner, in the Lord, in the faith and obedience of Christ And the special command to write this, conveys special comfort to those in all ages of the church who should read it. But it is not so easy to assign a fit meaning to **from henceforth**. Being thus joined with the former sentence, it must express some reason why this blessedness is to be more completely realized from this time when it is proclaimed, than it was before. Now this reason will quickly appear, if we consider the particular time, in connexion with which the proclamation is made. The harvest of the earth is about to be reaped; the vintage of the earth to be gathered. At this time it is, that the complete blessedness of the holy dead commences: when the garner is filled and the chaff cast out. And that not on account of their deliverance from any purgatorial fire, but because of the completion of this number of their brethren, and the full capacities of bliss brought in by the resurrection. Nor can it legitimately be objected to this, that the deaths implied must follow after the proclamation, For no doubt this would be so, the proclamation itself being anticipatory, and the harvest not yet actually come). **Yea, saith the Spirit** (the utterance of the voice from heaven still continues. The affirmation of the Spirit ratifies the blessedness proclaimed, and assigns a reason for it), **that they shall** (so literally) **rest from their labours: for their works follow with them** (for, which has seemed so difficult, and which apparently gave rise to the alteration in the text, is in fact easily explained. ‘They *rest* from their labours, because the time of working is over, their works accompanying them not in a life of activity, but in blessed memory; wherefore not labour, but rest is their lot).

14–20.] THE VISION OF THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE.

14–16.] THE HARVEST. **And I saw, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like unto the Son of man** (i. e. to Christ, see ch. i, 13 note. This clearly is our Lord Himself, as there), **having on his head a golden crown** (in token of His victory being finally gained: see ch. xix. 12), **and in His hand a sharp sickle.** **And an-other angel** (besides the three angels before fore mentioned: no inference can be drawn from this that the Sitter on the cloud is a mere angel) **came out of the temple, crying out in a loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud, Put forth** (literally, *send*: and so in Mark in the reff. De Wette’s objection, that the sitter on the cloud cannot be Christ Himself, because He would not be introduced receiving a command from an angel, may be well answered, as Düsterdieck, that the angel is only the messenger of the will of God. And I may add what to me makes this reply undoubtedly valid, that the command is one regarding the times and seasons, which the Father hath kept in his own power) **thy sickle** (the whole is a remembrance of our Lord’s own saying in Mark iv. 29: see below) **and reap: because the time to reap is come, because the harvest of the earth is dried** (perfectly: ripe, so that the stalk is dry: compare Mark iv, 29: also the fields being “white already to harvest,” John iv. 35: which they can only become by losing their moisture). **And he that sat upon the cloud thrust in his sickle upon** (into, from above) **the earth, and the earth was reaped** (to what does this harvest refer? Is it the ingathering of the wicked, or of the saints, or of both together? Each of these has examples in Scripture symbolism, The first, in Jer. li, 33, where it is said of Babylon, “It is time to thresh her, yet a little while and the time of her harvest is come:” and as appears, Joel iii. 15, though the reference seems rather there to be to the vintage: the second, in Matt. ix. 39, and parallels; Mark iv. 29; John iv. 35; the third, in Matt. xiii. 30, 39. The verdict of commentators is very much divided. There are circumstances in the context which tell both ways. The parallelism with the vintage, which follows, seems to favour a harvest of the wicked: but then on the other hand, if so, what is the distinction between the two ingatherings? and why do we read of the casting into the winepress of God’s wrath in the second case, and of no corresponding feature in the other? Again, why is the agency so different—the Son of man on the white cloud with the golden crown in the one case, the mere angel in the other? Besides, the two gatherings seem quite distinct. ‘The former is over before the other begins. On the whole then, though I would not pronounce decidedly, I much incline to think that the harvest is the ingathering of the saints, God’s harvest, reaped from the earth: described here thus generally, before the vintage of wrath which follows. And thus we have at least these two visions in harmony with the character of this section, which contains the mingled agency and fortunes of the Church and of its enemies; thus this harvest answers to the great preaching of the everlasting gospel above, vv. 6, 7, while the following vintage fulfils the denunciations of wrath on those who worship the image or receive the mark of the beast, vv. 8, 11. And thus too we bring this description into harmony with our Lord’s important parable in Mark iv. 29, where the very words are used of the agency of Christ Himself when the work of grace is ripe, whether in the individual or in the church. But while thus inclined, I will not deny that the other view, and that which unites both, have very much to be said for them).

17–20.] The vintage of wrath. **And another angel** (another may perhaps refer to the three angels who have already appeared in this vision: or, which is more probable, referring to the last-mentioned Agent, may be a general term, not necessarily implying that He was a mere angel) **came out from the temple which was in heaven** (from which come forth God’s judgments: see ch. xi. 19), **having himself also** (as well as that other: but the term rather raises a distinction between the two personages than sets them on an equality: there is some slight degree of strangeness, after what has gone before, in this angel having a sickle) **a sharp sickle.** **And another angel came out from the altar** (viz. that elsewhere several times mentioned, ch. vi. 9, viii. 8, xvi. 7, in connexion with the fulfilment of God’s judgments in answer to the prayers of His saints), **he that hath power over the fire** (viz. that on the altars the same angel who is introduced ch. viii. 3–5 as presenting the prayers of the saints, and casting some of the fire of the altar to the earth as introductory to the judgements of the trumpets), **and he cried with a great cry to him that had the sharp sickle** (it is to be observed that the whole description of this angel, coming from

the altar of vengeance, differs widely from any thing in the former part of the vision, and favours the idea that this vintage is of a different nature from that harvest), **saying, Put forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the the bunches of the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe. And the angel** (no such expression is used above, ver. 16. There it is, “*He that sat upon the cloud.*” All these signs of difference are worthy of notice) **thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast** (viz. what he had gathered) **into the great winepress of the wrath of God** (any thing corresponding to this feature is entirely wanting in the previous description of the harvest. See on it ch. xix. 15, and the prophetic passages in reff. especially Isaiah, from which the symbolism comes). **And the winepress was trodden outside the city** (see below), **and blood** (so Isa. lxiii. 3) **came forth from the winepress as far as to the bits of the horses, to the distance of a thousand six hundred stadii** (it is exceedingly difficult to say what the meaning is, further than that the idea of a tremendous final act of vengeance is denoted. *The city* evidently is the same as the *outer city* of ch. xi. 2 [not that of ib. 8, see note there], viz. *Jerusalem*, where the scene has been tacitly laid, with occasional express allusions such as that in our ver. 1. The blood coming forth from the treading of the winepress is in accordance with the Old Test. prophecy alluded to, Isa. lxiii, 3. It is in the depth, and the distance indicated, that the principal difficulty lies. The number of stadii (or furlongs) is supposed by some to be the length of the Holy Land, as given by Jerome at 160 Roman miles. But the great objection to this is, that 160 miles = 1280, not 1600 stadii. Another view has been, that 1600 has been chosen as a square number, = 40 x 40, or 4 x 400, or 4 x 4 x 100. We may fairly say, either that the number is assigned simply to signify completeness and magnitude [in which case some other apocalyptic numbers which have been much insisted on will fall perhaps under the same canon of interpretation], or else this is one of the riddles of the Apocalypse to which not even a proximate solution has ever yet been given).

CH. XV., XVI. THE SEVEN VIALS And herein,

Revelation: Chapter 15

XV. 1–8.] PREFATORY: *the description of the vision, ver. 1: the song of triumph of the saints victorious over the beast, vv. 2–4: the coming forth of the seven angels and delivering to them of the seven vials, vv. 5–8.*

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues which are the last [plagues], because in them is com-pleted the wrath of God (I have adopted an unusual arrangement to throw the word **because** into connexion with **the last**, for which epithet it renders a reason. It is to be observed 1) that this verse is evidently only a compendious description of the following vision: for the angels themselves are not seen till ver. 6, and do not receive the vials containing the plagues till after they are seen: 2) that the whole of God’s wrath in *final judgment* is not exhausted by these vials, but only the whole of His wrath in sending plagues on the earth *previous to the judgment*. After these there are no more plagues: they are concluded with the destruction of Babylon. Then the Lord Himself appears, ch. xix. 11 ff). **And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire** (see ch. iv. 6 and note: not merely glassy: the as it were indicates the likeness: it was as it were made of glass, The addition **mingled with fire** is probably made as bringing into the previous celestial imagery an element belonging to this portion of the prophecy, of which *judgment* is the prevailing complexion: The fact, that the personages of the former heavenly vision are still present, ver. 7, seems to remove all doubt of this being the *same sea* of glass as that before described ch. iv. 6, in immediate connexion with which the four living-beings were mentioned), **and the conquerors of** (literally, out of: they have come victorious out of the strife) **the beast and of his image and of the number of his name** (i. e. of the temptation to wor-ship his image and to receive the mark consisting of the number of his name, ch. xiii, 17, 18), **standing on** (does this im-port actually “upon,” so that they stood *on the surface* of the sea, or merely *on the shore of?* On every account the latter seems the more probable: as better suiting the heavenly imagery of ch. iv., and as according with the situation of the children of Israel when they sung the song to which allusion is presently made) **the sea of glass, having harps of God** (sacred harps, part of the instruments of heaven used solely for the praise of God. We have had them before mentioned in ch. v. 8, xiv. 2). **And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God** (i. e. a song similar to that song of triumph which Moses and the children of Israel sung when delivered from the Red Sea and from the Egyptians, Exod. xv. In Exod. xiv. 31, Moses is called, as here, the ser-vant of God [sec also Numb. xii. 7; Josh. xxii. 5]: and this song is formed on the model of parts of that one: see below) **and the song of the Lamb** (it is not meant that there are two distinct songs: the song is one and the same; and the expression which characterizes it betokens, as do so many other notices and symbols in this book, the unity of the Old and New Test. churches. Their songs of triumph have become ours: the song of Moses is the song of the Lamb. In this great victory all the triumphs of God’s people are included, and find their fulfil-ment), **saying** (the song is a reproduction of several portions of the Old Test. songs of praise), **Great and wonderful are thy works** (Ps. cxi. 2, cxxxix. 14), **Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways** (Ps. cxlv. 17; Deut. xxxii. 4 in Moses’ song), **thou King of the nations: who can but fear [Thee]** (these two clauses are from Jer. x. 7. The title “King of nations” is especially appropriate, as it is God’s judgments on the nations, and their effects on them, which are the theme of the Church’s praise) **and [who] shall [not] glorify** (so literally) **thy Name? cause Thou only art holy** (this first **because** grounds the question in the *attributes of God*): **because all the na-tions shall como and worship before thee** (so it is declared in Ps. lxxxvi. 9. This second **because** grounds the question in *matter of fact*): **because Thy righteous acts** (thy judgements: thy deeds of righteousness acted out towards the nations, both in the publication of the Gospel and in the destruction of Thine enemies) **have been made manifest** (this third **because** grounds the fact announced in its immediately exciting cause—the

manifestation of God's judgments). **And after these things I saw, and there was opened the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven** (see on ch. xi. 19, xvi. 17. The **temple** (proper) is the holy place of the tabernacle, to which latter the appellation **of the testimony** is here peculiarly appropriate, seeing that the witness and covenant of God are about to receive their great fulfilment): **and there came forth the seven angels** (viz, who were before mentioned: **the** does not point out any particular seven, such as the archangels) **which had** (or, "having." This was their office: but they *had* them not yet) **the seven plagues out of the temple** (see ch. xiv. 15, 17), **clad in linen pure and glistening** (the well-known clothing of angels and heavenly beings, see Acts x. 30 (i. 10), ch. xix. 8; Matt. xvii. 2 and parallels, xxviii. 3), **and girt round their breasts with golden girdles** (being in this like our Lord Himself as seen in vision, ch. i. 13). **And one from among the four living-beings** (appropriately to the symbolic meaning of these living-creatures as the representatives of *creation*, see notes on ch. iv. 7, 11, inasmuch as the coming plagues are to be inflicted on the objects of creation) **gave to the seven angels seven golden vials** (the *phialē* was a shallow bowl or cup, usually without a stand or foot, in which they drew out of the *crater* or goblet), **full of the wrath of God who liveth for ever and ever** (this addition serves, as in ch. i. 8, to give solemnity to the fact related). **And the temple was filled with smoke from** (arising from) **the glory of God and from His might** (i. e. from His presence, in which His glory and His might were displayed. 'The' description calls to mind similar ones in the Old Test. e.g. Ps. xviii. 8 f.; Isa. lxv. 5. See also below), **and no one was able to enter into the temple** (compare 1 Kings viii. 10, 11; Exod. xl. 34, 35) **until the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished** (the passages above referred to give the reason: because of the unapproachableness of God, when immediately present and working, by any created being. See Exod. xix. 21. When these judgments should be completed, then, the wrathful presence and agency of God being withdrawn, He might again be approached. Many other meanings more or less far-fetched have been given, but where Scripture analogy is so plain, the simplest is the best).

Revelation: Chapter 16

CH XVI. 1–21.] THE SEVEN VIALS. See the general remarks on ch. viii. 1 for all questions common to the three great series of visions. The following special particulars are here to be noticed: 1) In the description, ch. xvi., which first introduces these plagues, they are plainly called **the seven plagues which are the last**. There can then be no doubt here, not only that the series reaches on to the time of the end, but that the whole of it is to be placed close to the same time. And this is borne out by the particulars evolved in the course of the visions themselves. For we find that they do not in point of time go back, but at once take up the events of the former visions, and occur during the times of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the mystery of God should be finished. 2) As in the seals and in the trumpets, so here again, there is a marked distinction between the first four and the following three. As there, so here, the objects of the first four are the earth, the sea, the springs of waters, and the sun. After this the objects become more particularized: the throne of the beast, the river Euphrates, with the reservation of that peculiar and vague character for the *seventh*, which seems to belong to it in all the three series, 3) As before, so now, there is a compendious and anticipatory character about several of the vials, leading us to believe that those of which this is not so plain, partake of this character also. For example, under the *third* vial we find an acknowledgment of the divine justice in making those drink blood who shed the blood of saints and prophets. This, there can be little doubt, points on to the judgment on Babylon, in whom, ch. xviii. 24, was found the blood of saints and prophets, and of all that had been slain on the earth. Again, under the *sixth* we have the same great gathering to battle which is described in detail, ch. xix. 17–21. And finally, under the *seventh*, we have a compendious anticipatory notice of the judgment of Babylon, hereafter, ch. xvii., xviii. to be described in detail,—and of the great day itself in ver. 20, also hereafter [ch. xx. 11–15] to be resumed at more length. 4) As we might expect in the *final* plagues, we have no longer, as in the trumpets, a portion of each element affected, but the whole, 5) While in the first four vials the main features of the first four trumpets are reproduced, there is one notable distinction in the ease of the *fourth*. While by the plague of the fourth trumpet, the sun, moon, and stars are partially darkened, by that of the fourth vial the power of the sun is *increased*, and the darkening of the Kingdom of the beast is reserved for the *fifth*. 'The minor special features will be noticed as we proceed, On the whole, the series of the vials seems to bear a less general character than the other two. It takes up a particular point in the prophecy, and deals with symbols and persons previously described. It belongs, by its very conditions, exclusively to the time of, or to days approaching very near to the time of, the end: including in itself the subsequent details as far as the end of ch. xx.: without however noticing most important features and considerable prophetic periods,

1.] Introductory. And I heard a great voice out of the temple (from the fact, ch. xv. 8, that the divine Presence is filling the temple, and that none might enter into it, this voice can be no other than the divine voice) **saying to the seven angels, Go and pour out the seven vials of the wrath of God into the earth** (so, previous to the series of trumpets, the angel casts the fire from the altar into the earth, ch. viii. 5).

2.] And the first departed (each angel, as his turn comes, leaves the heavenly scene, and from the space between heaven and earth, empties his vial on the appointed object) **and poured out his vial into the earth** (the **earth**, which before in ver. 1 was general, is now particular, and correlative with the objects of the other vials, compare vv. 2, 3, "into the sea," "into the waters"): **and there came** (took place: *fell*, as A.V.) **an evil (in itself) and painful (to the sufferers) sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast and that worshipped his image** (see above, ch. xiii. 15–17, xiv. 9, 10. The allegorical and

historical interpretations have been very various: see them in Elliott, vol. iv. Notice the parallel with the sixth Egyptian plague, Exod. ix. 8 ff. Compare Deut. xxviii, 27, 35).

3.] And the second poured out his vial into the sea: and it (the sea, compare ch. viii. 8, 11) **became blood as of a dead man** (blood as when a dead corpse lies in its Blood: loathsome and corrupting) **and every soul of life** (so literally: soul being used in its physical sense of animal soul) **died**, [all] **the things in the sea**.

4–7.] And the third poured out his vial into the rivers and the fountains of the waters: and they became blood (that the fact was so, is testified by what follows, in which it is assumed that the sources of ordinary drink have become blood). **And I heard the angel of the waters** (i. e. the angel who was set over the waters; see ch. vii. 1, xiv. 18) **saying, Thou art righteous who art and wast** (as in ch. xi. 2, the “*and art to come*” is omitted) **holy, because Thou didst judge thus** (lit., “these things:” viz. the issue mentioned in ver. 4; the turning the drinking-water into blood: “Thou didst inflict this judgment”): **because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink: they are worthy** (these words are made stronger by the absence of any particle to introduce them). **And I heard the altar saying** (certainly the simplest understanding of these words is, that they involve personification of the altar. On the altar are the prayers of the saints, offered before God: beneath the altar are the souls of the martyrs crying for vengeance: when therefore the altar speaks, it is the concentrated testimony of these which speaks by it), **Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and just are Thy judgments.**

8, 9.] And the fourth poured out his vial upon (no longer *into*) **the sun: and it was given to it** (the sun: not “*to him*,” the angel, as, strangely enough, Bengel and Hengstenberg, and Elliott. The angels throughout this vision are simply the pourers out of the vials, not the executors of the plagues. Besides which, the verb **to scorch**, in a sentence where the sun is mentioned can have but one reference) **to scorch men with fire** (not, as Hengstenberg, understanding him of the angel, some fire other than the sun: but the glowing increased heat of the sun itself), **and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues, and did not repent to give Him glory.**

10, 11.] And the fifth poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast (given to it by the dragon, ch. xiii. 2, That is, on the spot where the power and presence of the beast had its proper residence): **and his kingdom** (those lands which owned his rule) **became darkened** (as in the ninth Egyptian plague, Exod. x, 21 ff., the darkness is specially sent over the land, not occasioned by any failure of the lights of heaven). **And they** (the inhabitants: the subjects of the beast. They are by and by identified with those who had received his mark) **chewed their tongues** (which, says Andreas, is a sign of excessive and intolerable pain) **from their pain** (viz, under which they were previously suffering: not, that occasioned by the darkness, which would not of itself occasion pain: see below), **and blasphemed the God of heaven** (see ch. xi. 13) **by reason of their pains and their sores** (these words bind on this judgment to that of the first and following vials, and shew that they are cumulative, not simply successive. The sores, and pains before mentioned, are still in force), **and repented not of their works.**

12.] And the sixth poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates: and its water was dried up, that the way of the kings which come from the rising of the sun might be prepared (notice, but not to be blindly led by it, the analogy of the sixth trumpet, also having reference to the river Euphrates. In order to understand what we here read, we must carefully bear in mind the context. From what follows under this same vial, we learn that the kings of the whole earth are about to be gathered together to the great battle against God, in which He shall be victorious, and they shall utterly perish. The time is now come for this gathering: and by the drying up of the Euphrates, the way of those kings who are to come to it from the East is made ready. This is the only understanding of these words which will suit the context, or the requirements of this series of prophecies. For to suppose the conversion of Eastern nations, or the gathering together of Christian princes, to be meant, or to regard the words as relating to any auspicious event, is to introduce a totally incongruous feature into the series of vials, which confessedly represent the “seven last plagues.” Andreas explains it as above: and so Bleck, Ewald, De Wette, Düsterd., and others).

13–16.] And I saw out of the mouth of the dragon (who is still in the prophetic scene, giving his power to the beast, ch. 2) **and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet** (viz. the second beast of ch. xiii, 11 ff. Compare ch. xix, 20, xx. 10) **three unclean spirits like frogs** (in shape and character. In the entire absence of Scripture symbolism,—for the only mention of frogs besides this is in, or in regard to, the relation of the plague in Egypt,—we can only explain the similitude from the uncleanness, and the pertinacious noise, of the frog), **for** (gives a reason for their being like frogs) **they are spirits of demons doing miracles** (this is a plain declaration of the interpretation of these three, and by it the limits of interpretation are clearly set, and must not be overpassed. The explanation of these as men, or sects of men, is therefore clearly wrong) **which go forth over the Kings of the whole earth** (it is the uniform testimony of the prophetic Scriptures, that the antichristian power shall work signs and wonders as means of deceiving man-kind: see Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9) **to gather them together to the war of that great day of Almighty God** (that day viz. which is explained in detail in the subsequent part of the prophecy, ch. xix. 17 ff. This great gathering of the beast and the kings of the earth against God and the Lamb, is the signal for the immediate and glorious appearing of the Lord. And therefore follows an exhortation to be ready, and clad in the garments of righteousness, when He shall come). **Behold, I come** (the Seer speaks in the name of

Christ) **as a thief** (that personal advent shall happen when many least expect when the world is secure in the ungodliness of ages): **blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they** (men) **see his shame** (the figure is that of one apprehending the thief's coming, and therefore keeping watch in his clothes, not undressing. In the spiritual sense, the garments are the robe of righteousness put on by faith in Him who is our Righteousness: and the walking naked is that destitution of these garments which will at that day bring shame before assembled men and angels). **And they** (the unclean spirits, as is evident from **gathered them** being merely a recital of the purpose, *to gather them*, announced in ver. 14: not, the angel of the sixth vial, as Bengel; nor God, as Hengstenberg and Ebrard) **collected them together to the place which is called in Hebrew Har-magedon** (it is evidently in the meaning of the Hebrew name of this place that its appropriate significance lies. For otherwise why should in Hebrew be prefixed to it? When St. John does this in his Gospel, in the cases of Bethesda, v. 2, Gabbatha, xix. 13, Golgotha, xix. 17, and in this book in the case of Abaddon, ix. 11, it is each time not without such reference: see the notes in those places. But this circumstance does not deprive the name of geographical reality: and it is most probable on every account that such reality exists here. The words **the place which is called** would surely not be used except of a real place habitually so named, or by a name very like this, Nor need we search far for the place pointed out. Harmagiddo, the 'mountain of Megiddo,' designates at least the neighbourhood where the Canaanitish Kings were overthrown by Barak, Judg. v. 19: an occasion which gave rise to one of the two triumphal songs of Israel recorded in the Old 'Test., and therefore one well worthy of symbolizing the great final overthrow of the Kings of the Earth leagued against Christ. That a name slightly differs from that given in the Old Test. where it is the plain [2 Chron. xxxv. 22] or the waters (Judges, as above] of Megiddo, is of slight consequence, and may be owing to a reason which I shall dwell on below, The Septuagint in both places adopts the form which we have here, Megiddo or-eddo. Nor must it be forgotten, that Megiddo was connected with another overthrow and slaughter, viz. that of Josiah by Pharaoh-Necho [2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. as above], which though not analogous to this predicted battle in its issue, yet served to keep up the character of the place as one of overthrow and calamity: compare also Zech. xii. 11, and the striking description, 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, of the ordinance of lamentation for Josiah. At Megiddo also another Jewish King, Ahaziah, died of the wounds received from Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 27, The prefix Har, signifying "mountain," has its local propriety: see Stanley's description of the plain of Esdraelon, in the opening of his Sinai and Palestine, ch. ix. And to the fisherman of the lake of Galilee, who would know Megiddo, as he saw its background of highland lit up by the morning or evening sun across the plain from his native hills, the name would doubtless be a familiar one. Still there may have been a deeper reason which led to, or at all events justified the prefix. As the name now stands, it has a meaning ominous of the great overthrow which is to take place on the spot).

17–21.] And the seventh poured out his vial upon the air (the consequences are presently seen), **and there came forth a voice out of the temple from the throne** (the voice, as in ver. 1, of God himself. This is rendered even more certain here by the addition of from the throne), **saying, It is done** (the limitation of the meaning to "that is done which was commanded," viz. the outpouring of the seven vials, is in fact no limitation; for the plagues are the *last* plagues: if therefore they are done, all is done. But the declaration is of course made in anticipation, and imports that the outpouring of the seventh vial had done that which should accomplish all and bring in the end. One who had fired a train would say, "It is done," though the explosion had not yet taken place). **And there were lightnings and voices and thunders** (the usual accompaniments at the close of each series of visions, see ch. viii. 5, xi. 19. But as before remarked, these phenomena occur here in rather a different connexion from that in the other two places. Here, they are more the result of the outpouring of the last vial, and they do not conclude, but only begin its effects, which do not, cease until the destruction of Babylon and the great overthrow of the antichristian hosts): **and there was a great earthquake** (this may perhaps be not without connexion with the pouring out of the vial into the air: in the descriptions of earthquakes we read of the darkened and lurid appearance of the air preceding the shock), **such as was not from the time when there was a man** (not, "since man was") **upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great.** **And the great city** (Rome: compare ch. xi. 8 and note, xiv. 8, xvii. 18, xviii. 10, 16, 18, &c., 21) **became into** (i. e. was divided or split, viz. by the earthquake, into) **three parts** (see ch. xi. 13, where a similar judgment takes place at the end of the episode of the two witnesses. The *three* parts are supposed by Düsterd. to refer to the three arch-enemies just now mentioned. But this is very uncertain: see on the tripartite division at ch. viii. 7), **and the cities of the nations fell** (not only the greatest city, but other great capitals of nations fell, from the violence and extent of the earthquake. We have its further consequences presently): **and Babylon the great** (mentioned specially, although really the same [see the places referred to above] with the appellation of the great city, because of her special adulterous character to be hereafter described. The destruction of the material city of Rome is but the beginning of the execution of vengeance on the mystic Babylon) **was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath** (see on this figure of the cup, ch. xiv. 8, note, The sense is, that all these material judgments were but prefatory; the divine intent, in the midst of them, being to make Babylon drink the cup of His wrath in her judgment which follows): **and every island fled** (the effects of the earthquake are resumed, the mention of Babylon coming into remembrance being parenthetical, and suggested by the great city having been split into three parts. On the sense, as belonging to the imagery of the Great Day, see ch. vi. 14),

and there were found no mountains (not as A. V., "the mountains were not found." The expression is far stronger than this: amounting to that in ch. vi. 14, that every mountain was removed out of its place and was looked for in vain), **and a great hail** (see reff. Egypt is again in view) **as of a talent in weight** (i. e. having each hail stone of that weight. Diodorus Siculus speaks of hailstones of a mina each in weight as being enormous: and the talent contained *sixty* minæ. Josephus speaks of the stones which were thrown from the machines in the siege of Jerusalem as each of a talent weight) **descendeth from heaven on men:**

and men blasphemed God by reason of the plague of the hail, because great is the plague of it exceedingly (i. e. mankind in general,—not those who were struck by the hailstones, who would instantly die,—so far from repenting at this great and final judgment of God, blasphemed him and were impenitent. The issue is different from that in ch. xi, 13, where the remnant feared, and gave glory to God).

Revelation: Chapter 17

CH. XVII., XVIII.] THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON. And herein,

XVII. 1–6.] *The description of Babylon under the figure of a drunken harlot, riding on the beast. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials* (we are not told which of the seven, and it is idle to enquire. The seventh has been conjectured, because under the outpouring of his vial Babylon was remembered) **and talked with me saying, Hither, I will shew thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon [the] many waters, with whom the Kings of the earth [have] committed fornication, and they who inhabit the earth have been made drunk from the wine of her fornication** (the figure here used, of a harlot who has committed fornication with secular kings and peoples, is frequent in the prophets, and has one principal meaning and application, viz. to God's church and people that had forsaken Him and attached herself to others. In eighteen places out of twenty-one where the figure occurs, such is its import; vis. in Isa. i. 21; Jer. ii, 20, iii. 1, 6, 8; Ezek. xvi. 15, 16, 28, 31, 35, 41, xxiii 5, 19, 44; Hosea ii. 5, iii. 3, iv. 15 [Micah 7]. In three places only is the word applied to heathen cities: viz. in Isa. xxii, 15, 16 to Tyre, where, ver. 17, it is also said, "she shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth:" and in Nahum iii. 4 to Nineveh, which is called the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. And there the threat is pronounced of a very similar ruin to that which befalls Babylon here. So that the Scripture analogy, while it points to unfaithfulness and treachery against God's covenant, also brings to mind extensive empire and wide-spread rule over the kingdoms of the earth. It is true, that as far us *the image itself* is concerned, pagan Rome as well fulfils its requirements as Tyre and Nineveh. It will depend on subsequent features in the description whether we are to bound our view with her history and overthrow. Still, it will not be desirable to wait for the solution of this question till we arrive at the point where those features appear: for by so doing much of our intermediate exegesis will necessarily be obscured. The decisive test then which may at once be applied to solve the question, is derived from the prophecy of the destruction of Babylon in ch. xviii. 2. It is to be laid utterly waste, and to "become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Now no such destruction as this has yet befallen Rome, unless her transfer from pagan to papal rule be such a destruction, and the Pope and his ecclesiastics be described in the above terms. In an eloquent passage of Vitringa, he presses Bossuet with this dilemma. Again, it is said of this harlot, "*with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication.*" But we may ask, if this be pagan Rome, who and what are these kings, and what is indicated by her having been the object of their lustful desires? In the days of Imperial Rome, there were no independent kings of the earth except in Parthia and Persia. Rome in her pagan state, as described for the purpose of identification in ver. 18, was not one who intrigued with the kings of the earth, but "*she which hath kingdom over the Kings of the earth:*" she reigned over them with undisputed and crushing sway. I do not hesitate therefore, induced mainly by these considerations, which will be confirmed as we proceed step by step in the prophecy, to maintain that interpretation which regards papal and not pagan Rome as pointed out by the harlot of this vision. The "*sitting upon many waters*" is said of Babylon in Jer. in reff., but has here a symbolical meaning; see below, ver. 15. On the drunkenness see ch. xiv. 8. 'The same thing is said of Babylon in Jer. i.e. But there she herself is the cup in the Lord's hand). **And he (the angel) carried me away to the wilderness** (not, as Elliott and others, and even Düsterdieck, "a wilderness.") 'The most natural way of accounting for the Seer being taken into the wilderness here, is that he was to be shewn Babylon, which was in the wilderness, and the overthrow of which, in the prophecy from which come the very words '*Babylon is fallen, is fallen*' (Isa. xxi. 9}, is headed "*the vision of the wilderness.*" So that by the analogy of prophecy, the: journey to witness the fall of Babylon would be to the wilderness. The question of the identity of this woman with the woman in ch. xii. is not affected by that of the identity of this wilderness with that) **in the spirit** (see note on ch. i. 10): **and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet wild-beast** (this beast is introduced as if a new appearance: but its identity with that mentioned before, ch. xiii. 1 ff. is plain as the description goes onward. For not to mention the features which the two have in common, this beast, as soon as described, is ever after mentioned as **the beast**; and in ch. xix. 19, 20, the identity is expressly established. For there we read, ver. 19, that the beast and the kings of the earth make war against the Lamb, which beast can be no other than this on which the woman rides, cf. our vv. 12–14:—and in the next verse, xix. 20, *we read that the Beast was taken, and the false prophet who did miracles before him*, which beast can be no other than that of ch. xiii. See ver. 14 there. The identity of the two is therefore matter not of opinion, but of demonstration. The differences in appearance doubtless are significant. That with which we are now concerned, the scarlet colour, is to be understood as belonging not to a covering on the beast, but to the beast itself. It is akin to the colour of the dragon, but as that is the redness of fire [see however ch. vi. 4], so is this of blood, with which both the beast and its rider are dyed. It was the colour, see Heb. ix. 19, of the wool to be used in sprinkling the Blood of sacrifice. 'There may be an allusion to the Roman imperial purple: for the robe which was put on our Lord in mockery is described by this same word. But this is more probably conveyed by its own proper word in the next verse. By the woman *sitting* on the wild-beast, is signified that superintending and guiding power which the rider possesses over his beast: than which nothing could be chosen more apt to represent the superiority claimed and exercised by the See of Rome

over the secular kingdoms of Christendom), **full of names of blasphemy** (the names of blasphemy, which were found before on the heads of the beast only, have now spread

over its whole surface. As ridden and guided by the harlot, it is tenfold more blasphemous in its titles and assumptions than before. The heathen world has but its *Divi*, i.e. "Gods," in the Cæsars, as in other deified men of note: but Christendom has its "most Christian" and "most faithful" Kings such as Louis XIV. and Philip II.; its "Defenders of the faith" such as Charles II. and James II.; its society of unprincipled intriguers called after the sacred name of our Lord, and working Satan's work "ad majorem Dei gloriam;" its "holy office" of the Inquisition, with its dens of darkest cruelty; finally its "patrimony of St. Peter," and its "holy Roman Empires" all of them and many more, new names of blasphemy, with which the woman has invested the beast. Go where we will and look where we will in Papal Christendom, names of blasphemy meet us. 'The taverns, the shops, the titles of men and of places, the very insurance badges on the houses are full of them), **having seven heads and ten horns** (as in its former appearance, ch. xiii. 1; inherited from the dragon, ch. xii. 3. These are presently interpreted: we now return to the description of the woman herself). **And the woman was clothed in purple** (St. John's own word, even to its peculiar form, for the mock-imperial robe placed on our Lord: and therefore bearing probably here the same signification; but not in mockery, for the empire is real) **and scarlet** (see above. This very colour is not without its significance: witness the Cardinals, at the same time the guiding council of the Church and princes of the State), **and gilded with gold and with** (the word **gilded** is carried on to other details to which it does not properly belong) **precious stones and with pearls** (this description needs no illustration for any who have witnessed, or even read of, the pomp of Papal Rome: which, found as it is every where, is concentrated in the city itself), **holding a cup of gold in her hand full of abominations and of the impure things of her fornication** (this cup is best taken altogether symbolically, and not as the cup in the Mass, which, however degraded by her blasphemous fiction of transubstantiation, could hardly be called by this name, and moreover is *not given*, but *denied* by her to the nations of the earth. That she should have represented herself in her medals as holding forth this cup [with the remarkable inscription, "she sits over the whole earth;" see Elliott, vol. iv. p. 30, plate], is a judicial coincidence rather than a direct fulfilment), **and [having] upon her forehead a name written** (as was customary with harlots), **Mystery** (is this word part of the name, or not? On the whole it seems more probable that it is. For though no such word would in the nature of things be attached to her forehead as part of her designation, so neither would the description which follows **Babylon the great**, to which the word **mystery** seems partly to refer. But whether part of the name or not, the meaning will be the same: viz. that the title following is to be taken in a spiritual and an enigmatical sense: compare ch. i. 20, and 2 Thess. ii. 7), **Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth** (i. e. not only first and greatest of these, but herself the progenitress and origin of the rest. All spiritual fornication and corruption are owing to her, and to her example and teaching). **And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus** (as the Seer contemplates the woman, he perceives that she is drunken: and from what is revealed to him, and from her symbolic colour of blood, he assigns the cause of that intoxication). A **nd I wondered, when I saw her, with great wonder** (what was the ground of the Seer's astonishment? One doubtless might be assigned, which would at once account for any degree of such emotion. If this woman is *the same as he before saw*, who fled into the wilderness from the face of the dragon, "the faithful city become an harlot" [Isa. i. 21], he might well wonder. And certainly there is much in favour of such a supposition. It has been taken up by some considerable expositors, such as Auberlen [on Daniel], who has argued earnestly but soberly for it. There is one objection to it, which has been made more of in this place than perhaps it deserves. It is, that in the Angel's replication to St. John's wonder, no allusion is made to this circumstance as its principal ground. But, it may well be replied, this would be just what we might expect, if the fact of identity were patent. The Seer, versed in the history of man's weakness and depravity, full of Old Test. prophetic thoughts and sayings, would need no solution of the fact itself: this would lie at the ground of his wonder, and of the angel's explanation of the consequences which were to follow from it. Auberlen very properly lays stress on the fact, that the joint symbolism of the wilderness and the woman could not fail to call up in the mind of the Seer the last occasion when the two occurred together: and insists that this symbol must be continuous throughout. Without going so far as to pronounce the two identical, I think we cannot and ought not to lose sight of the identity of symbolism in the two cases. It is surely meant to lie beneath the surface, and to teach us an instructive lesson. We may see from it two prophetic truths: first, that the church on earth in the main will become apostate and faithless, compare Luke xviii. 8: and secondly, that while this shall be so, the apostasy shall not embrace the whole church, so that the second woman in the apocalyptic vision should be *absolutely* identical with the first. 'The identity is, in the main, not to be questioned: in formal strictness, not to be pressed."This being so, I should rather regard St. John's astonishment as a compound feeling, occasioned partly by the enormity of the sight revealed to him, partly also by the identity of the symbolism with 'that which had been the vehicle of a former and altogether different

7-18.] Explanation by the angel of the mystery of the woman and of the beast. And first, 7-14] of the beast. **And the angel said to me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell to thee the mystery** (which, be it noted, is but one) **of the woman and of the wild-beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns, The beast which thou sawest, was, and is not, and shall come up out of the abyss, and goeth to perdition** (these words have been a very battle-field for apocalyptic expositors. 'The principal differing interpretations are far too long to be given at all intelligibly here, but will be seen best in their own works, and compendiously but fairly stated in the notices in Mr. Elliott's fourth volume. What is here required, is that I should give a consistent account of that solution which I have been myself led to adopt. 1) It will not be supposed, with the general view which I have taken of the beast as the secular persecuting power, that I am prepared to accede

to that line of interpretation which makes the whole vision merely descriptive of the Scer's own time, and of the Roman emperors then past, present, and expected. Against such a view it seems to me the whole imagery and diction of the vision protest: and this it will be my endeavour to shew as each of their details comes under my notice. If, as universally acknowledged, our prophecy be a taking up and continuation of that of Daniel, then we are dealing with larger matters and on a wider scale than such a limited interpretation would imply. 2) Noragain, after the meaning assigned above to the harlot and her title, will it be expected that I should agree with those who take her as, according to the letter of our ver. 18, strictly confined in meaning to the material city of Rome. She is that city: but she is also **mystery**. She is herself a harlot, an apostate and faithless church: but she is also a mother: from her spring, of her nature partake, with her shall be destroyed, all the fornications and abominations of the earth, though they be not in Rome, though they be not called by her name, though in outward semblance they quarrel with and oppose her. 3) The above remarks will lead their intelligent reader to expect, that the present words of our text, which are in the main reproductive of the imagery of ch. xiii. 1-4, will be interpreted as those were interpreted, not of mere passing events and persons, but of world-wide and world-long empires and changes. 4) Having thus indicated the line of interpretation which I shall follow, I reserve the details for ver. 10, where they necessarily come before us): **and they shall wonder who dwell upon the earth, of whom the name is not written upon** (so literally, as often in this book) **the book of life from the foundation of the world** (i. e. written from that time), **seeing the beast that he was and is not and shall come again** (see for full explanation, below on vv. 9, 10). **Here [is] the mind that hath wisdom** (by these words, as in ch. xiii. 18, attention is bespoke, and spiritual discernment challenged, for that which follows). **The seven heads are seven mountains, where** (so literally) **the woman sitteth upon them** (by these words, no less plainly than by ver. 18, Rome is pointed out). Propertius, by a remarkable coincidence, unites both descriptions in one line: "*The city on seven hills, that ruleth all the world.*" 'The Latin poets and prose writers are full of similar descriptions. See my Greek Test. and references there. See also the coin of Vespasian figured in Elliott, vol. iv. p. 30): **and they are seven Kings** (let us weigh well the significance of this indication furnished by the angel. The seven heads have a reference to the woman, who sits upon the beast to whom they belong: and, as far as *this reference* is concerned, they are *hills, on which she sits*. But they have also another reference—to the beast, of which they are the heads: and as far as this other reference is concerned, they are *kings*. Not, be it noticed, kings over the woman, nor kings of the city symbolized by her: but kings in a totally different relation, viz. that to the beast of which they are heads. So that to interpret these kings as *emperors of Rome*, or as successive *forms of government over Rome*, is to miss the propriety of the symbolism and to introduce utter confusion. They belong to the *beast*, which is not Rome, nor the Roman Empire, but a general symbol of secular antichristian power. They are in substance the same seven crowned heads which we saw on the dragon in ch. xii. 3: the same which we saw, with names of blasphemy on them, on the beast of ch. xiii. 1, to whom the dragon gave his power and his throne). **The five** (i. e. the first five out of the seven) **fell** (in English idiom, "are fallen.") Of whom is this word used? Is it one likely to be chosen to describe the mere passing away of king after king in an empire more or less settled? One appropriate to Augustus and Tiberius, who died in their beds? Or again is it one which could well be predicated of the government by consuls, which had been absorbed into the imperial power, or of that by dictators, which had merely ceased to be temporarily adopted, because it had become perpetual in the person of one man? Had Roman emperors been meant by the seven kings, or successive stages of government over Rome [even supposing these last made out, which they never have been], we should in vain have sought any precedent, or any appropriate meaning, for this term, **have fallen**: "have passed away" would be its constrained and unexampled sense. But let the analogy of Scripture and of this book itself guide us, and our way will be clear enough. "*Is fallen, is fallen,*" is the cry over Babylon herself. The verb is used in the Septuagint constantly, of the violent fall, the overthrow, either of kings or of kingdoms: it is a word belonging to domination overthrown, to glory ruined, to empire superseded. If I understand these five of individual successive kings, if I understand them of forms of government adopted and laid down on occasion, I can give no account of this verb but if I understand them of forms of empire, one after another heading the anti-christian secular power, one after another violently overthrown and done away, I have this verb in its right place and appropriate sense. *Egypt* is fallen, the first head of the beast that persecuted God's people, Ezek. xxix., xxx.: *Nineveh* is fallen, the bloody city, Nahum iii. 1-19: *Babylon* is fallen, the great enemy of Israel, Isa. xxi. 9; Jer. 1, li, al.: *Persia* is fallen, Dan. x. 13, xi. 2: *Graecia* is fallen, Dan. xi 3, 4. Thus, and as it seems to me thus only, can we do justice to the expression. Nor is any force done thus to the word *Kings*, but on the contrary it is kept to its strict prophetic import, and to the analogy of that portion of prophecy which is here especially in view. For in Dan. vii. 17 we read, that these great beasts which are four are four kings, not *kingdoms*), **the one is** (the Roman), **the other** (required to complete the seven) **is not yet come** (I agree with Auberlen, on Daniel, in regarding this seventh as the *Christian empire* beginning with Constantine: during whose time the beast in his proper essence, in his fulness of opposition to God and his saints, ceases to be), **and when he shall come he must remain a little time** (certainly the impression we derive from these words is not as Düsterdieck, al., that his empire is to be of very short continuance, but the term [*a season*]), as in 1 Pet. i. 6, v. 10 [*a while*] gives the idea of some space not assigned, but vaguely thus stated as "some little time." The idea given is rather that of duration than non-duration. Here, the stress is on **must remain**, and not on "*a short space*:" on the fact of *some* endurance, not on its being but short). **And the beast which was and is not** (as in ver. 8, whose peculiar power and essence seem suspended while the empire is Christian by profession. But observe, this seventh is for all that a veritable head, and like the others carries names of blasphemy. The beast is not actually put out of existence, but has only received a deadly wound which is again healed, see ch. xiii. 3, notes), **he himself also is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth unto perdition** (this eighth, the last and worst phase of the beast, is not represented as any one of his heads, but as being *the beast himself* in actual embodiment. He is **of the seven**,—not "*one* of the seven," but the successor and result of the seven, following and springing out of them). **And he goeth into perdition**—does not *fall* like the others, but goes on and meets his own destruction at the

hand of the Lord Himself. ‘There can be little doubt in the mind of the student of prophecy, *who* is thus described: that it is the ultimate antichristian power, prefigured by the little horn in Daniel, and expressly announced by St. Paul, 2 Thess. i. 8 ff, as “the son of perdition,”—as “the lawless one, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the appearance of His coming”). **And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings** (not necessarily personal kings: see on ver. 10 above: but kingdoms, regarded as summed up in their kings) **which** (kings of that kind who) **have not yet received a kingdom, but receive power as kings** (the term, **as kings**, is somewhat enigmatical. Auberlen suggests, whether the kingly power itself may not have passed away from these realms in the days of antichristian misrule, and thus their power be only **as kings**. But this seems inconsistent with their being *called* kings. Rather I would say the **as** represents the reservation of their kingly rights in their alliance with the beast) **one hour** (i. e. during the space of one hour: just as the corresponding term in ch. viii. 1 means, during the space of half an hour. Some, e.g. Vitringa and Elliott, have upheld the meaning of “at one and the same time with.” But I venture to say that but for a preconceived opinion, no one would ever have thought of any other meaning for these words than the ordinary one, “for the space of one hour.” And thus accordingly we will take them, as signifying some definite space, unknown to us, thus designated: analogous in position to the term “*a short space*” above) **together with** (i. e. in conjunction with, allied with: their power will be associated with his power) **the beast** (who are these? The answer seems to be furnished us in Dan. vii. 23 ff. They are ten kingdoms which shall arise out of the fourth great kingdom there: ten European powers, which in the last time, in concert with and subjection to the antichristian power, shall make war against Christ. In the precise number and form here indicated they have not yet arisen. It would not be difficult to point out the elements and already consolidating shapes of most of them: but in precise number we have them not as yet. What changes in Europe may bring them into the required tale and form, it is not for us to say). **These have** (the present is used in describing them, though they have not yet arisen) **one mind** (one and the same view and intent and consent), **and give their might and power to the beast** (becoming his allies and moving at his beck). **These shall war with the Lamb** (in concert with the beast, ch. xix. 19), **and the Lamb shall conquer them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they who are with Him** (shall conquer them also: the verb is implied above) **called and chosen** (all the called are not chosen, Matt. [xx. 16], xxii. 14: but all that, are chosen are first called, 2 Pet. i. 10) **and faithful** (this way of taking this clause is far better than with Bengel and the A.V., to make the last words into predicate, “and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful” For 1) it can clearly be no co-ordinate reason with the other assigned for the Lamb’s victory, that *His followers are, &c.*, and 2) the arrangement of the sentence in the original [see my Greek Test.] seems against this view).

15–18.] Explanation of various particulars regarding the harlot, and of the harlot herself. And he saith to me, The waters which thou sawest, where (i. e. on which) the harlot sitteth, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages (so in Isa. viii. 7, the king of Assyria and his invading people are compared to the waters of the river, strong and many. There is also doubtless an impious parody intended in the position of the harlot to that of Him who sitteth above the water-flood, and remaineth King for ever, Ps. xxix. 10). **And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast** (viz. in that compact and alliance just now mentioned), **these shall hate the harlot** (we now enter upon prophetic particulars other than those revealed in the vision, where the harlot was sitting on the beast. Previous to these things coming to pass, she must be cast down from her proud position), **and shall make her deserted and naked** (contrast to ver. 4. Her former lovers shall no longer frequent her nor answer to her call: her rich adornments shall be stripped off. She shall lose, at the hands of those whom she formerly seduced with her cup of fornication, both. her spiritual power over them, and her temporal power to adorn herself), **and shall eat her flesh** (batten upon her spoils; confiscate her possessions: or perhaps, as the same expression, Ps. xxvii, 2; Micah ili. 2 ff, where it is used to indicate the extreme vengeance of keen hostility), **and shall consume her with (in) fire** (Düsterdieck remarks that in the former clause the figure of a *woman* is kept: in this latter the thing signified, a *city*. But this need not absolutely be: the woman may be here also intended: and all the more probably, because the very words **shall consume her with fire** are quoted from the legal formula of the condemnation of those who had committed abominable fornications: see Levit. xx. 14, xxi. 9. The burning of the city would be a signal fulfilment: but we cannot positively say that that, and nothing else is intended). **For God put it** (anticipatory past tense) **into their hearts to do His mind, and to give their kingdom** (i. e., as above, the authority of their respective kingdoms) **unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled** (the prophetic words or discourses, respecting the destruction of Babylon), **And the woman whom thou sawest, is the great city, which hath kingdom over the kings of the earth** (every thing here is plain, The “city on seven hills which rules the world,” can be but one, and that one ROME. The present: tense, **which hath**, points to the time when the words were uttered, and to the dominion then subsisting. It has already been seen, that the prophecy regards Rome pagan and papal, but, from the figure of an harlot and the very nature of the predictions themselves, more the latter than the former. I may observe in passing, that the view maintained recently by Düsterdieck, after many others, that the whole of these prophecies regard pagan Rome only, receives no countenance from the words of this verse, which this school of Commentators are fond of appealing to as decisive for them. Rather may we say that this verse, taken in connexion with what has gone before, stultifies their view entirely. If the woman, as these Commentators insist, represents merely the stone-walls and houses of the city, what need is there for mystery on her brow,—what appropriateness in the use of all the Scripture imagery, long familiar to God’s people, of spiritual fornication? And if this were so, where is the contest with the Lamb,—where the fulfilment of any the least portion of the prophecy? If we understand it thus, nothing is left us but to say, as indeed some of this school are not afraid to say, that only the Seer’s wish dictated his words, and that history has not verified them. So that this view has one merit: it brings us at once face to face with the dilemma of accepting or rejecting the book: and thereby, for us, who accept it as the word of God, becomes impossible. For us, who believe the prophecy is to be fulfilled, what was Rome then, is Rome now.

Her fornications and abominations, as well as her power and pride, are matter of history and of present fact: and we look for her destruction to come, as we believe it is rapidly coming, by the means and in the manner here foretold).

Revelation: Chapter 18

CH. XVIII. 1—XIX. 10.] THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON. And herein,

XVIII. 1–8.] *Announcement of the destruction.* The Seer does not see the act of destruction: it is prophesied to him in ch. xvii., and now announced, as indeed it had been by anticipation before, ch. xiv. 8, as having taken place. **After these things I saw another angel** (another besides the one who shewed him the vision in the last chapter: or, perhaps, as it is natural to join epithet in some measure with the participle following,—another besides the last who came down from heaven, ch. x. 1) **coming down out of heaven** (the Scer is still on the earth) **having great power** (possibly as Elliott suggests, as the executor of the judgment that he announced. If so, the announcement is still anticipatory, see ver. 21), **and the earth was lighted up by** (literally, out of, as the source of the brightness) **his glory: and he cried in a mighty voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become an habitation of demons** (see especially the Septuagint version of Isa. xxxiv. 14 ff., where, instead of *wild-beasts*, as in A.V., we have **demons**), **and an hold** (a place of detention: as it were an appointed prison) **of every unclean spirit, and an hold of every unclean and hated bird** (see the prophecy respecting Babylon, Jer. i. 39): **because of the wrath of her fornication all the nations have drunk** (see on ch. xiv. 8. The use of the word wrath is even more remark-able here: of that wine of her fornication which has turned into wrath to herself), **and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth became rich out of the quantity of her luxury** (the word used here,—see note on 1 Tim. v. 11, seems properly to mean the exuberance of strength, the flower of pride).

4–20.] Warning to God's people to leave her, on account of the greatness of her crimes and coming judgments (4–8):

lamentations over her on the part of those who were enriched by her (9–20). And I heard another voice out of heaven (not that of the Father, nor of Christ, for in such a case, as has been well observed, the long poetical lamentation would be hardly according to prophetic decorum; but that of an angel speaking in the name of God, as we have **my** used in ch. xi. 3 also) **saying, Come out of her, my people** (in the prophetic references in Isaiah, the circumstances differed, in that being a joyful exodus, this a cautionary one: and thus the warning is brought nearer to that one which our Lord commands in Matt. xxiv. 16, and the cognate warnings in the Old Test., viz, that of Lot to come out of Sodom, Gen. xix. 15–22, when her destruction impended, and that of the people of Israel to get them up from the tents of Dathan and Abiram, Num. xvi. 23–26. In Jeremiah, we have the same circumstance of Babylon's impending destruction combined with the warning: and from those places probably, especially Jeremiah li. 45, the words here are taken, The inference has been justly made from them [Elliott iv. p. 40], that there shall be, even to the last, saints of God in the midst of Rome: and that there will be danger of their being, through a lingering fondness for her, partakers in her coming judgments), **that ye partake not in her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues** (the fear, in case of God's servants remaining in her, would be twofold: 1) lest by over-persuasion or guilty conformity they should become accomplices in any of her crimes: 2) lest by being in and of her, they should, though the former may not have been the case [and even more if it have], share in her punishment. It was through lingering fondness that Lot's wife became a sharer in the destruction of Sodom): **because her sins** (not as De Wette, the cry of her sins: but the idea is of a heap: see below) **have reached as far as heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Repay to her** (the words are now addressed to the executioners of judgment) **as she also repaid** (see the reference to Jeremiah, “*As she hath done, do unto her.*” The latter **repaid** is used, not in its strict propriety, but as corresponding to the other.—Hers was a giving, this is a giving back: we have exactly the same construction, which was probably in mind here, used also of Babylon, in the Septuagint version of Ps. cxxxvii. 8, “*Happy is he that shall repay to thee thy repayment, which thou didst repay to us*”), **and double [the] double according to her works** (so in Isa. xl. 2, and Jer. xvi. 18. See also Zech. ix. 12). **In the cup** (see above, ch. xvii. 4, and xiv. 8, xviii. 8) **which she mixed, mix for her double** (see ch. xiv. 10: a double portion of the deadly wine of God's wrath): **in proportion as** (literally, in as many things as) **she glorified herself, and luxuriated** (see above, ver. 8, and 1 Tim. v. 11, note), **so much torment and grief give to her. Because in her heart she saith [that] I sit a queen** (see ref. Isa., from which the sense and even the single words come, being there also said of Babylon. Similarly also Ezek. xxvii. 1 ff., of Tyre), **and am not a widow** (see as above), **and shall never see mourning** (“*n either shall I know the loss of children,*” Isa.). **For this cause in one day shall come her plagues, death and mourning and famine** (from Isa. xlvi. 9, where however we have. “*loss of children and widowhood.*” The judgments here are more fearful: death, for her scorn of the prospect of widowhood; mourning, for her inordinate revelling; famine, for her abundance): a **nd with fire shall she be burnt** (the punishment of the fornicatress; see ch. xvii. 1G note. Whether this is to be understood of the literal destruction of the *city of Rome* by fire, surely doubtful, considering the mystical character of the whole prophecy): **because strong is [the Lord] God who hath judged her** (a warrant for the severity of the judgment which shall befall her).

9–20] *The mourning over her: and first, 9, 10, by the kings of the earth. And there shall weep and mourn over her the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and luxuriated* (see above, ver. 7) *with her, when they see the smoke of her burning* (see ch. i. 15), *standing afar off on account of their fear of her torment* (this feature in the prophecy is an

objection to the literal understanding of its details. hardly be imagined that the kings should bodily stand and look as described, seeing that no combination of events contemplated in the prophecy has brought them together as yet), **saying,**
Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon the strong city, because in one hour has come thy judgment,

11–16.] *Lamentation of the merchants, And the merchants of the earth weep and lament* (the construction passes into the graphic present, but resumes the future again below, ver. 15, in speaking of the same thing) **over her, Because ne one any longer buys their cargo** (the description which follows is perhaps drawn, in its poetic and descriptive features, from the relation of Rome to the world which then was, rather than from its relation at the future time depicted in the prophecy. But it must not for a moment be denied, that the character of this lamentation throws a shade of obscurity over the interpretation, otherwise so plain from the explanation given in ch. xvii. 18. The difficulty is however not confined to the application of the prophecy to Rome papal, but extends over the application of it to Rome *at all*, which last is determined for us by the solution given ch. xvi. 18. For Rome never has been, and from its very position never could be, a great commercial city. I leave this difficulty unsolved, merely requesting the stu-dent to bear in mind its true limits and not to charge it exclusively on that interpretation which only shares it with any other possible one. The main features of the description are taken from that of the destruction of and lamentation over Tyre in Ezek. xxvii., to which city they were strictly applicable. And possibly it may be said that they are also applicable church which has wedded herself to the pride of the earth and its luxuries. But certainly, as has been observed, the details of this mercantile lamentation far more nearly suit London, than Rome at any assignable period of her history), **a cargo of gold, and of silver, and of precious Stone, and of pearls, and of fine linen manufacture, and of purple, and of silken stuff, and of scarlet stuff, and all citron wood** (the wood of the *thyon* tree, the citrus of the Romans, probably the *cupressus thyoides* or the *thuya articulata*. It was used for costly doors, with fittings of ivory, and for tables. It had a sweet smell), **and every article of ivory, and every article of most costly wood, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble; and cinnamon** (it is not certain, whether the *cinnamomum* of the ancients was the same as our cinnamon, Various accounts are given of its origin, but Herodotus, who ascribes it to the country where Dionysus [Bacchus] was born, i.e. to India, seems to give the right statement, if at least it is the modern cinnamon, which comes from Ceylon. In Exod. xiii, 23, it is an ingredient, in the holy oil for anointing: in Prov. vii, 17 it is one of the perfumes of the bed of the adulteress: in Cant. iv. 14 it is one of the plants growing in the garden of the beloved), **and amomum** (a precious ointment made from an Asiatic shrub, and used for the hair), **and odou rs** (for incense), **and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine meal** (*semidalis*, the *simila* or *similago* of the Latins, the finest wheaten meal: *the name* has been revived in our time as *semolina*), **and wheat, and cattle and sheep, and of horses and of chariots, and of bodies** (i. e. slaves),—**and persons** (lit. souls) **of men** (so the A.V. for the corresponding Hebrew expression, Ezek. xxvii. 13, which the Septuagint render aa here, **souls of men**, It seems vain to attempt to draw a distinction between the **bodies** before mentioned and these **souls or persons** of men. If any is to be sought, the most obvious is that pointed out by Bengel, and adopted by Ewald, Hengstenberg, and Düsterdieck, that **bodies** expresses such slaves as belong to the horses and chariots, and **persons of men** slaves in general).

14.] This verse takes the form of a direct address, and then in the next the merchants are taken up again. From this some have thought that it is not in its right place: e.g. Beza and Vitringa fancied it should be inserted after ver. 23: others, as Ewald, that it was originally a marginal addition by the Writer. But irregular as is the insertion, it need not occasion any real difficulty. It takes up the “weep and mourn” of ver. 11, as if “them” after those verbs had been “us,” which is not unnatural in a rhapsodical passage. And “these things,” ver. 15, refers very naturally back to the “fat things and splendid things” mentioned in this verse. **And thy harvest of the desire of thy soul** (i. e. the ingathering of the dainties and luxuries which thy soul lusted after) **has departed from thee, and all [thy] fat things and [thy] splendid things have perished from thee, and they(men) shall never more at all find them.** The next two verses describe, in strict analogy with vv. 9, 10, the attitude and the lamentation of these merchants. **The merchants of these things** (viz. of all those mentioned in vv. 12, 13, which have been just summed up as “fat things and splendid things”) **who gained wealth from her, shall stand afar off by reason of their fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, which was clothed in stuff of fine linen and of purple and of scarlet, and gilded in golden ornament and precious stone and pearl: because** (gives a reason for the **Woe, woe**) **in one hour hath been desolated all that wealth.**

17–19.] *The lamentation of the shipmasters, &c. And every pilot and every one who saileth any whither* (all sailors from place to place), and sailors and as many as make traffic of the sea, stood afar off, and cried out when they saw the place of her burning, saying, **Who is like to the great city? And they cast earth upon their heads** (see besides ref. Ezek. xxvii. 30: also 1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2, xiii. 19, xv. 32; Job ii. 12; Lam. ii. 10), **and cried out weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city in which all who have their ships in the sea became rich out of her costliness** (her costly treasures: concrete mean-ing for the abstract term): **for in one hour she hath been laid waste.**

20.] *The angel concludes with calling on the heavens and God's holy ones to rejoice at her fall. Rejoice at her, thou heaven, and ye saints and ye apostles and ye prophets, for God hath judged your judgment upon her* (hath exacted from her that judgment of vengeance which is due to you).

21–23.] *Symbolic proclamation by an angel of Babylon's ruin, And one strong angel took up a stone great as a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a rush shall be thrown down Babylon the great city, and shall never be found*

any more (see Jer. li. 63, 64). **And the sound of harpers and musicians and flute-players and trampeters shall never be heard in thee any more, and every artisan of every art shall never be found in thee any more, and the sound of the millstone** (see Jer. xxv. 10) **shall never be heard in thee any more, and the light of a lamp shall never shine in thee any more** (still from Jer. xxv. 10), **and the Voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall never be heard in thee any more:** because thy merchants were the great men of the earth, because in thy sorcery all the nations were deceived (see Isa. xlvi. 9–12), **And in her** (the angel drops the address to the fallen city, and speaks out this last great cause of her overthrow as a fact respecting her) **the blood of prophets and of saints was found and of all who have been slain on the earth** (i. e. naturally, of all slain for Christ's sake and His word. Compare the declaration of our Lord respecting Jerusalem, Matt. xxiii. 35).

Revelation: Chapter 19

CH. XIX. 1–8.] *The Church's song of praise at the destruction of Babylon.* As each of the great events and judgments in this book is celebrated by its song of praise in heaven, so this also: but more solemnly and formally than the others, seeing that this is the great accomplishment of God's judgment on the enemy of His Church. Compare ch. iv. 8 ff., introducing the whole heavenly scenery: v. 9 ff., celebrating the worthiness of the Lamb to open the book: vii. 10 ff.: xi. 15 ff., on the close fulfilment of God's judgments at the sounding of the seventh trumpet: xv. 3, on the introduction of the series of the vials: xvi. 5, on the retributive justice shewn in the pouring out of the third vial. **After these things I heard as it were a great voice of much multitude in heaven, of people saying Hallelujah** (the word so often found in the Psalter, 'Praise ye Jah, i.e. Jehovah, Perhaps it is hardly justifiable to lay, as Elliott has done, a stress on this Hebrew formula of praise being now first used, and to infer thence that the Jews are indicated as bearing a prominent part in the following song. The formula must have passed, with the Psalter, into the Christian Church, being continually found in the Septuagint: and its use first here may be quite accounted for by the greatness and finality of this triumph. The form Alleluia, adopted by the Greeks and Latins from inability to express the Hebrew spelling, ought not to be retained in English, as it disguises the sacred name, and thus obliterates the meaning of the word), **the salvation and the glory and the might belong to our God: because true and just are His judgments: because He judged** (the past tenses are anticipatory. In this case they can be rendered by the simple past in English) **the great harlot, which corrupted** (whose habit it was to corrupt) **the earth in** (of the element of the corruption) **her fornication; and He exacted in vengeance the blood of His servants from her hand** (so almost verbatim in 2 Kings ix. 7, of the vengeance to be taken on Jezebel. The vengeance is considered as a penalty exacted, forced, out of the reluctant hand: see also Gen. ix. 5; Ezek. xxxiii. 6). **And a second time they said Hallelujah; and her smoke** (of her burning, ch. xviii. 9) **goeth up to the ages of the ages** (this addition gives a reason for the praise, parallel with those introduced by because before). **And the twenty-four elders and the four living-beings fell down and worshipped God who sitteth upon the throne, saying Amen;** **Hallelujah** (thereby confirming the general song of praise of the great multitude). **And a voice came forth from the throne** (from perhaps gives more the direction than the actual source of the voice. It is useless to conjecture whose voice it is; but we may say that [on account of the expression our God] it is not that of the Lamb. Our Lord never spoke thus: compare John xx. 17, note) **saying, Give praise to our God, all His servants** (see Ps. cxxxiv. 1), and ye that fear Him, the small and the great (sec Ps. cxv. 18). **And I heard as it were the voice of much multitude** (see ver. 1), and as it were the voice of many waters, and as it were the voice of strong thunders, saying, **Hallelujah, because the Lord God Almighty reigneth. Let us rejoice and exult, and we will give the glory to Him; because the marriage of the Lamb is come** (these words introduce to us transitionally a new series of visions respecting the final consummation of the union between Christ and His Church, which brings about the end, ch. xxi. 1 ff.: the solemn opening of which now immediately follows in vv. 11 ff. This series, properly speaking, includes in itself the overthrow of the kings of the earth, the binding of Satan, the thousand years' reign, the loosing of Satan, the final overthrow of the enemy, and the general judgment: but is not consummated except in the entire union of Christ and His with which the book concludes. So that the past tenses are in a measure anticipatory. This figure, of a marriage between the Lord and His people, is too frequent and familiar to need explanation. Compare in the Old Test. Isa. liv. 1–8; Ezek. xvi. 7 ff.: Hos. ii. 19 f.: and in the New Test. Matt. ix. 15 and note, xxii. 2 ff., xxv. 1 ff.; John iii. 29; Eph. v. 25. Indeed it penetrates almost every where the thoughts and language used respecting Christ and the Church), **and His wife hath made herself ready** (is complete in her adournment, as in next ver.). **And it was given to her** (have we in these words still the voice of the celestial chorus, or are they merely narrative, written in the person of the Seer himself? It seems to me that the latter alternative is rendered necessary by the fact of the explanation, "f or the fine linen," &c., being subjoined. Moreover the words "to her it was given" are the regular narrative formula of the book) **that** (a construction of St. John's: so in John xvii. 4, "which Thou gavest me that I should do it;" ch. vi. 4, "given to him that he should take:" viii. 3.) **she should be clothed in fine linen raiment, bright and pure** (Grotius remarks that this is the grave adournment of a matron, not the ostentatious decking out of a harlot as before described), **for the fine linen garment is** (imports, see Matt. xxvi. 26) **the righteousness of the saints** (i. e. their pure and holy state, attained, as in the parallel description ch. vii. 14, is declared by the elder, by their having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The plural, righteousnesses, is probably distributive, implying not many to each one, as if they were merely good deeds, but one righteousness to each of the saints, enveloping him as in a pure white robe of righteousness. Observe that here and every where, the white robe is not Christ's righteousness imputed or put on, but the saints' righteousness, by virtue of being washed in His blood. It is *their own*; inherent, not imputed; but their own by their part in and union to Him),

9, 10.] The Bride in this blessed marriage being in fact the *sum of the guests* at its celebration, the discourse passes to *their blessedness, and an assurance of the certainty of that which has been foretold respecting them. The Apostle, moved by these declarations, falls down to worship the angel, but is forbidden.*—**And he saith** (who? the only ‘answer ready to our hand is, the angel of ch. xvii. 1. Some, as Ewald and Ebrard, suppose some one angel to have been constantly with St. John throughout the visions: but there seems no reason for this) **unto me, Write** (see ch. xiv. 13) **Blessed are they who are bidden** (bear in mind, throughout, our Lord’s parables on this matter: Matt. xxii, 1 ff., xxv. 1 ff. Our ch. iii. 20 furnishes us with a link binding on the spiritual import to the figure) **to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb. And he saith to me** (the solemn repetition of this formula shews that what follows it is a new and important declaration), **These [sayings]** (see ch. xvii. 17. If we understand that the speaker is the angel of ch. xvii. 1, then these sayings will most naturally include the prophecies and revelations since then) **are the true [sayings] of God** (are the very truth of God, and shall veritably come to pass). **And I fell down before his feet to worship him** (out of an overweening reverence for one who had imparted to him such great things: see also ch. xxii. 8, where the same again takes place at the end of the whole revelation, and after a similar assurance, The angel who had thus guaranteed to him, in the name of God, the certainty of these great revelations, seems to him worthy of some of that reverence belongs to God Himself. The reason given by Düsterdieck, that in both cases John imagined the Lord Himself to be speaking to him, is sufficiently contradicted by the plain assertion, here in ch. xvii. 1, and there in ch. xxii. 8 itself, that was not a divine Person, but simply an angel): **and he saith to me, Take heed not** (to do it): **I am a fellow-servant of thine, and [a fellow-servant] of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus** (as in ch. i. 2, xii. 17: on the former of which see note): **worship God** (the stress is on both words: let worship be reserved for *Him*), **for** (these words following are those of the angel, not of the Apostle, as Düsterdieck: ver. 8, and ch. v. 8, where the Apostle gives explanations, are no rule for this place, where the explanation of necessity comes from the speaker, whose reason for prohibiting the offered homage it renders) **the testimony of Jesus** (the genitive **of Jesus** is, as before, *objective*: the testimony *borne to* Jesus by these fellow-servants, men and angels) **is the spirit of prophecy** (there is no real difficulty in this saying: no reason for destroying its force by making “*of Jesus*”? subjective, and “*the testimony of Jesus*” to mean “the witness which proceeds from Jesus.” What the angel says is this: Thou and I and our brethren are all “*those who have the testimony of Jesus*,” i.e. are witnesses to Jesus; and the way in which we bear this witness, the substance and essence of this testimony, is the spirit of prophecy; “*we have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*” This Spirit, given to me in that I shew thee these things, given to thee in that thou seest and art to write them, is the token that we are fellow-servants and brethren. It does not follow that every one of those “*who have the testimony of Jesus*” has, in the same distinguished degree, the Spirit of prophecy: but every such one has the same Spirit, and that one Spirit, and no other, is the Spirit of prophecy).

11—XXII. 5.] THE END: beginning with *the triumphal coming forth of the Lord and His saints to victory* (vv. 11–16), *then proceeding with the great defeat and destruction of the beast and false prophet and kings of the earth* (vv. 17–21), *the binding of Satan and the millennial reign* (ch. xx. 1–6), *the unbinding of Satan and his destruction and that of the deceived nations* (xx. 7–10), *the great general judgment* (xx. 11–15), *and terminating with the vision of the new heavens and earth, and the glories of the new Jerusalem* (xxi. 1—xxii. 5).

11–16.] *The triumphal coming forth of the Lord and His hosts to victory. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse* (the same words, including the five following, as in ch. vi. 2. It is wonderful that this striking identity, in a book where symbolism is so constant to itself, has not prevented the mistakes which have been made in interpreting that place. This horse and Rider are the same as there: the “*conquering and to conquer*” is on the point of its completion: the other horses and their riders, dark forms in His great world-long procession to victory, will now for ever vanish, and war and famine and pestilence be known no more), **and He that sitteth upon him** [called] **faithful and true** (see ch. iii. 14), **and in righteousness He judgeth and warreth** (both those acts being his concern in his present triumphant progress). **His eyes [were as] a flame of fire** (ch. i. 14 verbatim, again beyond question identifying Him), **and upon His head many diadems** (probably

as He is King of Kings. Certainly these are not the crowns of the ten kings, as some say, for they are yet to be overthrown, ver. 19 ff. The *crown* of ch. vi. 2 has become multiplied in the course of the subjection of the world to Him): **having [names written** (if these words are genuine, probably the meaning is that the names were inscribed on the diadems, signifying the import of each), **and] a name written** (where, is not said. From this portion of the description regarding His Head, probably on the brow) **which none knoweth except Himself** (what name is indicated? Certainly not that given below, ver. 13; nor can these words mean that He Himself alone knows the mystery latent in that name. Nor again can we say that it is any of the names by which our blessed Lord is known to us already. But it is “*my new name*” of ch. iii. 12: some new and glorious name, indicative, as appears from the context there, of the completed union between Him and His people, and of His final triumph. This name the Apostle saw written, but knew not its import: that, like the contents of the sealed book, being reserved for the day when He shall reveal it): **and clothed in a vesture dipped in blood** (see Isa. lxiii. 2, 3: which is clearly in contemplation here, from our ver. 15 b. This being so, it is better perhaps to avoid the idea of His own blood being in view): **and His name is called, The Word of God** (this title forms so plain a link between the Apocalypse and St. John’s writings, where only it occurs, that various attempts have been made by those who reject his authorship, to deprive it of that significance. I have discussed these in the Introduction, §i. parr. 110, 111). **And the armies which are in heaven** (not the holy angels only, but the glorified saints: “*they that are with Him*” of ch. xvii. 14, who are spoken of in reference to this very triumph, and are said to be

“called and chosen and faithful” followed Him upon white horses, clothe in fine linen [raiment], white, pure (this clothing also speaks for the saints being included in the triumphal procession: see ver. 8, and ch. vi. 11), **And out of His mouth goeth forth a sharp sword** (see ch. i. 16, ii. 12, 16), **that with** (as invested in or with) **it He may smite the nations; and He** (there is an emphasis in this and the following clause on the word **He**, which however would be too strongly rendered by “himself”) **shall rule** (see ch. ii. 27, xii. 5, and note) **them** (their component members) **with a rod of iron: and He** (and none other, as we know from Isa. Ixiii. 3) **treadeth** (it is His office to tread) **the winepress of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath** (of the outbreaking of the anger: see on ch. xvi. 19) **of Almighty God. And He hath upon His vesture and upon His thigh a name written** (i. e. most naturally, written at length, partly on the vesture, partly on the: thigh itself; at the part where, in an equestrian figure, the robe drops from the thigh. The usual way of taking the words is to suppose the **and** explanatory or definitive of the former words, “on His vesture,” and that on the part of it covering His thigh. Others imagine a sword, on the hilt of which the name is inscribed, But there is no trace of this in the text. Cicero describes “a beautiful figure of Apollo, on whose thigh was inscribed in small silver letters the name of the artist, Myro: and Pausanias speaks of the dedicatory inscription of a statue being engraved on its thigh), **King of Kings, and Lord of Lords** (ch. xvii. 14).

17–21.] *Defeat and destruction of the beast and the false prophet and the kings of the earths* preceded by (17, 18) an *angelic proclamation*, indicating the vastness of the slaughter. **And I saw an** (literally, one) **angel standing in the sun** (not only as the place of brightness and glory becoming the herald of so great a victory, but also as the central station in mid-heaven for those to whom the call was to be made): **and he cried with a great voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid-heaven, Come, be gathered together** (see, on the whole of this proclamation, Ezek. xxxix. 17 ff., of which it is a close reproduction: also Matt. xxiv. 28) **to the great banquet of God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains of thousands, and the flesh of strong men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all, free as well as bond, both small and great** (this proclamation is evidently not to be pressed into a place in the prophecy, nor are its details to be sought in the interpretation, as has been done by Andreas and Primasius, who held the birds to be angels, and Brightmann, who holds them to be nations and churches. The insertion is made, as above, to shew the greatness and universality of the coming slaughter). **And I saw the wild-beast** (ch. xiii. 1), **and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together** (as above under the sixth vial, xvi, 12 ff., on the field of Harmagedon) **to make their war** (viz. that predicted above, ch. xvi. 14, xvii. 14) **with Him that sitteth upon the horse and with his army** (singular, probably as being *one*, and having one Head, whereas *they* are many, and under various leaders). **And the beast was taken, and those with him** (to wit, the false prophet, and the rest, ver. 21),—**the false prophet who wrought the miracles in his pre-sence** (compare ch. xiii. 11–17, by which it clearly appears that this false prophet is identical with that second beast), **with which he deceived those who received** (not necessarily nor probably, who *had*

received, as A.V.) **the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image** (compare ch. xiii. 14, 16): **the two were cast alive into the lake of fire which burneth with brimstone** (viz. into Gehenna, or hell properly so called, Matt. v. 22; Luke vi. 23; where also, after the millennium, Satan himself is cast, ch. xx. 10, and, when their work is finally accomplished, Death and Hadés, ib. 14 a. This lake of fire constitutes the second death, ib. 14 b, xxi. 8. These only, and not the Lord’s human enemies yet, are cast into eternal punishment. The latter await the final judgment, ch. xx. 11 ff.). **And the rest** (the *kings* and their *armies*) **were slain with the sword of Him that**

sitteth on the horse, which (sword) **goeth forth out of His mouth** (see Isa. xi. 45 2 Thess. ii. 8. De Wette remarks, that it is a hint of the spiritual nature of this victory, that no battle seems actually to take place, but the Lord Himself, as in 2 Thess., destroys the adversaries with the sword out of His own mouth. But clearly *all* must not be thus spiritualized. For if so, what is this gathering? what is indicated by the coming forth of the Lord in glory and majesty? Why is His personal presence wanted for the victory?): **a nd all the birds were satiated with their flesh,**

Revelation: Chapter 20

CH. XX. 1–10.] THE VICTORY OVER SATAN. The next enemy now remaining is the Arch-fiend himself, who had given his might and his throne and great power (ch. xiii. 2) to the beast: whose instruments the other enemies were, The blow given to him by their overthrow is followed by his binding and incarceration for 1000 years (vv. 1–3): during which period the saints live and reign with Christ, and judge the world, and the first resurrection takes place (vv. 4–6). But his malice and his power are not yet at an end. One final effort is permitted him at the end of that time (ver. 7), and he once more succeeds in deceiving the nations (ver. 8), who come up against the camp of the saints, and are destroyed by fire from heaven (ver. 9). He is then cast into the lake of fire with the beast and false prophet, there to be tormented for ever (ver. 10). **And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven** (not Christ himself, as many suppose, nor the Holy Spirit, as others: but a veritable angel, as always before in this book) **having the Key of the abyss** (of hell, the abode of the devil and his angels: see ch. ix. 1. For *this abyss* apparently is distinct from the lake of fire, a further and more dreadful place of punishment: see on ver. 10. This key had been for the purposes of God’s judgments given to Satan (Abaddon, Apollyon), and by him the locusts were let forth, ch. ix. 1–11. Now it is entrusted to other hands, and for another purpose), **and a great chain in** (so in English: in the Greek, *resting on, hanging upon*, as a chain naturally would be) **his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon** (already well known from ch. 3 ff.,

9; xiii. 2, xvi. 13), **the ancient serpent** (see ch. xii. 9), **who is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut and sealed over him** (shut the door or cover at the top, and sealed it down. Notice, that the same absolute use of the verb “*to seal*” in the active is found in John iii. 33, and apparently there only); **that he deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years shall be accomplished: after that he must** (according to the necessity of God’s purposes) be loosed for a little time (see below, ver. 7).

4–6] The Millennial reign. And I saw thrones (combine Dan. vii. 9, and Matt. xix. 28), **and they sat upon them** (who? the Apostles, as in Matt. xix. 28: the Saints, as in 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; notice well, that there is nothing to hinder this in the souls of the saints not being seen till the next clause: for there is no mark of temporal sequence connecting the two verses: nay, such an idea is precluded by the specification at the end of ver. 4, that those very souls of the saints are they who reigned with Christ, and were His assessors in reigning and judging, during this time), **and judgment** (the act and decision of judgment) **was given to them** (so in Dan. vii. 22, “*Until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.*” That is, they were constituted judges). **And I saw the souls of them who had been beheaded** (literally, smitten with the axe) **on account of the testimony of Jesus and on account of the word of God** (see ch. i. 9), **and (of those) the which did not worship** (during life) **the beast nor yet his image, and did not receive the mark** (mentioned ch. xiii. 16) **on their forehead and upon their hand: and they lived** (i. e. “*lived again;*” and, as the act is presently described as the first *resurrection*, with their bodies, perfect and complete) **and reigned with Christ** (took part in His Kingdom: see ch. i, 6; 2 Tim. ii. 12: also 1 Cor. iv. 8 and note) **a thousand years** (it would certainly appear that this reigning includes the office of judgment. Many interpreters suppose that these saints are the judged: but there is nothing in the context, nor in other parts of Scripture, to favour this idea, Nay, it is expressly negatived by our Lord’s saying in John v. 24: “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, That he who heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed from death unto life.*”) **T he rest of the dead lived not** (again, as above) **until the thousand years be completed, This is the first resurrection** (remarks on the interpretation of this passage will be found in the Introduction, §v. par. 33. It will have been long ago anticipated by the readers of this Commentary, that I cannot consent to distort the words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for 300 years, understood them in the plain literal sense: and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent stance of unanimity which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain **souls lived** at the first, and the rest of the **dead lived** only at the end of a specified period after that first—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave;—then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to any thing. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain: but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope). **Blessed** (see ch. xiv. 13, xix. 9) **and holy is he that hath part in** (the expression is peculiar to St. John) **the first resurrection: over such persons the second death** (ch. ii. 11, xxi. 8: and bear in mind what is said of our Lord Himself, Rom. vi. 9) **hath not power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they [shall] reign with Him** (Christ) a (or, the) **thousand years.**

7–10.] Loosing of Satan at the end of the millennium: gathering together and destruction of the nations: final condemnation of Satan. And when the thousand years are completed, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison (see ver. 3. The prophetic future is here used: but in ver. 9 the historic form with past tenses is resumed), **and shall go forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth** (there will be nations on earth besides the saints reigning with Christ, who during the binding of Satan have been quiet and willing subjects of the Kingdom, but who on his being let loose are again subjected to his temptations, which stir them into rebellion against God), **Gog and Magog** (compare Ezek. xxxviii. and xxix. throughout. This which is here prophesied is the great final fulfilment of those chapters. And the names Gog and Magog, taken from those, had been used in the rabbinical books to signify the nations which should in the latter days come up to Jerusalem against the Messiah. So the Jerusalem Targum on Num. xi. 27, “At the end of the last days, Gog and Magog and their armies shall go up to Jerusalem, and shall fall by the hands of Messiah the king, &c.” This name Magog occurs Gen. x. 2, as that of a son of Japhet, in company with brethren whose names mostly belong to northern and north-eastern nations: Gomer (Kimmerians), Madai (Medians), Meshech (Muscovites), &c. With these however are joined in Ezek. xxxviii. 5, Persians, Ethiopians, Libyans. Josephus renders the word *Scythians*, and so Jerome: Suidas, “Persians.” It seems to be a general name for the northern nations, and Gog, if at least we may follow the analogy of Ezekiel, xxxviii. 2, is their prince) **to gather them together to the (well-known) war: of whom the number [of them] is as the sand of the sea, And they went up** (the historical past tense is here resumed) **upon the breadth of the earth** (i. e. entirely overspread it) **and encompassed the camp of the saints, and the beloved city** (by these two is probably meant one and the same thing, the **and** being explanatory; or at all events the camp must be conceived as surrounding and defending the city. The **beloved city** is Jerusalem [see Ps. lxxviii. 68; lxxxvii. 2]: not the *new* Jerusalem, but the earthly city of that name, which is destined to play so glorious a part in the latter days). **And there came down fire out of heaven** (so in Ezek. in reff.), **and devoured them: and the devil that deceiveth them** (the present participle merely designates: the devil their deceiver) **was cast into the lake of fire and**

brimstone, where also are the beast and the false prophet (ch. xix. 20). **And they shall be tormented by day and by night to the ages of the ages.**

11–15.] *The general judgment.* **And I saw a great white throne** (great, in distinction from the thrones before mentioned, ver. 4: white, as seen in purest light, and symbolizing the most blameless justice), **and Him that sitteth on it** (viz. God: the Father: see ch. iv. 3, xxi. 5. It is necessary to keep to the well-known formula of the book in interpreting **Him that sitteth on it**, even though some expressions and sayings seem better to belong to the Son. Be it also remembered that it is the Father who giveth all judgment to the Son: and though He Himself judgeth no man, yet He is ever described as present in the judgment, and mankind as judged before Him. We need not find in this view any difficulty, or discrepancy with such passages as Matt. xxv. 31, seeing that our Lord Himself says in ch. iii. 21 “*I... sat down with my Father on His throne.*” Nor need we be surprised at the sayings of our Lord, such as that in ch. xxi. 6 b, being uttered by him that sitteth on the throne. That throne is now the throne of God and of the Lamb, ch. xxii. 1, Compare also ch. xxi. 22), **from whose face the earth and the heaven fled, and place was not found for them** (these words again seem to indicate the presence of One who has not hitherto appeared: whereas Christ in glory has been long present on earth. This fleeing away of heaven and earth is elsewhere described as their consumption by fire, 2 Pet. iii. 10–12. Both descriptions indicate the passing away of their present corruptible state and change to a state glorious and incorruptible). **And I saw the dead** (viz. the “*rest of the dead*” of 5: those who rose as described below, ver. 13), **the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened** (see Dan. vii. 10), **and another book was opened which is [the book] of life** (Düsterdieck remarks that the order of proceedings indicated seems to be that the contents of the books in which were written the works of men indicated whether they were to be found in the book of life. But this could hardly be: for in that sense, what need for the book of life at all? Rather should we say that those books and the book of life bore independent witness to the fact of men being or not being among the saved: the one by inference from the works recorded: the other by inscription or non-inscription of the name in the list. So the ‘books’ would be as it were the vouchers for the book of life): **and the dead were judged out of the things written in the books according to their works** (reff.: and 2 Cor. v. 10). **And the sea gave forth the dead that were in her, and Death and Hades** (see ch. i. 18, vi. 8) **gave forth the dead which were in them** (ie. all the dead, buried and unburied, rose again), **and they were judged each according to their (his) works. And Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire** (Death and Hades are regarded as two demons, enemies of God. So in 1 Cor. xv. 26. “*The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*” and in Isa. xxv. 8: Heb. and A.V., “He will swallow up death in victory.” compare I Cor. xv. 54. Hadés, as in ch. vi. 8, is Death’s follower and the receiver of his prey. The punishment of sin is inflicted on both, because both are the offspring of, and bound up with sin). **This is the second death, the lake of fire** (thus then our Lord’s saying, ch. ii. 11, and that of the Apostle in our ver. 6, are explained. As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death [ch. xxi. 4], so after that death there is no more life, ver. 10; Matt. xxv. 41). **And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire** (there was no intermediate state).

Revelation: Chapter 21

CH. XXI. 1—XXII. 5.] *The new heavens and new earth: the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem.* The whole of the things described in the remaining portion of the book are subsequent to the general judgment, and descriptive of the consummation of the triumph and bliss of Christ’s people with Him in the eternal kingdom of God. This eternal kingdom is situated on the purified and renewed earth, become the blessed habitation of God with his glorified people. **And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were departed: and the sea exists no longer** (see on the whole, Isa. lxv. 17. The vision does not necessarily suppose the annihilation of the whole creation, but only its passing away as to its outward and recognizable form, and renewal to a fresh and more glorious one. And though not here stated on the surface, it is evident that the method of renewal is that described in 2 Pet. iii. 10 ff.; viz, a renovation by *fire*. This alone will account for the unexpected and interesting feature here introduced, viz. that the sea exists no longer. For this the words mean [see ver. 4], and not as Düsterdieck, that the [former] sea, as well as the former heaven and earth, had passed away). **And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem** (see especially Gal. iv. 26, and note), **coming down. out of heaven from God** (Schöttgen quotes from the remarkable Jewish book Sohar, “Rabbi Jeremias said, The Holy Blessed God shall renew the world, and shall build Jerusalem, so as to make it come down from heaven into the midst of the world, so that it even shall be destroyed”), **prepared as a bride adorned for her husband** (as in our common discourse, so here with the Evangelist, the name of the material city stands for the community formed by its inhabitants. But it does not follow in his case, any more than in ours, that both material city and inhabitants have not a veritable existence: nor can we say that the glorious description of it, presently to follow, applies only to *them*. On the figure, see Isa. lxi. 10—lxii. 5). **And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle** (i. e. dwelling; the allusion being to the tabernacle in the wilderness, in which God dwelt in symbol only) **of God is with men, and He shall dwell** (tabernacle) **with them, and they shall be his people** (literally, peoples, plural: because, as in ch. xxi. 24, many nations shall now partake in the blessed fulfilment of the promise), **and He shall be God with them** (the name Emmanuel, God with us, first then being realized in its full significance), **their God** (so the ancient promises are fulfilled, Exod. xxix. 15; Lev. xxvi. 11; Ezek. xxvii. 27). **And [God] shall wipe away every tear from their eyes** (reff.): **and death shall exist no longer** (ch. xx. 14), **and (Gr. nor) mourning** (Isa. lxv. 19) **and (nor) crying and (nor) pain shall exist no longer: because the first** (former state of) **things are passed away. And He that sitteth on the**

throne (see note ch. xx. 11) **said, Behold, I make all things new.** **And he** (probably the angel, or voice from heaven, that gave the Seer similar commands before, xiv. 13, xix. 9. This seems probable on account of the change to the formula **he saith**, as well as from the nature of the command: for we have “*said to me*” re-sumed immediately with the **I**, leaving no doubt Who speaks) **saith, Write: because these words are faithful and true, And He said to me** (viz. He that sitteth upon the throne), **They are fulfilled** (viz. *these sayings*: or, but I prefer the other, *all things*). **I am** (or, **I have become the Alpha, &c.**: see margin) **the Alpha and the Omega** (see above, ch. i. 8), **the beginning and the end** (“the Unchangeable and Ever-lasting One, by Whom the old was and the new shall be, by Whom the old is fulfilled in the new, and with it all hope and all promise.” De Wette). **To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely** (compare ch. vii. 17, and reff. Isa. and John: compare also Matt. v. 6). **He that conquereth shall inherit these things** (the glories to be shewn in the heavenly Jerusalem), **and I will be to him [a] God, and he shall be to me a son** (this will be the full performance to the sons of God of the promise in 2 Kings vii. 14: which being first made to Solomon, received its chief fulfilment in the great Son of David and of God [Heb. i. 5], and now in Him to them that are His), **But to the cowardly** (the contrast to them that conquer: the “*drawers back*” of Heb. x. 38: those who shrink timidly from the conflict), **and the unbelievers, and the polluted with abominations** (those who have partaken of the abominations in ch. xvii. 4,—of idolatries, &c.), **and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the false** (i. e. all liars), **their part [shall be] in the lake that burneth with fire and brim-stone, which is the second death** (see the reff.).

9—XXII. 5.] More particular description of the heavenly Jerusalem. **And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, who** (viz. the angels, however strange it may seem: but thus it necessarily is in the ancient original text) **were full of the seven last plagues** (one of these angels had before shewn the Apostle the great harlot, ch. xvii. 1. The contrast to that vision is maintained throughout these opening verses), **and he talked with me, saying, Hither, I will shew thee** (hitherto verbatim as in ch. xvii. 1) **the bride, the wife of the Lamb** (here likewise note the contrast to the succeeding context in ch. xvii. 1,—in the faithfulness and purity implied in these words). **And he carried me away in the spirit** (ch. xvii. 3) **to** (as they say in some parts of England, *on to*, combining motion towards and position upon) **a mountain great and high** (so likewise when the vision of the heavenly city is vouchsafed to Ezekiel, Ezek. xl. 1, 2), **and shewed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God** (this vision had begun in ver. 2, but the Apostle is now carried to this “specular mount” to have a nearer and fuller view of it. The city must not be conceived of as on or covering the mountain, but as seen descending to a spot close by it: so in Ezek. xl. 2, whether we read “by” or “upon” as in our margin), **having the glory of God** (i. e. not merely brightness of a divine and celestial kind, but the glorious presence of God Himself, the Shechinah, abiding in her: see ver. 23: also ch. xv. 8): **her brightness** (the **brightness**, from ver. 23, the effect of the divine glory shining in her) [**was**] **like to a stone: most precious, as it were to a jasper stone, crystal-clear** (see this “crystalizing” jasper discussed in note on ch. iv. 3. Ebrard thinks it is the diamond): **having a wall great and high, having [also] twelve gates** (see Ezek. xlviii. 30 ff., where the same features are found in the description), **and at the gates twelve angels and names inscribed** (contrast to the names of blasphemy, ch. xvii. 3), **which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel** (it does not follow from this description either, 1. that the angels must necessarily be guardians, seeing that no foes remain to be guarded against: they are for the completeness and adornment of the city after the idea of a beautiful fortress, adopted to set it forth:—or, 2. that, as in the Jewish books, each gate is to be imagined as used by each the twelve tribes of Israel represent the whole people of God, and the city the encampment of Israel: see below). **From** (on the side entering from) **the sun-rising three gates** (Joseph, Benjunin, Dan, in Ezek. xlvi. 32. In ch. vii. 6, Manasseh is substituted for Dan, which is omitted. See there), **from the north three gates** (Reuben, Judah, Levi), **from the south three gates** (Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun), **from the sun-setting three gates** (Gad, Asher, Naphtali: Ezek. ibid, In Numbers ii., the order of encampment is thus set down: *East*,—Judah, Issachar, Zebulun: *South*,—Reuben, Simeon, Gad: *West*,—Ephraim, Manasseh Benjamin: *North*,—Dan, Asher, Naphtali). **And the wall of the city** (the wall surrounding the city) **having (had) twelve foundation-stones** (i. e. probably, each portion of the wall joining two gates had a conspicuous basement, of one vast stone. Four of these, as Düsterdieck observes, would be corner-stones, joining the third gate on one side to the first gate on the next), **and upon them** (over them, perhaps extending all their length) **twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb** (see Eph. ii. 20, where however the ruling idea is a different one, see the interpretation in the note. No inference can be drawn, as has been drawn by some from this, that the Writer was not himself an Apostle).

15—17.] Its measurement: compare Ezek. xl. 3—5, **And he that spoke with me had as a measure a golden reed, that he might measure the city, and her gates and her wall. And the city lieth foursquare** (so A.V. well: is in shape tetragonal), **and her length is as great as her breadth** (see below). **And he measured the city with the reed to the length of stadii of the amount of twelve thousands** (the 12,000 stadii are in all probability the whole circumference, 1000 to each space between the gates); **the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal** (the supposition of many expositors, that the city thus formed a monstrous cube, 3000 stadii in length, in breadth, and in height, really does not appear to be necessarily included in these words, Nay, it seems to be precluded by what next follows, where the angel *measures the height* of the wall. For Düsterdieck’s idea that the *houses* were 3000 stadii in height, while the wall was only 144 cubits, is too absurd to come at all into question. The words are open, this last consideration being taken into account, to two interpretations: 1) that the city, including the hill or rock on which it was placed, and which may be imagined as descending with it, formed such a cube as seems here described: or 2) that there is some looseness of use in the word equal, and that we must understand that the length and breadth were equal to each other and the height equal all round. Of these two I prefer the former, us doing no violence to

the words, and as recalling somewhat the form of the earthly Jerusalem on its escarpment above the valley of the Kedron. Some such idea seems also to be pointed at in the rabbinical books, which describe the future Jerusalem as twelve miles high. See extracts in my Greek Test.). **And he measured the wail of it** (i. e. the *height* of the wall of it), **of an hundred and forty-four cubits, the measure of a man, which is that of an angel** (meaning that in this matter of measure, men and angels use the same. As to the height thus given, it may be observed that the height of Solomon's porch, the highest part of his temple, was 120 cubits, 2 Chron. iii. 4, and the general height of his temple, 30 cubits, 1 Kings vi. 2).

18–27.] *Material*, and farther description of the city, **And the building-work of the wall of it [was] jasper** (ch. iv. 3, note), **and the city [was] pure gold like to pure glass** (i. e. ideal gold, transparent, such as no gold is here, but surpassing it in splendour). **The foundation-stones of the wall of the city** (see above, ver. 14) [**were**] **adorned with every precious stone** (not that the stones were merely set on the foundations, but that the foundations themselves *consisted* of them: see below, and compare Isa. liv. 12): **the first foundation-stone [was] jasper** (the material of the upper building of the wall, ver. 18), **the second, sapphire** (the stone described under this name by Pliny seems to be our lapis lazuli. But the sapphire of the Scriptures seems more like the present hard sky-blue stone known by that name: see Ezek. i. 26), **the third, chalcedony** (this name is unknown: corresponding perhaps Exod. xxviii, 19, xxxix. 12, “*agate*” There seems to have been an agate brought from Chalcedon. It is described as semi-opaque, sky-blue, with stripes of other colours: “like trees in autumn,” Pliny), **the fourth, emerald** (note, ch. iv. 8), **the fifth, sardonyx** (Exod. xxxix. 11; Ezek. xxviii. 18; perhaps garnet. Pliny describes it as “of the colour of the flesh under a fingernail.” The ancient versions and Josephus call it onyx), **the sixth, sardius** (ch. 3, note), **the seventh, chrysolith** (Ezek. xxviii, 13, where Josephus thus renders the word which in A.V. is “beryl.” The stone at present so called is pale green, transparent, and crystallized, with shifting colours. But the ancient chrysoliths are as by Pliny as translucent with golden rays, and have been supposed the same as our topaz: or by some, as amber), **the eighth, beryl** (Exod. xxiv. 10, where it “*sapphire*” in the A.V. It is said to have been pure sea-green), **the ninth, topaz** (Strabo describes it as transparent, shining with golden light. But Pliny says that it is a beautiful green: whence some have supposed it our chrysolith: see above. Compare Job xxviii. 19), **the tenth, chrysoprasus** (this word is found only in Pliny, who describes it as pale, and of a hue resembling the amethyst), **the eleventh, jacinth** (in Exod. xxviii, 19, called *ligure*. Pliny describes this also as a paler kind of amethyst), **the twelfth, amethyst** (Pliny reckons the amethyst among the purple stones. It seems to be the stone now known by that name), **And the twelve gates, twelve pearls** (Isa. liv. 12, “carbuncles.” Wetstein quotes from a Rabbinical work, that God shall place in the gates of the new Jerusalem pearls thirty cubits long and as many broad), **each one separately of the gates was [made] out of one pearl.** **And the street** (generic: the street-material, throughout) **of the city [was] pure gold like transparent glass** (see above on ver. 18). **And a temple I saw not in it: for the Lord God Almighty is the temple of it, and the Lamb** (i. e. the inhabitants need no place of worship or sacrifice, the object of all worship being present, and the great Sacrifice Himself being there). **And the city hath not need of the sun nor yet of the moon, that they should shine on her: for the glory of God** (the brightness of His presence, the Shechinah: see above, ver. 11) **lightened her, and her lamp was (or is) the Lamb** (see. Isa. lx. 19, 20. No assignment of the members of the sentence must be thought of, such as that the glory of God is her Sun, and the Lamb her moon, as has been done by some Commentators): **and the nations shall walk by means of her light** (i. e. she shall be so bright as to serve the light,—for sun and moon both,—to the world that then is, and her inhabitants. For such inhabitants are clearly supposed; see below, and ch. xxii. 2). **And the kings of the earth** (no longer hostile to Christ) **bring** (present tense of habit and certainty, as so often in this prophecy) **their** (the kings', not the nations', as ver. 26) **glory** (see Isa. lx. 3: all in which they glory) **into her: and her gates shall never be shut by day** (i. e. in meaning, shall never be shut, seeing it will always be day: shall never be shut, for if they were, they must be shut by day): **for night shall not exist there. And they (men) shall bring the glory and the costliness of the nations into her** (Isa. lxvi. 12. Among the mysteries of this new heaven and new earth this is set forth to us: that, besides the glorified church, there shall still be dwelling on the renewed earth nations, organized under kings, and [xxii, 2] saved. by means of the influences of the heavenly city). **And there shall never enter into her every thing unclean, and working abomination and falsehood, but only** (literally, except) **they that are written in the book of life of the Lamb** (if then the kings of the earth, and the nations, bring their glory and their treasures into her, and if none shall ever enter into her that is not written in the book of life, it follows, that those kings, and these nations, are written in the book of life. And so perhaps some light may be thrown on one of the darkest, mysteries of redemption. There may be,—I say with all diffidence—those who have been saved by Christ without ever forming a part of his visible organized Church).

Revelation: Chapter 22

CH. XXII. 1–5.] *The end of the desiption*: the means of healing for the nations (1, 2): the blessedness and eternal reign of the glorified servants of God (2–5). **And he shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, coming forth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb** (which throne is one and the same: see ch. iii, 21, and note on ch. xx. 11. The Old Test. passages in view are Gen. ii. 10; Ezek. xlvi. ff.). **In the midst of the street of it** (the city), **and of the river, on one side and on the other** (the meaning being that the trees were on each side in the middle of the space between the street and the river, See Ezek. xlvi. 7), **[was] the tree of life** (ch. ii. 7; Ezek. as above, and what follows, i.e. *trees* of the kind described: as in Ezek.) **producing twelve fruits** (kinds of fruit, Ezek. xlvi. 12), **according to each month yielding its fruit** (Ezek. as above): **and the leaves of the tree [are] for healing of the nations** (so exactly, Ezek. ver. 12: “and the leaf thereof for medicine.” On

the nations *outside*, see above, ch. xxi. end).

And every curse (accursed thing, see above) **shall exist no longer** (compare Zech. xiv. 11. There shall no more be these accursed things which bar the residence of God among His people; see Josh. vii. 12, which shows that these words are in close connexion with what follows): **and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in her, and his servants shall serve Him** (in administration and holy service, see ch. vii. 15). **and they shall see His face** (be close to Him, and know Him, even as they are known, Matt. v. 8), **and His name [shall be] on their foreheads** (see ch. vii. 3). **And night shall not be any more** (ch. xxi. 25), **and they shall have no need of [the light of] a lamp or (and) of [the] light [of the sun]** (ch. xxi. 28, ‘The reading is in some doubt, the words in brackets being omitted by some of our principal MSS.’), **because Lord God shall shine** (shed light) **upon them: and they shall reign** (De Wette well remarks, in a higher sense than in ch. xx. 4, 6) **to the ages of the ages.**

6-21.] CONCLUDING ASSURANCES AND

EXHORTATIONS: and herein, 6, 7, assurance by the angel of the truth of what has been said, in the terms of ch. i. 1. **And he** (the angel)

said to me, These sayings, (the whole book, by what follows) **are faithful and true: and the Lord** (Jehovah) **the God of the spirits of the prophets** (i. e. of those spirits of theirs, which, informed by the Holy Spirit, have become the vehicles of prophecy) **sent His angel to shew to His servants what things must come to pass shortly** (on the whole of this, see on ch. i. 1, from which place it is repeated at the close of the book of which that is the opening). **And behold, I come quickly** (the speech passes into the words of Christ, Himself,

reported by the angel: so in ver. 12, and in ch. xi. 3). **Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book** (the speech is a mixed one: in the words of **this book**, the Writer has in view the roll of **this book** now lying all but completed before him: but the words are the saying of the angel: “*of this prophecy*,” would express it formally). **And I John [am he] who heard and saw these things: and when I heard and saw, I fell down** (as in ch. xix. 10, where see notes) **to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed me these things. And he saith to me, Take heed not: I am a fellow-servant of thine, and** (a fellow-servant) **of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the sayings of this book: worship God** (the same feeling again, prevailed over the Apostle as before, and is met with a similar rebuke). **And he saith to me, Seal not up the sayings of the prophecy of this book** (compare ch. x. 4, where the command is otherwise: also Daniel viii. 26): **for the time is near** (in Daniel viii. 26, the reason for sealing up the vision is that the time shall be *for many days*). **Let him that is unjust commit injustice still: and let the filthy (morally polluted) pollute himself still: and let the righteous do righteousness still, and the holy sanctify himself still** (see Ezek. iii. 27: and compare Matt. xxvi. 45, “Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold the hour is at hand:” also

Ezek. xx. 39. The saying has solemn irony

in it the time is *so* short, that there is hardly room for change—the lesson conveyed in its depth is, “Change while there is time”). **Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me** (Isa. xl. 10) **to render to each as his work is** (these words sound as if spoken by our Lord himself: perhaps at the conclusion, the Apostle puts together, in prophetic shortness, many divine sayings of warning and consolation, with the replies to them). **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end** (these words have hitherto been said by the Father: see above, ch. i. 8, xxi. 6, and notes, And in all probability it is so here likewise, whether we assume the words to be spoken by Christ in God’s name, or by the Eternal Father Himself). **Blessed are they that wash their robes** (see the margin, and ch. vii. 14, where the expression is fuller, “in the Blood of the Lamb.” The difference in the readings is curious, being in the original that between *poιouμενας τας εντολας αυτου* and *plunontes τας στολας αυτον*, either of which might easily be mistaken for the other) **that they may have the power** (licence) **over the tree** (to eat of the tree) **of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs** (impure persons, see reff.), **and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters and every one loving and practising falsehood** (see on these, ch. xxi. 8). **I Jesus** (our Lord now speaks directly in His own person) **sent my angel to testify these things to you in the churches, “I am the root and the race** (the offspring, as A.V.) **of David, the bright morning star** (that brings in the everlasting day). **And the Spirit** (in the churches, and in the prophets) **and the Bride** (the Church herself) **say Come** (see on ch. vi. 1, &c.)? **and let him that heareth** (the cry of the Spirit and Bride) **say Come: and let him that thirsteth come: let him that will, take the water of life freely** (this verse is best understood as a reply Of the Apostle to our Lord’s previous words).

18-20.] Final solemn warning of the Apostle. I (emphatic) **testify to every one** (or, “*of every one*”) **who heareth the sayings of the prophecy of this book, If any one add** (*shall* here added) **to them, God shall add to him** (lay upon him, as he has laid his own additions upon them: the verb being from Deut. vii. 15, where the plagues of Egypt are threatened to the Israelites in case of their disobedience) **the plagues which are written in this book: and if any one shall take away from the sayings of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his portion from the tree of life** (strike out his portion from

the aggregate of those of which the whole participation of that tree is made up), **and out of the holy city, which are written in this book** (see Deut. as before. The adding and taking away are in the application and reception in the heart: and so it is not a mere formal threat to the copier of the book. All must be received and realized. This is at least an awful warning both to those who despise and neglect this book, and to those who add to it by irrelevant and trifling interpretations).

20, 21.] FINAL ASSURANCES of the Lord, and REPLY of the Apostle on behalf of the Church: and BENEDICTION. He who testifieth these things (the Lord Jesus) **saith, Yea, I come quickly. Amen** (the reply of the Apostle, not the conclusion of our Lord's saying), **Come, Lord Jesus, The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints** (i. e., with the church of God. This, the reading of the Sinaitic MS., is nowhere else found as a parting formula).